Prince Albert

NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Management Plan

Parks Canada Parcs Canada

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

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Prince Albert

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Management Plan

January 2008

Foreword

Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas offer Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast unique opportunities to experience and understand our wonderful country. They are places of learning, recreation and fun where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of these places offers Canadians and visitors unique opportunities to experience Canada. These places of beauty, wonder and learning are valued by Canadians - they are part of our past, our present and our future.

Our Government's goal is to ensure that each of these special places is conserved.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Prince Albert National Park. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Prince Albert National Park of Canada Management Plan.

John Baird
Minister of the Environment

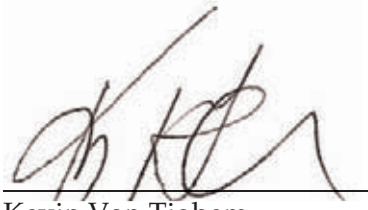
Recommendation Statement

PRINCE ALBERT NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Management Plan

Recommended for approval by:

Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



Kevin Van Tighem
Northern Prairies, Field Unit Superintendent

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A Vision for Prince Albert National Park - 2020

The public and all major stakeholders consulted during the preparation of Prince Albert National Park's management plan share this vision, which serves as the plan's overall goal.

Prince Albert National Park will welcome visitors from across Canada and around the world to a rich, protected landscape representative of Canada's southern Boreal region. Visitors will experience, enjoy and learn about the ecology, history and cultural resources of the lakes, wetlands, forests and native grasslands that characterize this part of Canada. From arrival in the national park community of Waskesiu through the diverse ways in which visitors experience and learn about this northern landscape, Prince Albert National Park will be seen as exemplifying the national park ideal in the heart of Canada's prairie provinces.

By the year 2020, Prince Albert National Park of Canada will be well known as a place that:

- Provides meaningful opportunities for active participation in the stewardship, presentation and celebration of natural and cultural heritage within and beyond the boundaries of the park in ways that promote the value and importance that Canadians place on our national parks and national historic sites.
- Integrates park management with that of the larger ecological and cultural landscapes through partnerships with organizations such as the Prince Albert Model Forest and Prince Albert Grand Council.
- Collaborates with Aboriginal people to preserve, present and protect the unique rich aboriginal history of the land, while incorporating Traditional Knowledge into science and decision-making.
- Serves as a living example of how people can enjoy memorable experiences in ways that sustain the nature and cultural heritage of this special place. As one of the premier visitor destinations within Saskatchewan, the park, its partners and stakeholders work together to welcome all Canadian and international guests and facilitate meaningful heritage experiences that foster lasting memories and build a culture of stewardship.
- Offers opportunities for visitors to connect with the cultural features, artifacts and stories that arise from the relationships of people to this place, including Aboriginal people, early European immigrants and those who have arrived more recently to add to the diversity of modern Canada.
- Protects healthy, functioning ecosystems for all time. This will be achieved in collaboration with others by maintaining and/or restoring natural processes (such as fire and flooding), plants, animals and physical features that have shaped this region, and by controlling or eliminating non-native species and pathogens.

- Includes a full complement of predator and prey species and vegetation communities representative of Canada's southern boreal plains and plateau natural region, with relationships among these species remaining essentially unimpaired.

1 A Management Plan for Prince Albert National Park of Canada

Through the management planning process, Parks Canada ensures decisions about protected heritage areas are consistent with its mandate and policies, and that interested Canadians have a meaningful opportunity to influence priorities and decisions.

> 'The management plan is obviously looking at the changing times, and in the plan it is important the changing needs of society should be included.'
>
> - Comment received during the scoping exercise

Management plans learn from the past and look to the future. They take into account a park's history, its current situation, and its significance in Canada's system of national parks. This plan, which replaces the plan tabled in parliament in 1995, will guide Prince Albert National Park during the next five to fifteen years.

A management plan is Parks Canada's key public accountability document for individual national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas. Each park management plan is approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament.

Kingsmere River © Parks Canada – Waskesiu Community Council – Frank Kasdorf - photographer

In a departure from previous approaches, the Prince Albert National Park Management Plan is organized around places rather than themes. This is done deliberately. When people talk of a national park, they are talking about a place, a special place that evokes a specific vision in their mind. For this reason, the management plan address issues and priorities for the park at various scales – first global, then national, then regional, and finally geographical units people can readily identify.

Another difference is the prominent placement of the chapter entitled, "Working Together for All Canadians." Again, this is no accident. This management plan would not have been possible without a lot of hard work on the part of many people. Building on the success of this approach, Prince Albert National Park will continue to move beyond consultation to active involvement. Park management will become a shared enterprise, engaging the talents, energies, and goodwill of the many people who have an interest in this very special place and the boreal forest it represents.

1.1 Legislation and Policy

Management planning for individual national parks takes place within a larger framework of legislation and policy.

- Canada National Parks Act (2000) - defines the responsibilities of the Government of Canada with regard to Canada's system of federally protected heritage areas.
- Parks Canada Agency Act (1998) - sets out the mandate for Parks Canada.
- Species at Risk Act (SARA) (2002) - with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada, Parks Canada is responsible for implementing this Act. SARA is an important tool for the conservation of species at risk and fulfills Canada's commitment to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1999) – ensures Parks Canada's programs meet the highest environmental standards.
- Historic Sites and Monuments Act (1985) - authorizes the Minister of the Environment to designate historic places of national significance.

1.2 Mandate

Since 1930, Canada's National Parks Act has dedicated the national parks of Canada *"to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and regulations . . . the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."* Today that dedication – at the heart of Parks Canada's mandate -- remains unchanged. Framed around three interlocking elements, the mandate challenges each national park to deliver a unique program linking protection, education, and visitor experiences.

National Park

A national park is not just a recreational resort, a field study school, or an ecological preserve; it combines elements of each in a uniquely rich Canadian institution. The three core elements are closely entwined and mutually supportive. The management plan does not balance one element against another, but rather ensures every aspect of Prince Albert National Park's management reflects Parks Canada's whole integrated mandate.

> On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.
>
> Parks Canada Agency

1.3 Ecological Integrity

"Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks."

Canada National Parks Act (section 8 (2)).

The Canada National Parks Act defines ecological integrity as"a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist, including abiotic components and the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes."

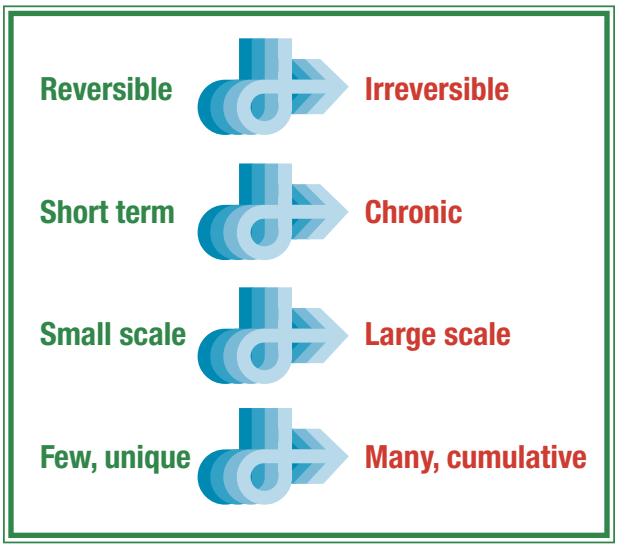
In plain language, a national park has ecological integrity if it has all the native plants and animals normally expected to live in that part of Canada, if their populations are healthy and likely to survive, and if natural processes such as fire, flooding, and predation continually shape and renew the landscape and its habitats.

Signs of decline in species or landscapes, because of pollution or other unnatural influences, demand action so future generations can experience as healthy and whole a park as we enjoy today.

> "In the end, we will conserve what we love, we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught"
>
> Baba Dioum

Not all environmental issues pose a serious threat to the ecological integrity of a national park. It is appropriate to consider ecological integrity at the park or ecosystem level, the area that sustains the fullest range of biodiversity, animals, and natural processes. It is also appropriate to consider effects over the long-term as the Canada National Parks Act commits us to maintain ecological integrity for future generations.

The following chart illustrates how environmental effects become serious ecological integrity concerns as they move from one side to the other:



Prince Albert National Park addresses challenges to ecological integrity through:

- scientific studies to understand the underlying issues
- traditional knowledge and expertise available in the community
- creative and lasting solutions in partnership with interested Canadians

Waskesiu River Dam – Creative Solutions for Ecological Integrity

In 2005, Parks Canada replaced a dam at the outlet of Waskesiu Lake with an engineered riffle structure. While the dam had helped maintain adequate water levels in Waskesiu Lake for boats, it also blocked the movement of fish and other aquatic animals.

The dam, built in the 1940's had become an important ecological integrity issue. In a landscape with ecological integrity, lake levels fluctuate naturally with the seasons and fish and other organisms move freely through the watershed. The effects of a dam are not readily reversible, they are chronic, and since they affect the entire watershed, they are large scale.

The riffle was a creative solution arrived at through consultation with scientists, engineers, concerned local stakeholders, and Aboriginal communities downstream. Water in Waskesiu Lake now fluctuates normally, while still remaining high enough for recreational use. Fish like cisco, walleye, northern pike, as well as other organisms, now move freely through the Waskesiu River between Waskesiu Lake and Montreal Lake.

This project illustrates the kind of approach Parks Canada will continue to take in restoring or maintaining the ecological integrity of Prince Albert National Park.

1.4 Memorable Visitor Experiences

Many elements combine to create a memorable national park experience – the natural environment, wildlife sightings, other visitors, activities, and facilities to support those activities. The park is committed, in partnership with others, to provide services and programs that enable visitors to take home lasting memories of:

- truly rewarding experiences that result in personal change
- opportunities for self-discovery and learning
- positive interactions with staff, stakeholders, and local residents
- the park and the opportunities it offers
- unique, authentic recreational activities, including camping and hiking
- a safe and enjoyable visit

1.5 Education - Learning about Canada's Heritage

Parks Canada offers education and outreach activities that connect Canadians to their land and their history – a critical element in building a country that celebrates and preserves our shared heritage.

- Park staff and Parks Canada's many partners interpret nature and history for park visitors.
- Facilities and services allow visitors to create their own learning experiences.
- Relevant information in a variety of forms is available to the public.
- Parks Canada engages stakeholders and partners, encouraging them to "learn by doing."
- Visitors learn about boreal ecosystems, the region's human history, and the challenges and issues associated with protecting ecological integrity and cultural resources.

> Come forth into the light of things. Let nature be your teacher.
> - William Wordsworth

2 Prince Albert National Park – A World View

2.1 A Global Network

Prince Albert National Park is part of a global network that includes more than 107,000 protected heritage areas covering approximately 170 million km^2 or 11.6% of the earth's surface (World Database on Protected Areas). The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines a protected area as "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and/or cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means."

2.2 Heritage Tourism

As the largest heritage conservation organization in the country, Parks Canada anchors Canada's international reputation for heritage tourism.

The World Tourism Organization defines heritage tourism as "an immersion in the natural history, human heritage, arts, philosophy and institutions of a region or country." In national parks, this definition is expanded to include stewardship.

> "First hand memorable visitor experiences are now at the core of travellers' desires."
>
> R. Klancnik

A primary destination for visitors to Saskatchewan, Prince Albert National Park plays a vital role in the province's tourism industry. Tourists come to see the park's abundant wildlife, the resort village of Waskesiu, the many lakes and pristine beaches, and to enjoy recreational opportunities such as camping and the extensive network of multi-use trails, including the trail to Grey Owl's cabin.

Archie 'Grey Owl" Belaney's Cabin © Parks Canada Collection

Parks Canada works with its tourism partners to support memorable visitor experiences that respect the natural environment and provide opportunities to learn. Visitors are encouraged to become stewards of the heritage that draws them here.

2.3 Wildlife

Many wildlife species spend their entire lives in Canada's boreal forests. The migratory nature of others takes them across international borders and, in the case of some birds, well into the southern hemisphere. The existence in the park of species whose global range has become very limited is internationally significant.

Migratory birds – especially neo-tropical migrants – and plains bison are two prime examples of the park's global importance to wildlife conservation.

More than 300 bird species breed in the boreal region of North America. For many of those species, more than half their global population convenes here during nesting season. Of the approximately 232 species of birds that use Prince Albert National Park, 197 are migratory (Parks Canada, 2002). Fifty-nine species winter in the park or pass through in spring on their way to breeding grounds farther north. At least 173 species breed in the park. The park is the largest tract of protected southern boreal mixed wood forest in western Canada, an area essential to the conservation of neo-tropical and short-distance migrant songbirds as well as resident species.

Prince Albert National Park lies on the western edge of the Mississippi Flyway and within the Central Flyway for migratory birds. Boreal species rely on both routes to reach their winter habitat in North, Central, and South America.

The Sturgeon River plains bison herd roams over some 700 km2, a range that includes the southwestern corner of Prince Albert National Park. This is the only disease-free, unfenced plains bison population in their historic range in Canada and one of only two in the world (Canadian Food Inspection Agency). This population, estimated in 2006 at 400 adults and yearlings, is also unique in that it lives in an intact ecosystem with all the original ungulates and their predators.

Plains Bison – Joe Benge - Photographer

The northern half of the park is outstanding for its oligotrophic lakes and clear streams (Abell et al. 2000). Kingsmere and Wassegam lakes, and the Kingsmere and MacLennan rivers are examples of these exceptional ecosystems. Both Kingsmere Lake and Wassegam Lake support productive lake trout populations at the southern extent of the species' range. Wassegam Lake contains two species of large invertebrates -- opossum shrimp (Mysis relicta) and scuds (Pontoporeia affinis) -- relicts of the Ice Age found nowhere else in the region.

2.4 Climate Change

Plant and animal communities evolve and change only gradually. As climate zones shift, the health of the park's ecosystems will depend on the ability of plants and animals to move freely across the landscape so species able to cope with changing conditions replace those that can no longer survive in the park. Global warming may already have affected the park's woodland caribou and lake trout, which are at the southernmost extent of their range.

Prince Albert National Park's boreal ecosystems have evolved considerably over several thousand years in response to large-scale variations in climate, making it a good area for climate studies and monitoring. Its vegetation, wetlands, and wildlife will likely respond sooner to climate change than the more northerly forested regions.

Research in the park has already contributed to studies, such as the Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment (GEWEX), and helped refine models to predict climate change. Park staff continue to work with Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada in the Boreal Ecosystem Research and Monitoring Sites (BERMS) to study how climate change affects the boreal forest.

Researchers predict the boreal forest, aspen parkland, and grasslands will shift north as the climate warms (Climate Change Website). Aspen parkland may replace much of the boreal forest and parkland will become grasslands. In northern areas, the limitations of thin, poor soil may offset the benefits of a warmer climate to plant growth. This could affect forest health, increasing the likelihood of insect outbreaks and forest fires.

Climate change in Canada's interior may mean an increase in extreme weather - severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, hailstorms, heat waves, warmer winters, more intense winter storms, and more rain. In summer, prolonged droughts or flooding due to heavy rains will become more common (Climate Change Website).

These changes will require a flexible management approach, particularly in maintaining connections that enable plants and animals to disperse in response to changing conditions.

3 Prince Albert National Park - A Canadian Perspective

Parks Canada is responsible to Canadians for administering national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas. Together, these national treasures protect representative elements of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. First created with the establishment of Banff more than 100 years ago, the goal of the national park system is to represent each of Canada's 39 natural regions.

Established in 1928, the purpose of Prince Albert National Park of Canada is to:

"Encourage public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the park's natural ecosystems and cultural heritage so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations"

and

"Protect for all time the ecological integrity of a Natural Area of Canadian Significance representative of the Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux."

Many Saskatchewan residents define Parks Canada and the national park concept through their association with Prince Albert National Park.

3.1 Regional Setting

At the heart of the Province of Saskatchewan, Prince Albert National Park's 3,875 km^2 represent Canada's **Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux natural region,** which extends from south-western Manitoba to north-eastern British Columbia. The park's southwest corner is in the **boreal transition eco-region,** while the remainder of the park is considered **mid-boreal upland** (Acton et al. 1998).

The community of Waskesiu, with its combination of culture, history, and recreational activities, is both a resort destination and a staging area for most of the national park's services and activities.

