

**DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREAS – KANANASKIS MANAGEMENT AREA**

June 11, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 How Will the Management Plan Be Used?	5
1.2 Working Together.....	5
1.3 Regional Context.....	5
1.4 Location and Access.....	6
1.5 Alberta Parks System Context.....	7
1.5.1 Strategic Plan for the Parks Program	7
1.5.2 The Vision, Mission and Goals for Alberta Parks	7
1.5.3 Planning Principles for Provincial Recreation Areas	8
1.6 Proposed Site Significance Statement.....	9
1.7 Provincial Recreation Area History	9
1.8 Protected Area Classification.....	9
1.9 Proposed Overall Management Direction for Kananaskis Management Area Provincial Recreation Areas.....	10
OUTDOOR RECREATION AND HEALTHY LIVING.....	10
2.1 Background	10
2.2 Recreation Management Objectives.....	12
2.3 Public Safety	13
2.3.1 Management Objectives and Actions	14
LEARNING AND CARING	15
3.1 Background	15
3.2 Heritage Appreciation Programming.....	15
3.3 Information Services	15
3.4 Environmental Education (EE).....	16
3.5 Outreach	16
3.6 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions	16
TOURISM AND COMMUNITY.....	17
4.1 Background	17
4.2 Commercial Guiding and Instructing.....	17
4.3 Commercial Filming	18
4.4 Special Events	18
4.5 Helicopter Tourism	18
4.6 Tourism Facilities	18
4.7 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions	19
PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION.....	20
5.1 Environmental Review	20
5.2 Geology/Landforms/Climate	20
5.3 Aquatic Resources	21
5.3.1 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions	22
5.4 Climate Change	22
5.4.1 Management Issues, Objectives and Actions.....	23
5.5 Vegetation	23
5.5.1 Management Objectives and Actions	24
5.6 Wildlife.....	25
5.6.1 Management Objectives and Actions	25
5.7 Natural and Cultural Landscape Values	26

5.7.1	Management Objectives and Actions	27
5.8	Cultural Resources.....	27
5.8.1	Management Objectives and Strategies	29
5.9	Adjacent Land Use and Development	29
5.9.1	Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions	30
5.10	Research, Monitoring and Adaptive Management.....	30
5.10.1	Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions	31
IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN.....		31
6.1	Application of the Plan	31
6.2	Site Management Objectives and Proposed Management Strategies/Actions	32
6.2.1	Ghost/Waiparous Sites (Highway 40/940).....	32
6.2.2	Jumpingpound Sites	33
6.2.3	Elbow Valley Sites	35
6.2.4	Highwood Sites (Highways 541/40/940).....	37
6.3	Proposed Reclassification of Elbow Valley PRAs to Provincial Park	39
6.4	Proposed Provincial Recreation Area Boundary Changes	40
6.4.1	Proposed Boundary Amendments	40
6.4.2	Update PRA Location and Description	40
6.4.3	Proposed Relocation of Wildhorse PRA	40
6.4.4	Proposed Future Recreation Sites.....	40
6.4.5	Proposal to Revert PRAs to Forest Reserve	41
APPENDICES		42
REFERENCES.....		47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1.0 of this plan provides background information for the management of 51 Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) in the Kananaskis Management Area west of Calgary. This includes the Vision, Mission, Goals and planning principles for the Alberta Parks system. It also includes the Proposed Site Significance Statement:

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 lead out from many of the PRAs, they form a very significant component of the outdoor recreation spectrum in the Calgary region.

The Proposed Overall Management Direction for Kananaskis Management Area Provincial Recreation Areas is:

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

Section 2.0, Outdoor Recreation and Healthy Living, describes existing recreation activities and proposes management objectives and strategies to maintain and enhance existing camping, trail, picnicking or other appropriate day use opportunities. A range of existing management issues and concerns are addressed on an overall and site specific basis. As well, the management of public safety services is addressed with objectives and strategies for responding to a range of emergencies, as well as reducing wildfires within or near PRAs, human/wildlife conflicts and flood damage.

Section 3.0, Learning and Engagement, describes existing heritage appreciation programming and activities including interpretation, visitor information services, environmental education, stewardship and outreach. Enhancements to interpretive programming in the Elbow Valley are proposed to with the proposal to reclassify these PRAs to provincial park status. As well, enhancements are proposed in the areas of partnerships, volunteer opportunities and new outreach efforts to priority groups who may not be users of parks.

Section 4.0, Tourism and Community, describes existing management of guides and outfitters, commercial filming, special events and tourism facilities. These activities will continue to be encouraged consistent with current guidelines designed to limit impacts and conflicts.

Section 5.0, Preservation and Protection, provides a description of natural, cultural and scenic resources within or near the PRAs and how they will continue to be managed. Management coordination between PRAs and surrounding forest reserve lands is also addressed. Several priorities are identified for management action including the implementation of a Vegetation Management Plan for Kananaskis Country and enhancing watershed protection.

Lastly, in *Section 6.0*, Implementation, site specific management objectives and strategies for each PRA are provided. As well, rationale and description of the proposed reclassification of the Elbow Valley PRAs to provincial park and other proposed administrative boundary amendments to selected PRAs are included in this section.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 How Will the Management Plan Be Used?

This plan addresses the overall management of 51 Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) in the Kananaskis Management Area west of the City of Calgary (see Maps 1 and 2). This plan provides background or descriptive information for the 51 PRAs as well as proposed management intent statements, objectives, and strategies.

The plan will be used by staff of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation 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 (e.g. vegetation management plan) or annual operating plans and budgets within these protected areas. Management plans are normally reviewed and updated ten-years after approval.

1.2 Working Together

Most of the 51 Provincial Recreation Areas in the planning area are surrounded by Forest Reserve lands managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. Forest Reserve lands are managed for watershed and fish and wildlife protection while accommodating public outdoor recreation along with timber harvesting, cattle grazing, and petroleum activities. Other provincial government departments with a role to play in managing these provincial crown lands or infrastructure include Alberta Environment, Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Transportation. Local municipalities (Kananaskis Improvement District and the Municipal District of Bighorn) exercise development control and provide municipal services in the planning area. Coordination between government departments is achieved through interdepartmental referrals as well as the Kananaskis Country Interdepartmental Consultative Committee (KCICC) that meets regularly. 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 individual are invited to provide input and review and comment on these management plans during their preparation.

A number of advisory groups or partnerships have been formed between 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 Alberta Parks, 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 labor have contributed to help maintain or upgrade Kananaskis Country trails, support research and environmental education activities in and around Kananaskis Country.

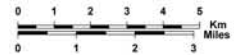
1.3 Regional Context

Kananaskis Management Area is located in Alberta's Eastern Slopes foothills and mountains. It covers over 5000 square kilometers of provincial crown land and includes all of Kananaskis Country as well as sites in the Ghost/Waiparous north almost to the Red Deer River. 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 Management Area contains a wide variety of vegetation types, interesting geological formations, wildlife populations, diverse terrain, and some of the most spectacular scenery in Alberta.

