

**Kananaskis Country  
Provincial Recreation Areas  
and  
Bragg Creek Provincial Park  
Management Plan**



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# PREAMBLE

We invite Albertans to make a connection with the natural environment through our parks; to understand how we are part of a larger system – an ecosystem of living things. That connection is paramount to our survival. Our sustainability is a direct result of our ability to co-exist within a natural system.

By working together, Parks' staff, volunteers, First Nations, stakeholders, partners and the public build a constituency of support for parks. We build a community of people connected to the natural world.

We believe in a set of values – a way of doing business that inspires people to discover, value, protect, and enjoy that natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.

## ***Parks within the Provincial Context***

Alberta's prosperity has created opportunities for our economy and people, but it has also created challenges for Alberta's landscapes. Industrial activity, municipal development, infrastructure, recreation, and conservation interests often are competing to use the same piece of land. The competition between user groups creates conflict, and often puts stress on the finite capacity of our land, air, water, and habitat.

To resolve this conflict, the Government of Alberta developed the Land Use Framework (LUF). The purpose of the Land-use Framework is to manage growth, not stop it, and to sustain our growing economy, but balance this with Alberta's social and environmental goals. This is what the Land Use Framework is about – smart growth.

A key player in the management of growth is Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation as it has the responsibility for managing Alberta's provincial parks and for supporting tourism development. To ensure the management of parks aligns with the Government of Alberta's strategic direction, the *Plan for Parks* was released in April 2009. It outlines key planning elements also found in the Land Use Framework, and both share the following desired outcomes:

- People-friendly communities and recreational opportunities
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- Sustainable prosperity supported by our land and natural resources

The *Plan for Parks* also provides a foundation for decision making through a set of guiding principles. These guiding principles will help guide complex decision making where needs are diverse and sometimes competing.

The guiding principles are:

- Accountability
- Citizen Engagement
- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement and Innovation
- Education
- Environmental Leadership
- Inclusion
- Integrated Management
- Knowledge-based Decision-making
- Respectful and Responsive
- Stewardship
- Sustainability

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation will report to Albertans on progress that has been made towards the desired outcomes and milestones in the Ministry Annual Report. This way, Albertans will be able to track the environmental, social, and economic health of Alberta's parks system.

Regional planning under the Land Use Framework will address land use needs across the seven regions of the province. Regional plans developed under the Land Use Framework will provide broad direction to park plans at all scales – from regional parks plans to management plans for specific parks. Where appropriate, park management plans, such as this document, are completed at a smaller scale prescribing detailed direction for a site or group of related sites, but always within a broader provincial and regional context.

### ***Working Together Toward a Common Vision***

We also recognize that unless we manage the environment responsibly, the beautiful landscape we enjoy may cease to exist. Good environmental management positively impacts ecosystems found within park boundaries and the effect is felt throughout the province.

Alberta's *Plan for Parks* reaffirms that we must meet both objectives – recreation and conservation – within Alberta's parks system because they are inextricably linked.

The *Plan for Parks* includes the following vision:

*Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.*

Key to this vision is the role of Albertans, who will help create the recommendations that guide how their parks are managed.

### ***Community Engagement is Integral to Our Success***

The *Plan for Parks* reaffirms a commitment to engage Albertans to ensure informed decisions are made that are sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values. Consultation with our First Nation communities, stakeholder groups, partners, and the public is beneficial in planning and decision-making. It helps to identify and gain understanding of key issues; to help fully identify and assess the impacts of options; to ensure that all components of public involvement have been considered; and, to feed information into the decision-making process and to evaluate the results.

The Parks Division believes strongly that meaningful consultation is an essential component of community engagement. The partnerships and relationships developed and nurtured through community engagement are generally long-term and provide an effective assessment of park management.

Aboriginal consultation is a unique process because the Government of Alberta recognizes Aboriginal communities on a government-to-government basis. Consultation between the Parks Division and Aboriginal communities involves information sharing and ongoing relationship building with the objective to reduce or mitigate impacts on Treaty rights and traditional uses on lands administered by the Parks Division.

Community engagement and consultation will continue to be a critical aspect of park management planning processes.

***Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas & Bragg Creek Provincial Park are priority sites***

The Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas, as well as Bragg Creek Provincial Park, are priority sites in the Alberta parks system and were chosen as a priority for management plan development.

These Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) accommodate a wide range of safe and enjoyable outdoor public recreation use while limiting the impacts of that use on natural and cultural features. Together with the network of recognized recreational corridors that are connected to many of the PRAs, they form a very significant component of the outdoor recreation spectrum in the Calgary region. Bragg Creek Provincial Park is locally and regionally important as a year-round day-use recreation destination.

The proposed overall management direction for the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas and Bragg Creek Provincial Parks is:

- To provide high quality, safe, and enjoyable recreation experiences for visitors in well designed and maintained facilities, as well as acting as staging areas to recreation opportunities on adjacent Crown lands
- To support the development of healthy, sustainable tourism activities that complement park features and facilities, as well as nearby community initiatives
- To protect significant natural, cultural, and scenic values within the areas
- To provide interpretation and educational opportunities at appropriate sites



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# 1.0 KANANASKIS COUNTRY PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREAS

## 1.1. **PURPOSE OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This plan addresses the overall management of 52 Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) and Bragg Creek Provincial Park. All are located in the Kananaskis Region and west of the City of Calgary. This plan will not apply to the Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area, located in the Kananaskis Region, as it has a management plan that was approved in 2004 following extensive public and stakeholder consultations. This plan will also not apply to the Wolf Creek and Volcano Ridge PRA's as they are included in the Sheep River Provincial Park and Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park Management Plan that was approved in 2008.

Provincial Recreation Areas are established under the *Provincial Parks Act* and are intended to accommodate a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities rather than providing a high degree of protection for natural or cultural values. They are generally smaller land areas offering day use or camping facilities within them. Provincial Parks help preserve natural and cultural heritage of the site, as well as support outdoor recreation, tourism and heritage appreciation activities that depend upon and are compatible with environmental protection. This plan provides background information on the 52 PRAs and Bragg Creek Provincial Park as well as proposed management intent statements, management objectives, and management strategies.

The plan will be used by staff of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (Alberta Parks) as well as staff of other government agencies, First Nations, stakeholders (such as volunteers, leaseholders, special interest groups) and the general public. It forms the foundation for more specific management strategies or annual operating plans and budgets within these parks. Management plans are normally reviewed and updated ten years after approval.

## 1.2. **WORKING TOGETHER**

Most of the 52 Provincial Recreation Areas in the planning area are surrounded by Forest Reserve lands managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD). Forest Reserve lands are managed for watershed, fish and wildlife protection, while accommodating public outdoor recreation along with timber harvesting, cattle grazing, and petroleum activities. Other departments with a role to play in managing these provincial crown lands or facilities include Alberta Environment and Water, Alberta Infrastructure, and Alberta Transportation. The Kananaskis Improvement District (KID) exercises development control and provides municipal services in much of the planning area. Bragg Creek Provincial Park is surrounded by private country residential lands under the jurisdiction of the Municipal District of Rockyview. Coordination among government departments is achieved through interdepartmental referrals as well as the Kananaskis Country Interdepartmental Consultative Committee (KCICC). Consultation with Treaty 7 First Nations with interests in these areas occurs under the Alberta Framework for First Nation Consultations and related guidelines. Stakeholders including the Forest Management Agreement holder, leaseholders, and permit holders as well as volunteers and interest groups are all involved in ongoing management of these lands. First Nations, stakeholders and any interested group or individuals have been invited to review and comment on this management plan during its preparation.

A number of advisory groups or partnerships have been formed involving parks staff, park users and stakeholders in or near Kananaskis Country. Examples include the Friends of Kananaskis Country who have a co-operating agreement with the Parks Division, a Trail Users

Group and, more recently, the Elbow River Watershed Partnership. To date, these partnerships have resulted in improved communications and understanding, additional and better coordinated research and management actions and additional outside resources. Outside donations and volunteer labour have contributed to help maintain or upgrade Kananaskis Country trails, support research and environmental education activities in and around Kananaskis Country.

### **1.3. ALBERTA'S PROVINCIAL PARK SYSTEM**

The strategic direction for Alberta's provincial parks system, *Alberta's Plan for Parks (Plan for Parks)*, acknowledges the interconnectedness between the environmental, societal, and economic values of parks to the people of Alberta. It also recognizes parks as being important to the quality of life Albertans enjoy and that responsible management of our parks is essential to ensure that parks support a high quality of life for current and future generations.

#### **1.3.1. The Vision for Parks**

The *Plan for Parks* established a new vision for the parks system. This vision illustrates the need to balance recreation and conservation, as they are inextricably linked.

The vision for the provincial parks system is:

*Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.*

#### **1.3.2. The Desired Outcomes of Parks**

Specific management objectives and actions that are presented in park management plans are intended to guide the present and future management and operation of parks. These specific objectives and actions are framed within the broad desired outcomes of the parks system.

There are three desired outcomes for the provincial parks system.

- People friendly communities and recreational opportunities
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- Sustainable prosperity supported by our land and natural resources

These three desired outcomes are not ranked by priority. They are interrelated and must be achieved together to meet the expectations of Albertans.

Similar to parks organizations across Canada and the world, Alberta Parks adopted four high-level program goals that address the important role of parks in the conservation of biodiversity, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and tourism.

The four program goals span the breadth of the Alberta Parks program, and similar to the desired outcomes, balance in the delivery of these goals through management objectives and actions, provides balance across the entire parks system.

The goals used to frame management objectives and actions for program delivery in park management plans are:

*Conservation & Protection* – Parks conserve Alberta's natural heritage and associated cultural heritage for current and future generations.

*Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living* – Parks provide diverse, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

*Learning & Engagement* – Parks offer an opportunity to learn about, appreciate and care for Alberta’s natural and cultural heritage.

*Tourism & Community* – Parks foster sustainable, nature-based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta.

### **1.3.3. Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas Site Significance Statement**

In assessing the significance of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas, information gathered during the planning process has identified the exceptional values and key opportunities and features required to maintain the significance of these sites. The significance statement provides an important framework on which to base all other assumptions about these sites and decisions about the way they should be managed and used. Unless the inherent natural, cultural and recreational values of the recreational areas are adequately understood and integrated, it can be difficult to apply appropriate management actions and ensure their sustainable use into the future. Taking these points into consideration, the following statement has been developed to outline how these recreational areas contribute to the region and how it benefits Albertans:

*These Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) accommodate a wide range of safe and enjoyable outdoor public recreation use while limiting the impacts of that use on natural and cultural features. Together with the network of designated recreation trails that are connected to many of the PRAs, they form a very significant component of the outdoor recreation spectrum in the Calgary region.*

## **1.4. PARK CLASSIFICATION**

Provincial Recreation Areas are one of eight (8) classifications of parks within Alberta’s park system. Each class allows for a different experience for the park visitor and level of protection for the landscape. Provincial Recreation Areas are established and governed under the *Provincial Parks Act*. They support outdoor recreation and tourism and often provide access to lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and adjacent Crown land. Typically, they:

- Support a range of outdoor activities in natural, modified, and man-made settings.
- Are managed with outdoor recreation as the primary goal.
- Can be intensively developed, while some can remain largely undeveloped.
- Play a significant role in management of adjacent Crown lands and waters by localizing the impact of development and serving as staging areas.

## **1.5. MANAGEMENT INTENT FOR KANANASKIS COUNTRY PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREAS**

The Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas will be managed for the following purposes:

- To provide high quality, safe, and enjoyable visitor experiences in well designed and maintained facilities, as well as acting as staging areas to recreation experiences on adjacent Crown lands
- To continue to support the development of healthy, sustainable tourism activities that complement park features and facilities, as well as nearby community initiatives
- To protect significant natural, cultural, and scenic values of these areas
- To provide high quality interpretation and educational opportunities at appropriate sites

## 1.5.1. Guiding Principles for Management

The following management principles guided the development of objectives and strategies for these provincial recreation areas.

### 1.5.1.1. *Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living*

- a) Provide safe and secure access and staging areas for a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities
- b) Enhance visitor quality of life by providing opportunities for interaction with nature through recreation
- c) Provide meaningful recreation opportunities for all visitors regardless of social, economic, or physical condition

### 1.5.1.2. *Learning & Engagement*

- a) High quality interpretation, education and visitor information is easily accessible to visitors and nearby communities
- b) Cultural features continue to be identified, researched, protected and/or interpreted as appropriate
- c) Providing high quality volunteer opportunities as well as visitor information, interpretation and environmental education programs is essential
- d) Current research is incorporated into programming wherever appropriate

### 1.5.1.3. *Tourism & Community*

- a) People are a fundamental part of the ecosystem. The Parks Division and other government agencies will work with visitors, residents and stakeholders to provide high quality, sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities while protecting ecological, scenic, and cultural heritage. Understanding the relationship between people and the environment is the foundation of good management decisions.
- b) The traditional relationship of First Nations to these parks will be respected and will help to guide management.
- c) Infrastructure is designed and developed to facilitate inclusive visitor experiences and, where cost effective, will employ new and innovative sustainable technologies.
- d) Enhancing effective communications and outreach will be a priority.
- e) The promotion of these areas as valued assets within the local community is a priority.

### 1.5.1.4. *Conservation & Protection*

- a) Ensure long term ecological health
  - Facility location, design and construction will recognize potential impacts on natural processes and systems (including vegetation and wildlife communities, watersheds in general and streams/rivers in particular) and will be completed to minimize or remove these impacts.
  - Natural vegetation communities and predator/prey relationships will be allowed to function and evolve naturally, wherever possible.
  - Wildlife corridors will continue to be maintained and allowed to function effectively.
  - Where it becomes desirable to maintain or restore ecosystems through reclamation or other actions, local native species, patterns and processes will be used wherever possible.
  - The Parks Division and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development will work towards the establishment of more precise monitoring targets and/or indicator species through ongoing research and planning activities.
- b) Manage the areas within the broader landscape

- Ecosystems extend beyond park boundaries. While management on neighbouring lands may affect wildlife, air, water, vegetation and visitor experience within a park, likewise management within a park may also affect adjacent lands. Ensuring good communication and collaboration among land managers and stakeholders including neighbouring jurisdictions is essential.
  - In all cases, vegetation management is undertaken using an ecologically appropriate approach
  - Grazing will be managed consistent with both grazing needs and park objectives
  - Monitoring, research and adaptive management are key components of an ecosystem-based approach.
- c) Use of the precautionary principle
- Decisions are based on the best available ecological, visual, cultural, economic and social information.
  - The precautionary principle will be applied when potential consequences are uncertain.
  - The Parks Division recognizes environmental screening and assessment as a necessary tool for anticipating, evaluating, mitigating and reducing the impacts of human activity on protected area lands. Screening and assessment includes a visual/scenic component.

## **1.6. REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The Kananaskis Region is primarily located in Alberta's Eastern Slopes foothills and mountains and extends to include a small portion of parklands around the City of Calgary. This area includes a portion of the headwaters of the Red Deer River as well as much of the headwaters of the Ghost, Spray, Kananaskis, Jumpingpound Creek, Elbow, Sheep and Highwood rivers. These headwaters contribute a significant portion of the flow of the Bow watershed. The region contains a wide variety of vegetation types, interesting geological formations, wildlife populations, diverse terrain, and some of the most spectacular scenery in Alberta.

Its natural attractions, proximity to Calgary, and easy access make it the most heavily used recreation area in the province. Recognizing the high recreation potential of this area as well as its importance for watershed protection and for resource activities (e.g. timber harvesting, cattle grazing, oil, and gas), the Government of Alberta announced its intent to establish Kananaskis Country as a major, multi-use recreation area in 1977 and followed this with a formal dedication in September 1978.

The development of Kananaskis Country recreation facilities was governed by the Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country (1977). Since then, recreation policies have evolved based on decisions refined and updated through a 1979 review, government decisions concerning proposed development in the 1986 Integrated Resource Plan, and the 1999 Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy.

A great variety of animal life is found here including grizzly bear, black bear, wolf, bobcat, lynx, cougar, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, elk, deer, and moose. Many are dependent on small, isolated patches of critical winter habitat. Most valleys and passes in the Management Area are important wildlife movement corridors providing linkages to larger populations of these animals in the region.