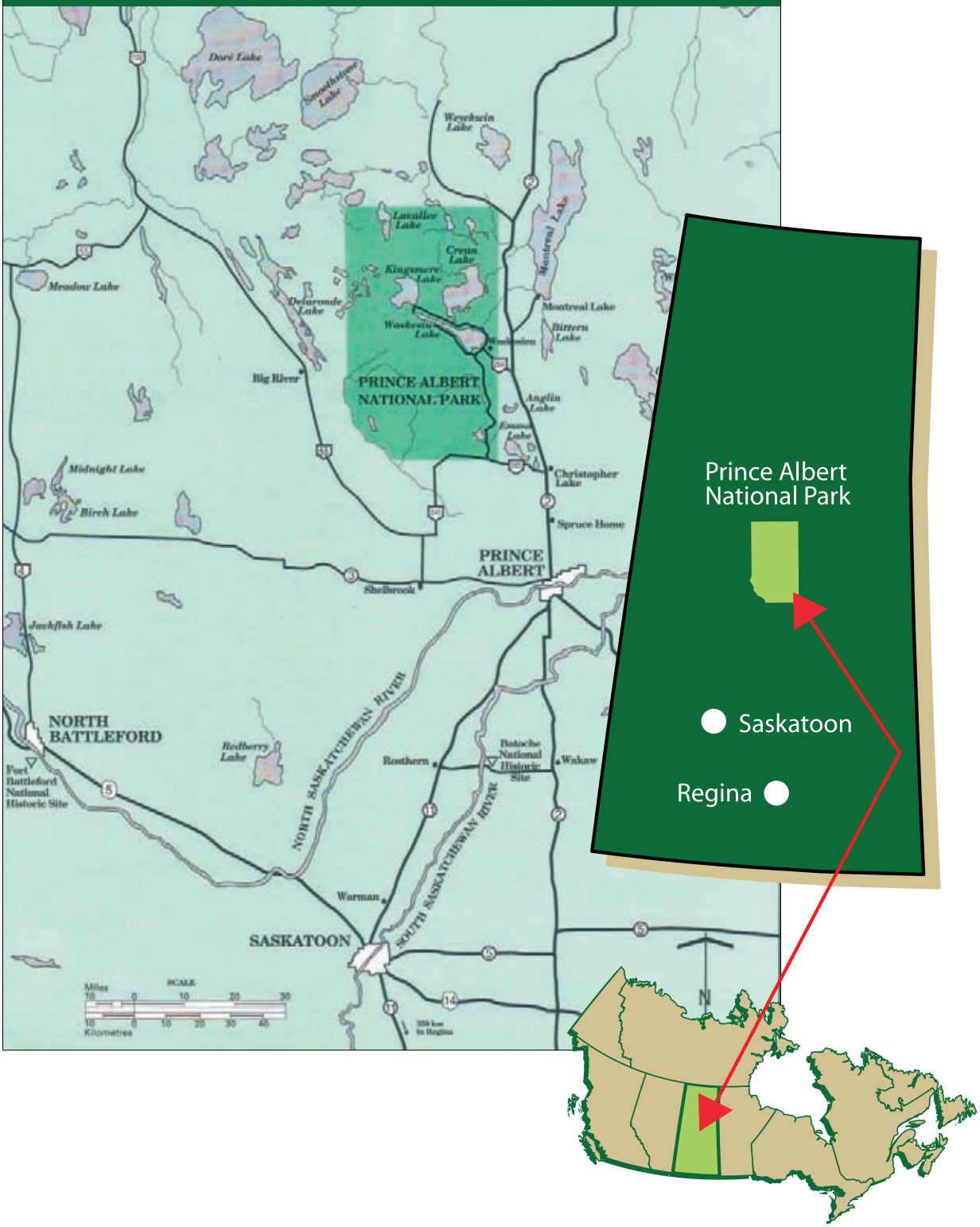
A number of small communities, resort villages, First Nation reserves, Métis communities, private agricultural lands, provincial forest and grazing lands, and forest harvesting leases, as well as provincial parks and recreation areas surround the park.

3.2 Nature

Trembling aspen, white spruce, jack pine, balsam poplar, black spruce, and tamarack dominate the park's mixed wood forests. Small pockets of fescue grassland in the southern, drier areas of the park are particularly important, as most of Canada's fescue grasslands were converted to cropland during the last century.

Water covers about ten per cent of the park, with more than fifteen hundred lakes

Prince Albert National Park – Regional Setting



in seven watersheds. With the exception of the MacLennan, all watersheds originate in the park, flowing out to end eventually in the Arctic Ocean via the Churchill or North Saskatchewan rivers. Most of the park's aquatic ecosystems enjoy good water quality, biological diversity, and intact ecological processes.

In the early years of the park, dams were built on the Crean, Kingsmere, Waskesiu, and Spruce rivers to maintain water levels in lakes for recreational activities. A dam and diversion on the Beartrap Creek allowed for the transportation of logs. In recent years Beartrap Creek and the Kingsmere and Waskesiu rivers have been restored to a more natural state. Dams at Crean and Anglin lakes continue to modify flow and restrict the movement of aquatic species.

Prince Albert National Park plays a role in the conservation of several species that are significant at the local, regional, and national level.

- Healthy populations of lake trout, in decline in many areas of Canada, persist in Kingsmere and Wassegam lakes, two of four park lakes believed to have originally supported this species.
- Several small local herds of woodland caribou - a threatened species under Canada's Species at Risk Act, based on recommendations from The Committee on the Status of Endangered of Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) - once ranged in parts of northern Prince Albert National Park. Research indicates this species may no longer be found in the park.
- An expanding herd of plains bison, originally released by the Province of Saskatchewan in the Thunder Hills area, ranges through the south-western section of the park.
- An American white pelican nesting colony on Lavallée Lake is one of the largest in Canada and the only one fully protected in a national park.
- Rare fescue grasslands contain several significant plant species.

3.3 History

Aboriginal Use

Although there are no confirmed archeological sites from the period, the Paleo-Indians are believed to have moved into the park area when the last of the glaciers retreated some 11,000 years ago.

According to oral history, the Rocky or Woods Cree used the area's waterways as travel routes for many decades before settling near Prince Albert National Park during the mid-19th century. The Cree moved seasonally; they fished, hunted, and gathered food communally throughout the summer and broke into small hunting parties in the fall and winter (Waiser, 1989).

Lavallee Family © Parks Canada Collection – PANP-NA-4868-173

Resource Exploitation

Exploitation of the region's resources began in the 19th century with the westward expansion of the fur trade. By 1880, a trading post was

> "By canoe. That's the only way they traveled in those days, by canoe and dogs. They couldn't use dogs in the summer; they had to use canoe. They were not bought canoes. They made them, birch bark canoes. I remember seeing, making many of them."
>
> - Mr. Halkett, elder of the Halkett family – Halkett (Sandy) Lake

established on the north shore of Waskesiu Lake at the Narrows. The main supply route passed through the area that is now Prince Albert National Park and other posts soon followed.

Timber harvesting coincided with the early growth of the city of Prince Albert in the 1860s. Exploitation of the region's forests slowed after fires in 1913 destroyed much of the merchantable timber in the Prince Albert Lumber Company's operating area. A large fire in 1919 swept west from Big River and burned the majority of timber berths held by the Prince Albert Lumber Company, including the Sturgeon River forest reserve (the southern half of present day PANP). The Prince Albert Lumber Company moved to Manitoba in 1920. Subsequent timber harvesting in the Sturgeon River forest reserve and Prince Albert National Park was limited to small operations supplying locals with timber and wood salvaged from burned areas.

By 1893 commercial fishing was well established. More than 150,000 kg of fish were caught in Montreal, Waskesiu, Crean, Kingsmere and Lavallée lakes in 1898 (Waiser, 1989). Between 1921 and 1926, commercial operators hauled almost one million kilograms of fish from Red Deer (Waskesiu), Big Trout (Crean), and Little Trout (Kingsmere) lakes to Big River (Waiser, 1989). Commercial fishing, except for a local market fishery for whitefish in Waskesiu Lake, ended when the park was established.

Creating a National Park

The Government of Canada identified land for Prince Albert National Park in March 1927 and the park officially opened on August 19, 1928. The creation of the park displaced several Woodland Cree and Métis families who lived near some of the larger lakes (Waskesiu, Kingsmere, Sandy (Halkett) and Lavallée).

With a view to attracting visitors, building facilities became an immediate priority in the new national park. A cottage development, established in 1924 on Waskesiu Lake, predated the national park. During the 1930's, relief workers put up buildings, built roads, and modified waterways to improve access for recreational fishing. In 1935 the new national park added a golf course to its growing list of amenities. Canadian architect Stanley Thompson designed many famous national park golf courses, including the Lobstick Golf Course at Waskesiu.

English-born naturalist Archie 'Grey Owl' Belaney and his Mohawk spouse Anahareo lived in the park during the 1930's. Grey Owl, who worked for the Dominion Park Service promoting conservation of fur-bearing animals, gained international stature through his writings and public speaking. He is buried near his cabin on Ajawaan Lake.

The twentieth century saw continued growth in the number of park visitors and of the facilities to serve them. Many assets built during the 1970's – roads, trails, interpretive signs, campgrounds, boat launches, and day-use areas – have aged to the point where the cost of maintenance exceeds available funding. Changing visitor interests and technology have also made some of the park's earlier infrastructure out-dated

Saskatchewan's Playground – Waskesiu Beach circa 1935 – Photo courtesy Sheila Brayford

3.4 Current Situation

Prince Albert National Park is in good ecological health and capable of supporting the flora, fauna, and ecological processes native to the region, with some exceptions. (See Appendix A)

3.4.1 Ecosystem Health

The park has an array of predators and prey species. Monitoring indicates that populations of bison, cormorants, white pelicans, ovenbirds, and other species are stable or increasing. Terrestrial ecosystems, healthy and natural for the most part, show some signs of decline due primarily to changes in the natural process of forest renewal. For species that depend on fire, the drop in frequency of fires to less than 20% of historical values means a loss of diversity and vulnerable forests. A spruce budworm outbreak in the early 21st century serves as a reminder of the risks associated with aging forests and a changing climate. Although the spruce budworm is native to the region, the extent and severity of the outbreak was unusual.

The park's plains rough fescue grasslands are small, highly fragmented, and at risk of being overgrown by aspen forest. In Canada, agriculture has reduced this type of grassland to approximately six per cent of its historic range. Active management of the park's forests and grasslands, particularly through the use of fire, is underway to restore and maintain the health of these ecosystems. On a smaller scale, there is a continuing need for programs to eliminate or control invasive non-native plants (e.g., caragana and smooth brome) that have the potential to spread, changing natural ecosystems.

The overall health of aquatic ecosystems is good. The northern pike population in Waskesiu Lake has rebounded from overfishing prior to1950. Crean Lake's lake trout population remains a concern. Recent research shows the number of mature lake trout is in the high hundreds or low thousands, a fraction of their numbers in the 1920's when Crean Lake supported an annual commercial yield of 13,000 kg. Lake trout are

Monitoring Fish Populations © Parks Canada – Sheila Gibbons - photographer

protected from sport fishing at Crean Lake, but very little reproductive habitat is available for the spawning population; eggs and young experience high mortality.

Changes outside the park as a result of activities such as forestry and road construction may affect the park. Research suggests woodland caribou populations are becoming fragmented, less mobile, and subject to high mortality. There is no recent evidence that woodland caribou range into the park as they did before the mid-1980's.

Human activity, which is mainly concentrated in Waskesiu and around Waskesiu Lake, can influence the health of an ecosystem for better or worse. There is no evidence human use in the park has a negative impact on ecological integrity. On the other hand, participation in stewardship activities is increasing. For example, since 2003, seasonal residents have celebrated Arbour Day by planting native trees and shrubs in Waskesiu; the number of residents and the number of trees increases each year.

Measures to reduce the risk to water quality in Waskesiu Lake include a tertiary sewage treatment plant and a storm water management system. Although nitrogen and phosphorus levels show signs of increase in lake sediments, it does not indicate a decrease in water quality as sediment rates have also increased. This trend is also evident in other park lakes not affected by wastewater.

3.4.2 Education and Learning

Visitors learn about the park in a variety of ways and locations. Information is available at the Visitor Centre and the Nature Centre. Special events, heritage programs for visitors and school groups, and contact with key stakeholders offer opportunities to learn about the park through personal contact. People also have access to information through the media, websites, outreach programs, and marketing initiatives.

Prince Albert National Park works with partners, such as the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site Committee, Friends of Prince Albert National Park, and the Waskesiu Heritage Museum, to provide a wide range of educational opportunities for people of all ages, primarily during the summer. Aging educational materials and infrastructure (e.g., trail signs and exhibits) are gradually being repaired, updated, or replaced.

Chapter 5.1 includes details about park messages and audiences.

Communications Programs © Parks Canada – Kalya Brunner - photographer

3.4.3 Visitor Experience

More than 220,000 visitors, mainly Saskatchewan residents who have visited and enjoyed the area for several generations, return to the park's forests and lakes every year. Of this number, approximately 25,000 stay in campgrounds ranging from rustic, backcountry sites to full-service sites in Waskesiu. Most visitors come during spring and summer, however marketing initiatives are in place to increase their numbers during autumn and winter.

Unique, memorable experiences abound. These include countless opportunities to see wildlife and experience nature along hiking trails and canoe routes, as well as guided tours of Heart Lake, interpretive walks and programs, a local heritage musuem, and events such as the annual Narrows Canoe Challenge, pow wows, and the West Side Residents' Day.

Surveys indicate visitors are very satisfied with park services and facilities.

Appendix E contains detailed information about the number, type, and origin of visitors to Prince Albert National Park.

3.4.4 Park Assets and Infrastructure

In 2006, Prince Albert National Park had $139.0 million invested in contemporary built assets, $3.5 million in heritage assets, and $2.9 million in equipment, much of it old or outdated. Redesigning or relocating assets such as trails would reduce maintenance costs and improve the quality of the visitor experience.

Industry standards call for a minimum investment of two per cent of an asset's value to maintenance and re-capitalization annually. The park budget is not sufficient to meet this standard.

Appendix F provides details about the condition of the park's assets in 2006.

4 Working Together for Future Generations

Canada's national parks exist for all Canadians. Although Parks Canada has been entrusted with the day-to-day operation of these special places, caring for them now and preserving them for the future is the responsibility and privilege of all Canadians.

Parks Canada is committed to sharing leadership, engaging Aboriginal communities, and facilitating active stewardship. Canadians will be invited to participate in every aspect of the implementation of this management plan.

Despite our love of wide-open spaces, Canada is now one of the most urbanized countries in the world. The population of visible minorities has quadrupled in just two decades. Implementation of the plan will reflect how Canada and Canadians are changing. Prince Albert National Park will reach out to new Canadians, inviting them to discover the park and share in celebrating and protecting its heritage values.

4.1 Values

The following values will guide Canadians as we work together for the benefit of Prince Albert National Park:

- **Commitment -** to an integrated approach to fulfilling Parks Canada's mandate
- **Restraint -** self-discipline today, for the sake of future generations
- **Openness -** inclusive and prudent decision making
- **Competence -** commitment and accountability by all who share in the national park enterprise
- **Predictability -** consistency and fairness
- **Respect -** for the interests and perspectives of all people

4.2 Beyond Consultation

Parks Canada's goal is to move beyond consultation and to actively involve Canadians as full partners - crafting a shared vision for the future, participating in management of national parks and national historic sites, and establishing new national heritage areas.

Intended Future

Prince Albert National Park continues the kind of broad-based engagement that produced this park management plan – in annual performance review and priority-setting workshops; in monitoring performance indicators and evaluating the findings; and in identifying issues and opportunities for future management plan reviews.

Public Consultation © Parks Canada –
Cliff Kaleski - photographer

Building on strong relationships with existing stakeholders, Parks Canada reaches out to ensure decisions and actions represent and are relevant to all Canadians. Staff form broad-based partnerships that bring representatives from the widest range of interests to the table.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Many people recognize the management planning process can serve as a model for an on-going advisory committee that works directly with the park management team on key planning and evaluation initiatives, such as the annual business plan.
- Some people feel the annual planning forum is one-sided, with information flowing from Parks Canada to the interested public in Waskesiu. The forum needs to become more interactive and inclusive, reaching beyond the community.
- Some stakeholder groups feel Parks Canada does not respond to their interests. Others believe certain groups have privileged access and are able to influence management decisions. An important challenge will be to continue bringing the full range of interests together.
- Existing regional partnerships include the Prince Albert Model Forest, Prince Albert National Park Science Liaison Committee, Paspiwin Cultural Site Committee, Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards, and the Tourism Destination Group.