Map 1 Provincial Recreation Areas Ghost / Waiparous

LEGEND

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

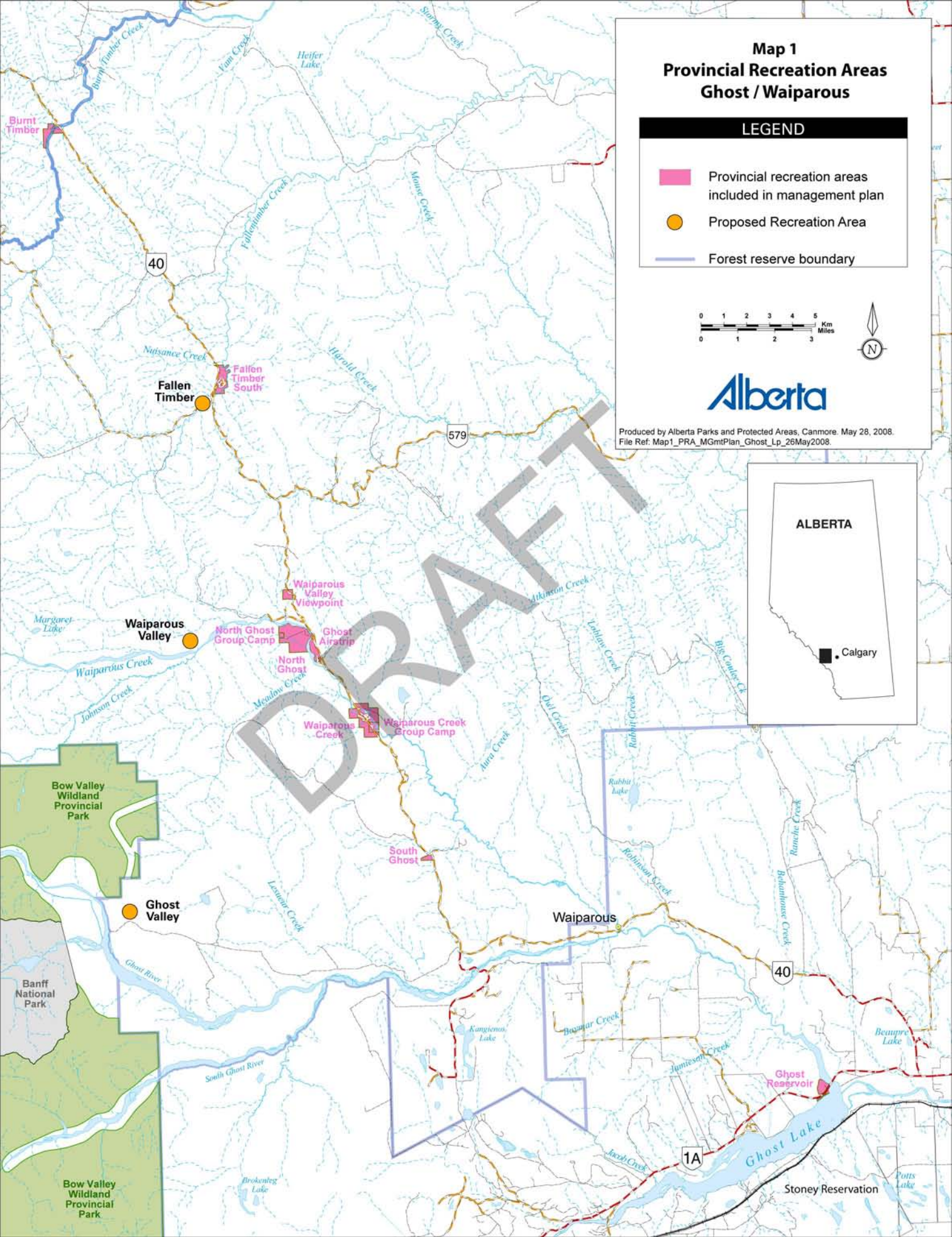


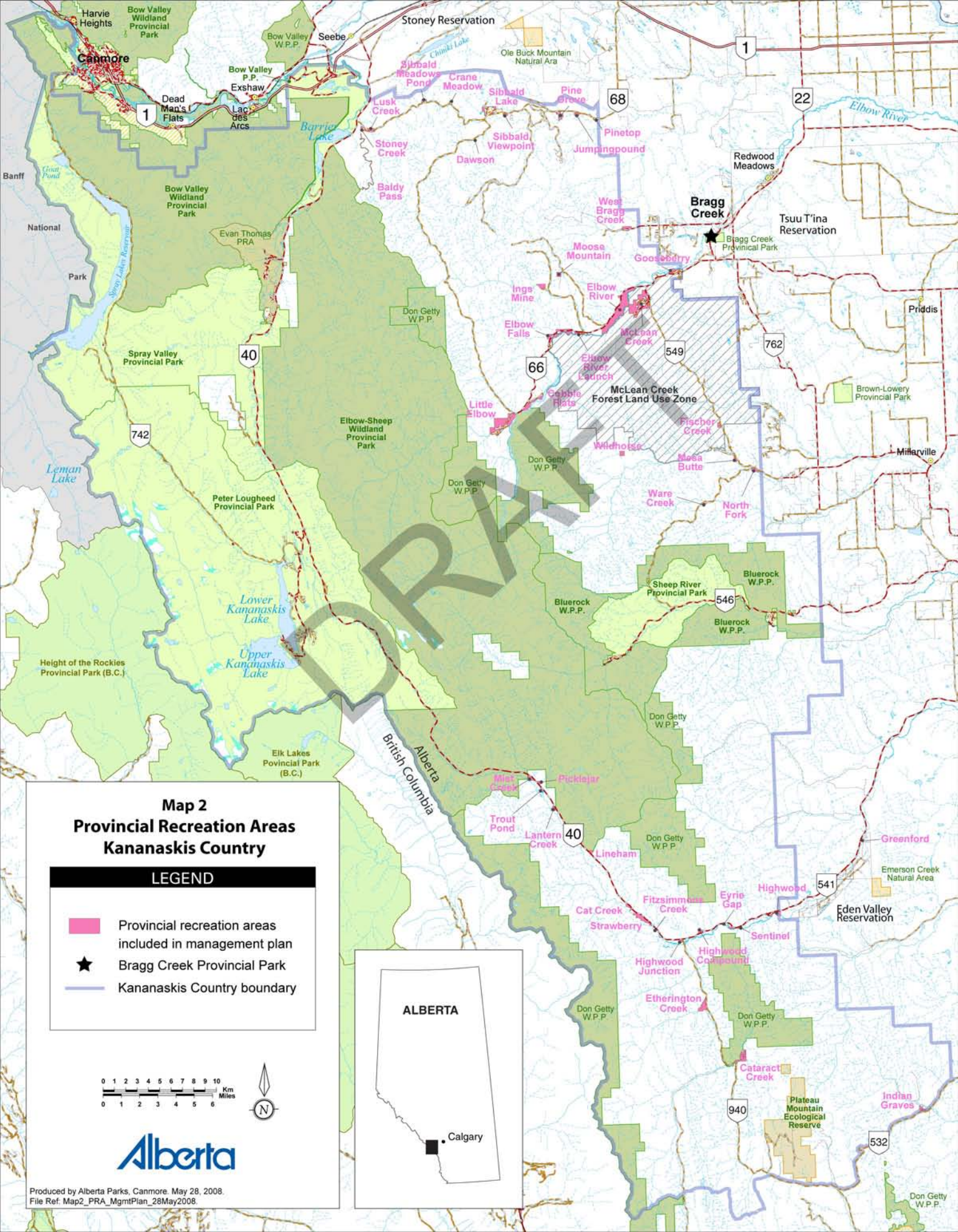
Alberta

Produced by Alberta Parks and Protected Areas, Canmore, May 28, 2008.
File Ref: Map1_PRA_MgmtPlan_Ghost_Lp_26May2008.

ALBERTA

Calgary





Map 2 Provincial Recreation Areas Kananaskis Country

LEGEND

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

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Km
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Miles



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 as a watershed and for other 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 the 1979 review, government decisions concerning proposed development the 1986 Integrated Resource Plan, and the 1999 Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy.

A great variety of animal life are found here including grizzly 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 Management Area is managed under protected areas legislation. Protected areas include Peter Lougheed, Spray Valley, Sheep River, Bow Valley and Bragg Creek Provincial Parks, Elbow Sheep, Bow Valley, 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 51 Provincial Recreation Areas. Alberta Parks staff are responsible for managing all of these protected areas as well as the approximately 700 km of official designated trails in the east part of Kananaskis Country.

Kananaskis Management Area 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 hookups 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.

This plan will not apply to the Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area in the Kananaskis Valley as it already has a management plan in place that was approved in 2004 following extensive public and stakeholder consultations.

1.4 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* (Hwy 40/940), *Jumpingpound* (Hwy 68), *Elbow* (Hwy 66) and *Highwood* (Hwy 541). Many of the PRAs are within an hour's drive of the city. The Hwy 66 seasonal closure December 1st to May 15th 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.

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 and 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 need to 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.

1.5 Alberta Parks System Context

1.5.1 Strategic Plan for the Parks Program

The Government of Alberta has developed a vision, mission, and goals for the Alberta Park's program. This strategy acknowledges the importance and interconnectedness between the Program's contribution to the environment, society, and the economy. The vision, mission, and goals explain the Program's purpose and key initiatives to ensure it is aligned with the Government of Alberta's 20-year Strategic Plan. The vision, mission, and goals will aid in directing management and planning to ensure that Alberta's protected areas continue to provide the environmental, economic, and social values important to all Albertans. More detailed management objectives, strategies and actions for the protected areas in this plan are presented later.

1.5.2 The Vision, Mission and Goals for Alberta Parks

Vision:

Parks are valued as natural landscapes that support the environmental diversity of the province. They inspire society to enjoy and rediscover its connection with the natural world.

Mission:

Parks are managed as a legacy for future generations through leadership, stewardship and research. They support biodiversity, foster sustainable visitor experiences, and provide environmental, social and economic benefits.

Goals:

These may be applied differently in the different classes of protected areas across the province are:

Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living

- *To provide inclusive, nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to health and wellness*

Preservation & Protection

- *To preserve Alberta's natural heritage and associated cultural heritage for current and future generations*

Tourism & Community

- *To foster sustainable, nature-based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta*

Learning & Engagement

- *To encourage Albertans, visitors and communities to actively care for our natural world by developing an appreciation for and understanding of Alberta's natural and cultural*

1.5.3 *Planning Principles for Provincial Recreation Areas*

The following management principles guide the development of objectives and strategies for these sites.

1.5.3.1 Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living Planning Principles

- 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

1.5.3.2 Learning and Engagement Planning Principles

- a) High quality interpretation, education and visitor information is easily accessible to visitors and nearby communities
- b) Cultural features continue to be identified, researched and 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

1.5.3.3 Tourism and Community Planning Principles

- a) People are a fundamental part of the ecosystem. Alberta Parks and other government agencies will work with visitors, residents and stakeholders to provide high quality, sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities within the planning area 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 protected areas 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.

1.5.3.4 Preservation & Protection Planning Principles

- 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 free to function.
- 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.
- Alberta Parks and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development will work towards the establishment of more precise monitoring targets and/or indicator species through ongoing research and regional planning activities.

b) Manage the areas within the broader landscape

- Ecosystems extend beyond protected area boundaries. While management on neighboring lands may affect wildlife, air, water, vegetation and visitor experience within a protected area, likewise management within a protected area may also affect adjacent lands. Ensuring good communication and collaboration among land managers and stakeholders including neighboring 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 PRA 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.
- Alberta Parks 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 Proposed Site Significance Statement

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 lead out from many of the PRAs, they form a very significant component of the outdoor recreation spectrum in the Calgary region.

