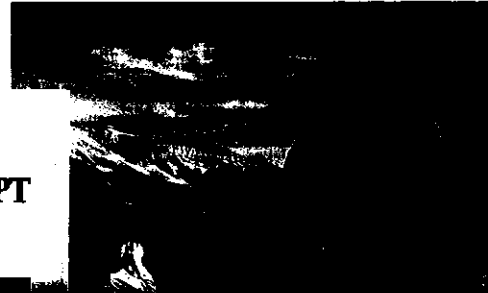


What We Heard:

A Summary of the Analysis
of Public Comments on the
Management Plan Concepts for
Jasper, Kootenay, Waterton
Lakes and Yoho National Parks

YOHO AND KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARKS MANAGEMENT PLAN CONCEPT

January, 1999



JASPER NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONCEPT

January 29, 1999



WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONCEPT

January 18, 1999



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In March 1999, Parks Canada provided opportunities for people to comment on proposed changes to the park management plans for Jasper, Kootenay, Waterton Lakes and Yoho national parks. Many people took the time to comment on issues affecting the parks and gave us their opinions. This newsletter is intended to let you know what we heard during that consultation program.

Public comments received have been analyzed by an independent consultant and are summarized in this newsletter. These comments were considered in the re-drafting of the new park management plans. Copies of the approved plans will be made available through Parks Canada.

Thank-you for participating in this review. Parks Canada will continue to consult with you in the future on the management of these World Heritage Sites and cornerstones of our Canadian Heritage.

Gaby Fortin
Director, Mountain Parks
Parks Canada

What We Heard:

A Summary of the Analysis of Public Comments on the Management Plan Concepts for Jasper, Kootenay, Waterton Lakes and Yoho National Parks

Introduction

Parks Canada is reviewing and updating the park management plans for Jasper, Kootenay, Waterton Lakes and Yoho national parks. Separate Management Plan Concepts were written for Jasper and Waterton Lakes national parks. One plan concept for Yoho and Kootenay national parks was prepared as these two parks are administered by Parks Canada as one unit. These plan concepts were made available to the public to obtain their input prior to finalization of the management plans for each of the parks. A response form for each plan concept was developed and distributed with the concept documents as the primary means to solicit feedback from the public.

As part of its role, Praxis was retained by Parks Canada to receive and analyze the public comments and provide a summary of the feedback received. This document summarizes "What We Heard" from the public on the Management Plan Concepts for the four national parks.

The Public Consultation Program

There were several ways for the public to obtain the plan concepts and response forms. Copies of these documents were mailed out to 3,463 individuals and organizations on an existing Parks Canada mailing list. Ten Open Houses were hosted at various locations in Alberta and British Columbia between March 11 and March 25, 1999. The locations included Calgary, Edmonton, Field, Golden, Hinton, Jasper, Lethbridge, Radium, Waterton Park and

West Glacier, Montana. The documents for all the parks were available at all of the open house locations. In addition, newspaper advertisements identified a toll free 1-800 number that could be called to request copies of the documents. An additional 423 sets of plan concepts and response forms were mailed out. The deadline for public comments was April 9, 1999. Praxis received a total of 653 responses by mail, fax, and electronic mail. The comments received were a combination of completed response forms and written submissions.