Opportunities may exist to extend this approach to groups such as Saskatchewan Environment (provincial parks) and neighbouring rural municipalities.

Priorities for Action

1. Establish an advisory board to share the leadership in implementing this management plan. With representatives from regional and national stakeholder groups, Aboriginal groups, the scientific community, and Parks Canada, the board will represent a broad range of expertise and viewpoints.

   Role of the Advisory Board

   - Plan and host an annual public forum to review implementation of the park management plan, including accountabilities and priorities.
   - Advise on priorities for the annual business plan related to cultural resource management, ecological integrity, quality visitor experience, and opportunities for learning.
   - Review and provide strategic advice on updates to major operational plans (e.g., marketing, trails).

2. Expand the scope of the Science Liaison Committee to include advice and analysis on social, recreational, and cultural sciences in addition to the natural sciences.
3. With partners, continue the timely distribution of electronic and printed newsletters and updates.
4. Create databases for consultation; use the databases to seek advice and promote collaboration.
5. Showcase ongoing research from the park.
6. Ensure park managers have access to scientific advice and Traditional Knowledge.

4.3 Aboriginal Peoples

The oldest of the park's 350 known archaeological sites dates back at least 7,500 years, a testament to the long history of cultural involvement with the park area by various Aboriginal groups.

Through much of the park's history, communication between the park and Aboriginal groups was limited, inconsistent, and generally confined to specific issues. The past decade has seen significant progress on all sides to strengthen links through consultation on management decisions and collaboration on cultural and interpretive activities. More than a quarter of the national park workforce is of Aboriginal descent.

Traditional Knowledge, gained through time spent living on the land, encompasses all aspects of the environment – biophysical, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual. Humans are seen as part of the environment, not as observers or controllers. Part of the collective memory of a community, Traditional Knowledge is oral, passed on through songs and stories, as well as through actions and observation. Parks Canada recognizes the important role of Traditional Knowledge in decision-making and that the national park should play a key role in helping Aboriginal communities to maintain and share this knowledge.

Intended Future

An on-going dialogue between park managers and Aboriginal leaders ensures matters of interest are identified early, discussed fully, and resolved in a respectful, progressive manner. Working relationships at many levels mean decisions arising from this dialogue are implemented effectively, in ways viewed as successes by all sides.

One of Canada's first generation of national parks, Prince Albert has overcome the challenges of its origins to work effectively with Aboriginal peoples.

Parks Canada and Aboriginal communities strengthen their working relationship through on-going consultation, economic opportunities, interpretation, cultural activities, and the protection of both the ecological integrity and cultural resources in the greater ecosystem.

Parks visitors learn about the culture and history of Aboriginal communities in a variety of ways. By telling their own stories, Aboriginal people help visitors understand all aspects of Canada's history.

Parks Canada works in a respectful manner with descendants of families who were displaced by the park.

Challenges and Opportunities

- While the aboriginal community is rooted and long-term, staff turnover, especially at the management level, in Parks Canada and other agencies makes it difficult to maintain long-term relationships that are key to effective engagement.
- In the 1920's and 1930's, Aboriginal residents were obliged to leave their homes to make way for the national park. Some families and communities continue to feel excluded.
- The history of Aboriginal use of the area is not effectively told, and some original Aboriginal place names have been changed.
- More research is needed to verify and document the pre-history and history of Aboriginal peoples residing in the park. Many burial sites, remnants of dwellings, and ceremonial and traditional sites have not been identified or documented.
- Parks Canada and other heritage agencies have cultural artifacts in their collections that local Aboriginal communities would like returned to them.
- Incorporating Traditional Knowledge into scientific research on ecological integrity is limited by the lack of capacity among

both Aboriginal peoples and scientists and by fundamental differences in the two systems of knowledge.

Priorities for Action

1. Maintain a management-level position responsible for liaising with Aboriginal communities.
2. Cultivate on-going working relationships and encourage participation of Aboriginal communities in park management through the use of 'Memoranda of Agreement.'
3. Continue to support and participate in initiatives such as the Aboriginal Leadership Development Program to ensure Aboriginal employees have opportunities to advance to supervisory or management positions.
4. Explore ways for local Aboriginal communities, Parks Canada, and other partners to collaborate effectively on initiatives of common interest, including heritage presentation, tourism, and repatriation of artifacts.
5. Provide opportunities for park managers, staff, and key stakeholders, to learn about First Nation and Métis culture, traditions, and heritage firsthand.
6. With Aboriginal groups, research Aboriginal sites, history, and cultural activities in the park. Use this research to prepare interpretive materials, curriculum-based educational materials, guided/self guided walks, outreach programs, readings at outdoor theatres, and Nature Centre displays.
7. Protect and maintain Aboriginal archaeological sites, burial locations, and other culturally significant areas.
8. With descendants of displaced families, ensure places associated with their stories are identified and presented to park visitors.
9. Support traditional cultural activities in the park in keeping with Parks Canada's regulations and policy.

4.4 Collaborative Stewardship

Collaborative stewardship is people working together, sharing knowledge and resources, to advance the national park mandate or sustain ecological systems and communities.

Key Characteristics of Collaborative Stewardship

Inclusiveness: knowledgeable people are involved in decisions about issues or opportunities that affect them.

New Focus: Instead of people lobbying government and government responding, both work together to address shared interests such as better recreational opportunities, ecological restoration, public education, or heritage commemoration.

Common Goals: Collaborative stewardship develops and nurtures long-term relationships built on people working together for common goals.

Intended Future

Everyone who shares an interest in the park, not just park staff, collaborates to fulfill Parks Canada's mandate.

People working together on all aspects of the park program strengthen and enrich relationships.

Arbour Day in Waskesiu © Parks Canada – Waskesiu Community Council – Jeanine D'Antonio – photographer

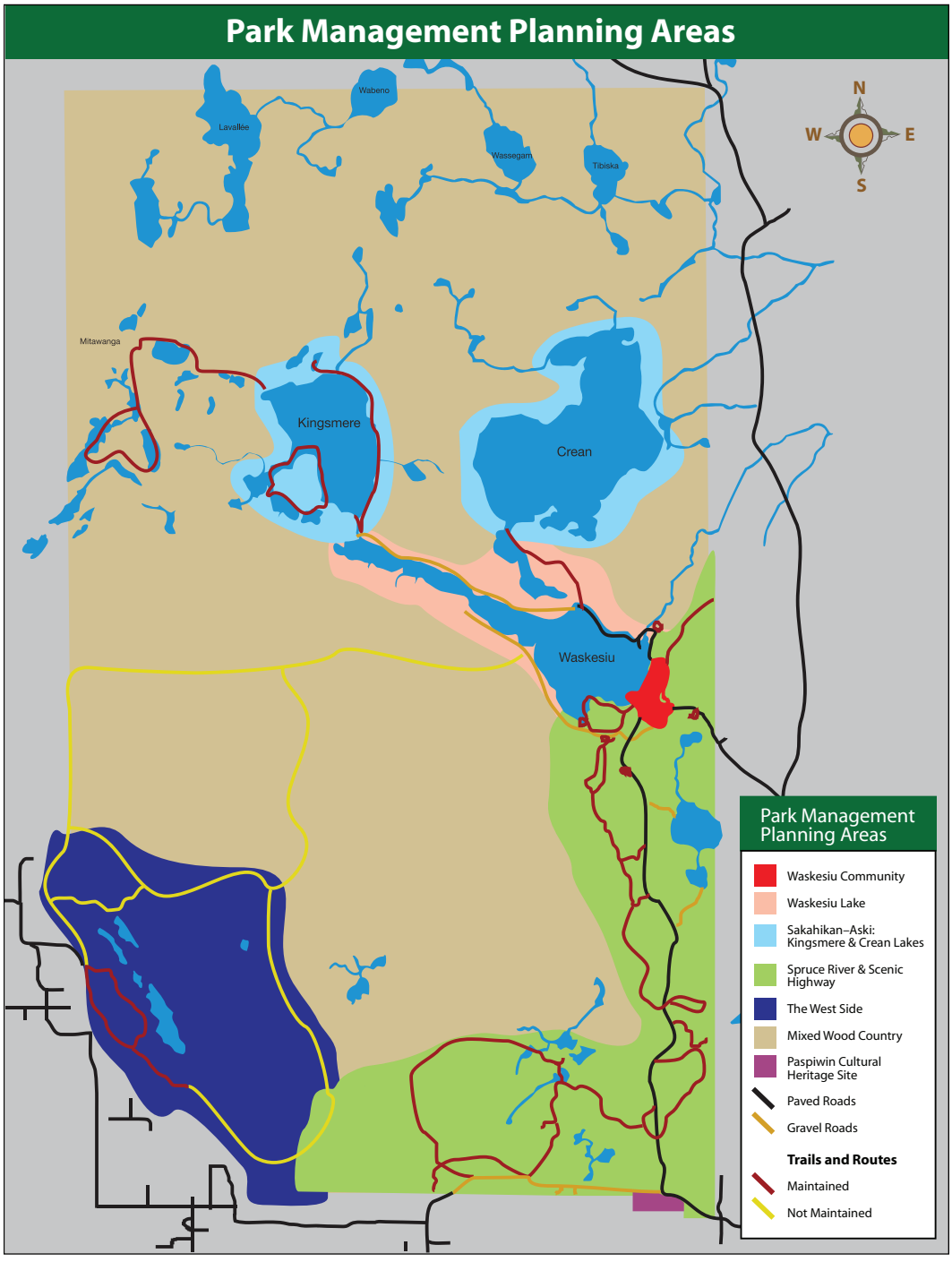
Challenges and Opportunities

- A growing number of retirees and families in Waskesiu and the surrounding area are interested in more tangible and meaningful experiences.
- Successful programs such as the annual Arbour Day events can serve as models for collaborative projects.
- The participation of volunteers in operational programs is potentially sensitive. Some may see this as transferring Parks Canada's responsibilities to others, while others may feel volunteers are replacing staff.
- The collaborative approach used by the Waskesiu Lake Community Council to set up their website (www.waskesiu.org) demonstrated the potential of this means of communication.
- Partnerships with the province and regional business operators to promote tourism have increased the park's profile. Similar opportunities exist at a regional scale.
- Fewer than 20% of park visitors come from outside Saskatchewan, leaving considerable scope for reaching out to Canadians from various backgrounds who do not currently visit the park.

Priorities for Action

1. Make collaborative stewardship initiatives a primary responsibility of park managers.
2. Determine appropriate levels of service and core programs; identify resources available to fund them.
3. Identify opportunities for enhancing service and programs through collaborative stewardship, and assign staff to facilitate the involvement of others.
4. Ensure business planning places a priority on projects that engage the community, youth, and volunteers in working directly with park staff.
5. Develop or update shared stewardship agreements with stakeholders, user groups, and other non-governmental organizations for projects such as:
   - o installation and maintenance of park benches
   - o maintenance and management of specific trails
   - o restoration and maintenance of heritage buildings
   - o educational programs
   - o heritage commemoration
   - o cultural programs
   - o Kingsmere Lake use and protection
6. Collaborate with the province, universities, rural municipalities, and stakeholder groups to address regional wildlife and vegetation issues. For example:
   - o minimizing the risk of wildlife disease
   - o wildlife management for shared populations
   - o forest health in the regional ecosystem
7. Engage interested stakeholders in collecting field data to support monitoring and resource studies.
8. Continue to work with stakeholders to implement a regional tourism strategy that links the national park with other area destinations and services.
9. Investigate stewardship opportunities with park agencies in Canada and around the world (e.g., Parks Victoria's International and Tertiary Volunteer Program in Australia).

5 Management Priorities



Consultation with the public and stakeholders identified actions to achieve the vision for Prince Albert National Park. Starting with the park as a whole, followed by individual areas, this section describes an *Intended Future* – a vision of the area as visitors will see it once the plan is implemented. An annual business plan will describe how each of these priority actions will make the *Intended Future* a reality.

5.1 The Park

Intended Future

Prince Albert National Park - where the north begins and the settled south is left behind.

> "Leave the city behind, drive like crazy, and get to the park as fast as possible. Get into Waskesiu. Take a big breath of fresh air instead of gas fumes. Hear birds singing instead of city traffic. It's quieter. It's green. The lake looks so blue and beautiful! This is wilderness. Slow down…. Relax."
>
> Kalya Brunner, Waskesiu

Approaching from the south, as most people do, visitors find themselves in a world of fescue grasslands and lakes set in seemingly endless forests of birch, aspen, spruce and pine. In low-lying areas, parkland potholes give way to sphagnum bogs and muskeg.

The magnitude of the vistas comes as a surprise to new visitors. Vast Saskatchewan skies frame views of the northern wilds. In summer, the call of loons and the sight of pelicans, waterfowl and other wildlife are the backdrop to most visitor experiences. Winter is a time of wolf tracks, stillness, and solitude.

At key points along park roads and in each of the park's small campgrounds, visitors find short interpretive loops, longer trails, and information about opportunities for day use.

Campgrounds are small, with well-spaced sites and basic facilities. The sounds of nature and human voices dominate and the sounds of engines and traffic are absent. Roofed picnic shelters protect campers from rain, with windows screened in summer to keep out insects and boarded in winter to keep out the cold. On summer evenings, the smell of campfires and the sight of nighthawks, combine with the sounds of grebes, loons and thrushes to create a sense that campers are immersed in nature.

Camping at Namekus Lake Campground ©Parks Canada

Visitors find…

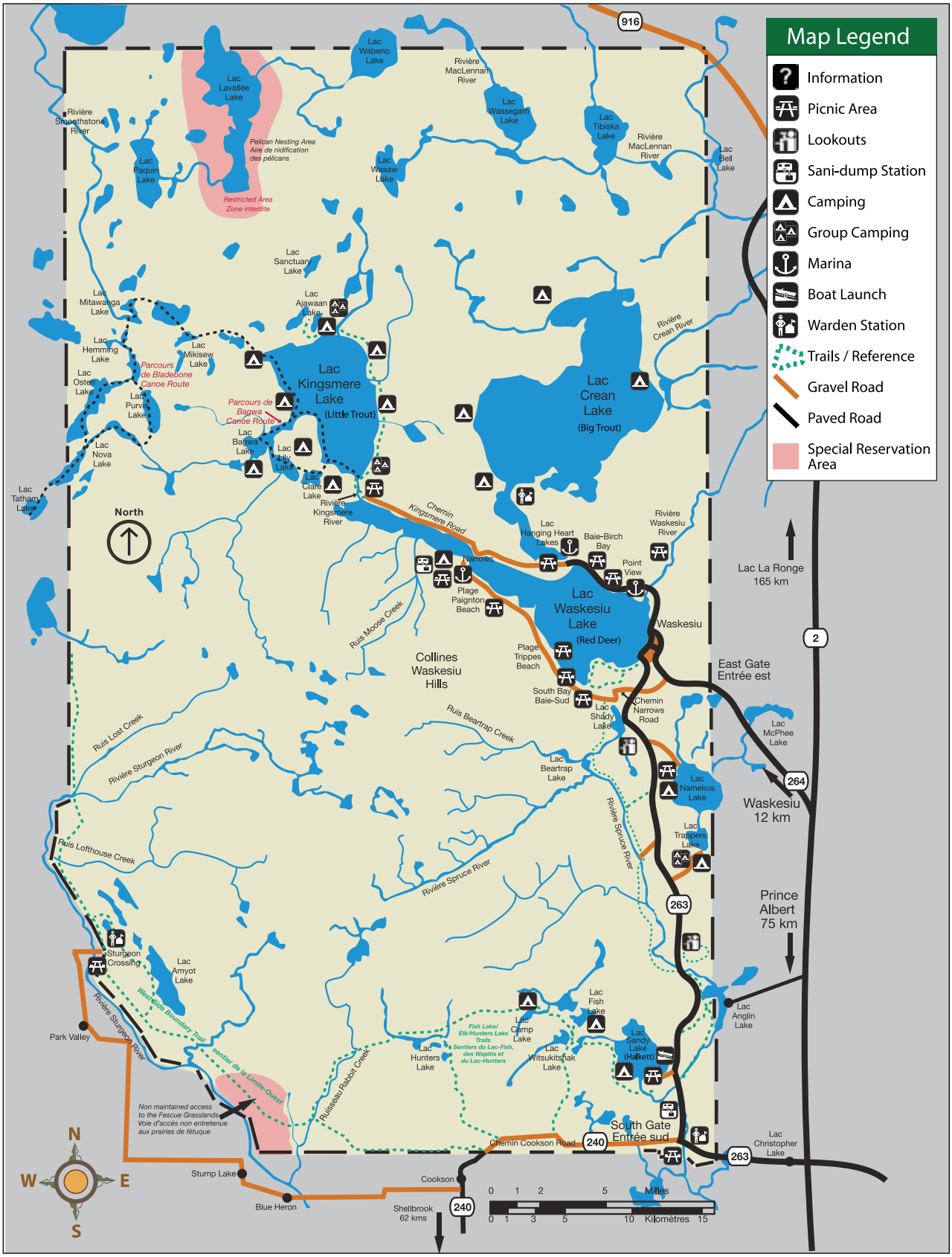
- Crisp clean air, northern lights, refreshing dips in clear lakes, clean safe sand beaches, and water access for fishing, cruising, and floating. In winter, cleared roads lead to groomed ski trails, where visitors might see otter and elk, and feel they have the entire north to themselves.
- Northern pike, walleye, and white suckers swimming upstream to reach spawning areas as the lake ice melts in early spring; bear and otter tracks along the nearby shore and bald eagles watching from spruce trees.
- Quality fishing, frequent sightings of white-tailed deer, foxes, and other northern wildlife; in spring, a constant variety of birdsongs competes with the chorus of frogs that rises from every wet hollow. Through the trees, the calls of sandhill cranes and other waterfowl are a constant reminder of hidden lakes and wetlands - of places yet unexplored.