1.7 Provincial Recreation Area History

Many of the facilities included in this plan were established as Forest Recreation Sites in the 1960s. However, those within Kananaskis Country were redeveloped and expanded or added during the 1980's capital development phase and were designated as Provincial Recreation Areas in 1981. Those Forest Recreation Sites in the Ghost/Waiparous were transferred to Alberta Parks and became Provincial Recreation Sites in the 1990s. Today, all of these 51 PRAs are managed by staff of Alberta Parks 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.

1.8 Protected Area Classification

Provincial Recreation Areas are one of eight classifications of protected area within the Alberta system. Each class allows for a different experience for the park visitor and level of protection for the landscape. *Provincial Recreation Areas* 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.

1.9 Proposed Overall Management Direction for Kananaskis Management Area Provincial Recreation Areas

The Provincial Recreation Areas in this plan area will be managed for the following purposes:

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

Consistent with these management purposes, section 6.3 of this draft plan proposes a reclassification of most of the PRAs found in the Elbow Valley to the Provincial Park class.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND HEALTHY LIVING

2.1 Background

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 the nearby forest reserve lands and Wildland Parks. Seasonal paddling occurs on the Elbow and Highwood rivers. Boating is an important activity on Ghost Reservoir.

All existing PRAs covered in this plan are described in a matrix in Appendix A.

Twenty-three of the PRAs contain campgrounds or group camps while twenty-five are day use 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 is one backcountry campsite (Wildhorse) 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 this 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 Forest Land Use Zone. As well, Dawson PRA (in the Sibbald Snowmobile zone) and Etherington and Cataract PRAs (in the Cataract Snowmobile zone) provide access to designated snowmobile trails. In the Ghost Waiparous, both South Ghost and Fallen Timber PRAs currently provide staging facilities for nearby designated OHV trails. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) has recently begun 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% of total use is day use and 20% 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 approaching or are at high occupancy levels. Those in the rest of the planning area are occasionally at capacity. Those sites approaching, or at capacity, that appear to have expansion potential are indicated in

Figure 6.1 and should be assessed in more detail. 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 and OHV use have occurred especially in the Elbow and Jumping Pound valleys and within the McLean Creek OHV zone respectively.

Available statistics (Park User Statistics 2003-2004) indicate that the Jumpingpound sites see approximately 10, 000 campers and 46,000* day visitors annually; that the Elbow Valley sees 81,700 campers and over 360,000 day visitors annually; that the Highwood Creek areas see 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 these camping use levels have been observed over the 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% 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, in Kananaskis Country, various roads are closed to public vehicle traffic either to protect important winter habitat for wildlife, for lack of demand 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 use for winter picnicking, hiking, viewing or ice fishing. On sunny winter days, several hundred vehicles may be observed at Elbow Falls. In winter, camping occurs at McLean 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 and maintain/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 zones. The Ghost Reservoir is popular for ice fishing and ice boating in winter.

Firepits were installed in many day use (picnic) sites during the capital construction phase throughout Kananaskis Country. However, when government stopped providing free firewood for these sites during the 1990s, the demand for firepits was reduced. Consequently, as firepits needed replacement or became disused, they were often removed. This has continued to the point where there are only a few day use sites with few firepits. 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, parks staff propose that day use firepits be provided with 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, rowdiness or vandalism

The day use sites proposed as locations for firepits are indicated in Table 6.1.

- Day use statistics are estimates only

2.2 Recreation Management Objectives

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

Management Objectives	Proposed Strategies/Actions
To continue to provide a wide range of accessible, safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbish existing viable recreation facilities on a priority basis • Identify potential new PRAs where demand warrants • Work with Alberta Transportation to coordinate maintenance and determine appropriate standards of access roads in plan area. • Encourage partnership approach to planning, building and operating an appropriate range of opportunities • Work with partners to assess existing facilities and retrofit appropriate ones in each valley
To work toward improved accessibility of recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure new facilities accommodate a wide and appropriate range of visitors
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"> • 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) • Identify potential new recreation sites or trails and, along with SRD and stakeholders, determine feasibility and desirability of formal facility development
To minimize impacts of recreation activities on water, soils, vegetation, fish, wildlife, scenic and cultural values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners in Elbow and other valleys to assess future flood damage risks to existing facilities plus risks to alluvial aquifer and, where appropriate, identify mitigation or other measures. • Minimize future facility development on active floodplains and alluvial aquifer • Ensure site plans, designs and construction minimizes siltation into water courses during construction and operations. • All proposed new facilities will be subject to environmental and cultural assessments to determine feasibility and/or protection/mitigation measures. This will include proactive First Nation consultations
To minimize the conflicts between recreational users and also between recreation and the other land uses occurring near to PRAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to separate motorized from non-motorized uses • To plan new facilities so as to minimize conflicts with other existing land uses (e.g. Sour gas wells, cattle grazing). • Carefully review and require other new land uses to minimize or eliminate the conflict

	<p>potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To plan and design trails for shared use (e.g. Hike/bike/ equestrian) wherever possible but also provide single use trails where necessary and feasible. • To 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
--	---

2.3 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 MD of Bighorn which has its own MEP. In order to respond to larger scale emergencies, the MEPs call for government agencies and neighboring municipalities (example: KID, MD of Rockyview, 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 nearest MD of Rockyview 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 takes the lead role and are supported by other government agencies. RCMP is responsible for all ground searches, but work 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 monitors and communicates 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 view 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 consistent manner with 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 Provincial Recreation Areas. Parks staff monitors 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 EUB require enforcement or evacuation services in KID.

2.3.1 Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Emergency Response	Maintain current and effective Municipal Emergency Plan to manage single incidents to disaster scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety staff of Parks (responsible for KID MEP) to ensure MEP is updated annually in conjunction with other government agencies, neighboring municipalities, emergency forces, and stakeholders Continue to provide high level training and leadership for technical backcountry, mountain, and water search and rescue
Wildfire risk	Reduce wildfire risk within and near PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SRD and stakeholders to implement appropriate "Firesmart" measures within and near PRAs
Human Wildlife Conflict	Minimize human wildlife conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to update and implement various wildlife conflict prevention and response plans & strategies Implement "Wildsmart" program in PRA areas as permit Consider wildlife-human conflict potential before developing new or expanding existing facilities
Floods	Minimize risk to visitors and recreation infrastructure from floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize 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. 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 protected areas, fish habitat etc.

LEARNING AND CARING

3.1 Background

Parks build environmental literacy in Albertan's and visitors through education, information services, meaningful volunteer opportunities, and by showcasing best practices in green infrastructure and operations. The Alberta Parks stewardship model (Figure 1) 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 capital. 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.



Figure 1: Alberta Parks Stewardship Model

3.2 Heritage Appreciation Programming

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

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

3.3 Information Services

There are several Kananaskis Country Information Centers located throughout the area. These centers 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.

The Kananaskis Country website, www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/kananaskis, is also available 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 areas, 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.

3.4 Environmental Education (EE)

Environmental Education staff in Kananaskis Country provide a wide variety of field-based programs for students throughout the Elbow Valley. All programs meet Alberta Education curriculum objectives and help to increase environmental awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Alberta Parks. EE 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 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.

3.5 Outreach

A newly created position in Kananaskis Management Area 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. This Outreach Coordinator role is also intended to enhance the effectiveness and reach of park messages, as they relate to heritage appreciation, stewardship, and park management, and to the changing demographics of Alberta society.

3.6 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Heritage Appreciation: 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 Alberta Parks system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update HA Programming to keep it current and interesting• Accessibility will be considered in the development of all programs• Explore expansion of HA Programming to other PRAs• Significantly expand programming in Elbow Valley PRAs if reclassified to provincial park
	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">• Support SRD in the development and maintenance of forestry related interpretive materials at the Demonstration Forest Exhibit• Continue to use existing interpretive trails and signs, and update as needed• Explore opportunities for expansion or development of new self-guided interpretive trails
Heritage Appreciation: 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">• Continue to work with the Friends of Kananaskis Country Cooperating Association in the operation of aspects of the Kananaskis Country Information Centers• Provide printed information about the areas at local and regional tourism authorities or distribution points in Kananaskis Country• Use the website to provide up-to-date information• Ensure all orientation, information, and promotional products are consistent with ministry messages and presentation standards

Heritage Appreciation: 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"> • Develop youth education programs and teacher professional development opportunities to assist in the delivery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. • 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. • Explore opportunities to develop relationships with other non-profit and government organizations to deliver environmental education programs.
Stewardship	Provide the public with opportunities to contribute to park management and protection of features, including the provision of HA Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work cooperatively with volunteer and stewardship groups in the Kananaskis Country region • Encourage participation in the Alberta Parks Campground Host program • Encourage volunteerism around events occurring in the Kananaskis Country PRAs (e.g. remediation projects, trail development, HA programming, etc.)
Outreach	Develop park outreach programs and projects with priority groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus outreach efforts on persons with disabilities, new Canadians, first nations, youth, and local community projects • Explore the development of corporate relationships
	Expand and improve Kananaskis communications and interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase park messaging available to day users, conference attendees and non English speakers • Improve accessibility of parks facilities including interpretive displays

TOURISM AND COMMUNITY

4.1 Background

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.

4.2 Commercial Guiding and Instructing

Provincial Recreation Areas are used year round by commercial 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 Parks Division Lands in Kananaskis Country.