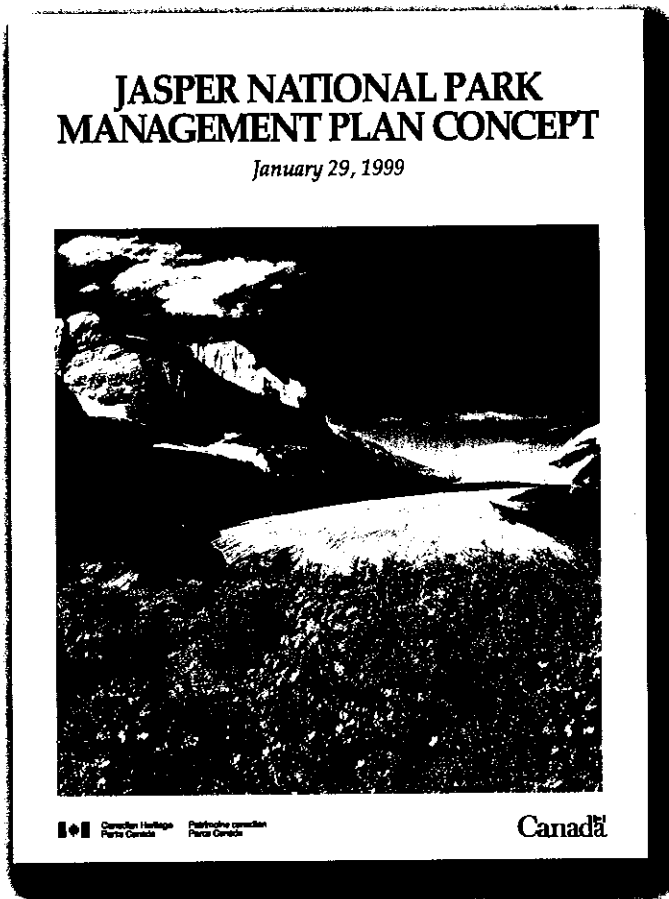
The Results

The following three sections summarize the public comments related to each of the three plan concepts. The results are presented separately for each of the plan concepts as both the content of the plan concepts and the respective response forms were different. The plan concepts and the response forms reflected the differences in both the challenges faced by each of the parks and the directions being proposed by Parks Canada. For each summary, the questions from the respective response forms are provided verbatim (and italicized) followed by the analysis of the public comments related to that question. All comments received by the deadline from the public were entered into an electronic database to facilitate analysis and the subsequent preparation of this summary. Where possible, the analysis of the comments has been structured to correspond with the questions in the response forms. All other comments were summarized as additional comments or suggestions.

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Jasper National Park Management Plan Concept



A Place For Nature

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you feel that Parks Canada is adequately addressing the cumulative effects of use and development in Jasper's montane (valley bottom) ecoregion?**

More than one-half of the respondents to this question agreed or conditionally agreed Parks Canada is adequately addressing the cumulative effects of use and development in Jasper's montane. Many respondents identified concerns or attached conditions to their support. Roughly one-third of the respondents disagreed cumulative affects are being adequately addressed. The balance of respondents offered comments but it is not clear whether they agreed or disagreed.

There was widespread concern for the environment, biodiversity, and wildlife. A significant majority of the people who answered this question want limits to commercial development in the park as a whole and specifically in the Athabasca Valley, Tonquin Valley, Jasper Townsite, Jasper Park Lodge area and Three Valley Confluence. Respondents also call for enhanced protection of wildlife habitat, and raise objections about the extent of vehicular and rail traffic, particularly as it contributes to wildlife mortality. As well, many people demand more thorough scientific research to better understand and address the inter-relationships between various forms of use and development and wilderness preservation and biodiversity. A number of respondents described the proposals as laudable but vague and recommended that Parks Canada clarifies the proposed actions and undertake concrete measures to implement the proposals.

► **Do the strategic directions and key actions adequately address Parks Canada's commitment to maintain ecological integrity? Are there issues or concerns that you feel have not been addressed with respect to maintaining ecological integrity?**

Roughly fifty per cent of respondents agreed or conditionally agreed with the proposed strategic directions and key actions to maintain ecological integrity in Jasper National Park. One-quarter of respondents disagreed and the remaining respondents did not clearly state whether they agreed or disagreed or supported only some of the directions and actions. Many people also identified issues that are not addressed to their satisfaction in the management plan.

A consistent shortcoming of the directions and actions identified by respondents, regardless of the extent to which they agree with the question, is a perceived lack of attention paid to the threats to ecological integrity, wildlife, and biodiversity. The comments from respondents focus almost exclusively on environmental protection, development and human use. Respondents urge Parks Canada to focus more intently on wildlife protection by maintaining wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity and by closing highways and imposing and enforcing speed limits on road and rail traffic. Some suggested that maintaining ecological integrity would be enhanced by better controlling angling activity, clearly defining the term "ecological integrity," focusing on controlled burns, evaluating the impact of the Jasper Park Lodge, and liaising more effectively with neighbouring landholders, especially the Alberta Government. In addition, many people seek more restrictions on various forms of human activity and commercial development, including hiking, golfing, boating, horseback riding, angling, and building construction. The specific geographic areas mentioned most frequently are the Maligne and Pyramid Lakes (with respect to boating),

Lake Edith (with respect to cabin closures), the Three Valley Confluence (seen as a rare montane region with heavy development pressure), and the Tonquin Valley (with respect to equestrian activity). Some respondents described the directions and actions as vague or weak.

A Place of Historical and Cultural Significance

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

► **What do you feel the priorities are for the management and presentation of cultural resources?**

Respondents commented on the priorities for the management and presentation of cultural resources. The need for increased public education and awareness, particularly with respect to ecological issues and First Nation's history and culture was the priority mentioned most frequently. About one-third of the people who responded to the question view public education as a means of enhancing environmental protection and instilling respect for the park. In general, a significant number of respondents approved of the strategic direction as proposed by Parks Canada, particularly those aspects pertaining to co-operation with NGOs, enhanced research, increased visibility of sites and architectural guidelines. While a few people doubted the need to develop cultural resources further, others applauded the merger of an ecological and cultural approach and called for a renewed emphasis on museums and interpretative programs. Several people dispute the inclusion of resource extraction, equestrian pursuits, and outfitting among valid historical issues.