> "The lakes seem to absorb boat traffic. Most weekends I can still feel like I have the lake to myself during the day and go into Waskesiu with all the amenities at night. It's like your own private lake – you hardly ever see anybody."
>
> Kalya Brunner, Waskesiu

- A sense of people in the northern landscape – of the Aboriginal people who lived in the park and continue to live in the area, of the trappers, freighters and loggers whose lives left fading marks on the land, and of modern visitors who share a common bond of discovery and stewardship.
- Opportunities for new discoveries - boating into large isolated lakes such as Kingsmere and Crean and seeing pelicans or caribou; hiking into the aspen wilderness of the Sturgeon River to see wild plains bison or dancing sandhill cranes; finding remains of old cabins; or sharing in the cultural activities of Dakota, Cree, and Métis people and learning of their relationship with this place.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Prince Albert National Park's wildlife population includes species designated as threatened - woodland caribou, peregrine falcon, plains bison – or of special concern northern leopard frog, monarch butterfly. Restoring or maintaining viable populations of these species, and others of regional significance such as the lake trout, is essential for the ecological integrity of the park.
- Removing dams or replacing them with structures that allow fish and other animals to travel between water bodies has restored some natural function while maintaining quality recreational opportunities.
- Shoreline erosion is a recurring problem on Waskesiu and Crean lakes when water levels are high.
- Hydrological changes resulting from climate shifts will require strategies to manage water and aquatic ecosystems effectively.
- Near the park, hunters use bait to attract black bears and white-tailed deer to feeding sites. This alters natural movement patterns and increases the risk that non-native plants used for bait will spread. Concentrating animals at feeding sites also increases the risk of spreading pathogens that cause chronic wasting disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, bovine tuberculosis, and brucellosis.
- Wild fires are a natural and recurring part of the ecology of boreal forests. In restoring the role of fire, Parks Canada must protect adjacent provincial forests, nearby communities and residences, and park facilities. While some feel thinning the forests around Waskesiu detracts from the natural environment, more thinning will likely be required in the near future to reduce the risk of fire to the community.
- Documentation of the history of Prince Albert National Park, especially relating to oral tradition and in-situ archaeological resources, is incomplete.
- Many recreational facilities and services date from an era when patterns of use and the needs of the public were quite different. Aging facilities do not always meet the changing needs of modern visitors and are expensive to maintain. The redesign and recapitalization of facilities such as boat launches, trails, and day use areas would reduce operating costs and improve quality.
- The condition of trails is inconsistent. Some staging areas do not offer short loops. Maintenance crews have used trucks and quads to gain access to remote sites. Flooding and unsafe bridges mean popular horse trails are frequently inaccessible.


Map Legend
Information
Picnic Area
Lookouts
Sani-dump Station
Camping
Group Camping
Marina
Boat Launch
Warden Station
Trails / Reference
Gravel Road
Paved Road
Special Reservation Area
916
Lac Wabeno Lake
Rivière MacLennan River
Lac Lavallée Lake
Rivière Smoothstone River
Lac Wassegam Lake
Lac Tibiska Lake
Rivière MacLennan River
Lac Bell Lake
Lac Paquin Lake
Pelican Nesting Area
Aire de nidification des pélicans
Restricted Area
Zone interdite
Lac Wasaw Lake
Lac Sanctuary Lake
Lac Mitawanga Lake
Lac Ajawaan Lake
Rivière Crean River
Lac Hemming Lake
Lac Mikisew Lake
Parcours de Bladebone Canoe Route
Lac Osten Lake
Lac Purvis Lake
Lac Kingsmere Lake
(Little Trout)
Parcours de Bagwa Canoe Route
Lac Crean Lake
(Big Trout)
Lac Nova Lake
Lac Bagwa Lake
Lac Lily Lake
Lac Tatham Lake
Lac Clare Lake
Rivière Kingsmere River
Chemin Kingsmere Road
North
Lac Hanging Heart Lakes
Baie-Birch Bay
Rivière Waskesiu River
Narrows
Point View
Plage Paignton Beach
Lac Waskesiu Lake
(Red Deer)
Waskesiu
Lac La Ronge
165 km
2
Ruis Moose Creek
Collines Waskesiu Hills
Plage Trippes Beach
South Bay Baie-Sud
East Gate
Entrée est
Lac Shady Lake
Chemin Narrows Road
Ruis Beartrap Creek
Ruis Lost Creek
Rivière Sturgeon River
Lac Beartrap Lake
Lac McPhee Lake
Lac Namekus Lake
264
Waskesiu
12 km
Lac Trappers Lake
Rivière Spruce River
Ruis Lofthouse Creek
Rivière Spruce River
263
Prince Albert
75 km
Sturgeon Crossing
Lac Amyot Lake
West Side Boundary Trail
sentier de la Limite Ouest
Rivière Sturgeon River
Park Valley
Lac Fish Lake
Lac Anglin Lake
Lac Camp Lake
Fish Lake/ Elk/Hunters Lake Trails
Sentiers du Lac-Fish, des Wapitis et du Lac-Hunters
Lac Hunters Lake
Lac Witsukitchak Lake
Lac Sandy Lake (Halkett)
Russeau Rabbit Creek
Non maintained access to the Fescue Grasslands
Voie d'accès non entretenue aux prairies de fétuque
South Gate
Entrée sud
Chemin Cookson Road
240
263
Lac Christopher Lake
N
W
E
S
Stump Lake
Blue Heron
Cookson
Shellbrook
62 kms
240
0 1 2 5 Miles
0 1 3 5 10 Kilomètres 15

- Many trails are under-used because of their location. Long, linear trails along old fire roads or freight trails fail to entice visitors with diverse settings, rewarding views, or the option of taking a shorter loop.
- Signs and exhibits tell fragments of bigger stories. A visitor to one or two sites leaves with a partial understanding rather than a coherent picture. Permanent interpretive media do not present some elements of the park's ecology and human history effectively.
- Youth, aboriginals, and new Canadians are under-represented among park audiences.

Educational Themes

Key Messages

- Prince Albert National Park is part of a national system of protected heritage places administered by Parks Canada on behalf of all Canadians.
- Prince Albert National Park is a place to experience, to learn, and to pass on to future generations.

> Many of the trail systems in this park are linear. I think there should be more loop trails.
>
> - Comment received several times during the scoping exercise

- At the edge of the great boreal forest, Prince Albert National Park represents the southern boreal plains and plateaux natural region. Key elements of this region include:
  - o biodiversity
  - o forest, grassland, and wetland ecosystems
  - o natural processes
  - o hydrological cycles
- Fire, water, the seasons, diverse plant and animal communities, and human activity shape boreal ecosystems. People are better able to protect ecological integrity when they have a sound understanding of how these ecosystems function.
- Home to Aboriginal people for centuries, the way people use the watershed between the Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers has evolved since the establishment of the park.
- Parks Canada and a variety of partners work together to protect and present this special place for the enjoyment and appreciation of visitors.

Audiences

Park Visitors

Approximately four per cent of park visitors stop at the Information Centre each year to find out about the park, camping, and recreational activities. The Centre is often the first stop for visitors to the townsite or for people headed to more remote locations.

An estimated 15% of visitors attend programs presented by park interpreters. In spring and fall, school groups participate in guided hikes. Summer events include evening programs, children's activities, roving interpreters, and special events such as the Nature Centre Spring Opening and Parks Day. The park and community organizations offer special events on Aboriginal Day, Canada Day, the Children's Festival, and Heritage Day. Each spring, the park invites the staff of local businesses to attend orientation sessions. The Nature Centre is a hub of activity, attracting visitors to its programs, exhibits and videos, some of which are now dated.

Some 20% of park visitors explore interpretive trails such as Boundary Bog, Treebeard, Mud Creek, Waskesiu River, and Spruce River Highlands on their own. Signs and brochures present information about the area and use of the trails continues to increase.

Aboriginal Canadians

Many residents of nearby Aboriginal communities have strong roots in the park. The park provides free entry passes to members of these communities and participates in events such as mid-summer pow wows in Waskesiu.

With the help of the Prince Albert Model Forest and Aboriginal organizations, Parks Canada has begun work on the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site, to expand programs delivered by and for Aboriginal audiences.

Seasonal Residents

Most seasonal residents live in Saskatchewan or Alberta, returning each year to cottages in Waskesiu. Seasonal residents receive information packages in the spring and fall that describe events, activities, and community organizations. They also receive updates throughout the year and have access to the local advisory council's website. Residents can discuss their ideas with park staff and are invited to open houses and meetings on various topics.

Stakeholders

Park staff meet regularly with stakeholders to discuss topics of interest, encourage support for Parks Canada's mandate, and talk about regional land-use. Examples include West Side Residents Day, the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site initiative, and the Prince Albert Tourism Destination partnership

Canadian Public and Non-Visitors

The park receives regular media coverage in newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

The public has access to detailed information about Prince Albert National Park on Parks Canada's website (www.pc.gc.ca) and on a website operated by the Waskesiu Community Council (www.waskesiu.org).

Priorities for Action

1. Work with partners to market Prince Albert National Park and the region, with particular emphasis on the following areas:
   - o visits in autumn, winter and spring
   - o key markets and target audiences
   - o the range of recreational and heritage attractions in the region
   - o linkages to other national parks and national historic sites
   - o youth programs and activities
2. Identify opportunities to develop or upgrade day-use nodes to a common standard (see specific geographical areas for details).
3. Prepare guidelines for use of the park on horseback. Guidelines should address quality recreational opportunities, public safety, user conflicts, and the spread of non-native plants in forage or droppings.
4. Ensure trail standards reflect the intended future condition.
5. Keep maintenance costs at an acceptable level by eliminating outdated or poorly designed facilities and designing low-maintenance renovations and new construction.
6. Prepare and implement timely recovery strategies for plant and animal species at risk.
7. Work with the province, forest companies, Aboriginal communities, and others on regional stewardship initiatives, including a recovery program for woodland caribou.
8. Collaborate with regional land managers and interested stakeholders on the stewardship of COSEWIC-listed species at risk such as plains bison.
9. Continue restoring river and lake ecosystems using an adaptive management approach; apply lessons learned in the restoration of other watersheds.

10. Work with the province and regional stakeholders to restore natural wildlife movement and minimize the risk of wildlife diseases and other ecological effects associated with activities such as baiting and feeding wildlife. Collaborate on research into disease prevention and management.

Day-use nodes will normally include:

- a graveled parking area
- outhouses
- orientation and interpretation
- a trailhead offering multiple options: short interpretive loops and year-round linked or looped day-use trails

11. Update the *Fire and Vegetation Management Plan.*
12. Place priority on reducing fuel for fires near developed areas and pre-treating areas for prescribed burns.
13. Restore the frequency of wild fires to 20% of their historic level.
14. Eliminate or reduce the extent of invasive, non-native plants likely to fundamentally change park ecosystems.
15. Interpret the ecology of the boreal forest and the human story of the region. While continuing to use personal programs and permanent exhibits to help visitors learn about and appreciate the park, incorporate new communications technologies when updating or replacing educational materials and infrastructure.
16. Work with Saskatchewan's education community to develop material on the ecological, historic, and cultural significance of the region that is linked to the provincial curriculum.
17. Update the park map showing both gazetted names and their original Aboriginal or well-established local names. Plot accurate locations of features and recreational opportunities.

5.2 Spruce River and the Scenic Highway

Intended Future

An intimate, paved road through aspen and mixed wood forests, highway 263 follows the Spruce River upstream from the southeast corner of the park north to Waskesiu. Motorists are treated to occasional views of small wetlands and lakes, and frequent sightings of healthy, free-ranging wildlife. Travel is safe at moderate speeds.

"Highway 263 is long, with some great views. It's narrow, so I feel as if I'm in the forest, not a wide highway."

Kalya Bruner, Waskesiu

This scenic highway provides access to many of the park's main destinations and staging areas. Visitors arriving from the south feel welcome and find information readily available at the park entrance. This allows them to begin their national park experience immediately rather than waiting to reach Waskesiu.

Off Highway 263, a number of smaller roads such as Cookson or Narrows, lead to nearby campgrounds. Visitors have a sense of venturing into the wild on a road that will end somewhere special. Winding, gravelled roads and narrow rights-of-way invite motorists to slow down and connect more intimately with the northern landscape. Passengers look not so much at the edge of the forest, as right into the woods.

Small day-use areas and quiet campgrounds at Sandy (Halkett), Trappers and Namekus lakes are located along the scenic highway and the Spruce River valley. Here visitors find information and take advantage of short interpretive loops or longer day-use trails.

Educational Themes

- Key elements of the area include:
  - o ***biodiversity:*** aspen forest; bison; fescue grassland ecology
  - o ***natural processes:*** fire in the boreal forest; herbivore-predator interactions
  - o ***human history:*** settlement and agriculture in the boreal fringe; park history
- Conservation challenges
  - o protecting park ecosystems and wildlife from disease and exotic organisms
  - o fire management
  - o restoration of fescue grasslands

Spruce River Highlands hillside ©Parks Canada – Fiona Moreland - photographer

Challenges and Opportunities

- Regulatory signs greet visitors arriving at the south entrance. There are no welcoming messages and information is only available from park staff in summer when the gate is staffed.
- Cookson Road connects Highway 263 with the West Side and provides access to some trailheads. Upgrades to this road, used mainly for local, non-park traffic, are incomplete.
- Trees screen the view from roadside pull-offs and viewing towers. Dense forests lack diversity, largely due to the lack of fire.

Priorities for Action

1. Install media at the park entrances on highways 263 and 264 to welcome visitors, provide information about opportunities, and share key messages.
2. Maintain the existing standard of Cookson Road as a year-round, low-maintenance link between Highway 263 and the West Side. Consider upgrading the road if a neighboring rural municipality proposes a viable funding partnership.
3. Develop and upgrade day-use nodes at the Paspiwin Cultural Site and Spruce River Highlands.
4. Explore the potential for day-use nodes at Sandy Lake and the Amiskawan Trailhead.
5. Using hand tools, thin forested areas near viewpoints or development to reduce the amount of fuel or restore views.