Approximately 40 percent of the total land area of Kananaskis Country, a portion of the Kananaskis Region, is managed under parks legislation. Parks include Peter Lougheed, Spray Valley, Sheep River, Canmore Nordic Centre, Bow Valley and Bragg Creek Provincial Parks, Elbow Sheep, Bow Valley, Bluerock and Don Getty Wildland Provincial Parks, Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area (not included in this plan), Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve, Ghost River Wilderness Area and 52 Provincial Recreation Areas. Parks Division

staff are responsible for managing all of these parks as well as the approximately 700 km of officially designated trails in the east part of Kananaskis Country.

Kananaskis Country has over three and a half million visitors annually (Park User Statistics Report, 2003/2004). Day use accounts for over 3 million visitors or 80 percent of the use. Since 1988:

- Day use has been increasing by approximately 5 percent per year (from about 1.6 million to about 3 million visitors per year between 1988 and 2000);
- Vehicle camping use has increased by only 3 percent due to accommodations being full during peak demand periods, weather, and other factors;
- Significant increases in numbers of off highway vehicles, especially quads and motorcycles, have occurred in the Ghost/Waiparous and McLean zones;
- Campgrounds providing electricity, showers, water and/or sewer hook-ups have experienced increases in use;
- The number of approved guide and outfitters (e.g. equestrian, hiking, white water) operating in Kananaskis Country has increased from 8 to 100.

### **1.6.1. Location and Access**

The PRAs are distributed over a wide geographic area (see Maps 1 and 2) and thus have been grouped in this plan by road access and watershed. The groupings are: *Ghost/Waiparous* (Highways 40/940), *Jumpingpound* (Highway 68), *Elbow* (Highway 66) and *Highwood* (Highways 541/940). Many of the PRAs are within an hour's drive of Calgary. The Highway 66 seasonal closure December 1<sup>st</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> is for winter wildlife habitat protection in the Rainy Summit vicinity. The Highway 40 winter closure is for the protection of regionally significant elk and bighorn sheep winter habitat, spring grizzly bear range, and high avalanche hazards. The winter closure of Gorge Creek Trail is for wildlife habitat protection and the Moose Mountain Ridge Road is due to unsafe travel conditions. Highway 940 winter closure is due to low use and hazardous road conditions.

While those sites further from the city are often not as busy as those closer, the standard of access road also has a large impact on the level and kind of recreational use. For example, Highway 66 is paved, directly accessible for many people and is extremely busy while Highway 68 is mostly gravel, is also easily accessible to many people yet has remained much less busy. Parks staff will continue to work closely with Alberta Transportation to ensure that maintenance of roadways as well as proposals for upgrading are coordinated with the facilities and capability of an area to support different use levels.

## **1.7. PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA HISTORY**

Many of the facilities included in the PRAs were established as Forest Recreation Sites in the 1960s. Those within Kananaskis Country were redeveloped and expanded during the 1980's capital development phase and were designated as Provincial Recreation Areas in 1981. The Forest Recreation Sites in the Ghost/Waiparous became Provincial Recreation Areas in the 1990s. Today, these 52 PRAs are managed by the Parks Division with most of the day to day operations being done by contractors under the terms of a Facility Operating Agreement. No previous management plans exist for these Provincial Recreation Areas.



## 2.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

### 2.1. RECREATION

The most popular recreation activities within or near these PRAs include camping, picnicking, trail recreation, and fishing. While hunting is not permitted within the PRAs for public safety reasons, it does occur on nearby forest reserve lands and in Wildland Parks. Seasonal paddling occurs on the Elbow and Highwood rivers. Boating is an important activity on Ghost Reservoir. The facilities in the PRAs covered in this plan are described in Table 1, Appendix A.

Twenty-five of the PRAs contain campgrounds or group camps while twenty-seven are day use/trail head sites only. Most of the campgrounds also have day use components at the site. These PRAs are mainly located between public roadways and streams or rivers that provide a focal point for recreation as well as an easily recognizable boundary. There are two backcountry campsites (Wildhorse and Big Elbow) and two PRAs that include administrative or service nodes (Highwood Compound and Highwood Junction). Many of those in the Jumpingpound, Elbow and Threepoint valleys provide access to the 700 kilometers of designated trails in the eastern part of Kananaskis Country. While most of these trails are non-motorized, the McLean Creek and Fisher Creek PRAs service motorized (off highway vehicle) trails within the McLean Creek Public Land Use Zone. As well, Dawson, Etherington and Cataract PRAs provide access to designated snowmobile trails. In the Ghost/Waiparous, both South Ghost and Fallen Timber South PRAs provide staging facilities for nearby designated OHV trails. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) intends to implement an Access Management Plan for the Ghost/Waiparous and, as planning progresses, it is expected that other existing PRAs in the Ghost may become OHV camping or staging areas while also accommodating other non-motorized recreation activities.

Past visitor surveys and staff observations in Kananaskis Country indicate that approximately 80 percent of total use is day use and 20 percent is camping. Weekends are markedly busier than weekdays, although weekday use has been increasing at certain popular staging areas. Analysis of summer camping use levels indicates that all of the Elbow Valley campgrounds are either approaching or are at high occupancy levels. Those in the rest of the planning area are occasionally at capacity. Similar occupancy figures are not available for day use sites but staff observations indicate frequent or occasional congestion and crowding on weekends at Elbow Falls, Allen Bill, and Powderface in the Elbow Valley. Noticeable increases in mountain bike use have occurred in the Elbow and Jumpingpound valleys, along with increases in OHV use in the McLean Creek Public Land Use Zone.

Available statistics (Park User Statistics 2003-2004) indicate that the Jumpingpound sites see approximately 10,000 campers and 46,000 day visitors annually; the Elbow Valley sites 81,700 campers and over 360,000 day visitors annually; and the Highwood sites over 10,000 campers and 17,000 day visitors. No statistics for the Ghost/Waiparous area are available but use levels are generally lower. No marked increases in camping use levels have been observed over the last several years. The lack of marked increases corresponds generally with data from long established traffic counters maintained by Alberta Transportation on most access roads to Kananaskis Country. While Highway 66 (Elbow) has seen a 13 percent increase in average annual daily traffic volume over the last 10 year period, significant fluctuations from year to year (likely weather related) are seen to occur.

In winter various roads are closed to public vehicle traffic either to protect important winter habitat for wildlife or because of avalanche or public safety concerns. Fewer campgrounds and day use sites are open in winter due mainly to lower demand but also because some sites are not designed for winter use. Several PRAs are kept open for winter picnicking, hiking, viewing or ice fishing. On sunny winter days, several hundred vehicles may be observed at Elbow Falls. Winter camping occurs at McLean Creek Campground which has electrical hookups, as well as at Cataract and Etherington snowmobile staging areas. Cross country

skiing occurs at West Bragg Creek PRA and parks staff work with local volunteers to groom, maintain, and upgrade ski trails as well as summer trails at that location. Low use by snowmobiles occurs at McLean Creek and Sibbald as well as in the Ghost/Waiparous area. A noticeable increase in demand for winter use by OHVs has been observed in both the Ghost/Waiparous and McLean areas. The Ghost Reservoir is popular for ice fishing and ice boating in winter.

Firepits were installed in many day use (picnic) sites in the early 1980s throughout Kananaskis Country. However, during the 1990s when firewood ceased to be supplied, the demand for firepits was reduced. Consequently, as firepits needed replacement or became disused, they were often removed. Recently, public complaints have been received from day users that there are insufficient places left where one can have a fire as part of a visit to a day use site in both summer and winter. In view of these concerns, it is proposed that day use firepits be provided under the following guidelines:

- Several day use sites in each valley or portion of the Management Area will have an appropriate number of firepits installed and maintained to meet demand.
- Visitors will bring their own wood. Those sites chosen will be where wood can be purchased nearby or on the way to the site. No gathering of firewood onsite is permitted.
- Sites should have an accessible source of water nearby with which to extinguish fires.
- Firepits will be installed where they will not increase crowding, rowdyism or vandalism.

The day use sites proposed as locations for firepits are indicated in the Plan Implementation section.

### 2.1.1. Recreation - Management Objectives

The following table highlights recreation management objectives applicable to all Provincial Recreation Areas within this management plan.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
To provide a wide range of accessible, safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish existing viable recreation facilities on a priority basis</li> <li>• Identify potential new PRAs where demand warrants</li> <li>• Work with Alberta Transportation to coordinate maintenance and determine appropriate standards of access roads in the planning area.</li> <li>• Develop partnerships for planning, building and operating an appropriate range of recreation opportunities</li> </ul>
To improve inclusiveness of recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new facilities accommodate a wide and appropriate range of visitors</li> </ul>
To work closely with SRD, stakeholders and users to maintain or enhance a variety of trail opportunities on forest reserve lands when they are associated with PRAs and where demand warrants and feasibility can be demonstrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure current plans are in place and effective timber and land use referrals occur that minimize negative impacts on designated trails and, where possible, result in benefits to trail recreation (e.g. upgraded or additional trails)</li> <li>• Identify potential new recreation sites or trails and, along with SRD and stakeholders, determine feasibility and desirability of formal facility development</li> </ul>

<p>To minimize impacts of recreation activities on water, soils, vegetation, fish, wildlife, scenic and cultural values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners in the Elbow and other valleys to assess future flood damage risks to existing facilities risks to alluvial aquifers and, where appropriate, identify mitigation or other measures.</li> <li>• Exercise discretion and due diligence in future facility development on active floodplains and alluvial aquifer</li> <li>• Ensure site plans, designs and construction minimizes siltation into water courses during construction and operations.</li> <li>• The development of new facilities on previously undisturbed sites will be subject to environmental and cultural assessments to determine feasibility and/or protection/mitigation measures. This will include proactive First Nation consultations as determined by the Government of Alberta's First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development.</li> </ul>
<p>To minimize the conflicts between recreational users and also between recreation and the other land uses occurring near to PRAs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to separate motorized from non-motorized uses</li> <li>• Plan new facilities so as to minimize conflicts with other existing land uses (e.g. sour gas wells, cattle grazing).</li> <li>• Carefully review and require other new land uses to minimize or eliminate the conflict potential.</li> <li>• Plan and design trails for shared use (e.g. hike/bike/equestrian) wherever possible but also provide single use trails where necessary and feasible.</li> <li>• Create through improved communications (e.g. signage, etc.), partnerships and user involvement, greater awareness and understanding of benefits of shared use and multiple use and how to minimize conflicts</li> </ul>

## 2.2. PUBLIC SAFETY

Responses to accidents, emergencies or calls for search and rescue assistance within Kananaskis Country are guided by the Kananaskis Improvement District Municipal Emergency Plan (MEP). Such MEPs are mandated by provincial legislation for all municipalities in Alberta. They are intended to ensure prompt and efficient responses to a full range of emergencies. The Ghost/Waiparous PRAs are part of the Municipal District (MD) of Bighorn which has its own MEP. In order to respond to larger scale emergencies, the MEPs call for government agencies and neighbouring municipalities (example: KID, Rocky View County, MD of Bighorn) to work together to share resources and define roles in various types and scales of incident. For example, Kananaskis Emergency Services will call on the Rocky View County ambulance personnel to respond to a motor vehicle accident on Highway 66 (Elbow). Kananaskis Emergency Services will investigate suspicious KID fires (vehicle, building, wildfire threat to facility) even though they may initially ask another agency to respond. In a forest fire situation,

SRD forest protection staff take the lead role and are supported by other government agencies. The RCMP is responsible for all ground searches, but works in unified command with Kananaskis Public Safety staff. Kananaskis Public Safety staff take the lead in technical search and rescue in Parks, KID and the Ghost/ Waiparous areas. Kananaskis Public Safety staff also monitor and communicate avalanche conditions to winter visitors in Kananaskis Country.

Visitors who are reported lost or injured while engaged in recreation in or near these PRAs receive assistance from parks staff and/or emergency personnel trained in search and rescue. In the backcountry, injured persons are stabilized and then evacuated to the next level of medical attention by Kananaskis Public Safety staff.

While Parks and SRD staff perceive wildfire as a natural disturbance process, it is highly unpredictable, and catastrophic wildfire may threaten human safety, development and valuable forests. Consequently all wildfires in proximity to the Provincial Recreation Areas in this plan area are managed according to provincial wildfire suppression policy in a manner consistent with the KID Municipal Emergency Plan. Fuel modification programs may be used in and adjacent to PRAs to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and improve fire suppression efforts by thinning the canopy and reducing ladder fuels. Prescribed fire and logging may be used in certain areas to simulate natural disturbance by wildfire where development or other factors have prevented or minimized the likelihood of stand-renewing wildfire.

Management of problem wildlife and wildlife-human conflict situations are dealt with through a variety of plans and procedures. Trail or area closures and selective vegetation alteration for example, are used to reduce conflict, public safety and impact concerns.

Periodic flooding of the creeks and rivers occurs in proximity to these sites. Parks' staff monitor flood conditions and take actions including temporary facility or road closures to maintain public safety.

Kananaskis Public Safety staff work with all gas and oil company safety plans to be able to assist should the companies or Energy Resources Conservation Board require enforcement or evacuation services in KID.

### 2.2.1. Public Safety - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Emergency Response	Maintain a current and effective Municipal Emergency Plan to manage single incidents to disaster scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Safety staff of Parks (responsible for KID MEP) to ensure MEP is updated annually in conjunction with other government agencies, neighbouring municipalities, emergency forces, and stakeholders</li> <li>Continue to provide high level training and leadership for technical backcountry, mountain, and water search and rescue</li> </ul>
Wildfire risk	Reduce wildfire risk within and near PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with SRD and stakeholders to implement appropriate "FireSmart" measures within and near PRAs</li> </ul>
Human Wildlife Conflict	Minimize human wildlife conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to update and implement various wildlife conflict prevention and response plans &amp; strategies</li> <li>Implement "Wildsmart" program in PRAs as resources permit</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider wildlife-human conflict potential before developing new or expanding existing facilities</li> </ul>
Floods	Minimize risk to visitors and recreation infrastructure from floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise discretion and due diligence in any future facility development on flood prone areas. Existing facilities at risk will be assessed to determine whether mitigation measures are required. Any future facilities developed in these PRAs will conform to the Flood Damage Reduction Program guidelines.</li> <li>• Parks staff will continue to work with adjacent municipalities and other partners to ensure that any future flood protection measures undertaken in the vicinity will have no or minimal effects on nearby parks, fish habitat etc.</li> </ul>



## **3.0 LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT**

### **3.1. VISITOR SERVICES**

Parks build environmental literacy in Albertans and visitors through education, information services, meaningful volunteer opportunities, and by showcasing best practices in green infrastructure and operations. The Parks Division stewardship model guides the delivery of all information and programming geared to encourage Albertan's and visitors to parks to become ambassadors and stewards of their natural heritage. The intent of the model is to move all visitors to parks from being unsupportive to a leader in stewardship through education, information sharing, and relationship building.

#### **3.1.1. Interpretive Programming**

Within the Kananaskis Country PRAs, the themes of watershed protection, early forest management, current land use activities, wildlife, and cultural history are the basis for interpretive and educational programming.

Interpretive programs provide an ideal opportunity to educate the public about the special features and natural themes of these areas. These programs are designed to educate visitors about the natural themes and management issues, with set objectives to improve understanding and encourage environmentally sustainable behaviour. In the past, these messages were available through evening interpretive programs at the Little Elbow, Paddy's Flat, McLean Creek and Gooseberry campground amphitheatres, as well as through guided hikes and point duties at various locations within the Elbow Valley. Heritage appreciation programming was limited in the Ghost/Waiparous, Jumpingpound, and Highwood areas.

#### **3.1.2. Information Services**

Visitor Information Centres are located throughout the area. These centres provide visitors with the personal and non-personal information services, exhibits, and displays. Environmental messages, visitor information, maps, brochures, and staff are available to inform visitors. Information on Kananaskis is available online to visitors and educators to gain information on the natural features, recreational opportunities, and visitor information. Information is also available at some high use areas, such as day use sites, campgrounds, highway pull offs, and along trails. This information generally concentrates on the natural features or processes occurring in that specific area and allows for the visitor to gain a better understanding of the area and what they see.

#### **3.1.3. Environmental Education & Stewardship**

Environmental education staff in Kananaskis Country provide a wide variety of field-based programs throughout the Elbow Valley for local and Calgary-based students. All programs meet Alberta Education curriculum objectives and help to increase environmental awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Alberta Parks. Education staff also provide educators with professional development opportunities to assist in the development and delivery of their own field programs or to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to take students outside. The most successful field program in the Elbow Valley is the watershed program which highlights a partnership involving the Friends of Kananaskis Country, the Elbow River Watershed Partnership, and Alberta Parks.