A number of respondents commented on the relative priority placed on the management and presentation of cultural resources compared to the need to achieve ecological

integrity in Jasper National Park. These respondents feel the priority should be to achieve ecological integrity and think available Parks Canada resources and attention should be directed to the pursuit of ecological integrity. In their view, the management and presentation of cultural resources is a lower priority.

A Place For People

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

► **Is Parks Canada proposing strategic direction and actions that will adequately focus tourism on appropriate visitor experiences?**

Slightly less than one-half of the responses agree that Parks Canada's strategic directions and actions adequately focus tourism on appropriate visitor experiences, roughly one-quarter disagree, and roughly one-quarter do not clearly state a position. Respondents' generally spoke to deep concerns about ecological integrity. Many people called for caps on the number of visitors to the park, and urged an end to the practise of marketing tourism. It was recommended that visitors be better educated about and held more accountable for environmental preservation, and some advised Parks Canada to encourage activities such as hiking and camping over "packaged" or "commercially-oriented" visits. In addition, many respondents sought more clarity in the wording of the actions and definitions, particularly the notion of what constitutes "appropriate" use.

A small number of people proposed that recreation facilities be increased or improved. Most respondents want greater restrictions on commercial development and tourism. Concerns about golf, mountain biking, horseback riding, downhill skiing and, to a lesser extent, camping, were expressed. The geographic areas mentioned most frequently are the Maligne Canyon, (where there is no

consensus about the proposed closure of the hostel), the Tonquin Valley (where there are concerns about the impacts of horse use and Mount Edith Cavell (where the proposed actions generally meet with approval).

► **Do you feel that the direction and actions in the management plan concept will improve heritage presentation and outreach? Why or why not?**

The majority of people who provided comments endorsed the direction and actions, although many qualified their support. While heritage interpretation is supported, extensive concerns are voiced about the nature, form and implementation of heritage displays, especially the possibility that commercial ventures could be launched under the guise of heritage presentation. Interactive activities, such as guided tours, are favoured over presentations, although many encourage making written materials readily available as well. Those few respondents who clearly oppose the direction and actions cite the management plan's lack of clarity, insufficient resources for implementation and inadequate environmental protection mechanisms.

► **Do you agree with the direction and actions proposed to deal with managing day use?**

A majority of respondents who offered opinions on managing day use agree or conditionally agree with the proposed direction and actions in principle, although many additional recommendations were offered. It is generally agreed that the environmental impact of day use should be more closely monitored and rigorously assessed, and that tourists should be better educated about environmental protection. Many respondents describe the direction on managing day use as vague and ineffective. Some respondents stress the need to employ sufficient staff to stringently enforce day use policies. Those who would like to cap the



number of visitors in the park want to discourage development of any additional day use facilities; others endorse additional facilities as long as they are not commercial or privately run. Many people recommend banning or placing additional restrictions on motor vehicles and horses in the park, and encouraging less intrusive activities such as hiking. Disagreement with the proposals often stems from a desire to restrict the number of visitors and activities in the park. Twenty per cent of the respondents in this group reject the day use proposals for a variety of reasons. Concern about the effects of increased human use on the environment is paramount. Some respondents seek further detail about environmental protection strategies, others are opposed to any additional day use facilities whatsoever, and several recommend restricting day use to environmentally stable areas and developing more accommodation facilities in areas outside the park.

► **Do Parks Canada's proposals adequately respond to future requirements for visitor services and facilities?**

Twenty per cent of respondents commenting on this question describe the proposals as adequate, liking the emphasis on affordable access and the management of restrictions, along with the balance between growth and preservation. The remaining respondents are equally divided between those who

conditionally agree and disagree. The concerns of these two groups are almost identical. They express concerns that the proposals are too vague to sufficiently curtail commercial development and tourism and question the definition and use of the term "appropriate" in the Plan Concept. Many recommend strict limits on activities described as environmentally damaging, such as horseback riding, snowmobiling, helicopters, motor boats, mountain bike trails, downhill skiing and dog sledding. Rather than improving campgrounds, these respondents support greater use of hostels and some recommend upgrades for the Maligne facility. Strict enforcement and ongoing evaluation of the policies and their effects is suggested.

► **Proposed strategic direction has been set out for three popular areas of Jasper National Park: the Maligne Valley, Mount Edith Cavell day use area, and the Tonquin Valley. What are your thoughts on the proposed direction and actions for these areas?**

In addition to the completed comment forms and other written submissions on this question, one form letter campaign and the results of one petition were also submitted. The form letter campaign received was comprised of eighty-eight identical letters in support of horse use in the Tonquin Valley. A petition with 4,307 signatures, which had previously been submitted to Parks Canada that requested reconsideration of the proposed closure of the Maligne River, was also received.