4.3 Commercial Filming

Some Provincial Recreation Areas are popular locations for commercial filming of TV commercials, documentaries, and feature films. The Department 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.

4.4 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 Races. 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 limit group size to 150 participants and parking use to 80% 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.

4.5 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 and were designed to minimize impacts on wildlife, sensitive areas and backcountry visitors.

4.6 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 the "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 developments can occur in Wildland Parks or Ecological Reserves however restricted nodal development can occur in PRAs, provincial parks or forest reserve lands where a management plan that includes public consultation is approved. While 3 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 below on Table 4.7 and Maps 3 and 4. While these sites were identified in previous tourism market studies, no detailed feasibility or other studies have yet been done. Comments on these proposed sites from stakeholders and the public will assist in determining which of them will be subject to more detailed studies.

4.7 Management Objectives and Strategies/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"> • Work with guides and outfitters to improve quality of facilities, experience and information provided to visitors. • Continue to monitor existing limits to numbers of permits issued and associated conditions • Improve monitoring of and reporting on existing activities to help minimize impacts and conflicts and ensure visitor safety and enjoyment • Work with SRD and other stakeholders to coordinate permitting between PRAs and forest reserve lands. • Continue working with the Alberta Film Commission to meet the needs of the film industry while minimizing impacts and conflicts. Implement new Parks Policy on filming and photography. • Staff to work with special event organizers to encourage smaller scale events in PRAs.
Tourism Facilities	To refurbish and enhance existing recreation and tourism facilities where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbish and enhance existing trails, trailheads, campgrounds and other visitor facilities as resources permit. • Where demand warrants and feasibility is demonstrated, develop additional facilities including loop or connecting trails. • Use partnership approach where feasible.
	To manage all development proposals consistent with the Kananaskis Recreation Policy (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to work with cell phone coverage providers to increase coverage where feasible • Continue to direct all non conforming tourism development outside Kananaskis Country
	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"> • Consider potential future development nodes at or near Lusk Creek, Sibbald Lake and Elbow Falls PRAs (see Map 3 and 4). • Update previous market assessment(s) for small fixed roof developments at these locations. • Conduct environmental reviews and more detailed studies required to support a future Call for Proposals process for these sites.

PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION

5.1 Environmental Review

Environmental review in Parks is a cornerstone to appropriate development and land management. Within Alberta Parks environmental review for all PRAs is required under the following conditions:

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%) 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. *If during planning of the improvement any issues of interest are noted on or adjacent to the site. This may include but are not limited to nesting sites, dens and burrows, rare or endangered species, archaeological or paleontological artefacts.*

When any one of these conditions exist the proponent of the development must submit a detailed plan to the Heritage Protection Team Leader for review. Following review of the plans the Heritage Protection Team Leader, in consultation with the Area Manager will provide details regarding the type and scope of Environmental Review required.

5.2 Geology/Landforms/Climate

The Provincial Recreation Areas within this plan area are mostly located in foothills and Montane valleys with elevations from 1400 metres (4350 ft) to 1600 meters. Several of the PRAs in the Highwood are located in mountainous terrain and are at valley bottom elevations up to 1700 meters. 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. There are occasional coal outcroppings in the foothills 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 High River or Kananaskis Boundary. 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 plan area will vary, due to their higher elevation, 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). The average annual precipitation in High River is 518 mm with May, June, July and August being the wettest months and March having the most snow. Average annual snow accumulations in the foothills are generally deeper and longer lasting than in High River or Cochrane. Prevailing winds are westerly and southwesterly 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.

5.3 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 lived or worked in or near the Forest Reserve. 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 plan 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 and is intended to ensure safe, secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. All streams in the plan area are important sources of drinking water for downstream users and must be managed to maintain existing flows and high water quality. Alberta Environment no longer accepts applications for new water allocations in the Bow, Oldman and South Saskatchewan River Sub-basins. In future, the Minister of Environment 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 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 habitat 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 the Provincial Parks Act and the Public Lands Act if it is in effect on a given shoreline area. Any approvals under the Public Lands Act would, however, only be issued if Alberta Parks approves of the proposed work.

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 the Provincial Parks Act and the Public Lands Act if it is in effect on a given shoreline area. Any approvals under the Public Lands Act would, however, only be issued if Alberta Parks approves of the proposed work.

Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is the lead 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 control.

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.

Following 2005 flooding Allen Bill Pond was damaged and SRD staff are assessing the feasibility of restoring the put and take fishery here.

5.3.1 Management Objectives and Strategies/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"> • Reclassify most PRAs along the Elbow River to Provincial Park to emphasize the need for protection of this watershed and increase heritage appreciation programming to support this. • Eliminate fording of Waiparous Creek by OHVs from existing campground
Ongoing fisheries management	Coordinate fisheries management per MOU between SRD and TPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective implementation of MOU • SRD is assessing feasibility of restoring Allen Bill pond fishery (damaged during 2005 flooding) • Develop appropriate access to Cataract Creek (below campground) to relieve fishing pressures from other areas
Riparian habitat	Maintain high quality riparian habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess need for mitigation measures at existing facilities
	Ensure wildlife movement is maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize impacts of future facility development on riparian habitat and function as well as the alluvial aquifer and ensure high water quality is maintained.

5.4 Climate Change

Climate change is a global concern. Recently, governments the world over have begun to explore climate change and their impacts on this issue. Every government recognizes their influence on climate change and as such many have developed strategies and plans to reduce their impacts.

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

5.4.1 Management Issues, Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Climate Change	Management within the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas will be consistent with the Alberta 2008 Climate Change Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all new construction of buildings and infrastructure uses the most cost effective, energy efficient methods and materials • Retrofit existing buildings with energy efficient lighting, heating, water fixtures, etc. to reduce overall consumption. • Ensure vehicles are appropriate to use and manage use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Reduce use of paper through focusing education and marketing through digital mediums. • 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 • Develop an environmental procurement guideline for implementation in all administrative and operation offices • Use Kananaskis Country as a setting for implementation of best practices regarding energy efficiency and use heritage appreciation (education) programming to educate visitors on climate change and their role

5.5 Vegetation

In the northern portion of the Kananaskis Management area 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, Sheperdia 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 subregion 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 snow beery, silverberry, Saskatoon berry, prickly rose and a variety herbaceous cover. Willow communities are common here in riparian zones and on poorly drained sites.

Most PRAs in Kananaskis Country are located at lower elevations 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, Trembling Aspen, Douglas fir and white spruce. Understories are dominated by Sheperdia Canadadensis, 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 and Mist creek, Etherington creek, Cataract creek and Wild Horse. These sites are dominated by a lodgepole pine over story 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 Trembling Aspen being almost non-existent. Typical understory can include bearberry, hairy wild rye, grouseberry, sheperdia 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 lead to larger than expected even aged lodgepole pine stands across the landscape and a loss in vegetation diversity. Fire regime analysis of the Montane and Upper Foothills sub-regions show similar changes in vegetation structure (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 protected areas 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 PRAs.

5.5.1 Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Fire Smart	Ensure all facilities meet fire smart standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new facility development will be required to meet current fire smart standards. All existing facilities and sites will meet current fire smart standards within five years
Dangerous tree management	Minimize the risk of injury or property damage from falling trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual inspection of all sites will occur to identify potentially dangerous trees. 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.
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"> Rare vegetation surveys will be completed prior to any new development in PRAs. All documented rare or endangered plants will be reported to the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre.
Bear attractant management	Reduce the risk of encounters and conflict between people and bears.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and remove vegetation known to attract bears (e.g. Sheperdia canadensis, Red Osier Dogwood) from areas close to facilities and trails. Improve visibility along trails and roadways.

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

5.6 Wildlife

Wildlife resources within the Kananaskis 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 protected areas including the PRAs. SRD consults with TPR on the implementation, development and alteration of the administrative regulatory regime relative to wildlife. 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 (which includes PRA's) is the responsibility of TPR.

5.6.1 Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Wildlife habitat	Maintain/enhance high value wildlife sites in/near PRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess need for mitigation measures at existing facilities
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"> Assess the need for mitigation measures along high use sections of Elbow and Highwood Rivers
Riparian habitat	Maintain high quality riparian habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize impacts of current and future facility development on riparian habitat and riparian habitat function

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

5.7 Natural and Cultural Landscape Values

The high scenic qualities within or near the PRAs in the plan area are important values to be maintained or enhanced. The main views or 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 protected areas 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, 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 Recreation Policy 1999. Any additional buildings approved to be developed within the PRAs will conform to Kananaskis Country Architectural Theme Guide (rev 2004) which ensures that public buildings blend in with the natural setting.

Alberta Parks applies an environmental screening and assessment policy that 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).

5.7.1 Management Objectives and Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Key scenic qualities	Maintain or enhance key natural scenic qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All facility development will continue to be controlled and will be consistent with approved design guidelines Facility location and design will respect key scenic qualities and maximize visitor opportunities to experience a variety of quality views 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.
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"> All developments will employ strategies and technology consistent with the Kananaskis dark sky initiative.

5.8 Cultural Resources

Historic Resources

The Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas are distributed over a large region of foothills and mountain terrain west of Calgary, largely within the watershed of the Bow River. Historic resources in this region include palaeontological (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 TPRC.

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 palaeontological 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 palaeontological 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, palaeontological remains are not a direct management concern for any of the Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas.