Stewardship and volunteer opportunities currently available in the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas are focused on assisting ministry staff to maintain official

designated trails, install bridges to replace trail fords, and on reclamation projects along streams.

### 3.1.4. Outreach

The Communications and outreach Coordinator position in the Kananaskis Region aims to increase awareness and foster stewardship for the natural and cultural heritage of Alberta among new audiences: beyond park boundaries, beyond existing park education initiatives, and beyond current park experiences. The Outreach Coordinator role is also intended to enhance the effectiveness and reach of park messages, related to heritage appreciation, stewardship, and park management, for the changing demographics of Albertans.

## 3.2. VISITOR SERVICES - MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Interpretive Programming	Provide programming that will enhance visitor understanding of the natural themes and features of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas and the contribution they make to the provincial system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Heritage Appreciation Programming to keep it current and interesting</li> <li>• Inclusiveness will be considered in the development of all programs</li> <li>• Explore expansion of Heritage Appreciation Programming to other PRAs</li> <li>• Significantly expand programming in Elbow Valley PRAs (if reclassified to Provincial Park). This would include water and watershed management topics related to management of lands within the park as well as on adjacent public lands.</li> </ul>
	Provide opportunities for appreciation of the natural features and processes within the Kananaskis Country PRAs and the surrounding landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support SRD in the development and maintenance of forestry related interpretive materials at the Demonstration Forest Exhibit</li> <li>• Continue to use existing interpretive trails and signs, and update as needed</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for expansion or development of new self-guided interpretive trails</li> </ul>
Information Services	Provide accurate and timely information to the public using a variety of methods to ensure visitors are properly prepared for their experience, encouraged to explore the area, and have a better understanding as they explore the areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with the Friends of Kananaskis Country Cooperating Association in the operation of aspects of the Kananaskis Country Information Centres</li> <li>• Provide printed information about the areas at local and regional tourism authorities or distribution points in Kananaskis Country</li> <li>• Use the website to provide up-to-date information</li> <li>• Ensure all orientation, information, and promotional products are consistent with ministry messages and presentation standards</li> </ul>

Environmental Education	Provide accessible, natural settings for application of knowledge and skills taught in the Alberta Education curriculum related to ecological processes, issues and outdoor pursuits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop youth education programs and teacher professional development opportunities to assist in the delivery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.</li> <li>• Continue to work cooperatively with the Elbow River Watershed Partnership and the Friends of Kananaskis Country to develop and deliver educational programs to adults and youth related to the Elbow Watershed.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to develop relationships with other non-profit and government organizations to deliver environmental education programs.</li> </ul>
Stewardship	Provide the public with opportunities to contribute to park management and protection of features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work cooperatively with volunteer and stewardship groups in the Kananaskis Region</li> <li>• Encourage participation in the Campground Host program</li> <li>• Encourage volunteerism around events occurring in the Kananaskis Country PRAs (e.g. remediation projects, trail development, etc.)</li> </ul>
Outreach	Develop park outreach programs and projects with priority groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus outreach efforts on persons with disabilities, new Canadians, First Nations, youth, and local community projects</li> <li>• Explore the development of corporate relationships</li> </ul>
	Expand and improve Kananaskis communications and interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase park messaging available for day users, conference attendees and non-english speakers</li> <li>• Improve accessibility of parks facilities including interpretive displays</li> </ul>



## **4.0 TOURISM & COMMUNITY**

### **4.1. TOURISM SERVICES & FACILITIES**

Appropriate and well-planned tourism and recreation developments can help foster sustainable, nature based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta. Kananaskis Country is unique in having a large area of provincial crown land that is scenic, has extensive outdoor recreation infrastructure and is easily accessible to a large nearby population base (Calgary). The PRAs along with the associated year round trail system are an important component of the recreation and tourism opportunities in the region and the province. In addition, ongoing consultations with Treaty 7 First Nations have indicated that some of these PRAs have potential cultural significance.

#### **4.1.1. Commercial Guiding and Instructing**

Provincial Recreation Areas are used year round by guiding and instructing companies for staging and conducting outdoor activities including hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, and cross country skiing. There are now over 100 guides or outfitters operating in Kananaskis Country. All commercial operators are required to obtain a “Guiding or Instructing an Outdoor Activity Permit” from the Parks Division. Permits may be limited in numbers and include conditions which reduce conflicts, impacts, and improve safety and are consistent with the approved guidelines for group size limits on park lands in Kananaskis Country.

#### **4.1.2. Commercial Filming**

Some Provincial Recreation Areas are popular locations for commercial filming of TV commercials, documentaries, and feature films. The Parks Division recognizes the economic and other benefits associated with commercial filming and the tourism which can result from films showcasing provincial park lands. In order to minimize conflicts and impacts on park lands, facilities and visitors, all filming projects require a permit issued by the Parks Division. Commercial filming is not normally permitted on weekends in Provincial Recreation Areas.

#### **4.1.3. Special Events**

Provincial Recreation Areas, in particular in the Elbow Valley, are often used as staging areas for special events such as mountain bike or running races. Examples include the Bow Cycle Mountain Bike Race and the Moose Mountain Trail Race. All special events require a permit that includes conditions to reduce conflicts and impacts. These conditions will be consistent with the approved Special Event Guidelines for Kananaskis Area which limits group size to 150 participants and parking use to 80 percent of available parking space. Special events will be permitted when they do not unduly disrupt general public access or use of the trails or facilities. Events are generally not approved on long weekends.

#### **4.1.4. Helicopter Tourism**

Presently there is no helicopter based tourism that directly affects the PRAs covered in this plan. Occasional sightseeing flights may occur but most of this activity occurs in the more westerly portions of Kananaskis Country and is managed through the “Voluntary Helicopter Guidelines for the Canmore/Kananaskis Area, December 1998”. These guidelines were developed by parks and fish and wildlife staff in consultation with the local helicopter operators to minimize impacts on wildlife, sensitive areas, and backcountry visitors.

#### 4.1.5. Tourism Facilities

Several tourism studies done over the past 10 years in the vicinity of Kananaskis Country have identified a variety of facility enhancements or new facilities that would benefit regional tourism. These have included upgrading and enhancing existing trails, trailheads, campgrounds and other facilities (e.g. Visitor Centers) and services (e.g. signage and information).

These studies have also recommended additional tourist facilities and services in “gateway” communities such as Canmore, Bragg Creek, Cochrane, Turner Valley, and Longview. Further commercial development within Kananaskis Country is restricted to a few small scale fixed roof facilities by the Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy (1999). This policy directs all large scale recreation and tourism developments outside of Kananaskis Country and limits small scale development to a few nodes. No development can occur in Wildland Parks or Ecological Reserves however restricted nodal development can occur in PRAs, provincial parks or forest reserve lands where an approved management plan exists. While three nodes have been identified in previous park management plans (at Barrier Lake, Kananaskis Village/Nakiska and the former Minimum Security Camp in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park), this management plan proposes three possible future nodes within or near existing PRAs. These proposed sites are indicated on Maps 3 and 4. While these sites were identified in previous tourism market studies, no detailed feasibility or other studies have yet been done.

#### 4.2. TOURISM SERVICES & FACILITIES - MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Tourism Services (Including guiding, outfitting, commercial filming, and special events)	To encourage the provision of a variety of high quality tourism services in Kananaskis Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with guides and outfitters to improve quality of facilities, experience and information provided to visitors.</li> <li>• Improve monitoring of and reporting on existing activities and permits to help minimize impacts and conflicts and ensure visitor safety and enjoyment</li> <li>• Work with SRD and other stakeholders to coordinate permitting between PRAs and forest reserve lands.</li> <li>• Working with the Alberta Film Commission to meet the needs of the film industry while minimizing impacts and conflicts.</li> <li>• Work with special event organizers to encourage smaller scale events in PRAs.</li> </ul>
Tourism Facilities	To refurbish and enhance existing recreation and tourism facilities where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish and enhance existing trails, trailheads, campgrounds and other visitor facilities as resources permit.</li> <li>• Where demand warrants and feasibility is demonstrated, develop additional facilities including loop or connecting trails.</li> <li>• Use partnership approach where feasible.</li> </ul>
	To manage all development proposals consistent with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff to work with telecommunications providers to increase cellular coverage where feasible</li> </ul>

	Kananaskis Recreation Policy (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct all non conforming tourism development outside Kananaskis Country</li> </ul>
	To encourage development of appropriate and sustainable tourism facilities at or near selected PRAs to meet the growing and diverse needs of visitors to Kananaskis Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update previous market assessment(s) for small fixed roof developments at these locations.</li> <li>• Consider potential future development nodes at or near Lusk Creek, Sibbald Lake and Elbow Falls PRAs (see Maps 3 and 4).</li> <li>• Conduct environmental reviews and more detailed studies required to support a future Call for Proposals process for these sites.</li> </ul>



## 5.0 CONSERVATION & PROTECTION

### 5.1. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Recreation areas are generally selected for their ability to accommodate a higher level of use and development (e.g. previous disturbance) and therefore typically are considered to have less potential for sensitive and/or significant ecological values. Nevertheless, an environmental review process, developed by the Parks Division, is required for all sites. Environmental review screening is considered a cornerstone within Parks to ensure appropriate development and land management.

The following conditions may trigger a review to ensure that significant and adverse effects associated with the proposal are addressed and mitigated where appropriate and feasible:

1. *There is ground disturbance and/or removal of natural vegetation associated with the development. This includes buildings, utilities, roads and trails.*
2. *There is a significant change to the management intent of the site. An example would be changing a summer only trail to a groomed X-country ski trail.*
3. *There is an anticipated significant (>20 percent) increase in human visitation to the site.*
4. *There is a significant change to the local viewscape as a result of increased building size, material used or site openings.*
5. *Issues of interest are noted on or adjacent to the site during the planning of the improvement or other concerns. This may include but are not limited to nesting sites, dens and burrows, rare or endangered species, and archaeological or paleontological artefacts.*

When any one of these conditions exists, the proponent of the development must submit a detailed plan to the Kananaskis Region Senior Parks Ecologist for review. Following review of the plans, the Senior Parks Ecologist, in consultation with the Operations Manager will provide details regarding the type and scope of environmental review required.

### 5.2. NATURAL RESOURCES

#### 5.2.1. Geology/Landforms/Climate

The Provincial Recreation Areas within this plan are mostly located in foothills and Montane valleys with elevations from 1400 meters (4350 ft) to 1600 meters (5250 ft). Several of the PRAs in the Highwood are located in mountainous terrain and are at valley bottom elevations up to 1700 meters (5580 ft.). Mountain landforms include high peaks and ridges, forested high slopes and a mostly broad river floodplain with extensive glacial deposits in the form of terraces above the floodplain. Foothill landforms consist of mostly bedrock ridges of cretaceous age sandstones, shales and siltstone overlain by alluvial, colluvial or glacial deposits. Often the glacial material is deposited in the form of terraces. The other main landforms of interest include two scenic canyons on the Highwood and Elbow Rivers at the transition between foothills and mountains. Occasional coal outcroppings occur as well. While many PRAs are located on alluvial river or tributary creek deposits, others are located on bedrock covered glacial terraces.

The planning area is in the transition zone between a Cordilleran (mountain) and Continental climate type with moderate precipitation in both summer and winter and moderate temperatures. The nearest long term climate records have been kept for the Town of Cochrane while seasonal records have been kept for the various nearby fire lookouts and the

Elbow office of Sustainable Resource Development. While the climate within the large planning area will vary due to the higher elevation of the PRAs, their proximity to the mountains and more diverse topography, it is expected that annual averages will be cooler and more moist than nearby towns. The annual temperature profile follows a typical pattern for this latitude, with the lowest average temperatures in January (-8.4° C), and the highest in July (15° C). May, June, July and August are usually the wettest months and March has the most snow. Average annual snow accumulations in the foothills are generally deeper and longer lasting than in Cochrane. Prevailing winds are westerly and south-westerly with Chinooks a common occurrence in the winter period.

Within this planning area, the vegetative pattern is strongly influenced by climatic factors especially frequent strong winds as well as the foothills topography and aspect.

### **5.2.2. Aquatic Resources**

Protection of foothill and mountain watersheds has long been recognized as critical for maintaining water for the prairies as well as plants, animals and people that live or work in or near this area. Policies and regulations designed to minimize damage and disturbance were put in place in the 1920's with the establishment of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve. Subsequent provincial legislation and policies have carried this intent through to modern times. Most streams within the plan area are part of the Bow watershed with Fallen Timber and Burnt Timber creeks (in the north end of planning area) being part of the Red Deer watershed.

Aquatic resources are managed subject to the *Federal Fisheries Act*, the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, the *Water Act* (Alberta), and the *Fisheries Act* (Alberta) along with related regulations, policies and guidelines. Alberta's water management strategy, "Water for Life", applies to all water bodies in the province to ensure safe, secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. All streams in the planning area are important sources of drinking water for downstream users and must be managed to maintain existing flows and high water quality. Alberta Environment and Water no longer accepts applications for new water allocations in the Bow, Oldman and South Saskatchewan River Sub-basins. In future, the Minister of Environment and Water may specify how water not currently allocated is to be used through a Crown Reservation. A Crown Reservation is a tool under the *Water Act* (Alberta) that allows the Minister of Environment and Water to specify the purposes for which any unallocated water can be used.

Any approvals for work (e.g. bridge building) in or near water bodies are subject to strict measures designed to minimize or eliminate impacts on the water and fish habitat. Approvals under the *Water Act* (Alberta) and the *Federal Fisheries Act* cover the effects of the proposed work on the water and fish while approvals for access to the site and any work/disturbance of the bed and shore of the stream are issued under the authority of either the *Provincial Parks Act* or the *Public Lands Act*.

Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is the lead agency in Alberta with respect to fisheries and fisheries management including the management of species, disease, species at risk, setting of seasons, limits on species, means of fishing, domestic and commercial fishing harvest, and research. As per the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development/Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) Memorandum of Understanding – Fisheries and Fisheries Management Appendix, SRD shall consult with TPR with respect to fisheries and fisheries management issues related to waterbodies under TPR jurisdiction.

Many of the PRAs covered in the management plan are located directly along streams and rivers which provide a focal point for recreational activities. Other PRAs provide points from which to access backcountry streams and lakes. Major watersheds in the vicinity of the PRAs include Fallen Timber and Burnt Timber creeks, the Ghost River and Waiparous Creek,

Jumpingpound Creek, the Elbow River, Threepoint Creek, and the Highwood River. Aquatic habitat in these waterbodies is generally characterized as pristine, cold, clear water.

**5.2.2.1. Aquatic Resources - Management Objectives and Actions**

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Water Quality	Maintain/enhance high water quality in water bodies in or near PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reclassify most PRAs along the Elbow River to Provincial Park to increase protection of this watershed and increase heritage appreciation programming to support this.</li> <li>Coordinate management of adjacent public lands with that of the park to maximize watershed protection values, visitor information and education programming.</li> <li>Eliminate fording of Waiparous Creek by OHVs from the existing campground</li> </ul>
Ongoing fisheries management	Coordinate fisheries management per MOU between SRD and TPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop appropriate access to Cataract Creek (below the campground) to relieve fishing pressures from other areas</li> </ul>
Riparian habitat	Maintain high quality riparian habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the need for mitigation measures at existing sites</li> <li>Minimize impacts of future facility development on riparian habitat and function as well as the alluvial aquifer and ensure high water quality is maintained.</li> </ul>

**5.2.3. Climate Change**

The Alberta 2008 Climate Change Strategy highlights the province’s plan for mitigating its impact on climate change. The Strategy highlights actions in three broad themes: Conserving and Using Energy Efficiently, Implementing Carbon Capture and Storage, and Greening Energy Production. This Strategy is of provincial scope; however the first theme, of Conserving and Using Energy Efficiently, can be applied at a local level.

The initiative “Conserving and Using Energy Efficiently” focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by transforming how energy is used, applying energy efficient solutions, and conserving energy. These measures can easily be applied to the management and operations of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas.

It is recognized that the scientific evidence regarding climate change is dynamic and park management and operation will be adapted as new information becomes available.