Most people appear to give priority to environmental protection over visitor use and access; in all areas, a majority of respondents support the proposed restrictions of visitors to promote ecosystem protection. The majority of respondents propose at least one stringent measure to protect each area, including limiting access, capping the number of visitors and prohibiting motor boats.



Respondents are divided on the proposed direction for the Tonquin Valley with roughly equal numbers of people supporting continuation of horseback access for visitors and the commercial operations supported by horses and those who want to see horse use restricted or eliminated. Supporters of horse use value the opportunity, believe the impacts are minimal and allows visitors to visit the Tonquin who are not physically capable of hiking into the valley. Those opposed to horse-use expressed concerns about trail erosion caused by horses and conflicts with horse users in the Tonquin Valley. Small numbers of respondents specifically mentioned one of the options presented within the Management Plan Concept for the management of horse use in the Tonquin Valley. Of the people commenting on the horse use options, forty per cent expressed support for the status quo, forty per cent supported the prohibition of horses from the south end of the valley and twenty per cent supported the construction of a by-pass for hikers.

At Mount Edith Cavell respondents recognize and make recommendations about ways to ameliorate the problems caused by vehicular traffic. Road repairs, "parking lot full" signs, vehicle weight restrictions and, if necessary, road closures are all proposed with a view to protecting both wildlife and the environment. Some support is voiced for increasing affordable public transportation.

Respondents generally support the closing of the mid-Maligne River, as well as winter road closures to reduce disruption to caribou and other wildlife.

Opinion is divided about the Maligne hostel. Ten per cent of respondents recommend that overnight accommodation facilities at the hostel be increased; the remainder of the people who commented on this issue are split into those who see the hostel as a means of balancing affordable access and environmental awareness and those who think it should be moved or closed.

A few respondents suggest that more emphasis be placed on visitor access. This group favours public education about responsible behaviour in the park over area closures; indeed, some recommend widening rather than closing roads. Particular objections are voiced about the previous closure of the Cavell tea room and gift shop, which held particular appeal for elderly visitors.

Transportation

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

▀ **Do the proposed strategic direction and actions reflect an appropriate approach to dealing with transportation in Jasper National Park? Why or why not?**

There was substantial interest in the approach to managing transportation in Jasper National Park. In addition to the respondents who answered the question from the comment sheet, there were eighty-two letters, e-mails or faxes dealing specifically with the proposed restrictions in over-flights.

While a few respondents voice complete agreement with the strategic direction and actions, the overwhelming majority identifies improvements related to the management of transportation and related infrastructure in the park. A majority of respondents identify environmental protection and wildlife

mortality as the priority issues in transportation planning. Support is also expressed for improved public transit, traffic quotas, lowered and enforced speed limits, private vehicle restrictions and vehicle weight restrictions in designated areas on a seasonal basis, particularly with respect to Highway 93A and in the Mount Edith Cavell area. Wildlife killed by speeding vehicles and trains is identified as a major problem throughout the park and particularly on the Yellowhead Highway and Highway 16. There is no consensus about structural changes to the Yellowhead Highway. Some respondents oppose any new road construction and approximately one-half of those who comment on the issue specifically protest twinning the road; others propose construction of a ring road or alternative major highway to divert through traffic from the park. Opposition to road closures and traffic restrictions is premised on the fear that access to tourist destinations, particularly for disabled and elderly people, would be unjustifiably restricted.

A Place For Community

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

➤ **Do you have any views on limits to growth in the community of Jasper?**

A few respondents support unconditionally the strategies as set out in the management plan concept. The vast majority favours some form of limits on growth in the Town of Jasper. Over one-quarter of the respondents to this question emphasize that they do not want Jasper to emulate Banff with respect to commercial growth and community development; an additional twenty per cent stress that a mandate of ecological integrity, including preservation of the wilderness and heritage, should guide all community decisions.