5.3 The West Side

Intended Future Condition

The West Side is a place of aspen forests, native wet sedge, and dry fescue grasslands -- the kind of deciduous parkland wilderness that once dominated the southern fringes of Canada's boreal forest. This is a place where one gets a sense of the spaces that once were home to plains bison, elk, sandhill cranes and fishers,

> "Once off the West Side Trail, they are roaming through grassy meadows and rolling hills along the Sturgeon River and overlooking the valley."
>
> "No crowding, no noise, no infrastructure but a huge connection to nature as they hike, bike or access the area on horseback. Minimal facilities add to the sense of wilderness."
>
> Cathy Corrigal, Mayview

and to the Aboriginal peoples whose cultures are founded on this rich ecosystem. The park's aspen wilderness still supports Canada's only healthy, free-ranging herd of plains bison in their original range.

Visitors arriving at the West Side feel welcome. Information about the park is readily available, without having to make the long round-trip to Waskesiu. The standard of day-use facilities and exhibits at Sturgeon Crossing are similar to those along the Spruce River. Visitors who want to explore the park's West Side and core areas can choose from a variety of trails in the Sturgeon River and Amyot Lake area.

For visitors interested in a wilderness experience, the West Side is untamed and undeveloped, offering opportunities for multi-day, overnight, and day trips. Visitors can hike, mountain bike, or ride horses along the Sturgeon River Valley or through rolling hills of aspen interspersed with sedge-meadows, fescue grasslands, and shallow lakes. Once away from the trailheads at Sturgeon River or Cookson Road, the only development consists of wide, well-defined trails, lightly used and unmarked by tire tracks or modern structures, signs at trail junctions, and simple wooden bridges.

The West Side ©Parks Canada

Educational Themes

- Key elements of the area include:
  - o ***biodiversity:*** aspen forest; bison; fescue grassland ecology
  - o ***natural processes:*** fire in the boreal forest; herbivore-predator interactions
  - o ***human history:*** settlement and agriculture in the boreal fringe; park history

- Conservation challenges
  - o collaborating with others to manage a free roaming bison population
  - o restoring and maintaining fescue grasslands
  - o protecting wildlife and ecosystems from disease and exotic organisms

Challenges and Opportunities

- Regulatory signs greet visitors arriving at the Sturgeon River Crossing entrance or at the west end of the Cookson Road. There are no welcoming messages or information. Staff presence is limited.
- Day-use facilities and interpretive media are minimal and of a lower standard than elsewhere in the park.
- Regional residents and visitors who enter the park from the west do not have access to reliable trails into the core areas of the park. The Lofthouse, Moose, and 57 trails are no longer maintained and have deteriorated significantly. The West Side Trail is maintained, but stream crossings and wet spots continue to be a challenge.
- Each year, park staff lead a motor vehicle tour of the West Side for visitors.
- Few park visitors are aware of the free-ranging bison herd, the unique aspen landscapes, and fescue grasslands.
- Forests are encroaching on fescue grasslands, likely as a result of fire prevention and the absence of bison during several decades of the twentieth century. Landscape diversity has declined due to lack of fire and the resulting spread and maturing of forests.
- The bison population continues to grow,

as do reports of damage to fences and crops on private property. Public support for a free-ranging herd will depend on the province, area residents, and Parks Canada collaborating to resolve conflicts.

- The park does not provide any information to visitors about camping and other services outside the national park on the West Side.

Priorities for Action

1. Install media at the Sturgeon Crossing entrance and at the west end of the Cookson road to welcome visitors, provide information about opportunities, and share key messages, particularly about fescue grassland and plains bison.
2. Locate staff at Sturgeon River Crossing Station year-round to provide information for visitors and to protect and monitor resources.
3. Develop or upgrade a day-use node in the Sturgeon Crossing area.
4. Build a new day-use trail (the Valley View Trail) along the northeast side of the Sturgeon River valley with links back to the West Side Trail.
5. Investigate opportunities for collaborating with Saskatchewan Environment at Nesslin Lake Provincial Park to provide visitor facilities, orientation, and education for people who might want to visit the national park.
6. Examine the possibility of using volunteers to restore and maintain trails no longer maintained by the park. These multi-use backcountry routes would not be open to vehicles and would connect the West Side with the park's core areas.
7. Continue to work with stakeholders on a regional strategy for the free-ranging plains bison herd that uses the West Side as part of its home range:
   - o Move human activity away from core bison ranges by locating, or relocating, trails to minimize the potential displacement of bison.
   - o Use fire to maintain habitat diversity in core bison ranges.
   - o Continue to allow bison to roam unfenced in the park.
8. Implement the Fescue Management Plan, including the repeated use of prescribed fire to restore and expand historic grassland areas in the Fescue Grasslands Environmentally Sensitive Area.
9. Retain the current Zone III designation for the section of the West Side Trail from Sturgeon River Crossing to Sturgeon Lookout; maintain this section of trail to a minimum standard that permits motorized access for special events such as the annual West Side Tour. The rest of the West Side Trail will be classified as Zone II.

5.4 Waskesiu Community

Long before the creation of Prince Albert National Park, Waskesiu was a gathering place. Now a focal point for visitors, the townsite is a mix of private and public interests and purposes. Balancing these interests in a national park depends on stakeholders working together to guide the community's function, design, and development, while keeping environmental

> "Waskesiu is the play land of the north. Waskesiu has been a well-kept secret from the rest of the world. But for Saskatchewanians it is a magical place. We took on the responsibility of caring for this place, of protecting its natural setting and of keeping it clean"
>
> Dr. N. Colleen Cooper,
> Coalition of Park Supporters

stewardship and conservation as a primary focus.

Because of the unique responsibilities involved in managing a year-round townsite inside a national park, a community plan guides each park community, including Waskesiu. The Waskesiu Community Plan, approved in 2000, will be reviewed and updated by 2008. The plan sets clear limits to growth, establishes policies for land use and development, and sets priorities for environmental management, community protection, and maintaining the community's unique character.

The Waskesiu Lake Community Council works with the park to provide direction for the management of Waskesiu.

Waskesiu Townsite © Parks Canada

The Waskesiu Lake Community Council Vision Statement

The people of Waskesiu take pride in being part of a model four-season community respecting its heritage character and natural environment. We serve as ambassadors for Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan's premier destination park, committed to celebrating all aspects of our human history and identifying and maintaining our architectural heritage for all Canadians.

The elected Council, the commercial sector, the residents and Parks Canada share a sense of purpose and harmony in guiding and managing the townsite. Together with Parks Canada, the community of Waskesiu educates and demonstrates by example the importance of ecological integrity.

Waskesiu is both a destination and a departure point for a variety of leisure experiences within the park and offers services and amenities of a community within a national park. The townsite offers a choice of affordable recreational experiences for all ages. Special events provide opportunities to enjoy Waskesiu and the park in a variety of ways and serve to build a sense of community.

The elected Council continues to exercise prudent fiscal management and to support tourism and other economic opportunities that are consistent with national park values.

Waskesiu continues to be a meeting place for generations of families who enjoy and respect its unique recreational opportunities, abundant wildlife and natural beauty.

Intended Future

Waskesiu is the visitor centre for Prince Albert National Park. For most visitors, it is both the place where they feel they have finally arrived, and the place where they learn about the park before setting out to explore.

"Preservation of the heritage buildings is essential to celebrate the past achievements of all the people who built the Park's facilities…. Together with NGOs the Park must undertake to restore the buildings and to maintain them properly for all time. Canadian National Parks are known world wide by the scenery and wildlife and by their beautiful rustic log and stone buildings. These buildings also can remind visitors that the Parks were built by men in very difficult circumstances that we should never forget."

Bill MacKenzie, Saskatoon

> "The Indian name Way-ske-siu means elk or red deer. But it happens that the time those people were here, most of their kin came from the Narrows in a canoe and they came up here much quicker.
>
> They killed an animal here. They didn't know what it was – an elk. Then they went back to the Narrows. They were very surprised and scared. I don't know what it meant to them at the time."
>
> Alan Nichols

Arriving in Waskesiu is not like arriving in another lakeside town. Visitors are conscious of having arrived in a national park and, with the expanse of Waskesiu Lake reaching away to the north, a heightened sense of possibilities for discovery and adventure.

Waskesiu is also a resort community where generations of Saskatchewan families have spent their summers and developed strong bonds with the lakes and forests of central Saskatchewan.

Some stay in the park's largest campground and trailer park, others at hotels and bungalow camps; many have seasonal cottages and cabins in the community. As "Saskatchewan's Playground", the community is a centre for swimming, fishing, boating, golfing and other recreational activities. Each summer, the atmosphere in Waskesiu is like an extended family reunion, a safe and exciting place where people find countless ways to celebrate each other and their natural heritage.

The community has existed since the establishment of the national park and was used and occupied well before then by Aboriginal families and by the traders and trappers who regularly passed through the region. The community's rich heritage is reflected in part by its distinctive whole and split log architecture. The Lobstick Golf Course Clubhouse, the Superintendent's Residence, and Community Hall are examples of this style.

Visitors and summer residents are always aware of the national park:

- Interpretive exhibits at the Nature Centre, Information Centre, and the Friends of the Park building present the history of the park. Special events such as pow wows, the Waskesiu Children's Festival, and Arbour Day bring people together to celebrate Canada's heritage.
- A network of interpretive trails leads from the town centre to the surrounding forests, wetlands, and lakeshores. Some trails are wide enough and hardened for baby strollers, bicycles, and for people to walk side-by-side
- In winter, groomed trails invite skiers and snowshoe enthusiasts of all abilities. Visitors are surprised by how seamlessly these trails take them from the sights and sounds of a small resort town to places where wolf and elk tracks dominate and nature prevails.
- Benches, donated by local residents, are placed at key locations for viewing sunsets, enjoying the solitude of the forest, or pausing from the excitement and activity of a summer afternoon.

> "The townsite is urban, but it's still wilder than the city where most visitors come from. Visitors appreciate the view of the lake. The crowds are still quieter than in the city. The air is still fresher than the city. There are more animals than in the city-squirrels, deer, elk, and birds."
>
> "Large proportions of visitors are repeat visitors who come back every year. Many families have been coming for multiple generations. Half the visitors tell me how many years they've been coming here. They have a high emotional investment in this place and want to pass it to their children and grandchildren unchanged. Continuity, the legacy is important. Family weddings, reunions."
>
> Kalya Brunner, Communications: PANP

Educational Themes

- The ***Waskesiu Community Plan*** describes a vision for Waskesiu.
- Key elements of the area include:
  - o ***biodiversity:*** lake ecology; predators; elk
  - o ***natural processes:*** hydrological cycles and their effect on lakes and forests; herbivore-predator interactions; vegetation succession; fire in boreal ecosystems
  - o ***human history:*** pre-park Aboriginal use of the area; national park establishment; evolution of a national park community; national park golf courses
- Conservation challenges
  - o protecting water quality
  - o reducing wildlife habituation
  - o building strong support for protected areas and conservation

Challenges and Opportunities

- Some of the public infrastructure in Waskesiu has deteriorated. Recent upgrades include a new water treatment plant with a state-of-the-art treatment system and improvements to the sewage system.
- The standard of trails is inconsistent; some trails have poorly drained areas while others follow unattractive old roadbeds or utility rights-of-way.
- Many potential visitors are unaware of the services and experiences available in spring, fall, and winter. The small numbers of visitors who do come at those times remain largely in the community.
- Businesses and organizations do not always provide consistent information about services in and around the park. Opportunities exist to integrate tourism information and services.
- Although resort services (e.g., shopping, accommodation) are readily available, it can be a challenge to find heritage attractions such as the Information Centre, the Nature Centre, the Community Museum, or the Friends of the Park.
- Good forage and the absence of wolves attract more elk than normal to the community. This is a safety concern, especially during spring calving season and the fall rut. The large number of elk also interferes with aspen regeneration and survival in thinned forests near the town.
- Mature white spruce and poplar, while contributing to the character of the community, are vulnerable to decay, insects and disease, posing a safety hazard and fire risk.
- DDT, a chemical that was used in the mid-twentieth century for insect control, has been found at several locations in concentrations that will require remediation. More work is required to identify sources.

Priorities for Action

1. Continue to use the Waskesiu Community Plan to guide management of the townsite.
2. Engage community and regional stakeholders in updating the Waskesiu Community Plan. The updated plan will address the challenges and opportunities identified in this management plan as well as new issues that may arise.
3. Designate the Red Deer Trail as a day-use node. Ensure the trail is wide enough to allow hikers to walk side-by-side and provide a dry firm surface that is safe for hikers, baby strollers, and people with limited mobility. Review and update interpretive media.

4. Consult with stakeholders to develop a trail that allows people in wheelchairs access to natural areas in and around the community.
5. Work with partners to preserve the community's heritage buildings.
6. Continue to work with community members in implementing the Waskesiu Vegetation Management Strategy.
7. Adopt management strategies to reduce the number of human/elk conflicts.
8. Conduct additional soil sampling combined with biological sampling to identify areas requiring remediation. Develop remediation plans where appropriate.

5.5 Waskesiu Lake

Intended Future

Waskesiu Lake changes a visitor's sense of scale and creates the first real awareness of how large Prince Albert National Park really is. A large boreal lake, with conifer-fringed shorelines that jut out in headlands or retreat into distant bays, Waskesiu is much bigger than any other lake in the park that is accessible by road.

The lake is big enough to retain its sense of wildness in spite of its popularity. Nearly a dozen beaches offer spectacular views of the lake.

> "Waskesiu Lake is the focal point of the entire Park. It is where most people gravitate to beach, swim, boat/sail/canoe, fish, picnic, watch the sunsets/moon on the water/storms/waves, and stroll along its shores."
>
> "As a clean, healthy, northern lake, it has been a good source of water for humans and a healthy habitat for fish. The health of this lake and others in the Park is a top priority as a bequest for the future."
>
> Dr. N. Colleen Cooper,
> Coalition of Park Supporters

> "Narrows Road, Kingsmere Road - I feel like I'm going into the wilderness. Narrowness and length of road reinforces this. Beautiful views of the lake all along the road. Pull offs are good for stopping, exploring and slowing down."
>
> "Even if visitors don't own a boat, they can still enjoy spending the day on the shore, picnic, swim etc and see the lake….
>
> "The beaches along the lake are clean, relatively quiet, have beautiful views."

Visitors swim, boat, water ski, or simply relax and listen to the loons and gulls or watch for eagles. Facilities include picnic tables ranging in number from two to more than a dozen. Winter visitors see otters at the Waskesiu Narrows and otter trails and wolf tracks where tributary streams and wetlands join the lake.

The water in Waskesiu Lake is clean. Populations of northern pike and walleye are robust, sustaining good recreational fishing and diverse natural predators.

North of the Narrows Campground, fewer motorboats travel more slowly and are more likely to contain anglers or families enjoying nature than people seeking thrills. Nature dominates; there is little evidence of roads or development.

Educational Themes

- The Waskesiu Hills are a source of water for the surrounding ecosystem. Its hydrological cycles affect lakes and wetlands as well as forests and downstream communities.
- Key elements of the area include:
  - biodiversity: mixed wood and spruce forests; lake and wetland ecology; otters, loons, and native fish
  - natural processes: lake ice, shoreline processes; wildlife migrations; seasonal cycles

o human history: pre-park Aboriginal settlement and use; park development; fishing (from subsistence through commercial and recreational)

> "Crisp, clean air, the sound of loons calling across the water, fresh fish for supper, annual pilgrimages, northern lights, wishing to not see anyone else but knowing they might/ probably will."
>
> Cathy Corrigal, Waskesiu

- Conservation Challenges
  - o maintaining water quality and watershed processes
  - o conserving native fish stocks

Sunset over Waskesiu Lake © Parks Canada and Waskesiu Community Council – Glen Craig - photographer

Challenges and Opportunities

- Some pit privies and septic fields adjacent to the lake are still in use. Waskesiu's sewage treatment system remains incomplete, creating potential water quality issues.
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) from the Waskesiu Marina's creosote pilings have leached into the lake sediment, creating a potential threat to water quality if the pilings are disturbed.
- The design of the road and landing cause silt and gravel to erode into the Kingsmere River at the public landing upstream from Waskesiu Lake. Downstream, the Kingsmere River, modified to allow boats to pass, has been partially restored. Facility redesign and further restoration work is required to maintain the river's ecological values.
- Winter use is limited in spite of available opportunities -- wildlife viewing (otters, elk, wolves), groomed ski trails, and ice fishing.