**5.2.3.1. Climate Change - Management Objectives and Actions**

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Climate Change	Management within the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas will be consistent with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all new construction of buildings and infrastructure uses the most cost effective, energy efficient methods and</li> </ul>

	provincial climate change strategies	<p>materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrofit existing buildings with energy efficient lighting, heating, water fixtures, etc. to reduce overall consumption.</li> <li>• Ensure vehicles are appropriate to use and manage use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Reduce use of paper through focusing education and marketing through digital mediums.</li> <li>• Examine the feasibility of implementing an integrated waste management system for Kananaskis Country to increase waste diversion opportunities through recycling and possible organics diversion programs</li> <li>• Develop an environmental procurement guideline for implementation in all administrative and operation offices</li> <li>• Use Kananaskis Country to implement best practices regarding energy efficiency and use. Heritage Appreciation (education) programming to educate visitors on climate change and their role</li> </ul>
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#### 5.2.4. Vegetation

In the northern portion of the Kananaskis Region several PRAs are located in the Upper Foothills natural sub-region in the Fallen Timber and Waiparous creek drainages. These areas are dominated by contiguous even aged lodgepole pine stands typically from a fire origin. White spruce and Englemann spruce are also common, particularly in creek drainages and along lower slopes. Aspen, balsam poplar and mixed wood stands can also be found here along south and west facing slopes. Common understory species include labrador tea, tall bilberry, *shepherdia canadensis*, bog cranberry, and alder. Grasslands dominated by hairy wild rye can occur on dry south and west facing slopes.

The Ghost Reservoir PRA is the only PRA located in the Foothills Parkland natural sub-region along the banks of the Bow River. Common tree species found here include white spruce, Douglas fir and balsam poplar typically interspersed with open grasslands dominated by rough fescue and blue bunch fescue. Understories are often dominated by snow berry, silverberry, Saskatoon berry, prickly rose and a variety herbaceous cover. Willow communities are common in riparian zones and on poorly drained sites.

Most PRAs in Kananaskis Country are located at lower elevations in the Montane natural sub-region of the Highwood River, Elbow River and Sibbald Creek and South Ghost drainages. These sites are characterized by mixed wood overstory dominated by lodgepole pine, aspen, Douglas fir and white spruce. Understories are dominated by *shepherdia canadensis*, bear berry, hairy wild rye, pine reed grass and a number of forbs. Alder and red osier dogwood can also be found in abundance. Willow communities are common in riparian areas. Grasslands are also common, both in and adjacent to PRAs in this zone, often on south and west facing slopes. Common grass species found here include rough fescue, bluebunch fescue and parry oatgrass.

Higher elevation PRAs are located in the Sub-Alpine natural sub-region and include Lineham Creek, Lantern Creek, Trout Pond, Picklejar, Mist Creek, Etherington Creek, Cataract Creek and Wild Horse. These sites are dominated by a lodgepole pine overstory with lesser amounts of sub-alpine fir. White spruce and Englemann spruce can be found here, particularly at higher elevations near the edge of tree line. Small patches of Douglas fir, limber pine, white bark pine and alpine larch can also be found in this zone. Characteristic of this zone is the lack of deciduous overstory with aspen being almost non-existent. Typical understory can include bearberry, hairy wild rye, grouseberry, *shepherdia canadensis*, pine reed grass and feather mosses. Alder and willow can be commonly found in riparian areas and along the run out zones of avalanche tracks (Natural Regions Committee 2006).

Objectives for vegetation management in PRAs will focus on providing a safe environment for visitors while maintaining a vegetation composition representative of the natural region and sub-region in which the PRA is located. Recent research (Jevons / Donelon in prep) has found that changes to historic fire patterns since 1940 have significantly altered the vegetation composition in the Sub Alpine natural sub-region in Kananaskis Country. This has led to larger than expected even aged lodgepole pine stands across the landscape and a loss in vegetation diversity. A fire regime analysis of the Montane and Upper Foothills sub-regions shows similar changes in vegetation structure as those in the Sub Alpine natural sub-region (Rogean 2006).

A Vegetation Management Strategy for Kananaskis Country was approved in March 2008. This strategy provides some broad landscape objectives for vegetation management to achieve multiple goals on both parks and public lands. The strategy requires the development of detailed vegetation management plans for specific areas which will include activities such as prescribed burning, fuel modification and habitat enhancement. Any or all of these activities may impact the PRAs.

#### 5.2.4.1. Vegetation - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Fire Smart	Ensure all facilities meet fire smart standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new facility development will meet current fire smart standards.</li> <li>All existing facilities and sites will meet current fire smart standards as soon as practicable</li> </ul>
Dangerous tree management	Minimize the risk of injury or property damage from falling trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual inspection of all sites will occur to identify potentially dangerous trees.</li> <li>Any tree identified that may pose a risk to people or property will be removed immediately or a site may be closed until remedial action can be taken.</li> </ul>
Rare, endangered and unique plants and plant communities	Protect rare, endangered or unique plants and plant communities from unnatural disturbance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rare vegetation surveys will be completed prior to any new development in PRAs.</li> <li>All documented rare or endangered plants will be reported to the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre.</li> </ul>
Bear attractant management	Reduce the risk of encounters and conflict between people and bears.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and remove vegetation known to attract bears (e.g. <i>shepherdia canadensis</i>, red osier dogwood) from areas close to facilities and trails.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve visibility along trails and roadways.</li> </ul>
Invasive and exotic plants	Eliminate the occurrence of invasive species listed under Alberta Weed Control legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete annual inventories of invasive plants in all PRAs.</li> <li>• Control / remove exotic plants as required and resources permit.</li> </ul>
Kananaskis Country Vegetation Management Strategy	Implement the recommendations of the Kananaskis Country Vegetation Management Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop detailed vegetation management plans for specific PRAs as required in the context of the larger landscape management plan.</li> </ul>

### 5.2.5. Wildlife

Wildlife resources within the planning area are diverse and contain many species of local and regional importance. While large ungulates (elk, moose, deer) and carnivores (grizzly/black bears, cougar, wolves) attract considerable attention, many smaller mammal and bird species are also present and contribute to ecological values and function. Both consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife contribute to the visitor experience. The sustainability of these wildlife resources and associated habitat is of high priority. Recreational activities and associated facilities have the potential to impact wildlife values and must be carefully planned and managed to ensure long-term sustainability.

Wildlife resources are managed under the *Wildlife Act* (Alberta) along with associated regulations, policies and guidelines. Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is the lead in Alberta with respect to wildlife and wildlife management including the management of species, disease, species at risk, fur management, setting of seasons, limits on species, the allocation of hunting outfitters, means of hunting and research. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) and Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) guides the coordinated management of wildlife in the PRAs. SRD consults with TPR on the implementation, development and alteration of the administrative regulatory regime relative to wildlife in parks. SRD also consults with TPR with respect to wildlife and wildlife management issues that would impact lands and activities under TPR control

Most of the PRA's under this management plan are of small footprint (campgrounds and day use sites) relative to the surrounding lands but contain intense levels of human activity that are not generally considered compatible with use by most wildlife species. Wildlife-human conflicts primarily involving grizzly and black bears within these sites are of significant concern both from a public safety and species sustainability perspective. As per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, problem wildlife management on TPR lands is the responsibility of TPR.

#### 5.2.5.1. Wildlife - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Wildlife habitat	Maintain/enhance high value wildlife sites close to PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess need for mitigation measures at existing facilities</li> </ul>
Harlequin Duck habitat along Elbow and Highwood Rivers	Ensure that Harlequin ducks continue to have undisturbed access to important river habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the need for mitigation measures along high use sections of Elbow and Highwood Rivers</li> </ul>
Riparian habitat	Maintain high quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize impacts of current and future</li> </ul>

	riparian habitat	facility development on riparian habitat and riparian habitat function
	Ensure that the wildlife movement corridor function along riparian habitat areas is not compromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess need for mitigation measures at existing facilities</li> </ul>
Wildlife-human conflicts	Reduce factors contributing to wildlife-human conflicts in existing PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement actions to remove natural vegetation attractants</li> <li>Maintain/implement effective education programs</li> <li>Maintain effective enforcement activities to ensure containment of human food attractants</li> <li>Assess appropriateness of any future PRA's from a location and activity perspective to ensure potential for wildlife-human conflict is minimal.</li> </ul>
Wildlife/Furbearer Management Issues	Coordinate wildlife/furbearer management per MOU between SRD and TPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure effective implementation of MOU</li> </ul>

### 5.2.6. Natural and Cultural Landscape Values

The high scenic qualities or views within or near the PRAs in the plan area are important values to be maintained or enhanced. The main scenic features include a variety of outstanding views west to the Rocky Mountains; striking canyons; clear, pristine rivers, creeks and waterfalls; and an attractive mix of open grasslands, aspen and conifer forests. Opportunities to view wildlife are also important. Visual preference studies indicate that the “mosaic” landscapes found near many of these parks are highly preferred (Olson and Olson, 2000).

Presently, visible evidence of human activity is limited to the roadways, recreation facilities (campgrounds, day use sites, trails) and the old ranger station buildings. Some evidence of cattle activity is also visible (e.g. fences, corrals, and cattleguards). Less visible evidence includes a vegetation pattern altered by fire suppression and the remains of old coal mining or timber harvesting activities (e.g. Waiparous Creek).

All facility development within PRAs is governed by the *Provincial Parks Act*, approved management plans and, within Kananaskis Country, the Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy 1999. Any additional buildings developed within the PRAs will conform to the Kananaskis Country Architectural Theme Guide (rev 2004) which ensures that public buildings blend in with the natural setting.

The environmental screening and assessment process includes consideration of the possible visual impacts of any activities in or near PRAs (e.g. prescribed fires). Timber harvesting or other proposed land use activities near or visible from PRAs are subject to visual quality review to ensure appropriate measures are taken to eliminate or lessen the visual impact on recreational users of the PRAs or associated trails. In relation to timber harvesting, this approach is described in the approved Detailed Forest Management Plan (Spray Lakes Sawmills, 2007) which refers to the manual “Forest Landscape Management Strategies for Alberta” (Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, 1986).

### 5.2.6.1. Natural and Cultural Landscape Values - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Key scenic qualities	Maintain or enhance key natural scenic qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All facility development will continue to be controlled and will be consistent with approved design guidelines</li> <li>Facility location and design will respect key scenic qualities and maximize visitor opportunities to experience a variety of quality views</li> <li>Visual quality assessment will be part of planning for prescribed fire, timber harvesting or other land use activities within or near PRAs or along the trails associated with them.</li> </ul>
Dark Sky Initiative	Reduce the amount of lighting and reflected light in PRAs to maintain a dark and observable night sky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All developments will employ strategies and technology consistent with the Kananaskis dark sky initiative.</li> </ul>

## 5.3. CULTURAL RESOURCES

### 5.3.1. Historic Resources

Historic resources in the planning area include paleontological (i.e., fossil) remains of ancient plants and animals, archaeological sites as much as 11,000 years old, cultural sites still used by First Nations today, and historic structures such as cabins, ranch buildings, and ranger stations. Collectively, historic resources are protected under the *Historical Resources Act* and regulated by Alberta Culture and Community Services.

### 5.3.2. Paleontology

The geological history of Alberta has resulted in a wealth of fossil remains in many parts of the province. But it is primarily where deposits are exposed by erosion that they are accessible. Identified locations with high potential for the presence of exposed paleontological remains are abundant in the Calgary area and in the rugged western portions of Kananaskis Country but less so in the vicinity of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas. Still, high potential for paleontological remains is reported by the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in close proximity to the Little Elbow, Cobble Flats and Eyrie Gap recreation areas. However, in each case, the high potential is in bedrock exposures outside the recreation areas, which occupy flat terraces along the Elbow and Highwood rivers. Thus, paleontological remains are not a direct management concern for any of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas.

### 5.3.3. Archaeology

Some 14,000 years ago, this part of Kananaskis Country became some of the first terrain in southern Canada to be freed from the thick blanket of ice that covered most of the country during the Late Wisconsinan glaciation. By 12,500 years ago, this was the southern end of an ice-free corridor connecting Alaska and the Yukon with the southern half of North America, at a time when North America and Asia were joined by a land bridge known as Beringia. This “corridor” has long been considered one possible early route of entry into North America and,

as such, Kananaskis Country holds considerable archaeological interest in the study of the peopling of the Americas. The area is also of interest because it is situated between two distinct physiographic and cultural areas – the plains and the cordillera.

Knowledge about the presence or absence of archaeological remains is very much dependant on the field studies that have been conducted in a given area. Since 1973, some 30 archaeological studies have been conducted within or on the edge of 36 of the PRAs within Kananaskis Country. The majority of these occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s in conjunction with road and recreation developments and as university-based research. Over the past decade, there have been several oil and gas related studies.

In all, these studies have resulted in the recording of 59 archaeological sites within or in extremely close proximity to the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas. The great majority (84 percent) are classified as pre-contact campsites, showing evidence of people having lived at these locations. Another 5 percent consist of just small scatters of stone artefacts and 6 percent have yielded only a single artefact – such sites are thought to represent short-term occupations or activities. One site is represented by a stone cairn, a type of feature more typically found on the plains.

By far, the most important known site in proximity to the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas is found at the south end of the Sibbald Lake Provincial Recreation Area. The “Sibbald Creek site” (also known as EgPr-2) has been repeatedly occupied over the last 11,000 years, including at least two historic period occupations. Virtually all of the major Pre-contact cultures known to have occupied southern Alberta are represented at the site. Major archaeological excavations have taken place at the Sibbald Creek site but much of the site remains intact and has been designated a Provincial Historic Resource, protected under the *Historical Resources Act*.

Of the remaining 58 archaeological sites, five are known to date to the Middle Pre-contact period (ca 7000 to 2000 years ago), three to the Late Pre-contact period (2000 to 350 years ago), and one to the Historic period. Other sites are thought to be Pre-contact occupations, based on the presence of stone artefacts, but specific cultural affiliations are not known.

All archaeological sites are afforded protection under the *Historical Resources Act*. Only the Sibbald Creek site is explicitly protected through designation under the Act (HRV 1). For the remaining sites, due diligence must be exercised, which means that sites known or thought likely to contain significant archaeological remains must be investigated prior to any activities that might disturb those remains. Thirty-three sites have this requirement (HRV 4). Other sites that have been exhaustively investigated or have been destroyed, usually as a result of some development, do not require further avoidance or investigation – 25 sites fall into this category (HRV 0).

From a historic resources management perspective, it is important to re-emphasize that this is only an inventory of known sites – it is very likely that the majority of archaeological sites associated with the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas have not yet been discovered. Therefore, any proposed developments will be referred to Alberta Culture and Community Services for review.

A list of sites and studies for each provincial recreation area is located in Table 2, Appendix A.

#### **5.3.4. Historic Structures**

Alberta Culture and Community Services maintains an inventory of historic period structures. In the Kananaskis area, these are typically cabins or ranch buildings. Unfortunately, records for these sites do not include exact locations – only legal descriptions. There are four recreation areas with recorded structures in the same quarter section. These are summarized in Table 2 of Appendix A. Due diligence should be exercised to avoid impact to these

structures or to undertake any studies as required by Alberta Culture and Community Services in the event of proposed development.

### 5.3.5. Cultural Resources - Management Objectives and Strategies

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Historic resource protection	To protect known historic sites and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that Historic Resources Impact Assessments are done prior to any site disturbances within PRAs</li> </ul>
Historic resource interpretation	To interpret cultural history where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Historic Resources Branch staff, First Nations and stakeholders to determine which sites have good potential, the most appropriate way of interpreting and how best to resource</li> </ul>
Research	To encourage further research into historic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with First Nations, academic, and other research partners to increase research activities in and near PRAs.</li> </ul>

## 5.4. ADJACENT LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Forest Reserve lands surrounding the PRAs in the planning area are managed for multiple use including watershed protection, recreation, timber harvesting, summer cattle grazing and petroleum development. Timber and grazing are managed under terms of separate management plans which are subject to review and comment by parks staff. As well, staff attend annual operational meetings and participate in referrals. The intent is to ensure good communication and coordination so that negative impacts and conflicts are minimized.

Watershed protection occurs through a variety of measures such as development restrictions on the alluvial aquifer, establishment of vegetative buffers and setbacks and use of bridges or other stream crossing devices to minimize siltation and erosion into streams. Such measures apply to all land uses on forest reserve lands including recreation trails and haul roads as well as on PRAs. As well, all recreation facilities in the PRAs are designed to eliminate or minimize siltation and contamination by careful site selection and design measures (e.g. vegetative buffers and holding tanks for toilet waste).