Of the respondents who endorse limits on growth, one-third demands a complete moratorium on growth and one-third seeks

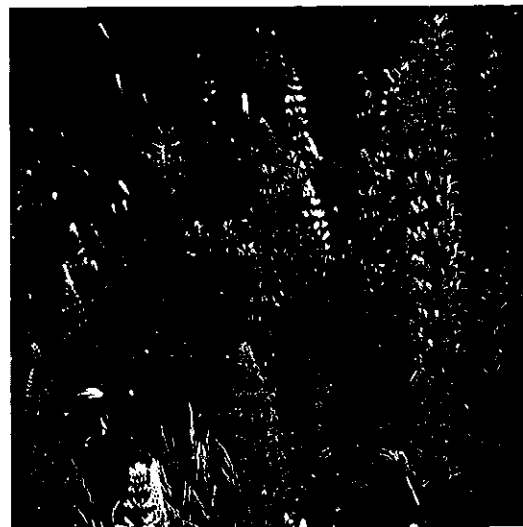
various forms of restrictions on development, including caps on commercial growth or limiting commercial growth to basic and essential services. The remaining respondents offer specific comments with respect to particular forms of growth. These include capping the resident population, enforcing a "need to reside" principle, fixing town boundaries, and re-directing commercial development to outlying communities such as Hinton. A few people support growth with "no net negative impacts." Issues most often identified that need to be addressed in the Town of Jasper are the sewage system and the housing shortage.

A Place For Open Management

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

➤ **Does the proposed direction address the need to better manage the park within the regional ecosystem?**

Just over one-half of the respondents who answered this question agree completely or conditionally that the proposed direction does address the need to better manage the park within the regional ecosystem. Only a few people clearly disagree with the direction, and the remaining respondents did not express agreement or disagreement.



Respondents consistently stress the overriding priority of environmental concerns over human use in the management plan. With the exception of five dissenters, people note that environmental preservation and human use are often incompatible, and the environment must take precedence. For this reason, respondents call for restrictions on human use and increased research to assess the environmental impacts of tourism and commercial development. As well, almost one-quarter of those who answered this question supports the inclusion of communities and jurisdictions surrounding the park in the land management strategies.

A number of people express skepticism about Parks Canada's commitment to act on respondents' recommendations. They feel the proposed management plan avoids assigning specific responsibilities, providing specific criteria for measuring achievement or identifying a mechanism for accountability to the public. Simple survey forms seeking yes and no answers and brief comments are thought to blur subtle yet important distinctions in perspectives. Concern is expressed that Parks' Canada will capitulate under pressure exerted by the business community and the provincial government to expand commercial growth.

A Place For Environmental Stewardship

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

- **Do Parks Canada's proposals adequately address the need to improve environmental stewardship in Jasper National?**

Almost two-thirds of the respondents who answered this question agree or conditionally agree that the proposed direction adequately addresses the need to improve environmental stewardship. A few describe the proposals as inadequate, and the balance of respondents express neither agreement nor disagreement.

Pollution and waste management are identified as issues of serious concern to most respondents, many of whom seek limitations on water and energy use by visitors and golf courses, improved waste management, and restrictions on herbicides, pesticides and vehicle emissions. Roughly forty per cent of the respondents who answer this question surmise that Parks Canada's ability to implement the proposals will be hindered either by insufficient financial resources or the vague wording of the proposals themselves. They suggest the language of the proposals will lend to interpretation and implementation issues and their execution will be easily thwarted.

Final Comments

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

- **Do you have any additional comments or suggestions relating to the Plan Concept?**

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions relating to the Plan Concept. Many of the respondents who completed the comment form also added additional comments and suggestions. In addition, over one-half of the respondents providing feedback on the Jasper National Park Management Plan Concept chose to send



their comments as letters, faxes or electronic mail. Almost all of these respondents did not follow the format of the comment form. Where possible this input was analyzed and reported as input to the specific questions from the comment form. Comments of a general nature are reported in this section.

Over-flights

Almost one-third of all survey respondents focus almost exclusively on plans to restrict flights over the park. The vast majority of these people identify themselves as pilots and, without exception, they are bitterly opposed to any restrictions. Most of the submissions appear to be promoted by various flying associations. Of utmost concern to these respondents are the perceived risks and dangers posed by flight restrictions. Any restrictions on altitudes and routes, they think would compromise safety as pilots need complete flexibility to cope with mercurial mountain conditions. The suggestion that scenic over-flights affect both the visitor experience and the environment is hotly contested on the ground that little noise disturbance results from infrequent flights of short duration, particularly since the aircraft are flying at an altitude of 1,000 feet. Rather than restricting flights over the park, some respondents propose that the role of light aircraft be enhanced as a means of reducing car traffic and parking problems.

Other Comments

While there was a wide range of comments and suggestions provided, there were four topics that were mentioned by large numbers of respondents. The topic most frequently mentioned by respondents dealt with limits or restrictions to development and human use. The most common suggestion was to restrict development within Jasper National Park. There were smaller numbers of suggestions on the need to manage human use and to develop the means of limiting or restricting use. Comments on limits or



restrictions were often linked to the need to maintain ecological integrity, which was the topic that received the second highest number of comments and suggestions. Another popular topic was the public consultation process itself. There were both positive and negative comments. There were suggestions to increase the scope of the consultations with the public and stakeholders, to allow public input in the development of plan options and to place more emphasis on including action statements in the content of the plan concept. The fourth topic of interest to respondents related to the implementation of the plan concept. Respondents generally want to see the direction outlined in the plan concept implemented. They have some reservations that Parks Canada has the resources or ability to implement the proposed actions. They also suggested it would be useful to make the proposed actions more specific. Other topics mentioned by respondents included concerns about affordability for all visitors, heritage tourism in the park, comments and concerns on mountain biking and comments of the proposed zoning in the plan concept.