Priorities for Action

1. Replace all pit privies or septic fields within 500 m of the lake with contained, pump-out septic systems.
2. Ensure future upgrades to the Waskesiu Marina eliminate the risk of water contamination by PAH's or other pollutants and provide reliable access for boaters at a wider range of lake levels.
3. Develop or upgrade day-use nodes at the Narrows and the Kingsmere River public landing.
4. Explore the potential for a day-use node at Hanging Heart Lakes.
5. Examine the possibility of a wheelchair-accessible loop that incorporates the existing viewpoint near the Heart Lakes marina.
6. Ensure safe, reliable public access at the Kingsmere River public landing that minimizes erosion.
7. Manage the channel downstream from the Kingsmere River public landing as an Environmentally Sensitive Site with emphasis on maintaining natural river processes and structures, including large woody debris.
8. Work with partners to find innovative ways of making people in the region aware of the recreational activities and opportunities to view wildlife in winter.

5.6 Sakahikan-Aski "Land of the Lakes" - Kingsmere and Crean Lakes

Intended Future

Outlying lakes, accessible by motorboat, but not by motor vehicle, demand some effort to reach. Visitors feel they've earned their solitude. Kingsmere is only accessible by a portage along a hand-powered narrow-gauge rail line. Crean requires slow navigation through the Hanging Heart Lakes channel.

Though not remote, these transitional wildlands offer a wilderness-like experience - pristine, quiet, untouched - in spite of the presence of motorboats. The size and beauty of the lakes, their pristine water quality, and excellent fishing often exceed expectations. Apparently endless mature boreal forests surround these lakes with little tangible evidence of human activity. For those who know where to look, or who wish to explore, old campsites, fallen cabins, and gravesites mark the places where Aboriginal people and others once lived. A national historic site commemorating the unique story of English-born naturalist Archie"Grey Owl" Belaney draws many visitors to his historic cabin at Ajawaan Lake.

Visitors to these outlying lakes leave with memories of crisp, clean air, the sound of loons calling across the water, fresh fish for supper, northern lights, sightings of moose or bears, and chance visits with others who ventured off the beaten track to discover a big, wild place.

Kingsmere (including Bagwa/Lily canoe route)

Kingsmere Lake, an easily accessible wilderness area, draws people back year after year. Visitors fish for native lake trout and northern pike. Canoeists follow the shore to reach backcountry routes such as the short Bagwa/Lily Lakes or the longer, more remote Bladebone. The lake is deep and cold and the water quality is exceptional. Because of the relatively easy rail portage from the Kingsmere River public landing, visitors expect to see other campers, canoes, and motorboats. However the lake's size means they can readily find isolation where the only sounds are the sounds of nature.

Canoeing on the Kingsmere River © Parks Canada

Crean

Crean Lake, also easily accessible, is more exposed to the wind than Kingsmere because of its shape and size. The number of overnight visitors is much smaller, as there are fewer group campgrounds, the vulnerable lake trout population is protected from angling, and visitors to Grey Owl's Cabin travel by way of Kingsmere Lake. With fewer visitors to the largest lake in the park, people who do visit experience the vast wildness of Canada's boreal north.

Educational Themes

- Key elements of this area include:
  - ***biodiversity:*** mixed wood and spruce forest; lake ecology, lake trout; pelicans, wolves, black bears, moose
  - ***natural processes:*** hydrological cycles and their effects on lakes and forests; shoreline processes; seasonal cycles
  - ***human history:*** pre-park Aboriginal settlement and use; park development; park administration and management; fishing; Grey Owl and the conservation movement

- Conservation Challenges
  - o conserving recreational fish stocks
  - o restoring the role of fire
  - o maintaining natural hydrological processes
- Canadians, visitors, and stakeholders can play a significant role in the conservation of boreal Canada; this role is exemplified in the story of Archie "Grey Owl" Belaney and Anahareo and their work to conserve species at risk.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Campers do not always find the privacy they seek. Occasional conflicts arise between smaller groups seeking isolation and larger parties more interested in socializing.
- Some popular campsites are trampled and polluted due to poor camping and hygiene practices of inexperienced backcountry travelers.
- Strong partnerships for presenting the Grey Owl story exist. The Friends of Prince Albert National Park have built a replica of the Grey Owl cabin at their bookstore in Waskesiu, and the Waskesiu Marina offers guided tours to the cabin.
- Commemoration of people's role at these lakes is uneven; although visitors are well aware of Archie "Grey Owl" Belaney, they are less familiar with the stories of Aboriginal families or early national park wardens.
- The lake trout population in Crean Lake has yet to recover in spite of protection from angling. Spawning habitat is extremely limited and survival of young is low.
- The lake trout population in Kingsmere Lake is one of the only remaining genetically pure native stocks in the region. It sustains a quality recreational fishery and some anglers feel catch limits could increase without threatening the stock. Other groups feel the lake should be closed to trout fishing as a precautionary measure.

> "Years back even, the country was all burnt. Not all, but a big portion of it, so the Indians called it burnt wood. These lakes down here had no name attached onto them, only what we attached ourselves."
>
> Harry Genge

- When water levels are low, boulders are a hazard for boaters traveling from Heart Lakes to Crean Lake.

Priorities for Action

1. Reduce the potential for conflict between groups by directing parties of more than eight people to one of two large campsites at Kingsmere Lake.
2. Minimize the environmental impact of popular backcountry camping areas by providing tent pads, grey water dumps, bear poles, and pit privies; allow adequate space between individual sites.
3. Maintain the existing lake trout angling limit on Kingsmere Lake to ensure a high quality fishery and to protect trout populations.
4. Monitor population structure and catch rates; adjust limits if significant positive or negative trends are detected.
5. Maintain the existing prohibition on lake trout angling at Crean Lake until monitoring indicates a sustained recovery.

> "Crisp, clean air, tough outing with some arduous portages, paddles and unknown environment but hugely rewarding when you think back to the experience and your sense of accomplishment."
>
> Cathy Corrigal, Mayview

6. Work with interested stakeholders to reduce navigational hazards in the Heart Lakes channel.

7. Continue to manage the Grey Owl site as an important historic resource, ensuring the interpretation of his story is authentic and complete.
8. With Aboriginal communities, identify opportunities to increase the presentation of relevant and authentic stories about their history.

5.7 Mixed Wood Country

Intended Future

Forests of spruce and pine dominate the northern two-thirds of the park. White birch and poplar are less common than farther south. Small rivers connect chains of lakes and much of the area is poorly drained. This is a country with few good trails, difficult to access, and offering opportunities for wilderness exploration and solitude that have become increasingly rare in other parts of central Canada.

Moose, deer, bear, wolf, and fisher tracks outnumber those of humans; tire tracks are never seen and the sound of an engine is rarely heard. Trails are maintained to a wilderness standard. Visitors can expect wet feet from crossing streams and hollows. Canoeists and hikers choose their own campsites and leave little trace of their passing. They value the wilderness and freedom as much for those who will come after as for themselves. Visitors are self-reliant, communication is poor, and timely rescue is unlikely.

Mixed woods © Parks Canada

Although Aboriginal people used most parts of this region, and many of the larger lakes served as seasonal homes for some families, visitors might still wonder if anyone else has ever been here.

Educational Themes

- Key elements of this area include:
  - o ***biodiversity:*** mixed wood and spruce forest; pelicans, wolves, black bears, moose; neo-tropical migrant birds; relicts of large glacial invertebrate fauna at Wassegam Lake
  - o ***natural processes:*** hydrology of rivers and lakes; seasonal cycles; fire in boreal ecosystems
  - o ***human history:*** pre-park Aboriginal settlement and use; canoeing in northern Canada
- Conservation challenges
  - o conserving or restoring sensitive (white pelican) and threatened (woodland caribou) species
  - o restoring fire's role in creating landscape diversity
  - o sustaining neo-tropical migrant birds that link Canada's boreal forests to tropical ecosystems

Challenges and Opportunities

- Some of the more popular backcountry campsites have deteriorated or are unhygienic because of heavy use and/or poor camping practices by inexperienced backcountry users.
- Some trails follow or cross old park maintenance roads, detracting from the isolation most visitors expect.

> "If you ever get a chance to go up on a canoe trip… It's pretty country up in there. We tried to get them to put their canoe in there and forget about these places. It is a beautiful country."
>
> Jack Leader

- Multiple access points to canoe routes and trails can create a sense of crowding because of the number of parties people meet going in the opposite direction.
- Lavallee Lake is closed to the public because of its large pelican breeding colony. No options exist at present for visitors to learn about this area at another location.
- While woodland caribou may have disappeared from the park, nearby populations persist and recovery of the park population remains possible.

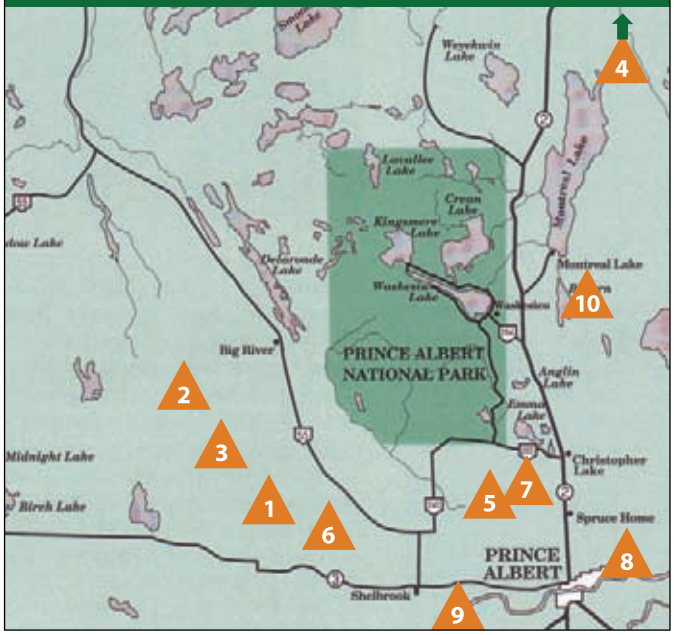
Priorities for Action

1. Redesign popular backcountry camping areas to reduce their impact on the environment.
2. Ensure backcountry travelers understand the necessity for hygiene and the nature of the wilderness sites.
3. Investigate options to broadcast remote video or webcam footage of the Lavallee Lake pelican colony in Waskesiu and on the Parks Canada website.
4. Maintain all designated trails to a minimal standard as wilderness routes or portages.
5. Use prescribed fire to restore diversity and a more natural age range of forest stands. Minimize the impact of wild or prescribed fire in critical caribou habitat.
6. Cooperate with partners to develop and implement a regional woodland caribou recovery program.
7. Work with the province and neighbouring agencies to maintain the wilderness quality of trans-boundary lakes by keeping motorized access from outside the park to a minimum.

5.8 Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site

In the south-east corner of the park, the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site occupies 229 ha adjacent to the Little Red River First Nation lands. Aboriginal Elders and community representatives interested in holding traditional cultural events in the park chose this site in consultation with Parks Canada. In the 1930's, when bison were on the verge of extinction, part of this area was home to a captive herd. No longer needed for bison conservation, the site closed in 1995.

First Nations Partner Communities



The Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site committee, formed in October 2003, represents most Aboriginal communities near the park.

1. Big River First Nation
2. Pelican Lake First Nation
3. Witchekan Lake First Nation
4. Lac La Ronge First Nation
5. Sturgeon Lake First Nation
6. Ahtahkakoop First Nation
7. Little Red River First Nation
8. Wahpeton First Nation
9. Mistawasis First Nation
10. Montreal Lake First Nation

- Agency Chiefs Tribal Council
- Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
- Métis Nation of Saskatchewan
- Métis Locals nearby

The site can accommodate moderate gatherings. A sign and logo, interpretive panels, a cooking shelter, picnic tables, camping areas with fireplaces, a water tank stand, and an outhouse will be installed before the opening ceremonies take place. Parks Canada and the Prince Albert Model Forest funded preliminary work.

Educational Themes

Sturgeon Lake First Nation Elder Bill Ermine gave the site its name. Literally translated from Cree, Paspiwin is,"The act of successfully escaping or eluding danger; clearance; survival." Elder Ermine's interpretation is: ***Survival of . . .***

- events affecting First Nations
- First Nations' languages, culture, traditions and heritage
- the bison from extinction
- First Nations; bison provided food, shelter, clothing and tools.

- Key elements of the area include:
  - ***biodiversity:*** transitional area between grassland and boreal forest; invasion of non-native grass species/weeds
  - ***natural processes:*** effect of beavers on hydrology; blow down; fire
  - ***human history:*** pre-historical and historical travel route; archaeological site near the Spruce River; ceremonial sites; sweat lodge site

Intended Future

Aboriginal groups hold ceremonies such as cleansing sweat lodges, healing circles, fasts, and feasts. They share their culture, heritage, customs, and values with the youth and the public through teaching Traditional Knowledge, story telling, dances, drumming, and singing.

The Paspiwin Cultural Site, and the relationships that develop around it, enable Aboriginal communities and individuals to interpret Traditional Knowledge and advise Parks Canada on the values, ethics, and historical traditions of Aboriginal ceremonies, rituals, and attitudes towards living things.

Aboriginal communities near the park benefit from self-sustaining economic opportunities, including eco-tourism, experiencing life at a tipi village, and the making and selling of traditional foods and crafts. The Paspiwin Cultural Site links park visitors and these opportunities in nearby communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

- The Paspiwin Cultural Site, near the south entrance of the park on Highway 263, is not immediately accessible to the many park visitors who center their activities in and around Waskesiu. Opportunities exist to work with Waskesiu businesses to develop tourism products and offer tours to Paspiwin.
- Interpretation of the Aboriginal story is clearly the responsibility of the people who own this history. Prince Albert National Park is uniquely situated to provide an audience and location for these messages.
- The links between the Paspiwin Cultural Site and other historical and cultural sites in the park have yet to be defined.
- The environment and the ceremonial and cultural sites must be protected in keeping with traditional Aboriginal and national park values.

Priorities for Action

1. Continue to support the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site Committee in areas of strategic marketing, partnership development, communication, and heritage presentation.
2. Re-zone the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site from Zone II to Zone III to respect the need for Elders to have vehicle access and to allow for maintenance and major cultural events.

Young Dancer at Pow Wow © Parks Canada - Bonny Sundberg – photographer

6 Tracking Success

Every five years, Parks Canada completes an assessment of each national park. This State of the Park Report objectively evaluates key indicators and identifies issues management plan reviews may need to address. Prince Albert's first *State of the Park Report*, released in 2005, was incomplete as the park had not finalized indicators for ecological integrity and there was no assessment of visitor experiences, communications, or education.

Ecological integrity is the first consideration in all aspects of park management and monitoring of ecological integrity has consequently received considerable attention. Because ecosystems are complex and dynamic, researchers monitor their well-being by tracking a manageable number of meaningful indicators, rather than trying to measure everything.

Prince Albert National Park's ecological indicators reflect the major ecosystems in most of Canada's parks – forests, grasslands, wetlands, lakes, and streams. A sixth indicator is based on a keystone species whose decisions and actions affect ecosystem health for better or for worse – human beings.

For each indicator, a simple conceptual model identifies the measures that will contribute to an understanding of its condition and trend. For example, fire regularly destroys and renews forests in boreal Canada. To track the health of forest ecosystems, it is necessary to monitor the frequency, size, and effect of fires. Because grazing animals affect grasslands, monitoring the distribution and abundance of major grazing species helps track the health of these ecosystems. Human activity benefits ecosystems when people act as environmental stewards, so it is useful to track participation rates in recycling or tree-planting programs.

Parks Canada has monitored visitor use and satisfaction, participation in education programs and other measures that relate to other elements of the park mandate for many years, however the development of meaningful indicators and communication of findings is not as advanced as for ecological integrity.

Monitoring programs must be scientifically sound and well documented. This includes the rigourous collection and analysis of statistics to minimize sampling errors, the safe storage and management of data, critical peer review and debate, and regular communication with the public.

Intended Future

Widely-understood and accepted indicators of ecological integrity, visitor experience and public education are supported by on-going programs of monitoring and reporting.