The impacts of timber harvesting on visitors to PRAs or associated trails are minimized by such measures as timing (e.g. harvesting and hauling during winter closure) and designing cutblocks consistent with good visual management practices (and other factors) considering views from PRAs, roadways, and trails. As well, opportunities to upgrade existing trails or selectively add new ones to the system are assessed in conjunction with harvesting plans.

The impacts of cattle grazing on recreational activities within PRAs are monitored and a variety of measures such as fencing or adjusting seasonal cattle movements are employed to reduce conflicts.

Petroleum access roads and other facilities are planned to minimize conflicts with recreational use and maintain safety standards. Petroleum facility operators are required to prepare, and keep up to date, emergency response plans in the event of equipment failure or accident. This includes a coordinated response with government and emergency staff with priority given to maintaining public safety.

Camp Adventure, operated by the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary has been located on leased public land on the north side of Sibbald Lake since the 1960's. It is close to the Sibbald Lake Campground and day use facilities but only occasional minor conflicts have occurred. Another youth camp is being constructed on leased public land adjacent to the Jumpingpound Ranger Station.

Coordination between Kananaskis Country and adjacent municipalities along its eastern boundary occurs through timely and appropriate referrals of plans, zoning changes, subdivision applications etc.

**5.4.1. Adjacent Land Use & Development - Management Objectives and Actions**

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Coordinated Land Management	Coordinate management with adjacent forest reserve lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with SRD, agreement holder, disposition holders and permit holders to ensure that plans and policies are current and effective and that effective mitigation measures are in place.</li> <li>• Parks staff to review all land use referrals for activities on forest reserve lands so as to minimize negative impacts/conflicts, ensure public safety and, where possible, upgrade or add trail recreation opportunities.</li> <li>• Park staff to work with SRD and Spray Lakes Sawmills to effectively implement best practices for visual quality management</li> <li>• Parks staff and campground operator to work with SRD and operator of Camp Adventure to minimize conflicts</li> </ul>
	Coordinate management with land use in adjacent municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks staff and SRD to refer and review relevant plans, policies and developments/activities that may affect existing or future facilities/activities on both sides of the Kananaskis Country boundary</li> </ul>

**5.5. RESEARCH, MONITORING & ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

Research and monitoring projects are key to understanding the ecological and cultural processes and features of the lands in and surrounding the PRAs. Parks staff encourage a variety of research activities especially those intended to improve overall land management or site/activity management. All research and monitoring conducted within the Provincial Recreation Areas must be done with an approved Parks Division Research and Collection Permit. A research partnership with the University of Calgary has been established and will continue to grow.

### 5.5.1. Research, Monitoring & Adaptive Management - Management Objectives and Actions

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
<p>Encourage appropriate ongoing research activities especially those leading to improvements in management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research activities will be permitted provided they have no significant adverse impacts on the site, other site users, or wildlife.</li> <li>• Monitoring of range health to assess the impacts of grazing and establish appropriate stocking rates and grazing management guidelines.</li> <li>• Fire regime and history analysis to develop a model and set targets for ecosystem restoration work.</li> <li>• Monitoring for Mountain Pine Beetle</li> <li>• Ongoing visitor and social research, including Visitor Satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Monitoring of facility and trail use to understand the patterns of visitor use in this area. Completing biophysical inventories</li> <li>• Issuing Research and Collection Permits with appropriate conditions. Off-road vehicle use for research purposes will be discouraged. Use of closed highways during the closure season will require written authorization from Alberta Transportation.</li> <li>• Proposals involving animal capture, handling, and tagging will require protocol approval from the Animal Care Committee of Sustainable Resource Development prior to any issuance of Research</li> </ul>



## 6.0 BRAGG CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

### 6.1. **WORKING TOGETHER**

Bragg Creek Provincial Park is surrounded mainly by private rural residential land within Rocky View County, near the Hamlet of Bragg Creek. Parks work with the County to coordinate plans and activities within and around the park and with Treaty 7 First Nations that have expressed an interest, according to the Alberta Framework for First Nation Consultations and related guidelines. They also work with local community groups with an interest in trails, in educating students and visitors about the Elbow River or holding special events. A number of partnerships have been formed to improve communication among parks staff, recreationists, students and stakeholders in or near the park. Examples include the Friends of Kananaskis Country who have a Co-operating Agreement with the Parks Division, an agreement with the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association on the Centennial Trail within the park and, more recently, participation by parks staff in the Elbow River Watershed Partnership. To date, these partnerships have resulted in improved communications and understanding, additional and better coordinated research and management actions. Outside donations and volunteer labour have also contributed to help maintain or develop new trails, support research and environmental education activities in and around Bragg Creek Provincial Park.

### 6.2. **ALBERTA'S PROVINCIAL PARKS SYSTEM**

The strategic direction for Alberta's provincial parks system, *Alberta's Plan for Parks* acknowledges the interconnectedness between the environmental, societal, and economic values of parks to the people of Alberta. It also recognizes parks as being important to the quality of life Albertans enjoy and that responsible management of our parks is essential to ensure that parks support a high quality of life for current and future generations.

#### 6.2.1. **The Vision for Parks**

The *Plan for Parks* established a new vision for the parks system. This vision illustrates the need to balance recreation and conservation, as they are inextricably linked.

The vision for the provincial parks system is:

*Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.*

#### 6.2.2. **The Desired Outcomes of Parks**

Specific management objectives and actions that are presented in park management plans are intended to guide the present and future management and operation of parks. These specific objectives and actions are framed within the broad desired outcomes of the parks system.

There are three desired outcomes for the provincial parks system.

- People friendly communities and recreational opportunities
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- Sustainable prosperity supported by our land and natural resources

These three desired outcomes are not ranked by priority. They are interrelated and must be achieved together to meet the expectations of Albertans.

Similar to parks organizations across Canada and the world, Alberta Parks adopted four high-level program goals that address the important role of parks in the conservation of biodiversity, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and tourism.

The four program goals span the breadth of the Alberta Parks program, and similar to the desired outcomes, balance in the delivery of these goals through management objectives and actions, provides balance across the entire parks system.

The goals used to frame management objectives and actions for program delivery in park management plans are:

*Conservation & Protection* – Parks conserve Alberta’s natural heritage and associated cultural heritage for current and future generations.

*Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living* – Parks provide diverse, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

*Learning & Engagement* – Parks offer an opportunity to learn about, appreciate and care for Alberta’s natural and cultural heritage.

*Tourism & Community* – Parks foster sustainable, nature-based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta.

### **6.2.3. Bragg Creek Provincial Park Site Significance Statement**

Similar to the provincial recreation areas, information gathered during the planning process has identified the exceptional values and key opportunities and features required to maintain the significance of Bragg Creek Provincial Park. As such, the following statement has been developed to outline how this park contributes to the region and how it benefits Albertans:

*Bragg Creek Provincial Park provides a significant nature based day use recreation resource for local and regional residents.*

## **6.3. PARK CLASSIFICATION**

Provincial parks are one of eight (8) classifications within the Alberta system. This classification is established and governed by the *Provincial Parks Act*. Each class allows for a different experience for the park visitor and level of protection for the landscape. Provincial parks preserve natural heritage; they support outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and natural heritage appreciation activities that depend upon and are compatible with environmental protection. Typically, provincial parks:

- Provincial parks protect both natural and cultural landscapes and features.
- They are distinguished from wildland parks by their greater range of outdoor recreation facilities, the extent of road access, and the interpretive and educational programs and facilities that are available to visitors.
- Outdoor recreation activities that promote appreciation of a park's natural heritage and cultural features are encouraged.
- Provincial parks offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and support facilities.
- Interpretive and educational programs that enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of, and respect for, Alberta's natural heritage (without damaging natural values) are offered in some provincial parks; these programs serve visitors of diverse interests, ages, physical capabilities and outdoor skills.

Bragg Creek Provincial Park is close to other recreation facilities in the Elbow Valley and has a similar size, vegetative character and visitor use pattern. With reclassification of a number of existing PRAs in the Elbow Valley to become part of the Elbow Valley Provincial Park, the Bragg Creek site would retain its long-standing name but would be incorporated as part of Elbow Valley Provincial Park for watershed protection purposes.

#### **6.4. MANAGEMENT INTENT FOR BRAGG CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK**

Bragg Creek Provincial Park will be managed consistently with the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas and the following purposes:

- To provide access to high quality, safe, and enjoyable recreational experiences for nearby residents and visitors in well designed and maintained facilities.
- To preserve riparian areas and valley bottom lands to help maintain good water quality in the Elbow River.
- To work with neighbouring residents and the Rocky View County to coordinate planning and management of the park and surrounding lands.
- To provide high quality interpretation and educational opportunities primarily through partnerships.

##### **6.4.1. Guiding Principles for Management**

The management principles outlined for the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas (Section 1.5.1) were also applied to the development of objectives and strategies for Bragg Creek Provincial Park.

#### **6.5. PROVINCIAL PARK HISTORY**

Bragg Creek Provincial Park is a relatively small (128 hectares or 316 acres) site adjacent to the Hamlet of Bragg Creek (see Map 4). Bragg Creek Provincial Park is located just off Highway 22 near the Hamlet of Bragg Creek.

Bragg Creek Provincial Park was first established in 1960. It became a day use park in 1983 during the Kananaskis Country capital development phase when many new camping facilities were developed further west in the Elbow Valley. No previous management plan exists for this park.

# 7.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

## 7.1. RECREATION

The Bragg Creek site is a day use park providing opportunities for picnicking, hiking, dog walking, and fishing.

Recently, a community-based trails group has partnered with parks staff to develop and maintain the Centennial Trail which links the nearby Hamlet of Bragg Creek to the park along the Elbow River. This trail commemorates the 2005 Alberta Centennial and has become very popular with local residents. The park is open year-round and sees mainly hiking and dog walking in the winter. Use levels are high on fine weekend days and moderate on other days.

No hunting is allowed within the park but is allowed on Forest Reserve lands to the west.

### 7.1.1. Recreation - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Recreation Opportunities	To ensure an appropriate range of day use opportunities are provided here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install 6 to 8 firepits at picnic sites</li> <li>• Improve accessibility of facilities where feasible</li> <li>• Monitor demand and opportunities for expanded trail partnership</li> <li>• Consider development of reservation group day use facility</li> </ul>
Facility Condition	To refurbish facilities as resources permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish existing facilities and signage</li> </ul>
	To reduce or eliminate dust from gravel access road and parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pave access road and parking</li> </ul>

# 8.0 LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

## 8.1. VISITOR SERVICES

The Bragg Creek site has one interpretive loop trail of approximately one and a half kilometres in length. It contains messages about the foothills environment and is moderately used by local residents and some school groups. The recently developed Centennial Trail has excellent views of the Elbow River and the possibility of adding some interpretive signage relating to the river or watershed has been discussed by members of the Elbow River Watershed Partnership.

Park visitor information is available at the nearby Elbow Valley Information Centre (EVIC) on Highway 66 which is open daily in the summer and on weekends in winter. Both personal and printed information is available. A small gift shop is operated by the Friends of Kananaskis Country in conjunction with visitor centre staff.

Kananaskis Country environmental education staff provide a wide variety of field-based programs for students throughout the Elbow Valley including Bragg Creek Provincial Park. All programs meet Alberta Education curriculum objectives and help to increase environmental awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Alberta's parks. Staff also provide educators with professional development opportunities to assist in the development and delivery of their own field programs or to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to take students outside. The most successful field program in the Elbow Valley is the watershed program which highlights a partnership between the Friends of Kananaskis Country, the Elbow River Watershed Partnership, and the Parks Division.

Stewardship and volunteer activities to date in Bragg Creek Provincial Park have consisted of the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association members developing and maintaining the Centennial Trail with staff supervision.

### 8.1.1. Visitor Services - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Interpretive Opportunities	Maintain or enhance interpretive trail opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assess current interpretive trail and messages to ensure they are current and appropriate.</li><li>Explore potential to expand existing trail with trail partners here.</li></ul>
Visitor Information	Maintain or enhance provision of visitor information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to provide up to date information and operate the EVIC, KC website.</li><li>Install kiosks at key locations at the Bragg Creek site to provide basic onsite information</li></ul>
Environmental Education/Volunteer Opportunities	Maintain or enhance environmental education and volunteer opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parks staff to continue to work actively with Elbow River Watershed Partnership and Friends of KC to deliver and enhance existing education programs and explore establishing a volunteer steward and/or trail ambassador program at the Bragg Creek site.</li></ul>

# 9.0 TOURISM & COMMUNITY

## 9.1. TOURISM SERVICES & FACILITIES

The Bragg Creek site is used by some commercial guiding and instructing companies for staging and conducting outdoor activities including hiking and team building. As in all PRAs and other parks, commercial operators are required to obtain a “Guiding or Instructing and Outdoor Activity Permit” from the Parks Division. Permits may be limited in numbers and include conditions which reduce conflicts, impacts, and improve safety and are consistent with the approved guidelines for group size limits on parks lands in the Kananaskis Region.

To date the park has not been used for commercial filming of TV commercials, documentaries, and feature films. However, the Parks Division recognizes the economic and other benefits associated with commercial filming and the tourism which can result from films showcasing provincial park lands. If and when applications to film in Bragg Creek are received, a permit intended to minimize impacts and conflicts within the park would be issued. Commercial filming would not normally be permitted on weekends.

Occasional special events (e.g. weddings) are held on site and require a permit that includes conditions to reduce conflicts and impacts. These conditions will be consistent with the approved Special Event Guidelines for Kananaskis Region which limits group size to 150 participants and parking use to 80 percent of parking space. Special events will be permitted when they do not unduly disrupt general public access or use of the trails or facilities. Events are generally not approved on long weekends.

Several tourism studies over the last few years have recommended upgrading existing public recreation facilities including those within the Bragg Creek site. As well, adding new tourist facilities and services in “gateway” communities such as the Hamlet of Bragg Creek as well as the nearby towns of Cochrane, Turner Valley, and Longview has been recommended. Demand for a reservable day use site for group functions appears to exist and will be considered.

### 9.1.1. Tourism Services & Facilities – Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Guides and Outfitters/Filming/Special Events	To encourage the provision of a variety of high quality guiding and outfitting opportunities, commercial filming and special events in Kananaskis Country, including the Bragg Creek site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with guides and outfitters as well as parks staff to improve quality of information provided to visitors.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor existing limits to numbers of permits issued and associated conditions</li> <li>• Improve monitoring of and reporting on existing activities to help minimize impacts and conflicts and ensure visitor safety and enjoyment</li> <li>• Continue working with the Alberta Film Commission to meet the needs of the film industry while minimizing impacts and conflicts.</li> <li>• Continue to direct all non conforming tourism development outside the Bragg</li> </ul>

		<p>Creek site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider establishing reservable group day use facilities in the park.</li> </ul>
Tourism Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To refurbish and enhance existing park facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish and enhance day use facilities, existing trails, trailheads as resources permit. Where demand warrants and feasibility is demonstrated, develop additional facilities including loop or connecting trails. Use partnership approach where feasible.</li> </ul>
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify park boundaries and work to prevent access by park users onto neighbouring private land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign, fence and clear park boundaries as appropriate</li> </ul>

# 10.0 CONSERVATION & PROTECTION

## 10.1. NATURAL RESOURCES

The Bragg Creek site is located in the Montane Natural sub-region of the Rocky Mountains with terrain composed of several low ridges and a flat terrace near the Elbow River. Ridges are composed of sandstone and shale bedrock overlain with periglacial, colluvial and alluvial deposits. Bedrock outcroppings are visible along the Elbow River within or near the park. Valley bottoms are wet with many seeps and springs that run year round. There is a well developed forest cover composed of white spruce, lodgepole pine and trembling aspen and balsam poplar. The aspen has a well developed understory. No vegetation inventory or biophysical work has been done in this park and consequently it is not known whether sensitive or rare plants are present.

A variety of wildlife species will use the park with some using the park as a major component of their home range. Black bears, grizzly bears, white tailed deer, mule deer and elk along with numerous smaller mammals have been known to pass through and use the park in recent years.