Waterton Lakes National Park Management Plan Concept

WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONCEPT

January 18, 1999



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A Place For Nature

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- ▣ **Do the strategic directions and key actions adequately address Parks Canada's commitment to ecological integrity?**

The strategic directions of the management plan were supported by a majority of the respondents; however, many people felt that while the directions look good, they doubted that they would be fully implemented. It was thought that management should emphasize protection, indeed, several people identified protection as the primary function of the park. However, people did not support overly restricting use of the park and advocated using education as a tool to achieve protection objectives. There was a split in opinion regarding continuing to allow fishing in the park, with some for and some against fishing. The use of fire in ecosystem management was cautiously supported, e.g. allowing natural fires to burn in a controlled way.

- ▣ **Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to the proposed actions for ecological integrity?**

Overall, people restated their support for actions proposed to maintain ecological integrity. Although responses covered a broad range of topics, the prevailing sentiment was that balance is needed between protection and enhancement and use of the park. There were a number of comments regarding collaboration with other jurisdictions, parks and communities. This was seen as essential to protecting and maintaining populations of large animals and was encouraged. The remaining comments were captured in the above section.

- ▣ **Aquatic benchmark areas will be identified and designated in the park and angling in these areas will be prohibited. What do you think of the suggested representative areas?**

Establishing benchmark areas in the suggested locations was supported by a majority of the

respondents. Although most benchmarks were supported, there were recommendations against including Maskinonge, Blakiston and Bauerman as benchmarks because they are easily accessible to seniors and the handicapped and are popular family fishing spots. It was also suggested remote areas such as Ruby Lake would make the best benchmarks because they are most difficult to reach. While some people support a total ban on fishing, others do not believe benchmarks are necessary and propose stricter fishing regulation instead. A small number of people were concerned that not enough areas would be set aside as benchmarks.

► **Do you have other comments or suggestions related to the establishment of the aquatic benchmark areas?**

In these responses, there was a division between protection and restoration and recreation priorities in the park. On the side of protection and restoration, people recommended aquatic areas should be returned to their natural state and all non-native species removed. This group suggested fishing be phased out in the park altogether. Others felt that some lakes should be stocked or that fish currently surviving in the lakes should be allowed to remain. Stricter regulations e.g. 'zero' catch limits or barbless hooks, were suggested as alternatives to banning fishing.

There was support for removing structures to restore natural stream flows, but there was confusion and alarm over what was meant by "unnecessary structures".

► **The Blakiston Fan will be managed as a dynamic landscape. Maintaining access to the day use facilities will require new management strategies. What do you think of the strategies under consideration?**

There was general support for the strategies presented. In the detailed suggestions it is clear that there is support for removal of the maintenance facilities; support for providing

parking and building foot access trails; opposition to elevating and armouring the roadbed; and some support for annual repair of the road. The underlying division here is between road access and foot access. Those who favour road access want to ensure that seniors and handicapped people have easy access, while those who favour trail access want to maintain the natural processes of the area and keep costs down.

► **Are there other strategies or actions which would help in maintaining access to the day use facilities?**

One-quarter of the respondents to this question suggested a variety of ways to limit access to the day use facilities. A smaller number recommended some sort of shuttle bus to transport people to the Blakiston area.

A Place of Historical and Cultural Significance

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

► **Do you have comments or suggestions regarding the proposed strategic direction and the proposed actions related to the protection and preservation of cultural resources in Waterton Lakes National Park?**

On balance, there was support for the proposed strategic direction and proposed actions to preserve and present historical and cultural resources. An overall criticism of the proposal was that the cultural aspects of the park were not as significant as the natural resources. There was opposition to expansion of the Prince of Wales Hotel, but recognition of its cultural significance. Incorporation of First Nations' cultural and natural resources was seen as the most positive element of the proposed actions. There were a number of suggestions for enhancing and making use of the existing built heritage in the Waterton townsite. There were mixed views about the appropriateness of highlighting the first oil well in western Canada.



A Place For People

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

Do you have comments on the Proposed Strategic Direction for the Park Visitor Experience?