All monitoring projects are subject to critical scientific review and fully documented. Protocols for sampling and analyzing are documented on local and national databases in accordance with accepted metadata standards. To simplify reporting of regional trends, common methodologies and standards apply to all parks in the Interior Plains bioregion.

Stakeholders are actively involved in collecting data, analyzing findings, and reporting results to the public. Results are communicated annually through updates, and once every five years in a comprehensive *State of the Park Report*.

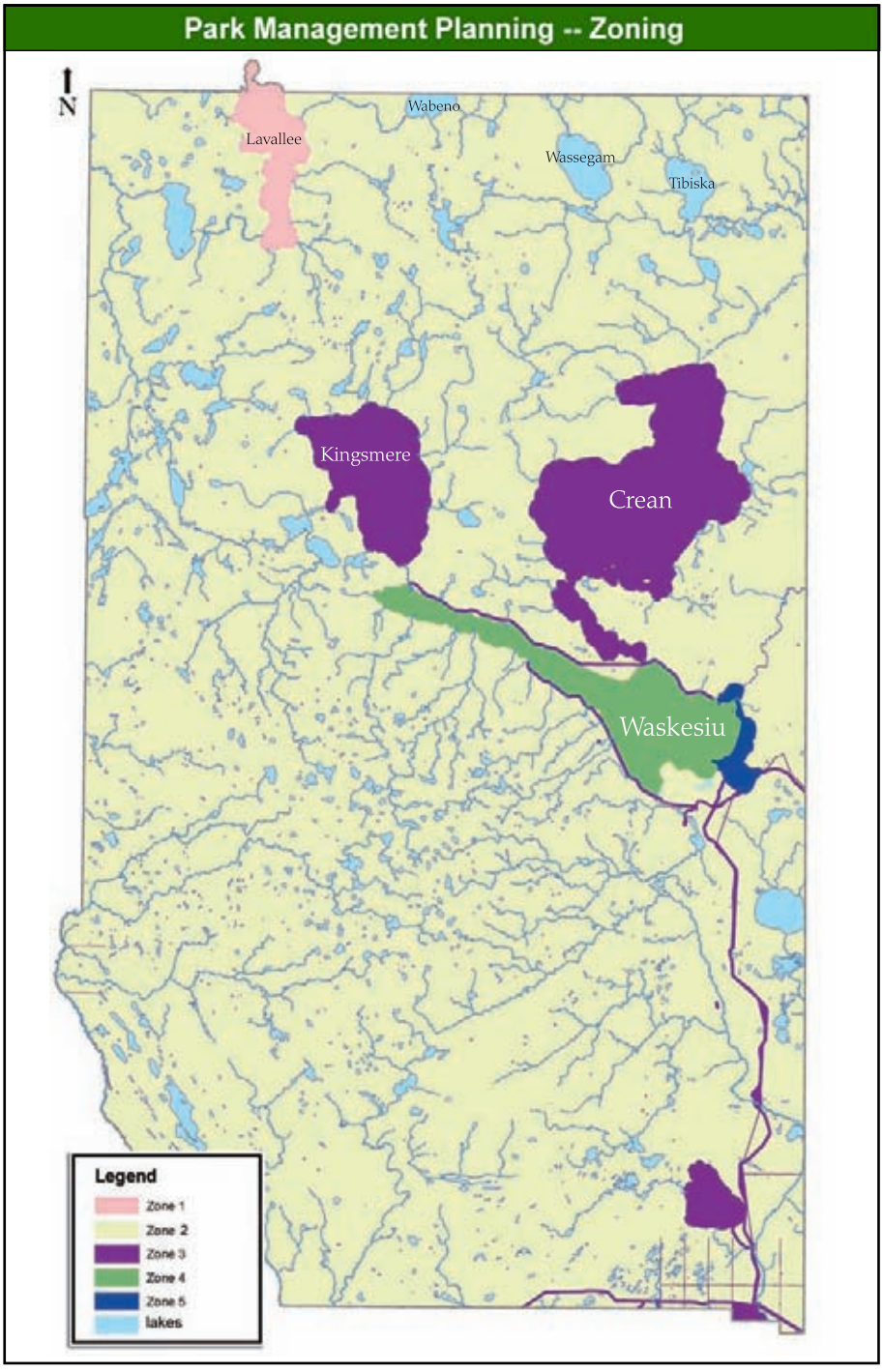
Challenges and Opportunities

- The 2005 State of the Park Report on Ecological Integrity for Prince Albert National Park reported on six ecological indicators. Based on consultation with scientists and the public, these have been replaced. New indicators represent dominant ecosystems in the Interior Plains bioregion and are easily understood (see Appendices A & B).
- Measures are in place for forests and lakes. Ecosystem models and measurement protocols for streams and wetlands are not complete. Research into the human dimension of ecosystem health is not advanced enough to allow identification of meaningful indicators.
- National indicators for visitor experience and public education are under development and have not yet been implemented at the park level.

Priorities for Action

1. Based on simple conceptual ecosystem models, identify and document monitoring protocols that enable Parks Canada to report on the condition and trend of six indicators of ecological integrity:
   - forest ecosystem health
   - grassland ecosystem health
   - wetland ecosystem health
   - lake ecosystem health
   - stream ecosystem health
   - human dimension (measures of human-induced stresses as well as human stewardship and restoration)
2. In consultation with the public, adapt Parks Canada's national indicators for communications, education, learning, and visitor experience to reflect the park's unique characteristics (see Appendices C & D).
3. Base indicators for communications, education, and learning on the following key performance areas:
   - telling compelling, relevant stories about our ecosystems and our people
   - engaging people whose stories are part of this place in presenting those stories to the visiting public
   - helping Canadians to understand the nature of their country and the stories of its peoples, so they can make informed decisions that sustain Canada's heritage
   - presenting key messages (see Chapter 5.1)
4. Base indicators for visitor experience on the following key performance areas.
   - understanding visitor demographics and motivations
   - providing opportunities for memorable visitor experiences
   - effective marketing to promote public appreciation and understanding
   - providing high quality service that meets or exceeds visitors' needs and expectations

7 Park Zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration



Note: The zoning boundaries shown on this map are small-scale approximations of the actual zoning described in the text of the Management Plan for Prince Albert National Park.

The national park zoning system classifies land and water areas according to their need for protection and the opportunities they offer park visitors. These zones ensure a range of visitor opportunities is provided in areas best suited for those activities, while protecting the attributes essential to a memorable visitor experiences.

7.1 Zone I - Special Preservation (1% of the park)

Zone I lands require special preservation because they contain or support unique, threatened, or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features of the natural region. Preservation is the key consideration. Motor vehicles are not permitted and human access is regulated.

The Lavallee Lake Pelican Colony, the only Zone I area in the park, protects the nesting and feeding areas of one of the largest white pelican colonies in Canada. The extent of the zone is based on the need to include watercourses where breeding pelicans feed and rest. This area is closed to all human use from April through September. Essential scientific research is permitted under carefully controlled conditions. Parks Canada will investigate the use of webcams or other remote devices so people can observe and learn about this important pelican breeding colony at other locations.

Pelicans © Parks Canada – Waskesiu Community Council - Wendy Despins – photographer

7.2 Zone II - Wilderness (90% of the park)

Large tracts of protected wilderness are an increasingly scarce and valuable resource in Canada. From an ecological perspective, their importance lies in their ability to support natural processes and viable populations of native wildlife. They can be critical for animal species with large home ranges and for migrating wildlife. From the human perspective, wilderness areas offer unique opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature study, personal challenge, reflection, solitude, and peace of mind.

The emphasis in Zone II is on development and activities required for essential services and resource protection. Trails, basic campgrounds, and cleared portages are among the visitor facilities normally found in these areas. In much of Zone II, visitors experience remoteness and solitude. Motor vehicles are not permitted. Existing roads will be allowed to re-vegetate naturally or will be adapted as trails. Certain non-conforming activities and facilities may be permitted if they are essential for park administration, resource protection, and public safety. This includes the use of light motorized equipment (quads, snowmobiles, helicopters) for research, search and rescue, fire control and, subject to strict guidelines, maintenance. Parks Canada patrol cabins may remain in areas where they are required for management of the park.

Changes to Zone II areas identified in the 1995 management plan:

- Fescue Grasslands Area will now be designated as Zone II instead of Zone I as there is no need to limit human use to protect the area's special attributes. Maintenance and restoration of the ecological integrity of the park's fescue grasslands will require special measures involving prescribed fire and protection from non-native plants, both of which are consistent with Zone II.

- The West Side Trail from the Sturgeon Valley viewpoint moves from Zone III to Zone II.
- The areas around the Red Deer and Kingfisher trails and undeveloped areas between the Narrows Road and Waskesiu Lake are now Zone II. This will not affect the management of the area, which is already treated as Zone II.
- Boreal Ecosystem Research and Monitoring Site (former BOREAS Research Station) will be Zone II. The superintendent must authorize all use and access.

7.2.1 Wilderness designation

Since the 1960's, most of Prince Albert National Park has been classified as Zone II Wilderness. The *Canada National Parks Act,* proclaimed in 2000, allowed national parks to legally designate wilderness areas for the first time. The wilderness designation is not intended to change access or land use, but to make protection of these areas a matter of law, not policy. Within one year of the approval of this management plan, the park will nominate sections of its Zone I and II areas as Wilderness. These nominations will exclude utility corridors, active gravel pits, limited access roads, and other facilities that currently require periodic access by motorized vehicles.

7.3 Zone III - Natural Environment (6 % of the park)

Visitors to Zone III require minimal services and facilities that, while rustic, exceed the basic level found in Zone II. The controlled use of motor vehicles may be allowed in specific areas. Protection is required because of the areas' ecological and aesthetic importance.

Zoning for the Paspiwin Cultural Heritage Site changes from Zone II to Zone III to allow controlled vehicle access for Elders, persons with physical challenges, and to provide basic facilities for groups.

The following areas are included in Zone III:

- the surface area of Kingsmere, Crean, Sandy and Heart lakes
- established campground and day-use areas on Waskesiu, Kingsmere, and Crean lakes
- the Kingsmere River between the Kingsmere Road boat launch and the rail portage and from the north end of the rail portage to Kingsmere Lake
- the Height of Land interpretive exhibit and access road
- the Spruce River interpretive exhibit and access trail
- proposed day-use nodes
- Beartrap, Kilometre Ten, and Spruce River gravel pits and access roads
- the West Side Trail between Sturgeon Crossing and Sturgeon Lookout

7.4 Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation (3 % of the park)

Zone IV areas include front country campgrounds, picnic sites, viewpoints, parking lots for major trails, roadside developments, and a 15-metre right-of-way on each side of the centre line of all public roads.

The following areas are included in Zone IV:

- Waskesiu Lake and all adjacent day-use and picnic areas
- Waskesiu Marina
- Waskesiu overflow campground and access
- Narrows campground, marina, and day-use area
- Campgrounds, day-use areas, and access roads at Namekus, Trappers, and Sandy lakes
- Heart Lakes access, parking lot, and marina
- Elaine Lake Road right-of-way

- Sturgeon River road from Sturgeon Crossing to the park facilities at Sturgeon River (changed from Zone III to Zone IV)

7.5 Zone V - Park Services (*Waskesiu Townsite* less than 1 % of the park)

The community of Waskesiu is the only Zone V area in the park. The *Waskesiu Community Plan* guides land use in the community (see Chapter 5.4). The Zone V boundaries will be adjusted to include any upgrades to the wastewater treatment facility.

7.6 Environmentally or Culturally Sensitive Sites

This designation is not new and can be applied within any park management zone. It applies to small areas that contain significant and sensitive resources requiring special protection or management. Specific guidelines for each *Environmentally Sensitive Site* define visitor use and resource management strategies.

Prince Albert National Park has three *Environmentally Sensitive Sites:*

- *Fescue Grasslands* require special measures such as prescribed fire and protection from non-native plants to maintain and restore their ecological integrity.
- *Calcareous Seeps and Marl Ponds* in the southern part of the park contain many rare and unique species, including the tiger salamander.
- *Lower Kingsmere River* (downstream from the boat launch to Waskesiu Lake) – to maintain the natural character of the river and fish habitat requires protection of the riverbed and of the large woody debris that accumulates naturally in the river channel.

Culturally Sensitive Sites include all graves and in-situ archaeological resources. The park will collaborate with First Nations and Métis groups to manage sensitive Aboriginal sites according to mutually agreed upon guidelines for protection.

8 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment (EA)

As required by parliament (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, 2004), this management plan underwent a strategic environmental assessment. Indicators from the *Prince Albert National Park of Canada State of the Park Report* were used to evaluate the environmental and socio-economic impact of the plan's recommendations on ecological integrity, cultural resources, and visitor experiences.

Positive Outcomes

The review determined that implementation of the plan will have many positive residual effects:

- maintenance and enhancement of ecological integrity
- better visitor experiences
- stronger relationships with stakeholders and Aboriginal groups
- better knowledge and long-term management through research, monitoring, and inventories
- greater diversity of vegetation and species through implementation of the *Fire and Vegetation Management Plan*
- recovery strategies to restore the woodland caribou to its former range

Potential Negative Outcomes

Four main types of activities may have a negative effect on ecological integrity - fuel reduction near the park, prescribed burning, increased marketing, and day-use nodes.

Fire

Reducing the amount of fuel available to feed a forest fire around communities and facilities near the park could contribute to habitat fragmentation.

More development around the park, including new resorts, could make the use of prescribed fire riskier. If development increases, the park will need more pre-burn preparations (fire guards, fuel modification) or fewer, smaller prescribed burns.

Implementing the *Fire and Vegetation Management Plan* will restore disturbances essential in maintaining biodiversity. By coordinating its implementation with the Fescue Management Plan, the Bison Management Strategy and recovery strategies, the park will mitigate the impact of fire on specific species or sensitive areas such as the plains bison, woodland caribou, and fescue grasslands.

Environmental assessments of specific projects and prescribed burns will identify ways to minimize their effect on the environment.

Marketing and Day-Use

A regional tourism marketing strategy, promotion of the park as a four-season destination, and new day-use nodes could increase the number of people trampling vegetation, disturbing wildlife, creating noise and light pollution, generating more solid waste, and damaging cultural resources. Monitoring will be required to identify any emerging issues. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders will be required to develop effective mitigating measures.

Most site specific impacts, however, are unlikely to significantly affect the larger ecosystem. Measures to enhance the visitor experience and educate visitors about boreal ecosystems, on the other hand, will build support for conservation in the park and the region. These measures will also help build a secure constituency for continued protection of the park.

Public and Peer Review

The preparation of the management plan offered numerous and diverse opportunities for public input and expert review. Starting with the scoping document in 2004/05, the park adopted an open, inclusive approach to the planning process. The management plan addresses issues identified by the public. The park also enlisted the help of an advisory group, composed of representatives of stakeholder groups, in developing and drafting the plan.

In the summer of 2006, Parks Canada circulated the *Draft - Prince Albert National Park Management Plan* for public review. This document discussed issues, actions, outcomes, and zoning. The draft plan was available on the website, at park offices, at the park's Annual General Meeting, and was sent to individuals at their request. Parks Canada analyzed the comments and incorporated suggestions where appropriate.

Once the Minister responsible for Parks Canada approves the management plan, the implementation of specific projects will require more detailed environmental assessments and public review.

Summary

The direction and key actions in the *Prince Albert National Park of Canada Management Plan* are not likely to have any important negative effects and will have many positive effects. The management strategy laid out in this plan will maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the park and the boreal region it represents. With the mitigation proposed in the *Strategic Environmental Assessment,* including the requirement for project specific assessments, the actions proposed in this management plan will not have any important negative environmental effects.

9 Acknowledgements

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The Prince Albert National Park Management Planning Team consisted of Kalya Brunner, Carla Flaman, Henry Fremont, Cliff Kaleski, Murray Peterson and Kevin Van Tighem.

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Appendix A: *State of The Park Report* (2005)

This chart uses the draft ecological indicators from the 2005 State of the Park Report. These indicators have since been updated as described in Appendix B.