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 we refer to 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, there have been 30 archaeological studies 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%) are classified as pre-contact campsites, showing evidence of people having lived at these locations. Another 5% consist of just small scatters of stone artifacts and 6% have yielded only a single artifact – 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 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 *Alberta 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 artifacts, but specific cultural affiliations are not known.

All archaeological sites are afforded protection under the *Alberta 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).

One site not included above because it is across the Highwood River from the Sentinel Recreation Area, is the Highwood Medicine Wheel (EcPp-25), a ceremonial site constructed from boulders and cobbles reported by a member of the public in 1992. According to the report, the site continues to hold significance for First Nations people as shown by the presence of a contemporary Sundance Lodge. Given its separation from the Sentinel Recreation Area by the Highwood River, the site is not a direct management concern, though the sensitivity of this site and the potential for conflict with First Nations’ traditional use practices should be borne in mind. That said, a recent visit to the site by a professional archaeologist, failed to find any evidence of the Medicine Wheel or Sundance Lodge.

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 should be referred to Culture and Community Spirit for review.

A list of sites and studies for each recreation area is located in Appendix B.

Historic Structures

Alberta Culture and Community Spirit 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. Due diligence should be exercised to avoid impact to these structures or to undertake any studies as required by Alberta Culture and Community Spirit in the event of proposed development.

5.8.1 Management Objectives and Strategies

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Historic resource protection	To protect known historic sites and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that Historic Resources Impact Assessments are done prior to any site disturbances within PRAs
Historic resource interpretation	To interpret cultural history where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Research	To encourage further research into historic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with First Nations, academic, and other research partners to increase research activities in and near PRAs.

5.9 Adjacent Land Use and Development

Forest Reserve lands which surround the PRAs in this plan 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 practises (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 is monitored and a variety of measures such as fencing or adjusting seasonal cattle movements are employed to reduce conflicts. Several facilities where cattle conflict has been observed are noted in Figure 2.4 (Recreation section) 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 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 facility is being constructed on leased 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.

5.9.1 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Coordinated Land Management	Coordinate management with adjacent forest reserve lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Park staff to work with SRD and Spray Lakes Sawmills to effectively implement best practices for visual quality management • Parks staff and campground operator to work with SRD and operator of Camp Adventure to minimize conflicts
	Coordinate management with land use in adjacent municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

5.10 Research, Monitoring and 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 here especially those intended to improve overall land management or site/activity management. All research and monitoring conducted within Provincial Recreation Areas must be done with an approved Alberta Parks Research and Collection Permit. A research partnership with the University of Calgary has been established and will continue to grow.

5.10.1 Management Objectives and Strategies/Actions

TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Research, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management	Encourage appropriate ongoing research activities especially those leading to improvements in management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research activities will be permitted provided they have no significant adverse impacts on the site, other site users, or wildlife. • Monitoring of range health to assess the impacts of grazing and establish appropriate stocking rates and grazing management guidelines. • Fire regime and history analysis to develop a model and set targets for ecosystem restoration work. • Monitoring for Mountain Pine Beetle • Visitor Satisfaction surveys. • Monitoring of facility and trail use to understand the patterns of visitor use in this area. • Completing biophysical inventories • 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. • 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

IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

6.1 Application of the Plan

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

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 Department's Volunteer Program. Volunteer stewards will assist departmental staff in inspecting and reporting on the conditions of the Protected Areas, 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. Alberta Parks will continue to work with a variety of interest groups and encourage the development of active partnerships to care for protected areas or educate and inform visitors.

6.2 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. The site specific direction tables are grouped according to watershed and access (as described in section 1.1).

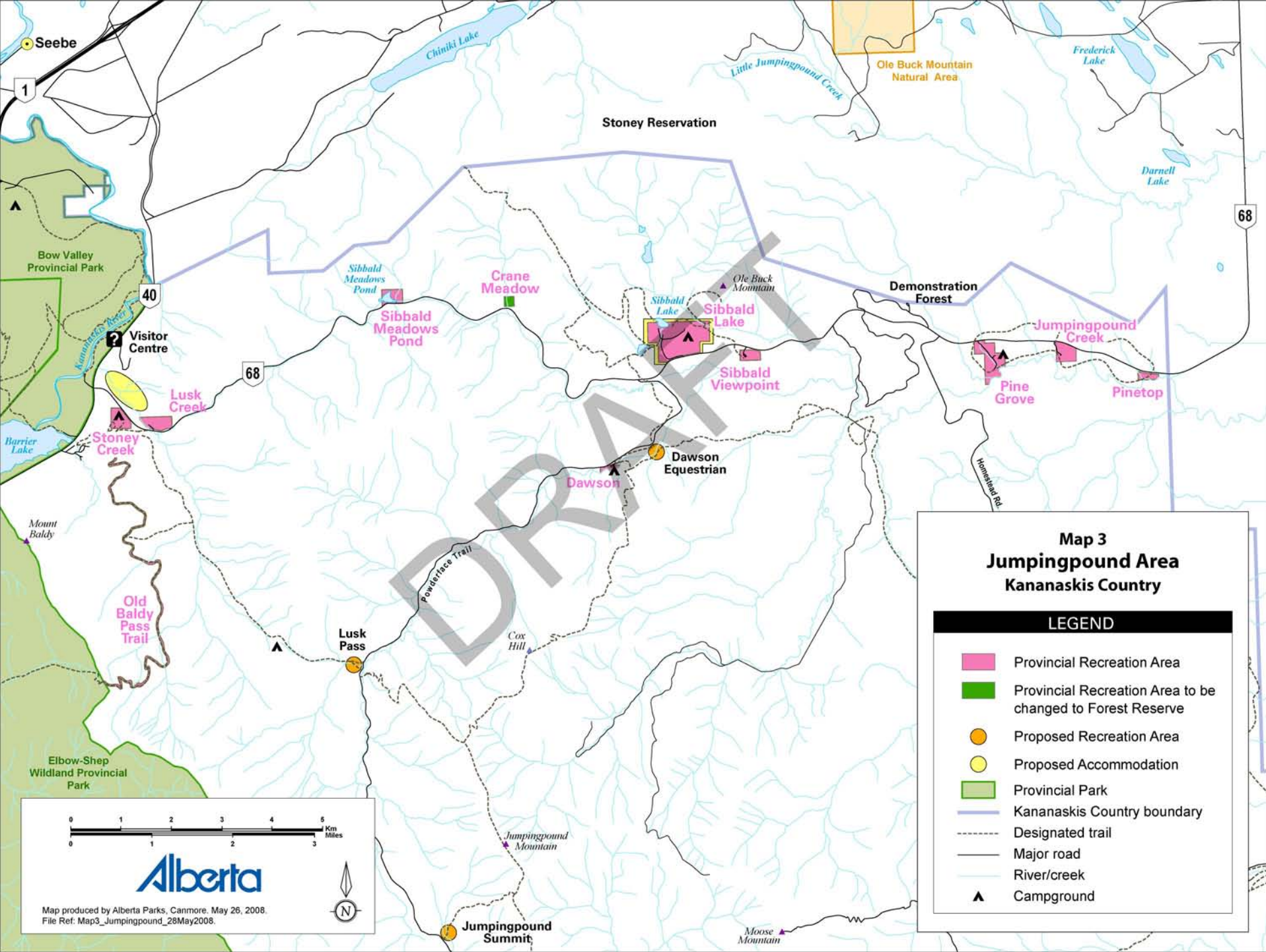
6.2.1 Ghost/Waiparous Sites (Highway 40/940) – (see Map 2)

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Burnt Timber (camping/fishing)	Determine long term forest health within and near PRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess forest health
	Enhance general camping, access to creek and picnicking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish toilets and other facilities as soon as resources permit Include picnicking and trail to creek in site refurbishment planning Determine expansion potential during site planning
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"> Monitor use and work with SRD and stakeholders to address site issues/demands
	Determine need for additional facilities and services within or in vicinity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess expansion potential Refurbish as funds permit Amend boundary if required Work with SRD, Tourism and stakeholders to assess potential for new facilities and services in vicinity Ensure protection of known cultural sites
Waiparous Valley Viewpoint (scenic viewing)	Manage as viewpoint with limited facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain viewpoint and monitor use Refurbish viewpoint sign and consider adding garbage or toilet facilities if demand warrants Amend boundary to include existing viewpoint only – return portion west of Hwy 40 to forest reserve status
North Ghost (non OHV camping/ group camp)	Determine forest health and assess wildfire hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do forest health assessment and implement recommendations Work with SRD to assess wildfire hazard and need for mitigation
	Maintain or enhance existing camping experiences (non motorized)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish campground and determine whether group camp should remain where is or be relocated to Ghost Airstrip. Continue to work with SRD, stakeholders and campground operator to enhance safe and enjoyable recreation experiences Determine pedestrian/bike trail system or other day use potential within and near campground
Ghost Airstrip (group camp; day use interpretation)	Enhance and add more group camps when warranted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for OHV groups to use facility and gain access to designated OHV trails east of Hwy 40 Refurbish existing facilities Assess potential for additional group campgrounds as well as connecting trail to nearby trails (east of Hwy

	Review existing interpretive displays and determine appropriate actions and messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park staff to work with SRD and stakeholders to assess appropriate options for interpreting historic logging features here.
Waiparous (camping; group camp)	Address OHV use pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SRD and stakeholders to determine feasibility of developing OHV staging facilities west of Hwy. OHV staging area required north of Waiparous Creek and east of Highway.
	Ensure that sufficient group camp capacity exists in vicinity of Waiparous/Airstrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess whether to retain existing Waiparous group camp or relocate to Ghost Airstrip
	Provide safe day use opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign this site to include good day use access to Waiparous Creek. Work with AT to ensure intersections are safe and reduce/eliminate Hwy dust problem
South Ghost (OHV staging)	Determine appropriate use for this site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SRD and stakeholders to determine visitor needs at this site If demand is demonstrated, design site plan to accommodate and amend boundary as appropriate.