### 10.1.1. Natural Resources - Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Environmental Review	To implement guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As required (see Section 5.1, P 19)</li> </ul>
Vegetation Management	To develop comprehensive vegetation management plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under terms of KC Vegetation Management Strategy, work with SRD to conduct inventories of forest composition and health.</li> </ul>
	To determine presence of sensitive or rare species of plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct biophysical inventory as resources permit</li> <li>Complete a rare plant survey of the park</li> </ul>
	To address wildfire and other hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local community and SRD on FireSmart initiative, monitoring and removing hazardous trees</li> </ul>
Water quality in Elbow River	To maintain or enhance water quality in the Elbow River through the Bragg Creek site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further facility development on alluvial aquifer other than low standard hiking/interpretive trail</li> </ul>
Fish Management	Ensure MOU between SRD and TPR is effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks staff to work with SRD fisheries staff to implement</li> </ul>
Wildlife Management	Identify and protect important / rare or unique habitats found in the park, including denning and nesting sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include identification of important / rare and unique habitats in a biophysical inventory of the park.</li> </ul>
	Maintain connectivity to riparian habitats and corridors along the Elbow River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage development and human use to protect areas of important wildlife connectivity with adjacent lands.</li> </ul>
	Reduce the potential for human wildlife conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and manage facilities and trails consistent with Wildsmart principles.</li> </ul>

# 11.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The co-ordination of plan implementation and day-to-day management of these parks is the responsibility of the Parks Division. Parks staff will communicate with other government agencies, the Kananaskis Improvement District council, neighbouring jurisdictions, visitors, aboriginal communities, stakeholders and local residents in implementing this management plan. The Parks Division will conduct periodic plan reviews or updates as the need arises.

## 11.1. IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH COLLABORATION

Individuals or groups will be invited to assume a variety of responsibilities including stakeholder representation on planning advisory groups, protected area stewards or trail volunteering through the Friends of Kananaskis Country Trail Care Group. Management of volunteers will conform to the standards set out by the Parks Division’s Volunteer Program. Volunteer stewards will assist park staff in inspecting and reporting on the conditions of the parks, as well as providing input to the ongoing management process. They will have no enforcement role and will only OBSERVE, RECORD, and REPORT. In addition, volunteers will continue to support a variety of programs such as public safety, research, monitoring and education. The Parks Division will continue to work with a variety of interest groups and encourage the development of active partnerships to care for parks or educate and inform visitors.

## 11.2. SITE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

Proposed site specific strategies and actions are presented in the following charts. After the site name, a listing of the existing activities for each PRA is included.

### 11.2.1. Ghost/Waiparous Sites (Highway 40/940)

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Burnt Timber South (camping/fishing)	Determine long term forest health within and near PRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess forest health and implement recommendations</li> </ul>
	Enhance general camping, access to creek and picnicking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace toilets and other site furnishings as soon as resources permit</li> <li>Include picnicking and trail to creek in site refurbishment planning</li> <li>Determine expansion potential during site planning</li> </ul>
Fallen Timber (OHV staging; camping)	Manage primarily as year round OHV staging area in context of recent SRD Access Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor use and work with SRD and stakeholders to address site issues/demands</li> </ul>
	Determine need for additional facilities and services within or in vicinity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess expansion potential</li> <li>Refurbish as funds permit</li> <li>Amend boundary if required</li> <li>Work with SRD, Tourism and stakeholders to assess potential for new facilities and services in</li> </ul>

		<p>vicinity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure protection of known cultural sites</li> </ul>
Waiparous Valley Viewpoint ( <i>scenic viewing</i> )	Manage as viewpoint with limited facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain viewpoint and monitor use</li> <li>• Refurbish viewpoint sign and consider adding garbage or toilet facilities if demand warrants</li> <li>• Amend boundary to include existing viewpoint only – return portion west of Hwy 40 to Forest Reserve status</li> </ul>
Ghost Airstrip (North Ghost Campground and Group Camp, Airstrip <i>group camp; day use interpretation</i> )	At North Ghost site, determine forest health and assess wildfire hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do forest health assessment and implement recommendations</li> <li>• Work with SRD to assess wildfire hazard and need for mitigation</li> </ul>
	At North Ghost, maintain or enhance existing camping experiences (non motorized)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish campground and determine whether group camp should remain where is or be relocated to Ghost Airstrip.</li> <li>• Continue to work with SRD, stakeholders and campground operator to enhance safe and enjoyable recreation experiences</li> <li>• Determine pedestrian/bike trail system or other day use potential within and near campground</li> </ul>
	At Ghost Airstrip, enhance and add more group camps when warranted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore options for OHV groups to use facility and gain access to designated OHV trails east of Hwy 40</li> <li>• Refurbish existing facilities</li> <li>• Assess potential for additional group campgrounds as well as connecting trail to nearby trails (east of Hwy 40)</li> </ul>
	At Ghost Airstrip, review existing interpretive displays and determine appropriate actions and messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park staff to work with SRD and stakeholders to assess appropriate options for interpreting historic logging features here.</li> </ul>
Waiparous Creek & Waiparous Group Camp ( <i>camping; group camp</i> )	Address OHV use pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with SRD and stakeholders to determine feasibility of developing OHV staging and camping facilities west of Hwy 40.</li> <li>• OHV staging area required north of Waiparous Creek and east of Highway 40.</li> </ul>
	Ensure that sufficient group camp capacity exists in vicinity of Waiparous/Airstrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess whether to retain existing Waiparous group camp or relocate to Ghost Airstrip</li> </ul>
	Provide safe day use opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign this site to include good day use access to Waiparous Creek.</li> <li>• Work with Alberta Transportation to ensure intersections are safe and reduce/eliminate Hwy dust problem</li> </ul>
South Ghost ( <i>OHV staging</i> )	Determine appropriate use for this site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with SRD and stakeholders to determine the need for this site</li> <li>• If demand is demonstrated, design site plan to accommodate and amend boundary as appropriate.</li> </ul>
Ghost Reservoir (boating; day use; camping)	Refurbish and modernize facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to modernize day use and campground facilities as resources permit.</li> </ul>

## 11.2.2. Jumpingpound Sites

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Stoney Creek ( <i>group camp</i> )	Maintain or enhance viability as group camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and sign connecting trail to nearby Lusk Pas/Baldy Pass trails</li> </ul>
Lusk Creek ( <i>picnic; trailhead</i> )	Enhance as picnic site and trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade signage and connector trail to Lusk Pass and Baldy Pass trails</li> <li>Expand picnicking and pathways when site refurbished</li> <li>Work with Alberta Transportation on dust abatement</li> </ul>
	Examine feasibility of possible small fixed roof accommodation facility in vicinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Parks Division and Tourism Division to conduct more detailed feasibility studies including environmental and cultural assessments</li> </ul>
Old Baldy Pass Trail	Manage as a backcountry hiking/mountain biking/equestrian (partial) trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connector trail and trailhead parking lot to be upgraded</li> </ul>
Sibbald Meadows Pond ( <i>fishing; picnic</i> )	Manage as picnic site and put and take fishery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with SRD to manage fishery</li> <li>Monitor and mitigate litter or other problems</li> </ul>
Crane Meadow ( <i>facilities removed; site reclaimed</i> )	Revert to Forest Reserve status	
Sibbald Lake ( <i>camping; picnic; trailhead; fishing</i> )	To manage for general camping, non motorized trailhead, picnicking, natural and cultural interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Alberta Transportation regarding paving of Hwy 68 and this site</li> <li>Assess feasibility of raising/stabilizing Sibbald Pond and upgrading/expanding picnic and paddling opportunities.</li> <li>Maintain firepits at picnic site</li> <li>Address rowdiness through design changes, improved communications and signage and onsite management.</li> <li>Assess forest health within campground and develop strategy to address forest health issues and improve aesthetics</li> <li>Address cattle conflict</li> </ul>
	To ensure well coordinated management between public and youth camp (Camp Adventure) activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks staff to work with Camp Adventure staff to reduce conflicts and improve experience for all.</li> <li>Explore potential partnership for trail care by Camp</li> </ul>
	Examine feasibility of site for possible small fixed roof accommodation facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct more detailed feasibility studies</li> </ul>
	Provide opportunities for appreciation of natural and cultural features/processes in PRAs and surrounding landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update interpretive signage in vicinity</li> <li>Protect known cultural site</li> <li>Add Copithorne Viewpoint to Sibbald Lake PRA and install appropriate highway signage.</li> </ul>

Dawson ( <i>trailhead; picnic; camping</i> )	Manage as a high quality day use site and trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert Dawson to day use only and refurbish facilities to enhance biking, hiking, equestrian, and picnic area</li> <li>• Assess demand for equestrian camping in area and if demand warrants this use, provide in alternate location</li> <li>• Amend boundary to include all facilities</li> </ul>
Sibbald Viewpoint ( <i>picnic; scenic views</i> )	Increase visitor use and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how to enhance the appeal of this site and increase visitor use levels.</li> </ul>
Pine Grove Group Camps ( <i>group camp</i> )	Provide high quality group camping opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish existing group camps and Jumpingpound Loop trail facilities</li> <li>• Investigate need for and feasibility of connecting trail to nearby Tom Snow Trail and/or Demonstration Forest Interpretive facilities.</li> </ul>
Jumpingpound Creek ( <i>facilities removed</i> )	Provide venue for special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain for special events and possible future site development by private sector if demand warrants</li> </ul>
Pinetop ( <i>Picnic; trailhead; fishing</i> )	Provide high quality day use opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address cattle conflict</li> <li>• Assess and treat hazard trees</li> <li>• Monitor any impacts/conflicts with youth camp and work with operator to minimize</li> <li>• Install firepits</li> <li>• Open site year round</li> </ul>

### 11.2.3. Elbow Valley Sites

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Big Elbow ( <i>backcountry campsite</i> )	Incorporated as part of Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park	Disestablish as a PRA but retain as a backcountry campground
Little Elbow ( <i>camping; trailhead; fishing; picnic</i> )	To manage site for summer auto access and equestrian camping, trailhead parking for equestrian, biking and hiking; picnicking and fishing in Elbow River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign traffic circulation into main trailhead and Forgetmenot Pond with much more deliberate turn into campground. Remove all day use parking from campground</li> <li>• Expand/upgrade corral capacity</li> <li>• Develop overflow camping facility</li> </ul>
	Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Elbow River and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to complete mapping of alluvial aquifer</li> </ul>
Cobble Flats ( <i>picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer picnicking, river access and informal non-motorized trailhead purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain firepits</li> <li>• Address cow conflict</li> <li>• Refurbish and keep informal trailhead function</li> <li>• Expansion may be required in future – minimize impact on Elbow River</li> <li>• Amend boundary to include facilities</li> </ul>

	Protect water quality of the Elbow River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete mapping of alluvial aquifer</li> <li>• Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Elbow River and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality</li> </ul>
Elbow Falls ( <i>scenic viewing; picnic; fishing</i> )	<p>Beaver Flats for summer general camping;</p> <p>Powderface Trailhead as summer trailhead;</p> <p>Elbow Falls as year round day use viewpoint, interpretation and picnic site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow removal/signage on Elbow Falls viewpoint pathway required</li> <li>• Keep firepits out to help alleviate crowding in picnic area; address re-vegetation</li> <li>• Consider relocating winter gate on Hwy 66 further west from entrance to Elbow Falls</li> <li>• Investigate feasibility of connecting trails</li> <li>• Address Powderface Trailhead frequent overcrowding.</li> <li>• Refurbish Beaver Flats campground and Interpretive Trail</li> <li>• Manage existing OHV use on south side of Elbow River to reduce impacts and conflicts.</li> <li>• Amend boundary as appropriate</li> </ul>
	Manage traffic flow (internal and external) to provide safe and efficient flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address vehicle congestion/hazard on Hwy 66 when winter gate closed</li> <li>• Provide connecting trails between facilities where feasible</li> <li>• Address OHV impacts on south side of Elbow Falls</li> </ul>
Elbow River Launch ( <i>picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer picnicking and river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish; determine feasibility of any further expansion and opening in winter;</li> <li>• Retain firepits</li> <li>• Determine feasibility of connecting trails to Elbow Falls and Riverview Trail (east)</li> <li>• Address occasional OHV trespass issues with SRD and OHV users</li> <li>• Amend boundary</li> </ul>
Ings Mine ( <i>trailhead</i> )	To manage site as summer non-motorized trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update PRA location/description</li> <li>• Refurbish as resources permit; coordinate with SRD re nearby informal bike trails</li> <li>• Include 2 or 3 picnic sites but no firepits.</li> </ul>
	Protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to complete map of aquifer</li> <li>• Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Canyon Creek and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality</li> </ul>
Moose Mountain ( <i>Trailhead</i> )	Manage as summer only trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand parking if feasible and add signs, toilet and garbage</li> <li>• Update PRA location/description</li> <li>• Work with Alberta Transportation and Shell to enforce winter road closure</li> </ul>

Elbow River – including Paddy’s Flats, Station Flats, and Allen Bill sites ( <i>camping; group camp; trailhead; fishing; picnic</i> )	Paddy’s Flat for summer general camping, group camping and limited overflow camping;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish Paddy’s Flat, Station Flats facilities and consider expansion potential</li> <li>• Address cow conflicts</li> <li>• Amend boundary of Elbow River at Station Flats to include facilities</li> <li>• Consider snowplowing first 80 meters of Paddy’s Flat entrance road to provide some off road parking in winter</li> <li>• Determine feasibility of trailhead/picnic potential on north side of Hwy opposite Allen Bill to serve Fullerton Loop Trail to address crowding</li> <li>• Add picnic sites with some firepits at Allen Bill</li> <li>• Assist SRD with restoration of pond fishery</li> </ul>
	Station Flats as year round equestrian, biking and hiking trailhead;	
	Allen Bill as year round picnicking, river access, trailhead and fishery	
	Protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete mapping of alluvial aquifer. Should consider long term plan for site given flood potential</li> <li>• Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Elbow River and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality</li> </ul>
McLean Creek ( <i>camping; OHV staging; fishing; picnic</i> )	Manage for year round general and OHV camping, OHV trailhead, picnicking and fishing pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine feasibility of expanding both non motorized and motorized serviced camping;</li> <li>• Amend boundary if needed</li> <li>• Refurbish all existing facilities including feeder trails and fencing</li> <li>• Address cow conflict</li> <li>• Establish overflow camping area</li> <li>• Refurbish and expand with firepits at picnic sites on both west and east sides of pond;</li> <li>• Work with SRD to identify future trail system needs and support facilities within McLean zone and PRA</li> </ul>
Gooseberry ( <i>camping; fishing; visitor center</i> )	Manage site for summer general camping and operation of the Elbow Visitor Information Center year round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider seasonal bear habitat and proximity to Elbow River floodplain in refurbishment of campground</li> <li>• Work with partners to expand and upgrade services available at Elbow Visitor Centre</li> </ul>
West Bragg Creek ( <i>trailhead; fishing</i> )	Manage as winter trailhead but work towards managing as year round trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When resources permit, implement recommendations from the West Bragg Creek All-Season Trails Plan</li> </ul>
Wildhorse ( <i>backcountry campsite</i> )	Enhance appeal and use of this summer backcountry campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate site and include water source, firepits, toilet, food storage and fencing</li> <li>• Ensure PRA boundary is consistent with facility location</li> </ul>
Fisher Creek ( <i>OHV staging</i> )	Manage as year round OHV trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine feasibility of developing alternate campground/group camp nearby</li> <li>• Work with SRD and timber company to minimize negative impacts and add trail benefits if feasible</li> <li>• Determine potential for OHV camping and group camp facility in this vicinity</li> </ul>

Mesa Butte ( <i>equestrian camping/group camp</i> )	Manage for summer equestrian camping and group camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine day use trailhead east of North Fork; or, adjacent to entrance to North Fork Campground</li> <li>Refurbish existing facilities</li> </ul>
North Fork ( <i>camping; picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage site as a summer camping destination if determined feasible given the flood potential of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine feasibility of maintaining existing site vs. relocation in view of flooding and limited size.</li> <li>Refurbish existing facilities if warranted</li> <li>Consider alternate use for picnic site (low use)</li> <li>Determine best location for future equestrian/hiking trailhead within PRA or nearby to provide access to area trails</li> </ul>
Ware Creek ( <i>trailhead</i> )	Manage as summer hiking, biking trailhead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor use and refurbish as resources permit</li> <li>Explore opportunities for equestrian trailhead use</li> <li>If demand warrants, consider additional loop trail opportunities nearby.</li> </ul>