Many responses to this question indicated that the plan was appropriate or provided a good balance between use and protection of the environment. People recommended an emphasis on interpretation and education of visitors, parks staff and the community. On the flip side, there was concern that the strategic direction was too vague and that no definitions were given for "appropriate and affordable". Several responses expressed an aversion to encouraging tourism in the park. Other comments included the notions of affordability and limits for growth and access, particularly in regards to the Prince of Wales Hotel.

What are your thoughts on the proposed Park Experience and visitor management actions?

The most common response to this question expressed support for the proposed Park Experience and visitor management actions, with some respondents calling the proposed actions "excellent". As in the previous question, the need for education was also a popular comment. However, responses were mixed regarding the proposed interpretive center, with some predicting success of the facility and others failure. Other comments suggested setting limits on the number of visitors and developments in the park, monitoring the activities and impacts of

visitors and making the ecosystem a first priority in all management decisions.

Traffic volumes and congestion on the Red Rock and Cameron Lake Parkways will be monitored and actions taken to address experience and/or safety concerns. What do you think of the proposed strategies being considered to address the traffic congestion in the Red Rock and Cameron Lake Parkways?

Only a small proportion of the responses to this question specifically expressed support for the strategies to reduce traffic. The balance of responses made suggestions on how to alleviate the problems. Many respondents supported limiting the number of vehicles and suggested ways to reduce traffic volumes. Just under one-half of the respondents recommended implementing a shuttle service. It was also advised that limits be set for the maximum size of vehicles and the number of large tour buses allowed on the Red Rock and Cameron Lake Parkways. Regarding bear jams, it was suggested that more pull-out areas be provided to allow motorists to stop to watch bears along the parkways.

Are there other strategies which could help reduce traffic congestion on the parkways?

Respondents also had a large number of other ideas on how to deal with traffic problems, these included: Encouraging other forms of transportation, lowering speed limits, upgrading parking areas and implementing a reservation system. Several people commented that the public must be kept informed of any changes to transportation that might affect usage of the park.

Use of the Little Prairie day use area will be monitored during winter months over concerns about parking. What do you think of the strategies to address the winter parking congestion at the Little Prairie Day Use area?

► **Are there other strategies which could help reduce the winter parking congestion?**

The Management Plan lists a number of possible strategies to deal with parking congestion in the Little Prairie day use area. Over thirty per cent agreed with the proposed strategies, though several indicated that they had never experienced problems in the area and a few believed that the strategies would not work. A number of suggestions were made on how to alleviate the problem. The most popular suggestions were to create a shuttle service to and from the area, and to provide more parking, either by allowing parking on the shoulders of the road, or by plowing some additional space. It was advised that Parks ensure better turnaround areas are kept plowed. Some respondents also recommended additional cross-country ski areas be promoted. Other ideas were to place limits on cars or users, implement a reservation system and to monitor the area to determine if there is actually a problem.

► **Efforts are going to be made to reduce wildlife/people conflicts and enhance the backcountry experience. Do you have any comments on the proposed management strategies for reducing visitor conflicts and enhancing the parks day use backcountry experience?**

Most people agreed with the strategies to reduce wildlife/people conflicts. The need for effective communication and education also figured prominently in people's comments. There was support for the proposed shuttle and overnight closure of Crypt Lake. Other prevalent comments included setting limits on visitors and developments and advocacy for other temporary and permanent closures.

► **Are there other strategies which could help reduce the conflicts or enhance the day use backcountry experience?**

The most common response to this question advocated more education for visitors and park personnel. Other comments suggested

restrictions on equestrian activities to reduce conflicts and enhance the backcountry experience, more prominent signs and notices to enhance the visitor experience and temporary and permanent closures of certain areas to reduce wildlife/people conflicts. On the subject of closures, several comments were made that campground closures would put more pressure on remaining sites and that in the event of closures, proper notice must be given to the public.

A Place For Community

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

► **What are your thoughts on the proposed direction for the Community of Waterton Park?**

Over one-quarter of the responses to this question were in support of the proposed directions for the Community of Waterton Park, particularly with regards to capping growth. Slightly less than one-quarter stated their support for limiting expansion of the community. The principle of "no negative environmental impacts" in park management was supported in several responses. However, not all respondents agreed with the directions for a number of reasons ranging from vague objectives and political distrust to concerns that the plans would be too restrictive. There was also concern that the Prince of Wales Hotel was not included in the community plan.

A Place For Open Management

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

► **What are your thoughts on the proposed management direction to create more open and consultative decision-making, determine appropriate activities and levels of use and encourage the coordination of regional land use management?**

➤ **Will the direction provide for more open and effective decision-making?**

More than one-half of the responses to this question anticipate that the proposed management direction will result in more open and effective decision making. However, it was cautioned that more openness and consultation could "bog down" the decision making process. Furthermore, others warned that consultation could give people false expectations that their ideas would be incorporated in park plans. It was emphasized that Parks Canada must be committed to providing meaningful opportunities for participation. The skepticism of people regarding consultation was reflected in that more than a quarter of respondents answered in a non-committal manner while a small group stated directly that no more openness or effectiveness would result.