6.2.2 Jumpingpound Sites (Hwy 68) – (see Map 3)

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Stoney Creek (group camp)	Maintain or enhance viability as group camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and sign connecting trail to nearby Lusk Pas/Baldy Pass trails Work with campground operator to maintain high occupancy
Lusk Creek (picnic; trailhead)	Enhance as picnic site and trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade signage and connector trail to Lusk Pass and Baldy Pass trails Expand picnicking and pathways when site refurbished Work with AT (Alberta Transportation) on dust abatement
	Examine feasibility of possible small fixed roof accommodation facility in vicinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Tourism to conduct more detailed feasibility studies including environmental and cultural assessments
Sibbald Meadows Pond (fishing; picnic)	Manage as picnic site and put and take fishery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to manage fishery Monitor and mitigate litter or other problems
Crane Meadow (facilities removed; site reclaimed)	To revert back to forest reserve lands	
Sibbald Lake (camping; picnic; trailhead; fishing)	To manage for general camping, non motorized trailhead, picnicking, natural and cultural interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Alberta Transportation regarding paving of Hwy 68 and this site Assess feasibility of raising/stabilizing Sibbald Pond and upgrading/expanding picnic and paddling opportunities.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain firepits at picnic site if viable • Address rowdiness through design changes, improved communications and signage and onsite management. • Assess forest health within campground and develop strategy to address forest health issues and improve aesthetics • Address cattle conflict
	To ensure well coordinated management between public and youth camp (Camp Adventure) activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks staff to work with Camp Adventure staff to reduce conflicts and improve experience for all. • Explore potential partnership for trail care by Camp
	Examine feasibility of site for possible small fixed roof accommodation facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct more detailed feasibility studies
	Provide opportunities for appreciation of natural and cultural features/processes in PRAs and surrounding landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update interpretive signage in vicinity • Protect known cultural site
Dawson (trailhead; picnic; camping)	Manage as a high quality day use site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert Dawson to day use only and refurbish facilities to enhance biking, hiking, equestrian, and picnic area • Assess demand for equestrian camping in area and if demand warrants this use, provide in alternate location • Amend boundary to include all facilities
Sibbald Viewpoint (picnic; scenic views)	Increase visitor use and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how to enhance the appeal of this site and increase visitor use levels.
Pine Grove Group Camps (group camp)	Provide high quality group camping opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbish existing group camp and Jumpingpound Loop trail facilities • Investigate need for and feasibility of connecting trail to nearby Tom Snow Trail and/or Demonstration Forest Interpretive facilities.
Jumpingpound Creek (facilities removed)	Provide venue for special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain for special events and possible future site development if demand warrants
Pinetop (Picnic; trailhead; fishing)	Provide high quality day use opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address cattle conflict • Assess and treat hazard trees • Monitor any impacts/conflicts with youth camp and work with operator to minimize • Install firepits

6.2.3 Elbow Valley Sites (Hwys 66/549) – (see Map 4)

SITE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
Little Elbow (camping; trailhead; fishing; picnic)	To manage site for summer general and equestrian camping, trailhead parking for equestrian, biking and hiking; picnicking and fishing in Elbow River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign traffic circulation into main trailhead and Forget me Not Pond with much more deliberate turn into campground and remove all day use parking from campground Expand/upgrade corral capacity Develop overflow camping facility
	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"> Work with partners to complete mapping of alluvial aquifer
Cobble Flats (picnic; fishing)	Manage for summer picnicking, river access and informal non-motorized trailhead purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain firepits here Address cow conflict Refurbish and keep informal trailhead function Expansion may be required in future – minimize impact on Elbow R. Amend boundary to include facilities
	Protect water quality of the Elbow River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete mapping of alluvial aquifer Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Elbow River and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality
Elbow Falls (scenic viewing; picnic; fishing)	<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"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snow removal/signage on Elbow Falls viewpoint pathway required Keep firepits out to help alleviate crowding in picnic area; address re-vegetation Consider relocating winter gate on Hwy 66 further west from entrance to Elbow Falls Investigate feasibility of connecting trails Address Powderface Trailhead frequent overcrowding. Refurbish Beaver Flats campground and Interpretive Trail Manage existing OHV use on south side of Elbow River to reduce impacts and conflicts. Amend boundary as appropriate
	Manage traffic flow (internal and external) to provide safe and efficient flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address vehicle congestion/hazard on Hwy 66 when winter gate closed Provide connecting trails between facilities where feasible Address OHV impacts on south side of Elbow Falls
Elbow River Launch (picnic; fishing)	Manage for summer picnicking and river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish; determine feasibility of any further expansion and opening in winter; Retain firepits Determine feasibility of connecting trails to Elbow Falls and Riverview Trail (east) Address occasional OHV trespass issues with SRD and OHV users Amend boundary
Ings Mine (trailhead)	To manage site as summer non-motorized trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update PRA location/description Refurbish as resources permit; coordinate with SRD re nearby informal bike trails Include 2 or 3 picnic sites but no firepits here.

Map 4 Elbow Area Kananaskis Country

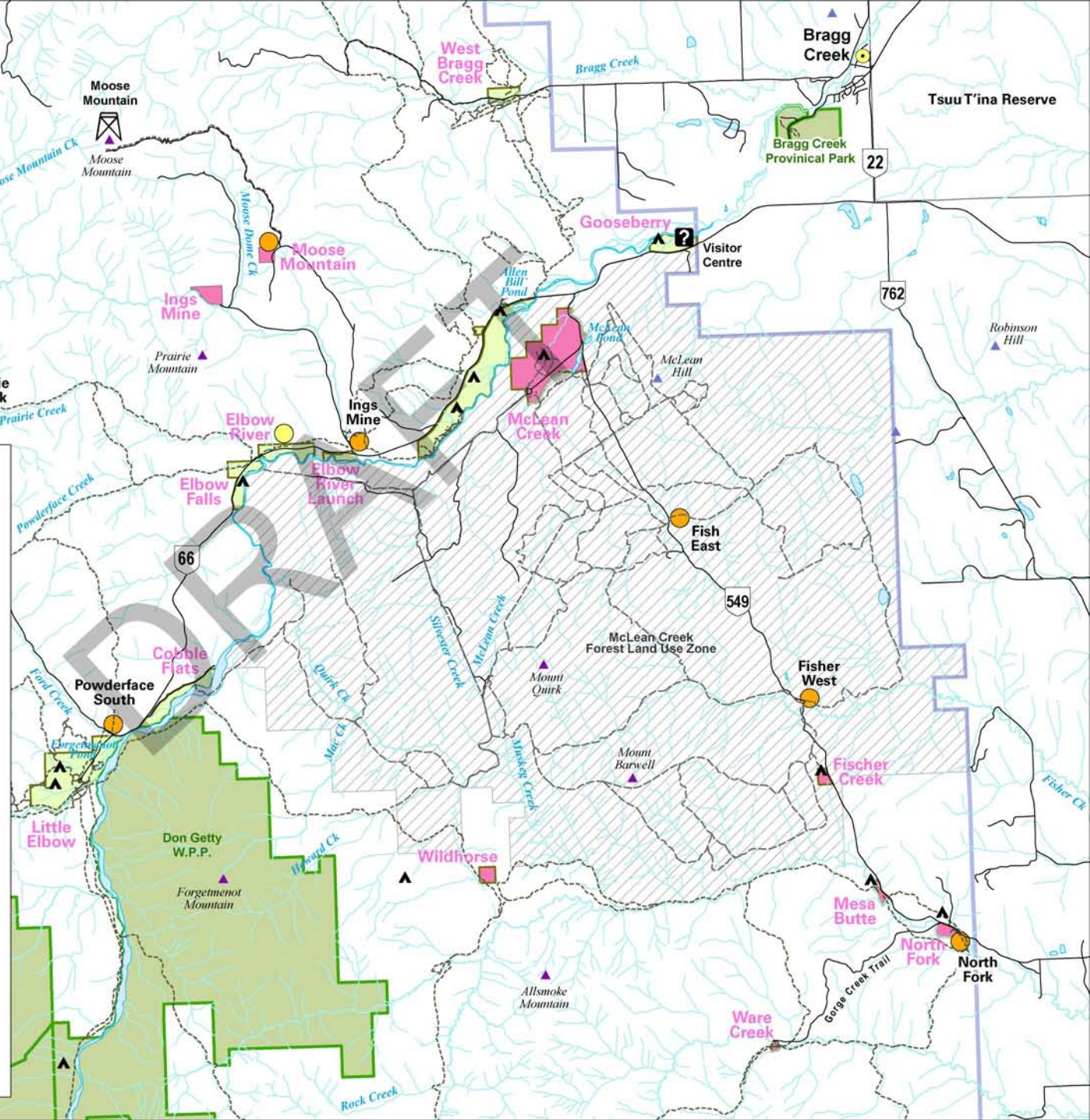
LEGEND

- Provincial Recreation Area
- Provincial Recreation Area to be changed to Provincial Park
- Proposed Recreation Area
- Proposed Accommodation
- Provincial Park
- Kananaskis Country boundary
- Designated trail
- All terrain vehicle trail
- Major road
- River/creek
- Campground



Alberta

Map produced by Alberta Parks, Canmore, May 28, 2008.
File Ref: Map4_Elbow_28May2008.



	Protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to complete map of aquifer • Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Canyon Creek and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality
Moose Mountain (Trailhead)	Manage as summer only trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand parking if feasible and add signs, toilet and garbage • Update PRA location/description • Work with AT and Shell to enforce winter road closure
Elbow River (camping; group camp; trailhead; fishing; picnic)	Paddy's Flat for summer general camping, group camping and limited overflow camping; Station Flats as year round equestrian, biking and hiking trailhead; Allen Bill as year round picnicking, river access, trailhead and fishery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbish Paddy's Flat, Station Flats facilities and consider expansion potential • Address cow conflicts • Amend boundary of Station Flats to include facilities • Consider snowplowing first 80 meters of Paddy's Flat entrance road to provide some off road parking in winter • Determine feasibility of trailhead/picnic potential on north side of Hwy opposite Allen Bill to serve Fullerton Loop Trail to address crowding • Add picnic sites with some firepits at Allen Bill • SRD assessing feasibility of restoring pond fishery
	Protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete mapping of alluvial aquifer. Should consider long term plan for site given flood potential • Determine whether facilities are located in/near the alluvial aquifer of Elbow River and the need for mitigation measures to help protect water quality
McLean Creek (camping; OHV staging; fishing; picnic)	Manage for year round general and OHV camping, OHV trailhead, picnicking and fishing pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine feasibility of expanding both non motorized and motorized serviced camping; • Amend boundary if needed • Refurbish all existing facilities including feeder trails and fencing • Address cow conflict • Establish overflow camping area • Refurbish and expand with firepits at picnic sites on both west and east sides of pond; • Work with SRD to identify future trail system needs within McLean zone and PRA
Gooseberry (camping; fishing; visitor center)	Manage site for summer general camping and the Elbow Visitor Information Center operation year round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider seasonal bear habitat and proximity to Elbow River floodplain in refurbishment of campground • work with partners to expand and upgrade services available at Elbow Visitor Center
West Bragg Creek (trailhead; fishing)	Manage as winter trailhead but work towards managing as year round trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to continue to develop winter trails partnership with local trails association • TPR to consider designation as summer facility when resources permit • When resources permit, develop plan for summer trail system with links to Station Flats, Allen Bill and Moose Mountain • Minimize conflicts and ensure safety of recreational users
Wildhorse (backcountry campsite)	Enhance appeal and use of this summer backcountry campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate site and include water source, firepits, toilet, food storage and fencing • Ensure PRA boundary is consistent with facility location

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

6.2.4 Highwood Sites (Highways 541/40/940) – (see Map 5)

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

Map 5 Highwood Area Kananaskis Country

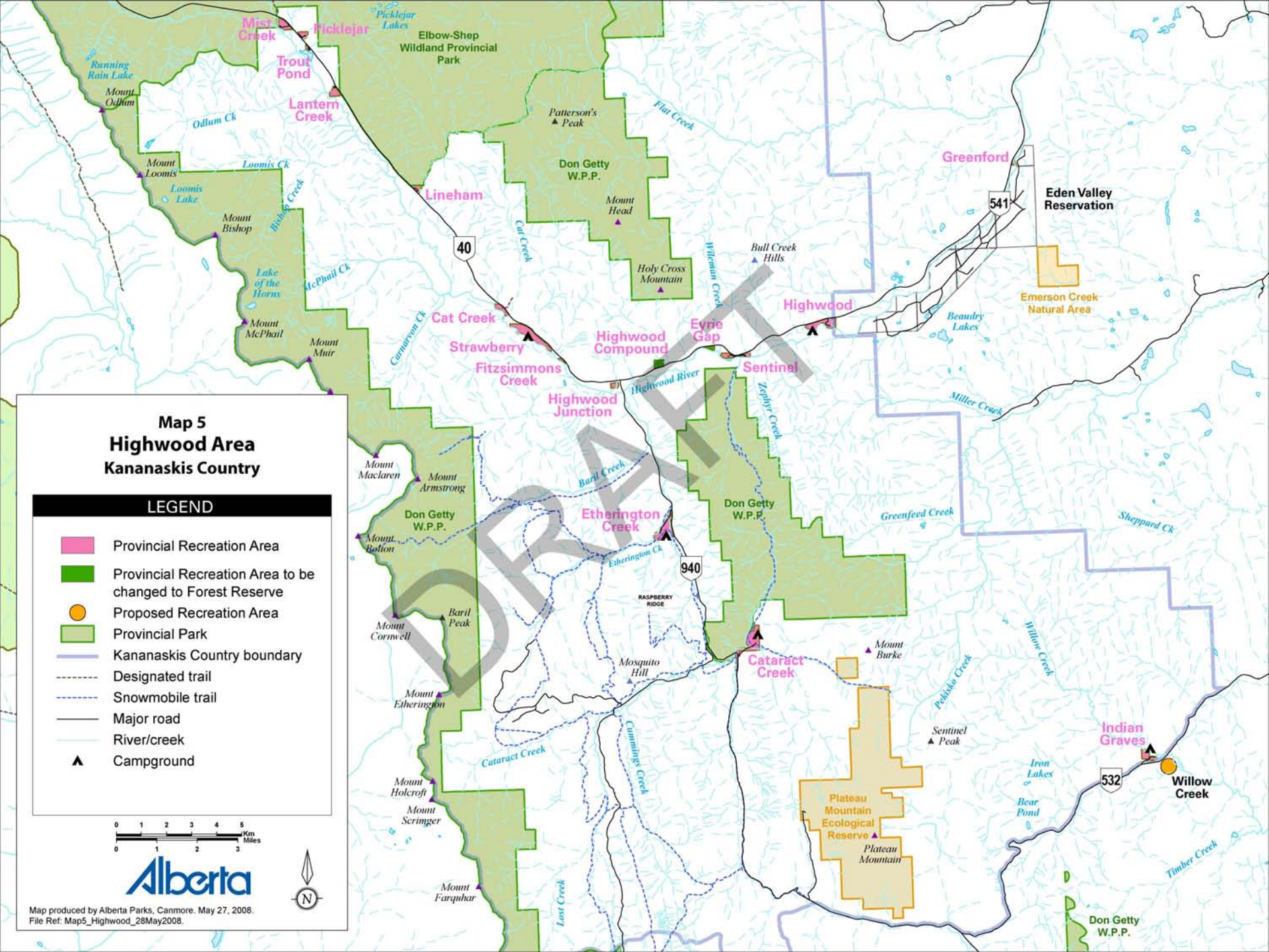
LEGEND

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



Alberta

Map produced by Alberta Parks, Canmore. May 27, 2008.
File Ref: Map5_Highwood_28May2008.



Strawberry (<i>hunting season camping</i>)	Manage for fall hunting camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider closing and move camping to Etherington
Fitzsimmons Creek (<i>picnic; fishing</i>)	Manage as summer picnic site and informal trailhead/river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish Amend boundary
Highwood Junction (<i>service center; admin site</i>)	Maintain as seasonal service center and year round maintenance facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify options for enhancing visitor information services here Amend PRA boundary to include all facilities
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"> Refurbish including group firepits at snowmobile staging area Determine need for equestrian campground here and provide standard facilities if warranted Address cow conflict Minimize impacts/conflicts of logging on PRA and nearby trails
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"> Refurbish including firepits in picnic area; determine need for formal trailhead parking for Salter Creek and Cataract Creek downstream Minimize impacts/conflicts of logging on PRA and nearby trails Amend boundary to include access road
Highwood Compound (<i>former maintenance site</i>)	Revert to forest reserve status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site should be reclaimed and revert to forest reserve status
Eyrie Gap (<i>picnic; fishing</i>)	Close site due to low use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove facilities, reclaim and revert to forest reserve status
Sentinel (<i>trailhead; picnic; fishing</i>)	Manage for summer informal trailhead, picnicking, fishing/river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess potential future flood impacts and possible mitigation Retain and refurbish including firepits Assess expansion feasibility for both picnicking and trailhead (equestrian and hiking mainly)
Fir Creek (<i>facilities removed by 1995 flood</i>)	Revert to forest reserve status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site should be reclaimed and revert to forest reserve status
Highwood (<i>picnic; fishing; group camp</i>)	Manage summer group camp and to increase use of picnic facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish day use and provide firepits Investigate other ways to increase day use at this attractive site
Greenford (<i>camping; day use; fishing; rafting</i>)	To enhance day use river access function and investigate future options for camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish public day use area and consider reducing or divesting camping function

Indian Graves (camping)	To determine future flood damage potential on existing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess flooding potential and mitigation Ensure protection of cultural site
	To manage for general and possibly equestrian camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
	To investigate options for providing formal OHV camping on south side of Hwy 532	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Alberta Transportation and stakeholders to determine potential for Hwy 532 improvements Work with SRD to determine demand and feasibility of formal OHV staging facilities

6.3 Proposed Reclassification of Elbow Valley PRAs to Provincial Park

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 many existing facilities including an extensive trail system. 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 draft plan for the Elbow River (March 2008) emphasizes the need to carefully protect water quality in the upper watershed within Kananaskis Country. 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. While some interpretive messages about the river and watershed were presented on signs, at evening campground programs or on guided hikes in the early days of Kananaskis Country, all personal interpretive activities were eliminated due to government cutbacks in the 1990's. Recently, a growing number of school students have benefited from first hand education about the river and watershed management through a partnership between Kananaskis Country Environmental Education, the Friends of Kananaskis Country and the Elbow River Partnership.