#### 11.2.4. Highwood Sites (Highways 541/40/940)

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Mist Creek ( <i>trailhead; picnic</i> )	Manage as summer equestrian, hiking and biking trailhead and river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish</li> </ul>
Picklejar ( <i>trailhead</i> )	Manage as informal summer equestrian, hiking trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess feasibility of designated equestrian trail to Picklejar Lakes</li> <li>Refurbish facilities</li> </ul>
Trout Pond ( <i>picnic; )</i>	Manage for summer picnicking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish including firepits</li> <li>Amend PRA boundary to include all facilities</li> </ul>
Lantern Creek ( <i>trailhead; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer informal or formal hiking trailhead and river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish</li> <li>Assess feasibility of designating (formalizing) hiking only trail to Picklejar Lakes</li> <li>Address cow conflict</li> </ul>
Lineham ( <i>trailhead</i> )	Manage as informal summer trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain parking and toilet</li> </ul>
Cat Creek ( <i>trailhead; interpretive trail; picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer picnicking, interpretive trailhead, informal trailhead, and river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish including firepits</li> <li>Address cow conflict</li> </ul>
Strawberry ( <i>hunting season camping</i> )	Manage for fall hunting camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess feasibility of closing and move camping to Etherington</li> </ul>
Fitzsimmons Creek ( <i>picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage as summer picnic site and informal trailhead/river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish</li> <li>Amend boundary</li> </ul>

Highwood Junction ( <i>service center; admin site</i> )	Maintain as seasonal service center and year round maintenance facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify options for enhancing visitor information services here</li> <li>Amend PRA boundary to include all facilities</li> </ul>
Etherington Creek ( <i>camping; group camp; equestrian camping; snowmobile staging; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer general camping; group camping and informal trailhead; snowmobile staging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish including group firepits at snowmobile staging area</li> <li>Determine need for equestrian campground here and provide standard facilities if warranted</li> <li>Address cow conflict</li> <li>Minimize impacts/conflicts of logging on PRA and nearby trails</li> </ul>
Cataract Creek ( <i>camping; trailhead; snowmobile staging; picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer general camping, informal trailhead for Salter Pass and Cataract Creek trails; picnicking and snowmobile staging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish including firepits in picnic area; determine need for formal trailhead parking for Salter Creek and Cataract Creek downstream</li> <li>Minimize impacts/conflicts of logging on PRA and nearby trails</li> <li>Amend boundary to include access road</li> </ul>
Highwood Compound ( <i>former maintenance site</i> )	Revert to Forest Reserve status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site should be reclaimed</li> </ul>
Eyrie Gap ( <i>picnic; fishing</i> )	Revert to Forest Reserve status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close site, remove facilities and reclaim</li> </ul>
Sentinel ( <i>trailhead; picnic; fishing</i> )	Manage for summer informal trailhead, picnicking, fishing/river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess potential future flood impacts and possible mitigation</li> <li>Retain and refurbish including firepits</li> <li>Assess expansion feasibility for both picnicking and trailhead (equestrian and hiking mainly)</li> </ul>
Fir Creek (facilities removed by 1995 flood)	Revert to Forest Reserve status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site reclaimed</li> </ul>
Highwood ( <i>picnic; fishing; group camp</i> )	Manage summer group camp and increase use of picnic facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbish day use and provide firepits</li> <li>Investigate other ways to increase day use at this attractive site such as improving views of river</li> </ul>
Greenford ( <i>camping; day use; fishing; rafting</i> )	Enhance day use river access function and investigate future options for camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish public day use area and consider reducing or divesting camping function</li> </ul>
Indian Graves ( <i>camping</i> )	Determine future flood damage potential on existing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess flooding potential and mitigation</li> <li>Ensure protection of cultural site</li> </ul>
	Manage for general and possibly equestrian camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess future campground expansion or relocation potential considering developable sites, stock association needs, need for trailhead parking for access onto informal trails to the north</li> </ul>
	Investigate options for providing formal OHV camping on south side of Hwy 532	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Alberta Transportation and stakeholders to determine potential for Hwy 532 improvements</li> <li>Work with SRD to determine demand and feasibility of formal OHV staging facilities nearby</li> </ul>

## **11.3. BOUNDARY AND CLASSIFICATION CHANGES**

The sites identified in the following sections indicate boundary amendments, classification changes and consolidations that will be required as part of implementing this plan. Prior to these taking place, a standard consultation or notification process involving other government agencies, the public, stakeholders and First Nations will need to be conducted.

### **11.3.1. Reclassification of Elbow Valley to Provincial Park**

The Elbow River provides approximately half of the drinking water for the City of Calgary as well as meeting a variety of other community water needs. While the water quality inside Kananaskis Country has been found to be excellent, the Elbow River Basin Water Management Plan (March 2008) emphasizes the need to carefully protect water quality in the upper watershed within Kananaskis Country in view of the increasing level of day use. As well, the plan emphasizes the need to better inform and educate all water users about the importance of continued good management in the face of increasing recreational and other land use activities and the role that all stakeholders, residents and visitors can play. Ongoing observations and research have reinforced the importance of preserving riparian areas and valley bottom lands such as those within the Elbow PRAs to help maintain good water quality but also to provide good wildlife habitat. In addition, it is important to protect existing wildlife movement corridors along the Elbow Valley.

The Elbow Valley is one of the busiest parts of Kananaskis Country (almost 500,000 visitors annually) with a high standard paved access road, good scenery and several existing facilities, including an extensive trail system. Demand for these facilities is increasing significantly as the regional population grows and there is pressure to expand their capacity.

In order to ensure that excellent water quality in the Elbow River as well as the functionality of wildlife corridors are maintained while continuing to accommodate the growing public recreation demands and enhance visitor learning opportunities here, it is proposed to reclassify the following nine (9) existing Provincial Recreation Areas to provincial park status.

- Little Elbow
- Cobble Flats
- Elbow Falls
- Elbow River Launch
- Ings Mine (updated location)
- Moose Mountain Trailhead
- Elbow River (including Paddy's Flats, Station Flats, and Allen Bill sites)
- Gooseberry
- West Bragg Creek

The reclassification of these PRAs will allow the Parks Division to more readily fund additional interpretive programming and work with partners to greatly enhance educational efforts. These Elbow sites would continue to be managed for non-motorized, public recreation with an enhanced focus on water and watershed protection through public education.

Bragg Creek Provincial Park would also be included in Elbow Valley Provincial Park and would continue to be managed in a consistent manner with these other sites. Other natural and cultural values would continue to be protected and, where appropriate, interpreted to visitors.

No expansion of PRA boundaries have yet been identified in the Elbow Valley but Parks Division staff will continue working closely with staff of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and stakeholders to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to land management is achieved, regardless of administrative boundaries. As new "Best Practises", plans and policies are adopted; rules and protocols that guide land uses (e.g. timber

harvesting, petroleum and grazing as well as recreation) will be updated and implemented. Staff of TPR and SRD will continue to be active participants in the Elbow River Partnership.

McLean Creek PRA, while within the Elbow watershed, is also within the McLean Creek OHV zone, and would remain a PRA in order to continue to accommodate OHV use. Similarly, Fisher Creek and other proposed future PRAs within the McLean Creek OHV zone would remain PRAs.

The Big Elbow PRA will be disestablished and the site incorporated into Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park.

### 11.3.2. Consolidation of PRA

In order to simplify the administration of the remaining PRAs within the Kananaskis Region, all those in relatively close proximity to each other will be grouped by watershed. This will see the following PRAs grouped as the “**Ghost/Waiparous Provincial Recreation Area**”:

- Burnt Timber
- Fallen Timber South
- Waiparous Valley Viewpoint
- Ghost Airstrip
- Waiparous Creek
- South Ghost
- Ghost Reservoir

The following PRAs will be grouped as the “**Jumpingpound Provincial Recreation Area**”:

- Stoney Creek
- Lusk Creek
- Old Baldy Pass Trail
- Sibbald Meadows Pond
- Sibbald Lake
- Dawson
- Sibbald Viewpoint
- Pine Grove
- Jumpingpound Creek
- Pinetop

The following PRAs will be grouped as the “**McLean Creek Provincial Recreation Area**”:

- McLean Creek
- Fisher Creek
- Mesa Butte
- North Fork
- Ware Creek

The following PRAs will be grouped as the “**Highwood Provincial Recreation Area**”

- Mist Creek
- Picklejar
- Trout Pond
- Lantern Creek
- Lineham
- Cat Creek
- Strawberry
- Fitzsimmons Creek
- Highwood Junction
- Etherington Creek

- Cataract Creek
- Sentinel
- Highwood
- Greenford

The “**Indian Graves Provincial Recreation Area**” will be retained as is as it is located on Willow Creek, a tributary of the Oldman River.

### **11.3.3. Proposed PRA Boundary Changes**

#### **Proposed Boundary Amendments**

During this plan process, a review of all existing PRA boundaries was done to determine whether they contained the facilities, had definable boundaries on the ground and whether they were up to date. When established in the 1980’s, the existing boundaries were not surveyed and were based on maps that were not as accurate as today’s. Further, two sites had been relocated in the 1990’s and the designation had not moved with them. This review indicated that 14 sites had existing boundaries that did not entirely contain the facilities, had not been updated or were difficult to locate on the ground. To address these administrative issues boundary amendments are required for the following sites:

- Fallen Timber
- Ghost Airstrip
- Waiparous Viewpoint
- South Ghost
- Dawson Equestrian
- Sibbald Viewpoint
- Elbow Falls
- Elbow River Launch
- Elbow River PRA (at Station Flats site)
- Little Elbow (Cobble Flats)
- Highwood Junction
- Trout Ponds
- Cataract Campground

#### **Update PRA Location and Description**

Two PRAs (Ings Mine and Moose Mountain) had facilities that were relocated some years ago and have not had the boundaries adjusted to match the new locations nearby. The approximate locations of the new sites are indicated on Map 4.

#### **Proposed Relocation of Wildhorse PRA**

Wildhorse PRA is a backcountry campsite located on the south side of the Elbow River (see Map 4). The facility is physically located west of the PRA location but this has proven to be a poor location. Staff will find a suitable site to relocate this campground to and seek approval to make the necessary adjustments to the PRA location.

#### **Proposed Future Recreation Sites**

In the Ghost/Waiparous and Kananaskis Country, there are many locations which are used regularly by recreational users for either random camping or trailhead parking where no facilities and no PRAs exist. Given the role of the Parks Division to develop and maintain formal public recreation facilities on provincial crown land, parks staff and SRD staff have identified proposed sites where there is a proven demand for facility development in the future. These are identified on the appropriate maps and listed below along with the anticipated facilities required. The current proposal is to apply a protective notation to these sites on the

provincial crown land record which is intended to reserve them for future public use. Existing protective notations in the planning area will be evaluated for possible inclusion with existing and proposed recreation sites. In other areas especially within the Ghost/Waiparous and the McLean Creek OHV Zone, parks staff and SRD staff will work together to define more specific sites where there is demand for camping or day use facilities and where it will be feasible to develop sustainable recreation facilities. As resources permit, further assessments will be done to determine the feasibility of these proposed sites. This will include the physical suitability of the site as well as results of environmental and cultural assessments. If approval is given to proceed, then a suitable PRA boundary will be defined and established.

PROPOSED SITE	PROPOSED FACILITY DEVELOPMENT
Harold Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHV Campground/trailhead/service centre</li> </ul>
Waiparous Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHV Trailhead</li> </ul>
Ghost Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non OHV Campground/trailhead</li> </ul>
Dawson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equestrian Campground/trailhead</li> </ul>
Lusk Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
JP Summit Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
Canyon Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
Prairie Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
North Powderface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
South Powderface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>
Elbow Falls (south bank)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHV parking/viewpoint</li> </ul>
Fisher East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHV Trailhead</li> </ul>
Fisher West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHV Trailhead</li> </ul>
North Fork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead</li> </ul>

### Proposal to Revert PRAs to Other Status

Several PRAs have been closed or reclaimed over the years due to minimal or no use, flood damage or other causes. Where closure and reclamation has not already occurred, it is proposed to do so and turn the lands back to Forest Reserve status. These sites are listed below and marked on Maps 3 and 5.

PRA	PROPOSED ACTIONS
Crane Meadow (Map 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed and reclaimed – Revert to Forest Reserve</li> </ul>
Highwood Compound (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former maintenance/storage yard – Has never been a public recreation site and is no longer needed for operations. – close and reclaim</li> </ul>
Eyrie Gap (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site sees almost no use and is very close to Sentinel PRA – Close and Reclaim</li> </ul>
Fir Creek (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destroyed in 1995 flood – Has been closed and reclaimed.</li> </ul>
Big Elbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancel PRA designation and incorporate into Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park</li> </ul>



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# APPENDIX A: TABLES

**Table 1: Recreational Opportunities and Facilities**

PRAs & SITES		# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/ Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
<b>GHOST/WAIPAROUS PRA (proposed)</b>											
1	Burnt Timber	30		S			☑	☑			
2	Fallen Timber South	62	50	S/W		☑	☑	☑		☑	
3	Waiparous Valley Viewpoint		10	S							☑
4	Ghost Airstrip										
	Group Camp	25		S		☑	☑	☑		☑	
	Day Use		10	S							☑
	North Ghost Campground	173		S			☑	☑			
	Group Camp	25		S			☑	☑		☑	
5	Waiparous Creek										
	OHV Trailhead		10	S	☑						
	Campground	56		S			☑	☑			
	Group Camp	25		S			☑	☑		☑	
6	South Ghost		25	S/W		☑					
7	Ghost Reservoir										
	Campground	112		S		☑	☑	☑			
	Day Use		100	S/W			☑	☑			
<b>JUMPINGPOUND PRA (proposed)</b>											
8	Stoney Creek Grp Cp	25		S	☑					☑	
9	Lusk Creek		10	S/W	☑		☑				
10	Old Baldy Pass Trail			S	☑						
11	Sibbald Meadows Pond		42	S/W				☑	☑		
12	Crane Meadow (reclaimed)										
13	Sibbald Lake	134		S			☑	☑			☑
	Day Use		20	S/W	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
14	Dawson	17	20	S/W	☑		☑	☑	☑		
15	Sibbald Viewpoint		20	S							☑
16	Pine Grove GCps	25 x 2		S	☑		☑	☑		☑	
17	Jumpingpound Crk (closed)		15								
18	Pinetop		10	S	☑		☑	☑	☑		

PRAs & SITES		# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/ Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
<b>ELBOW PRA (proposed)</b>											
19	Moose Mountain		10	S	☐						
20	McLean Creek	170	50	S/W		☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
21	Wildhorse Backcountry	4		S							
22	Fisher Creek	30	30	S/W		☐			☐		
23	Mesa Butte	15		S	☐		☐	☐			
	Group Camp	25		S	☐		☐	☐			
24	North Fork	24	10	S	☐		☐	☐			
25	Ware Creek		10	S	☐		☐	☐			
<b>ELBOW VALLEY PROVINCIAL PARK (proposed)</b>											
26	Little Elbow	94	50	S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Equestrian Campground	46		S	☐						
27	Cobble Flats		25	S			☐	☐	☐		
28	Elbow Falls										
	Beaver Flats	55					☐	☐			
	Beaver Pond		10	S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Powderface Trailhead		8	S	☐						
	Elbow Falls		138	S/W			☐	☐			☐
29	Elbow River Launch		40	S			☐	☐	☐		
30	Ings Mine		40	S/W	☐						
31	Elbow River										
	Paddy's Flat Campground	114		S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Paddy's Group Camp	25		S							
	Station Flats Trailhead		12	S/W	☐						☐
	River Cove Group Camp	25					☐	☐		☐	
	Allen Bill		45	S/W	☐		☐	☐	☐		☐
32	Gooseberry	83		S			☐	☐			
	Elbow Visitor Center		25	S/W							
33	West Bragg Creek		100	S/W	☐		☐	☐			
<b>BRAGG CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK</b>											
34				S/W	☐		☐	☐	☐		☐