INDICATOR	MEASURE	CONDITION	TREND
BIODIVERSITY	1. Oven Bird Population - Healthy considered source for the greater ecosystem 2. Wildlife Diversity - Full complement of species present in the Park. 3. Bison Population - continuing to grow. 4. Pelican and Cormorants - population stable and healthy 5. Northern pike population healthy 6. Crean Lake trout population low but being maintained		↔
TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS	1. Fire Frequency - outside historical range of variation. Several large fires over the past 6 years have not been included in the calculation. 2. Spruce Budworm - Historically there are no records that show previous defoliation rates equivalent to the past 4 years. In 2004 , the defoliation rate had dropped from previous years. To early to determine trend.		↔
AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS	1. Northern pike population has recovered from low populations in the 1950's and is healthy. 2. The population of lake trout in Crean Lake is fair; The trend is stable as recovery of this population is extremely slow. 3. Water quality of Waskesiu Lake is good but showing increases in nitrogen and phosphorus. This trend is occurring on other lakes in the park.		↔
HUMAN INFLUENCES	1. Water consumption has been consistent over the past 4 years and is considered to have minimal impact on the environment. 2. Water quality of Waskesiu Lake is good but showing increases in nitrogen and phosphorus. This trend is occurring on other lakes in the park.		↓
LANDSCAPE	No measures have been developed at this time.		
ATMOSPHERE	No measures have been developed at this time.		

CONDITION OF INDICATOR	GOOD	MODERATE	POOR
TREND OF INDICATOR	Improving ↑	Stable ↔	Declining ↓

Appendix B: Monitoring and Reporting on Ecological Integrity

The proposed indicators for monitoring ecological integrity in the Interior Plains Bio-Region are based on themes rather than functions. The following table matches indicators with measures used in the *State of Ecological Integrity Report (2005).* The park has begun work to complete its long term monitoring program before the deadline for the next *State of the Park Report* in 2010, including indicators for visitor experiences and heritage education.

PROPOSED INDICATOR	PROPOSED MEASURE	PROPOSED TARGETS/ THRESHOLD	MEASUREMENT METHOD	STATUS
FORESTS	Forest Bird Monitoring	TBD	Point and transect monitoring of mating calls.	Oven bird populations are healthy.
	Wildlife Diversity	Full complement of naturally occurring predators and prey. Species specific targets TBD	Winter wildlife track surveys	Condition appears good from initial surveys; all species expected have been found; no trends determined.
	Bison Population	Minimum population of 400 breeding-age bison; no population decline for more than four consecutive years.	Total count surveys.	Bison population increasing; trend improving
	Fire Frequency	Fire cycle is within 20% of the normal range of variability for a majority of fire dependent vegetation.	Time since fire mapping	
GRASSLANDS	Fescue grasslands	TBD	Ground sampling with remote sensing mapping.	
WETLANDS	Pattern change Tree mortality Amphibians			
LAKES	Pelican and Cormorant population			

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix B: Monitoring and Reporting on Ecological Integrity continued...

PROPOSED INDICATOR	PROPOSED MEASURE	PROPOSED TARGETS/ THRESHOLD	MEASUREMENT METHOD	STATUS
LAKES	Northern pike population.	- The relative frequency for fish greater than 80 cm should exceed 10%. - The biomass proportion for fish greater than 80 cm should exceed 25%. - Female biomass should exceed male biomass in the spawning run. - Summer tag returns should not exceed 10% of the fish tagged in any spring. - Estimated angling mortality should not exceed 25% of estimated total mortality. - Estimated annual survival rates should be greater than or equal to 60% as estimated from three angling seasons of tag return data. Deteriorating trend if two or more targets are not met.	- Spawning run monitoring for individual fish measurements. - Annual angler catch and surveys.	Northern pike population is healthy and the trend is stable to increasing.
	The population of lake trout in Crean Lake.	Restoration of lake trout to the position of top fish predator in Crean Lake	- Live-capture techniques to assess the abundance and health of adult lake trout - Remote sensing of spawning size lake trout for population estimates.	The population of lake trout in Crean Lake is fair; the trend is stable as recovery of this population is extremely slow.
	Waskesiu Townsite water consumption	The conservation target for Waskesiu Townsite water consumption will be a five-year average of –10% of baseline total (overall consumption and per capita use). The threshold for concern will be established at a five-year average of +10% of baseline total and per capita use.	Estimated from the townsite water system pump records	Water consumption is being maintained at a reasonably consistent level; no trend determined. One more year of data required to determine baseline.

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix B: Monitoring and Reporting on Ecological Integrity continued

PROPOSED INDICATOR	PROPOSED MEASURE	PROPOSED TARGETS/ THRESHOLD	MEASUREMENT METHOD	STATUS
STREAMS	Connectivity - Culverts - Dams - Riparian wildlife			
HUMAN DIMENSIONS	Participation rate: - Recycling - Stewardship - NPA offences			

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix C: Measuring/Monitoring Communication and Education Programs

National indicators for communications, education and learning will be incorporated into this management plan. The following table shows the type of indicators under consideration.

PROPOSED INDICATOR	PROPOSED MEASURE	PROPOSED TARGETS/ THRESHOLD	MEASUREMENT METHOD	STATUS
ATTENDANCE AT AGM	Actual numbers		Actual numbers	
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS	Actual numbers	Baseline data - 2007	Actual numbers	
USER SURVEY	Satisfaction; knowledge of PANP issues	Baseline data – 2007 75% of visitors understand significance of PANP	Survey - Survey schedule to de developed	
A SET OF INDICATORS WILL HELP THE PARK EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS	Understanding	Baseline data – 2007 50% of park visitors have learning experience 85% visitor satisfaction (with 50% being very satisfied) with onsite programming	Survey - Survey schedule to de developed	
		Baseline data - 2007	Survey - Survey schedule to de developed	

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix D: Measuring/Monitoring Communication and Education Programs

National indicators for visitor experience will be incorporated into this management plan. The following table shows the type of indicators under consideration.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA	SUCCESS INDICATOR	KEY MEASURES	MEASUREMENT TOOLS
UNDERSTANDING VISITORS Parks Canada managers routinely use research on actual and potential visitor needs and expectations to make decisions.	The extent to which management decisions are influenced by an understanding of actual and potential visitors' needs and expectations.	The extent to which management plans integrate performance indicators Investment decisions are made to respond to the needs and expectations of strategic target audiences	Sustainable Business Plans & Management Plans
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES Parks Canada provides a range of opportunities that addresses its targeted visitor segments' needs and expectations.	Target segments participate in opportunities that are targeted to their needs and expectations.	Level of participation by the target segments	On-site visitor surveys
DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE Deliver consistently high quality services that meet or exceed visitors' needs and expectations.	The state of perceived service quality received by visitors: 85% overall visitor satisfaction, including at least 50% very satisfied.	Perceived level of service quality by 85% of target	Primary: Components of Common Measurement Tool Service Quality (Measures perceived quality of service, and expectations of service); Onsite survey program
CONNECTING VISITORS PERSONALLY WITH THE PLACE Recognition that the visitor experience is personal and created within each visitor.	The presence and level of a visitor's connection to the park or site.	Level of understanding and importance of these special places Likelihood of return visit (repeat at local and within system)	VIP National Poll
VISITOR SAFETY			

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix E: Park Attendance and Use

	PARK ENTRIES YEAR	PARK ENTRIES SUMMER*	CAMPER NIGHTS	FISHING PERMITS	BACK COUNTRY PERMITS
2000–2001	223,240	185,765	27,442	5,029	513
2001–2002	229,666	190,026	29,443	5,487	572
2002–2003	225,162	186,277	28,591	4,842	499
2003–2004	241,073	201,615	29,477	4,922	634
2004–2005	223,008	186,309	25,293	5,003	533
2005–2006	216,179	179,772	24,352	4,156	538

* May to September

A visitor survey in 2001/2002 revealed the following information about visitors to Prince Albert National Park.

- 85% visited the park for recreation or pleasure
- 84.6% were from Saskatchewan, and 97% were Canadian
- 86.8% were repeat visitors to the park
- Over one-third (35.5%) of visitors to the park were day users
- The average group size of the parties interviewed was 2.6 people
- The average age of visitors was 37.6 years, with almost one-quarter 18 years or younger
- Visitors appear largely satisfied with the facilities, activities, and services provided in the park
- 'Spending time with family and friends' and 'a recreational experience' were the two most important factors in the decision to visit the park
- Camping and staying in a motel or hotel account for over 60% of overnight stays in the Waskesiu area

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix F: Park Assets and Infrastructure - 2006

INFRASTRUCTURE	
# Kilometres of paved throughway	75.3 km
# Kilometres of unpaved throughway / trails	130.5 km unpaved roads
# Kilometers of hiking and ski trails	237.5 km of hiking trails 118.1km of skiing trails
# Contemporary structures (including VRC)	120
Asset Condition	36% Good 46% Fair 19.3% Poor 0.6% Closed 0.1% Not rated
# Campgrounds / campsites	6 Front country - 509 campsites 18 Backcountry - 45 campsites 3 Group Campgrounds - 20 campsites

Up-to-date information will be available on the Parks Canada - Prince Albert National Park website.

Appendix G: Trail Definitions

Interpretive loop trail

- no perpetual wet spots; boardwalk or stairs as required to ensure safe footing for families with small children or people with limited mobility
- between 0.5 and 2 km long
- interpretive signs or self-guiding brochures; may have viewing platforms or towers

Day-use trail

- some wet spots; may have corduroy segments or simple wooden bridges to ensure safe access for hikers, horse riders, or cyclists
- between 2- and 15-km long, with links to other trails offering a variety of options for hikers, skiers, horse riders, and cyclists
- trailhead maps and interpretive information; orientation information at major trail junctions
- no trucks or heavy equipment used for maintenance. Light motorized equipment (quads or snowmobiles) may be used in winter for setting cross-country ski trails and mowing bicycle trails in late spring

Wilderness route or portage

- no tread maintenance; trail cleared of deadfall and brushed periodically
- trail markers (wolf head symbol) where required for safe orientation
- no motorized equipment (except chainsaws) used for maintenance

User-maintained trail

- day-use or wilderness routes; not part of the park's trail network
- maintained by interested groups to park standards
- limited use of motor vehicles for maintenance in wilderness areas, except as required to track-set cross-country ski trails

Appendix H: Glossary

Adaptive management - "Learning while doing." Results of the carefully thought out actions are monitored and compared to the predicted outcome. Future actions are adjusted accordingly.

Commemorative Integrity - A historic place (national historic site, heritage railway station, federal heritage building, etc.) may be said to possess commemorative integrity when the resources that symbolize or represent its importance are not impaired or under threat, when the reasons for its significance are effectively communicated to the public, and when the heritage value of the place is respected.

Cultural Resource Management - Generally accepted practices for the conservation and presentation of cultural resources, founded on principles and carried out in a practice that integrates professional, technical and administrative activities so that the historic value of cultural resources is taken into account in actions that might affect them. In Parks Canada, Cultural Resource Management encompasses the presentation and use, as well as the conservation of cultural resources.

Cultural Resource - A human work or a place which gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning, and which has been determined to have historic value.

Ecological Integrity - A condition where the structure and function of an ecosystem are unimpaired by stresses induced by human activity and are likely to persist.

Ecological Integrity, Maintenance of - Managing ecosystems in such a way that ecological processes are maintained and genetic, species and ecosystem diversity are assured for the future.

Federal Heritage Building - Any federally owned building that has been designated by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the Federal Heritage Buildings Policy.

Functionally extirpated - Describes a species that has been extirpated from an area; though a few individuals may occasionally be found, they are not thought to constitute a viable population.

Genetic diversity - the natural variation in genetic make-up among individuals of the same species Biodiversity is linked to ecological processes such as fire, predation, pollination, seed dispersal, and grazing. These natural processes, along with the physical environment that produces and supports the diversity of life, must also be maintained.

Exotic - A plant or animal species that did not originate from the area but has now established in the ecosystem.

Herbivory - The act of eating vegetation. Herbivores eat vegetation. "Grass eaters or grazers" such as bison consume mainly grasses. "Twig eaters or browsers" such as moose consume twigs from trees and shrubs. Browsers and grazers make up the herbivore guild.

Heritage Area - A generic term used to signify those geographical areas which are included within the Parks Canada Program. These include National Parks, National Marine Conservation Areas, National Historic Sites and Historic Canals

Heritage Resources - A Heritage Area, or any natural or cultural features associated with Heritage Areas or potential Areas.

Heritage Tourism - An immersion in the natural history, human heritage, the arts and philosophy, and the institutions of another region or country that creates understanding, awareness and support for the nation's heritage.

Hydrology - The occurrence, circulation, and distribution of water in the environment.

Indigenous Species - Organisms that occur naturally in a particular area instead of being introduced, directly or indirectly, by human activity.

Management Plan - A document that constitutes the local expression of the general policies of the department and approved by the Minister following extensive public participation. This plan directs the long-term development and operation of a park, national historic site or canal. It constitutes a framework within which subsequent management, implementation and detailed planning will take place.

Monitoring - To gather information consistently over time on one or a group of living organisms or non-living elements to determine their status, abundance, distribution and/or interactions with other organisms or the environment.

National Historic Site - Any place declared to be of national historic interest or significance by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

National Marine Conservation Areas - A designated marine area set aside in accordance with the National Marine Conservation Area Policy.

National Park - Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations; (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area; and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible. Source:"Guidelines for Protected Areas Management Categories" - IUCN - The World Conservation Union (1994).

In Canada, the word also means a national park as described in Schedule 1 of the National Parks Act. It is an area which has been identified as a natural area of Canadian significance, which has been acquired by Canada and designated by Parliament as a national park, and over which Parks Canada has been given administration and control under the authority of the National Parks Act. It is managed for the benefit, education and enjoyment of Canadians so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations.

Neo-tropical migrants - Birds, especially songbirds, that summer in North America but migrate to the tropics for the winter.

Oligotrophic Lake - A relatively nutrient-poor lake, it is clear and deep with bottom waters high in dissolved oxygen.

Riffle - Shallow reaches with low sub-critical flow (1-4% gradient) in alluvial channels of finer particles that are unstable, characterized by small hydraulic jumps over rough bed material, causing small ripples, waves and eddies without breaking the surface tension. Stable riffles are important in maintaining the water level in the pool immediately upstream of the pool. Riffles can be generally characterized by moving water with small ripples, waves and eddies - waves not breaking, surface tension not broken.

Riparian - Areas of land immediately adjacent to streams and rivers. Riparian also describes plants and animals associated with these areas.

Social and economic needs - This term reaches beyond financial needs. It refers to the needs of people to enjoy, appreciate, and understand nature, and to participate in the conservation of wilderness areas and the reintroduction of species. As an example, the reintroduction of a species could be the celebration of an event that has not taken place for decades.

Stakeholders – A person or organization with an interest in Prince Albert National Park of Canada. Organizations may include both government and non-government organizations, commercial, and for profit or non-profit organizations.

State of the Park Report - State of the Park Report - an Assessment of Ecological Integrity gives a snapshot description of the state of ecological integrity for a park, and where possible, the greater ecosystems adjacent to the park. Based on completed or current monitoring and research programs, the report provides a clear evaluation of the ecological sustainability of PANP. The document also examines how, primarily, resource conservation management actions have affected ecological integrity. To a lesser extent, other elements of the park's management program such as Heritage Presentation, Visitor Use and Asset Management will also be assessed. Activities in these functions can, at times, have both direct and indirect impacts on the park's ecological integrity. The EI of each national park will be reexamined every five years, with the State of the Park Report providing those updates. The State of the Park report is a critical precursor to the park management plan review process, illuminating information and data gaps, and identifying issues that need consideration in the next park management plan. Key to the park's success in managing for sustained ecological integrity is to include the results of park monitoring in management directions within the park, and influencing, where possible, management decisions in the greater ecosystem outside the park.

Suite of Indicators - A range of indicators used to assess the current state of ecological integrity, visitor experience or educational opportunities.

Sustainable Manner - The use of resources in a way that ensures their integrity is not destroyed.

Sustainable Use - A general term meaning that people can gain direct and indirect benefits from heritage resources over the long term, without destroying them

Visitor Activity - Educational or recreational pursuits that contribute to an understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of heritage resources.

Wilderness - "An enduring natural area of sufficient size to protect pristine ecosystems which may serve physical and spiritual well being. It is an area where little or no persistent evidence of human intrusion is permitted so that ecosystems may continue to evolve." National Wilderness Colloquium (1988).