In view of the high public use of the Elbow Valley facilities and the importance of enhanced efforts by Alberta Parks to continue to protect Elbow River water quality and also the key role that recreation sites that focus much of the recreation use along the upper Elbow Valley can play in educating and informing the public about this, it is proposed to reclassify the following existing PRAs as Elbow Valley Provincial Park (see Map 4):

Little Elbow
 Cobble Flats
 Elbow Falls
 Elbow River Launch
 Ings Mine (updated location)
 Elbow River
 Gooseberry
 West Bragg Creek

The reclassification would allow Alberta Parks to more readily fund additional interpretive programming and work with partners to greatly enhance educational efforts. These Elbow sites would continue to be managed as non-motorized, public recreation sites with an enhanced focus on watershed protection and public education. Bragg Creek Provincial Park nearby would also 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.

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.

6.4 Proposed Provincial Recreation Area Boundary Changes

6.4.1 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 PRA had not moved with them. This review indicated that 12 sites had existing boundaries that did not entirely contain the facilities, had not been updated or were difficult to locate on the ground. These sites included Fallen Timber, Ghost Airstrip, Waiparous Viewpoint and South Ghost (see Map 1 for locations) as well as Dawson Equestrian and Sibbald Viewpoint in the Jumpingpound (see Map 2 for locations). Sites in the Elbow Valley that need boundary amendments include Elbow Falls, Elbow River Launch and Station Flats (see Map 4). Finally, Trout Ponds and Cataract Campground in the Highwood (see Map 5) also need amending.

6.4.2 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 PRAs adjusted to match the new locations nearby. The approximate locations of the new sites are indicated on Map 4.

6.4.3 Proposed Relocation of Wildhorse PRA

Wildhorse PRA is a backcountry campsite located on the south side of the Elbow River (see Map 4). Presently 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 any adjustments to the PRA location.

6.4.4 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 Alberta Parks 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. In other areas especially within the Ghost/Waiparous and the McLean Creek OHV Zone, Alberta 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 with development, then a suitable PRA boundary will be defined and established.

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

6.4.5 Proposal to Revert PRAs to Forest Reserve

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.

PROPOSED SITE	PROPOSED FACILITY DEVELOPMENT
Crane Meadow (Map 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed and reclaimed – Revert to Forest Reserve
Highway Compound (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former maintenance/storage yard – Has never been a public recreation site and is no longer needed for operations.
Eyrie Gap (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sees almost no use and is very close to Sentinel PRA – Close and Reclaim
Fir Creek (Map 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destroyed in 1995 flood – Has been Closed and Reclaimed.

APPENDICES

A MATRIX OF PRA SITES AND ACTIVITIES

KANANASKIS MANAGEMENT AREA											
PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREAS - FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES											
May 2008											
	SITE	# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
	GHOST/WAIPAROUS										
1	Burnt Timber	30		S			☐	☐			
2	Fallen Timber	62	50	S/W		☐	☐	☐		☐	
3	Waiporous Valley Viewpoint		10	S							☐
4	North Ghost Campground	173		S			☐	☐			
	Group Camp (GCp)	25		S			☐	☐		☐	
5	Ghost Airstrip GCp	25		S		☐	☐	☐		☐	
	Day Use		10	S							☐
6	Waiporous										
	Group Camp	25		S			☐	☐		☐	
	Campground	56		S			☐	☐			
	OHV Trailhead		10	S		☐					
7	Shouth Ghost		25	S/W		☐					
8	Ghost Reservoir										
	Campground	112		S		☐	☐	☐			
	Day Use		100	S/W			☐	☐			
	JUMPINGPOUND										
9	Stoney Creek Grp Cp	25		S	☐					☐	
10	Lusk Creek		10	S/W	☐		☐				
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	☐		☐	☐			

SITE		# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
ELBOW											
19	Little Elbow	94	50	S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Equestrian Campground	46		S	☐						
20	Cobble Flats		25	S			☐	☐	☐		
21	Elbow Falls										
	Beaver Flats	55					☐	☐			
	Beaver Pond		10	S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Powderface Trailhead		8	S	☐						
	Elbow Falls		138	S/W			☐	☐			☐
22	Elbow River Launch		40	S			☐	☐	☐		
23	Ings Mine		40	S/W	☐						
24	Moose Mountain		10	S	☐						
25	Elbow River										
	Paddy's Flat Cpgrnd	114		S	☐		☐	☐			☐
	Paddy's GCp	25		S							
	Station Flats Trailhead		12	S/W	☐						☐
	River Cove GCp	25					☐	☐		☐	
	Allen Bill		45	S/W	☐		☐	☐			☐
26	McLean Creek	170	50	S/W		☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
27	Gooseberry	83		S			☐	☐			
	Elbow Visitor Center		25	S/W							
28	West Bragg Creek		100	S/W	☐		☐	☐			
29	Wildhorse B/C	4		S							
30	Fisher Creek	30	30	S/W		☐			☐		
31	Mesa Butte	15		S	☐		☐	☐			
	Group Camp	25		S	☐		☐	☐			
32	North Fork	24	10	S	☐		☐	☐			
33	Ware Creek		10	S	☐		☐	☐			
HIGHWOOD											
34	Mist Creek		15	S	☐		☐	☐			
35	Picklejar		10	S							
36	Trout Pond		10	S			☐				
37	Lantern Creek		8	S	☐		☐	☐			
38	Lineham		6	S							
39	Cat Creek		10	S	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SITE	# Campsites	# Day Use Sites	Summer/Winter	Non-Motorized Trailhead	Motorized Trailhead	Water Access	Fishing	Day Use Firepits	Shelter	Interpretive Signs
HIGHWOOD cont'd										
40 Strawberry (fall camping)	18		S							
41 Fitzsimmons Creek		6	S			☐	☐	☐		
42 Highwood Junction service center	40	S								
43 Etherington Creek	61	40	S/W	☐	☐	☐				
Snowmobile Staging	30		W							
Equestrian Camping	10		S							
Group Camp	25		S						☐	
44 Cataract Creek	102		S			☐	☐			
snowmobile staging		50	W	☐				☐	☐	
day use		50	S			☐	☐	☐	☐	
45 Highwood Compound (former maintenance site)										
46 Eyrie Gap		8	S			☐	☐			
47 Sentinel		35	S			☐	☐	☐		☐
48 Fir Creek (reclaimed)										
49 Highwood		10	S			☐	☐	☐		
Group Camp	15		S						☐	
50 Greenford	13		S			☐	☐		☐	
51 Indian Graves	38	5	S			☐	☐			

B ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND STUDIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE KANANASKIS COUNTRY PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREAS.

RA NAME	Archaeological Sites			
	HRV 1	HRV 4	HRV 0	# Studies
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
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 2: Historic structures within or in close proximity to Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas.

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

DRAFT

REFERENCES

Achuff, Peter. (Revised 1994). Natural Regions, Subregions and Natural History Themes of Alberta: A Revised Classification for Protected Areas Management (Report No. 2) Alberta Parks Services, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and Natural and Protected Areas, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

Achuff, Peter, and Wallis, Cliff. (Revised 1994). Natural Regions and Natural History Themes: Targets for Alberta (Report N. 3). Alberta Parks Services, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and Natural and Protected Areas, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

Alberta, (1998) Alberta Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management

Alberta Community Development, 1999, Helicopter Use Guidelines

Alberta Government, Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy, May 1999.

Alberta Forestry, Lands, and Wildlife. 1988. Ghost River Sub-regional Integrated Resource Plan. Publication Number T/180. Edmonton.

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, 1986. Kananaskis Country Subregional Integrated Resource Plan

Applied Aquatic Research Ltd. 2008a. Fall spawning surveys on the Elbow River, 2007. Prepared for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Cochrane, AB.

Applied Aquatic Research Ltd. 2008b. Fluvial bull trout redd surveys on the Elbow, Sheep and Highwood rivers, Alberta. Prepared for Trout Unlimited Canada, Calgary, AB.

Hills, B.E., and J.D. Stelfox. 2008. Gillnetting survey of Ghost Reservoir, September 1987. Unpublished report, Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Cochrane, Alberta.

Miller, R.B. 1943. Report on the Ghost River Reservoir. Alberta Department of Lands and Forests. 3 p.

Nibourg, J.H. 1985. Inventory of fish populations and fish habitat in the Jumpingpound Creek watershed. Alberta Energy and Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Division, Calgary.

Rawson, D.S. 1939. A preliminary examination of some Alberta provincial waters. Prepared for Alberta Department of Lands and Mines, Fisheries Service. 47 p.

Rawson, D.S. 1948. Biological investigations on the Bow and Kananaskis rivers in 1947, with special reference to the effects of power development on the availability of game fish in this area. Prepared for the Calgary Fish and Game Association. 72 p.

Ward, J.C. 1974. The fishes and their distribution in the mountain National Parks of Canada. Prepared for Parks Canada by the Canadian Wildlife Service, Calgary, AB. 42 p.