PRAs & SITES		# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/ Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
<b>HIGHWOOD PRA (proposed)</b>											
35	Mist Creek		15	S	☑		☑	☑			
36	Picklejar		10	S							
37	Trout Pond		10	S			☑				
38	Lantern Creek		8	S	☑		☑	☑			
39	Lineham		6	S							
40	Cat Creek		10	S	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
<b>HIGHWOOD PRA (proposed)</b>											
41	Strawberry (fall camping)	18		S							
42	Fitzsimmons Creek		6	S			☑	☑	☑		
43	Highwood Junction service center		40	S							
44	Etherington Creek	61	40	S/W		☑	☑	☑			
	Snowmobile Staging	30		W							
	Equestrian Camping	10		S							
	Group Camp	25		S						☑	
45	Cataract Creek	102		S			☑	☑			
	Snowmobile Staging		50	W		☑			☑	☑	
	Day Use		50	S			☑	☑	☑	☑	
46	Highwood Compound (former maintenance site)										
47	Eyrie Gap		8	S			☑	☑			
48	Sentinel		35	S			☑	☑	☑		☑
49	Fir Creek (reclaimed)										
50	Highwood		10	S			☑	☑	☑		
	Group Camp	15		S						☑	
51	Greenford	13		S			☑	☑		☑	
<b>INDIAN GRAVES PRA (proposed)</b>											
52		38	5	S			☑	☑			

**Table 2: Archaeological Sites & Studies**

PRA NAME	# of Archaeological Sites			# Studies
	HRV 1	HRV 4	HRV 0	
Bow Valley	0	0	0	2
Burnt Timber	0	0	0	0
Burnt Timber	0	0	0	0
Cat Creek	0	2	0	3
Cataract Creek	0	9	7	4
Cobble Flats	0	0	0	2
Dawson	0	0	0	2
Elbow Falls	0	0	0	1
Elbow River	0	1	1	3
Elbow River Launch	0	1	1	4
Etherington Creek	0	2	2	1
Eyrie Gap	0	0	1	2
Fallen Timber	0	0	0	1
Fallen Timber South	0	2	2	3
Fisher Creek	0	0	0	1
Fitzsimmons Creek	0	0	2	2
Ghost Airstrip	0	0	0	1
Ghost Reservoir	0	1	0	1
Gooseberry	0	0	0	1
Greenford	0	0	0	0
Heart Creek	0	0	0	1
Highwood	0	2	2	3
Highwood Compound	0	0	0	0
Highwood Junction	0	0	0	1
Indian Graves	0	0	1	1
Lantern Creek	0	0	1	1
Lineham	0	0	1	2
Little Elbow	0	0	0	2
Lusk Creek	0	0	0	1
McLean Creek	0	0	0	3
Mesa Butte	0	0	0	1
Mist Creek	0	3	0	1
North Fork	0	0	0	1
North Ghost	0	0	0	1
North Ghost Group Camp	0	0	0	1
Old Baldy Pass Trail	0	0	0	0
Picklejar	0	1	0	2
Pine Grove	0	2	1	4
Pinetop	0	1	0	3
Sentinel	0	3	1	2
Sibbald Lake	1	0	0	3
Sibbald Meadows Pond	0	0	0	1
Sibbald Viewpoint	0	0	0	0
South Ghost	0	1	0	2
Stoney Creek	0	0	1	1

PRA NAME	# of Archaeological Sites			# Studies
	HRV 1	HRV 4	HRV 0	
Strawberry	0	1	0	2
Trout Pond	0	0	0	0
Waiparous Creek	0	0	0	1
Waiparous Creek Group Camp	0	0	0	1
Waiparous Valley Viewpoint	0	0	0	4
Ware Creek	0	0	0	2
West Bragg Creek	0	0	0	1
Wildhorse	0	0	0	0
Wolf Creek	0	0	0	0
Bragg Creek	0	1	1	2
Total	1	33	25	
HRV = Historic Resource Value				
Note: some studies involved several recreation areas.				

**Table 3: Historic Structures**

PRA NAME	Historic Site
Elbow River	Elbow Ranger Station
Sibbald Lake	Andrew Frank Sibbald Ranch House



## **APPENDIX B: MAPS**

**Map 1: Provincial Recreation Areas- Ghost Waiparous Area**

**Map 2: Provincial Recreation Areas- Kananaskis Country**

**Map 3: Jumping Pound Area**

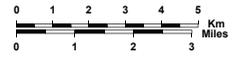
**Map 4: Elbow Area**

**Map 5: Highwood Area**

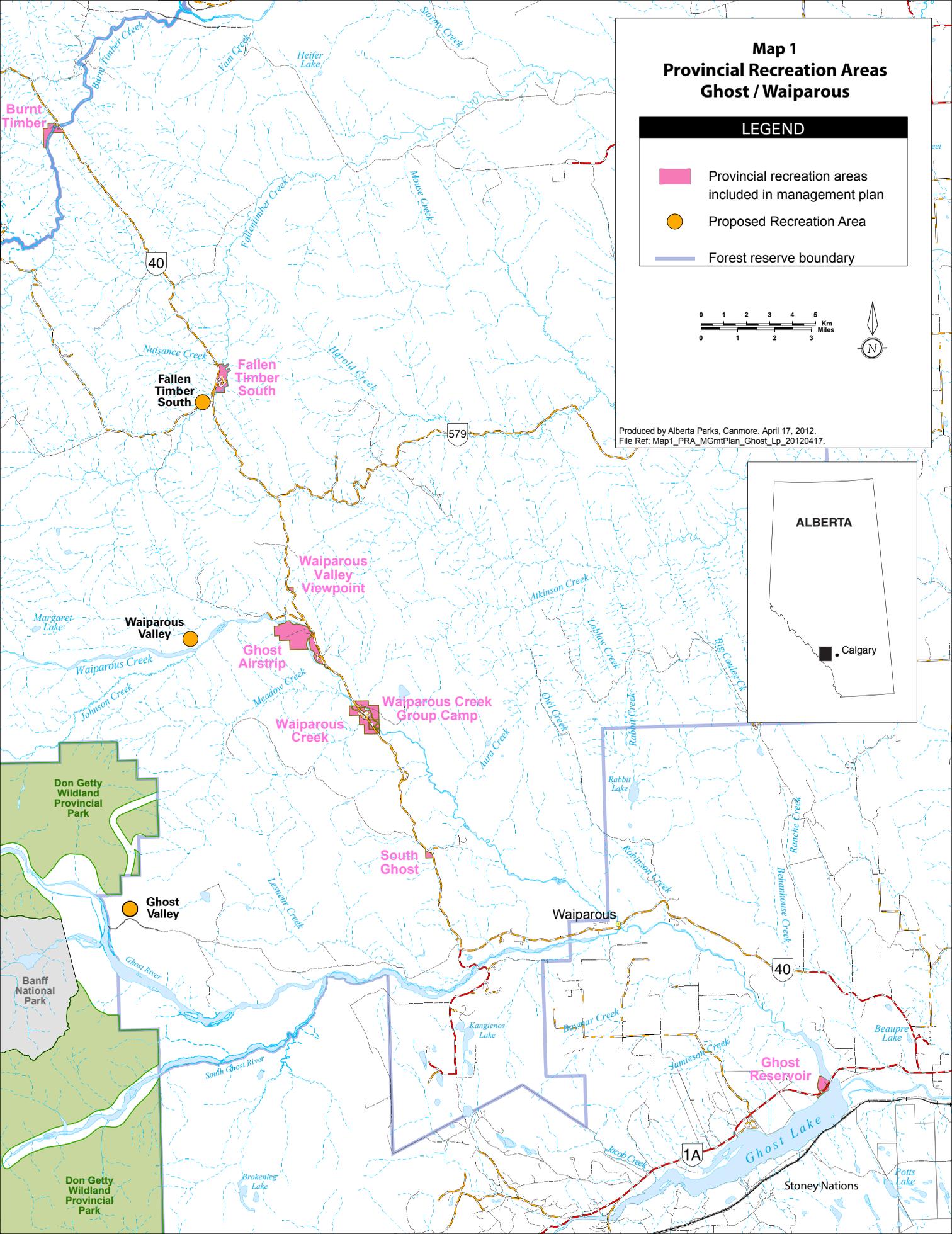
# Map 1 Provincial Recreation Areas Ghost / Waiparous

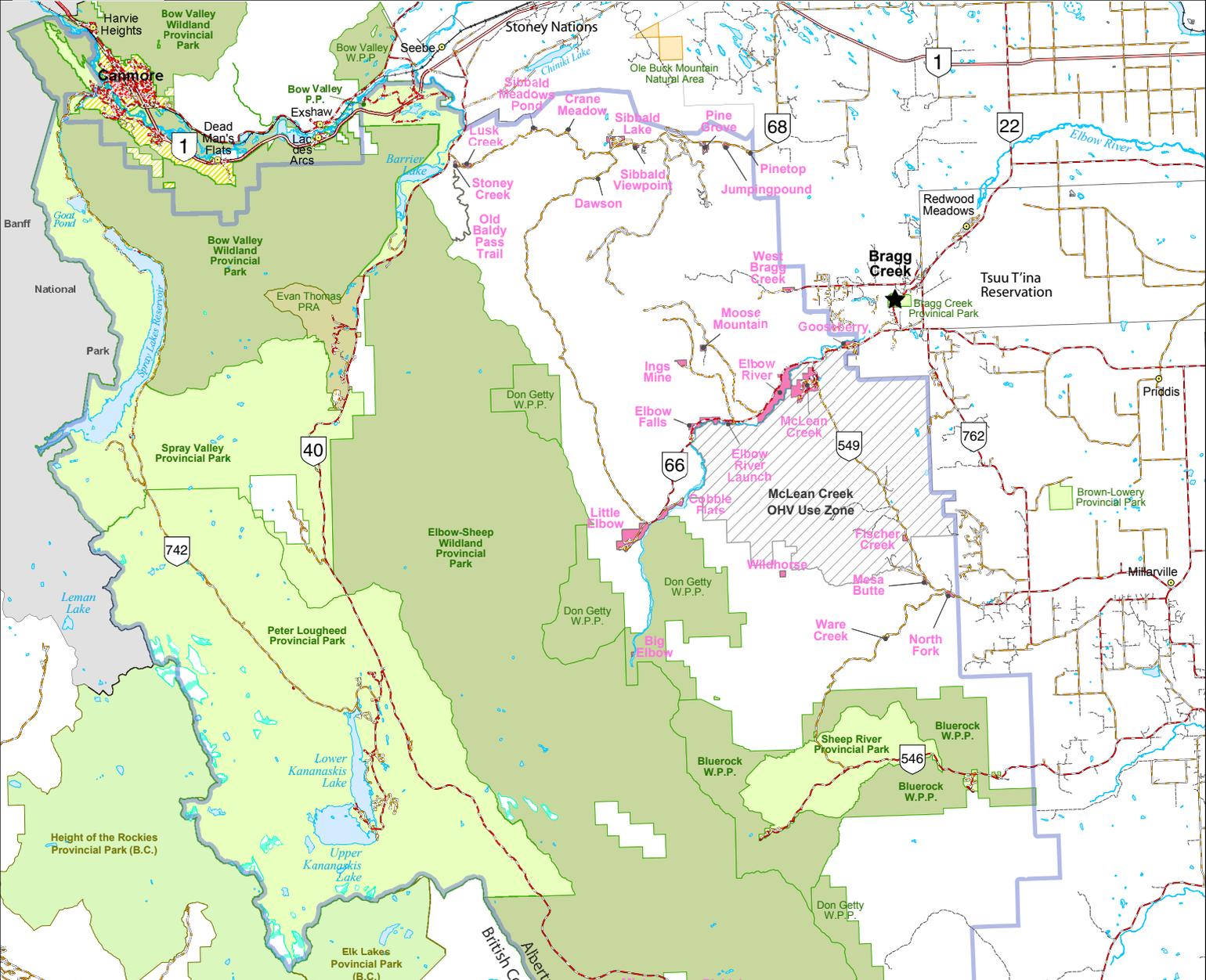
## LEGEND

- Provincial recreation areas included in management plan
- Proposed Recreation Area
- Forest reserve boundary



Produced by Alberta Parks, Canmore, April 17, 2012.  
File Ref: Map1\_PRA\_MgmtPlan\_Ghost\_Lp\_20120417.



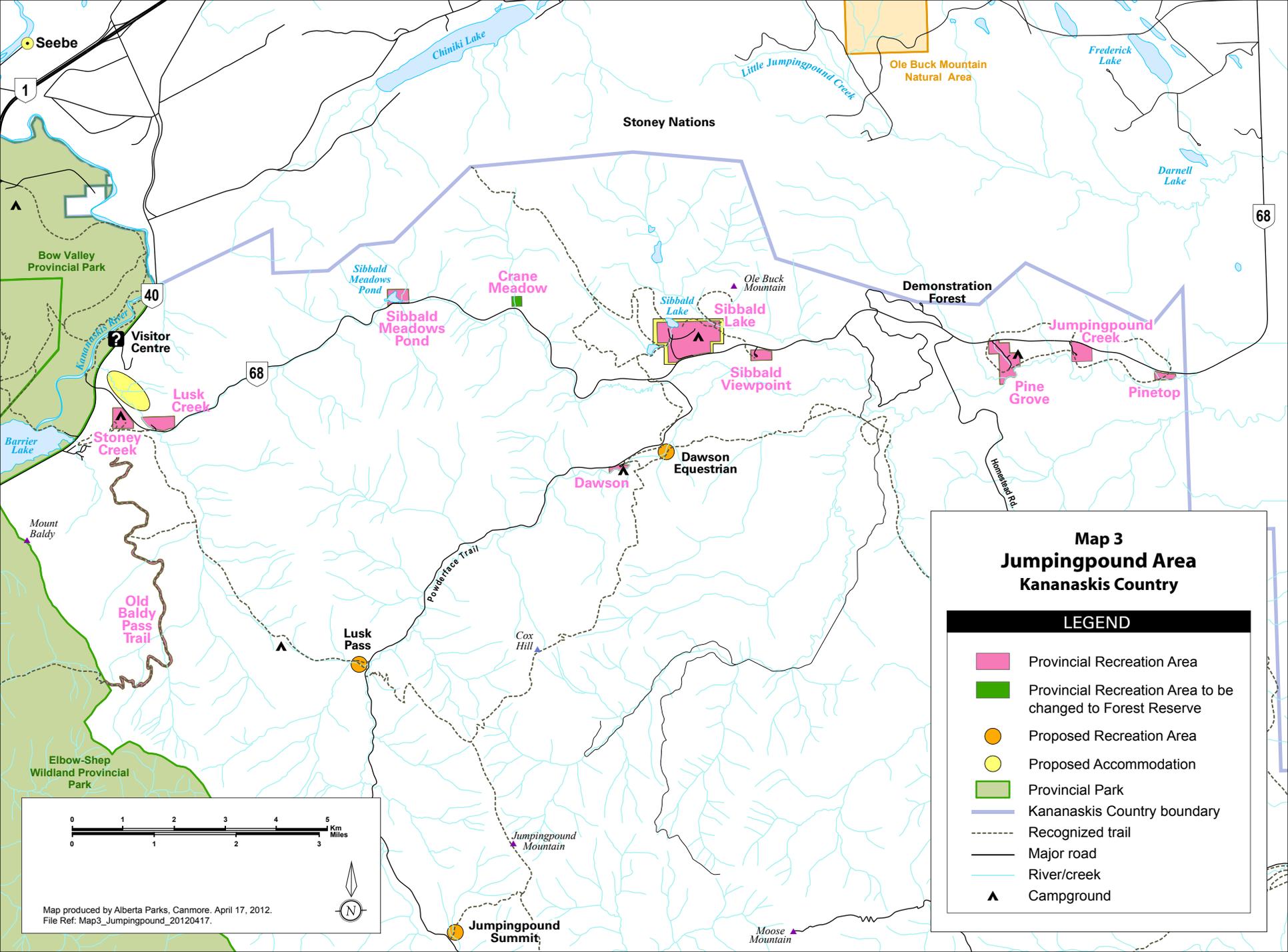


## Map 2 Provincial Recreation Areas Kananaskis Country

### LEGEND

- Provincial recreation areas included in management plan
- ★ Bragg Creek Provincial Park
- Kananaskis Country boundary





### Map 3 Jumpingpound Area Kananaskis Country

#### LEGEND

- Provincial Recreation Area
- Provincial Recreation Area to be changed to Forest Reserve
- Proposed Recreation Area
- Proposed Accommodation
- Provincial Park
- Kananaskis Country boundary
- Recognized trail
- Major road
- River/creek
- Campground





## Map 5 Highwood Area Kananaskis Country

### LEGEND

- Provincial Recreation Area
- Provincial Recreation Area to be changed to Forest Reserve
- Proposed Recreation Area
- Provincial Park
- Kananaskis Country boundary
- Recognized trail
- Snowmobile trail
- Major road
- River/creek
- Campground