➤ **Will this direction lead to improved coordination in the management of the regional ecosystem?**

A majority of the responses agreed or conditionally agreed that the proposals would provide open decision making and effective ecosystem management. Further, regional management was seen as essential to maintaining a balance between preservation and visitor access. However, some concerns were noted. Respondents suggested that the proposals required clear definitions, regular monitoring and strong enforcement and wondered why the proposed management omitted reference to surrounding areas. A few respondents did not support the proposals. Concern was noted about further development, the Waterton Lakes National Park administration and influences from special interest groups.

➤ **Do Parks Canada's proposals adequately address environmental stewardship issues?**

In general, respondents agreed that the proposals adequately address environmental stewardship issues. In particular, people supported involving the community and

volunteers in park management. Some respondents noted that education was essential to the success of Parks Canada's proposals and there was doubt that there are the resources to implement the proposals. There was also concern over staff housing, since opposition to new housing in the community would be high. Less than one-third of respondents opposed the proposals, they were concerned that they place too little emphasis on stewardship, they doubted they would be implemented and criticized their vagueness.

Response to General Questions, Suggestions and Issues Not Covered by the Specific Questions

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

➤ **Do you have any additional comments or suggestions relating to the Plan Concept?**

Many of the responses in this section reiterated topics covered by the above questions. Traffic congestion, heritage preservation, coordination with other jurisdictions, ecosystem management, public consultation, human/animal conflicts and day use of some areas were all issues that emerged again in this section. The classic struggle between recreational use and "nature for nature's sake" was another theme that arose frequently, as was the notion of limiting numbers and human impact rather than increasing services and facilities. Three other topics received particular attention, the Prince of Wales Hotel, park staff accommodation and horse/bike riding on trails. Overall, there was opposition to expansion to the Hotel and suspicion that the Plan Concept made no mention of the hotel expansion plans. People also were opposed to moving staff housing to the community and felt that it should be kept where it is. There were recommendations that either horse riding or mountain bikes be prohibited from trails. A few people used this opportunity to provide anecdotes about their experiences in the park and to make a plea to maintain the ecological integrity of the area for future generations.

Yoho and Kootenay National Parks Management Plan Concept Review

Management Plan Concept Review

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you agree with the issues described?**
- **Are there other issues which should be addressed?**

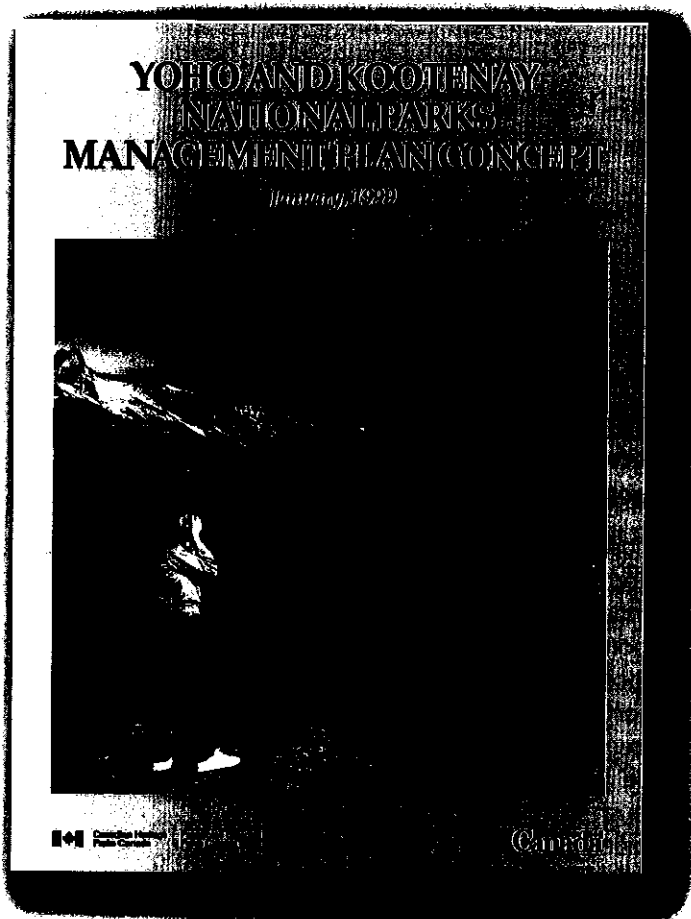
There was a high level of agreement from respondents with more than three-quarters agreeing the key challenges and issues facing the parks were described in the Plan Concept. Increasing use of the parks, human wildlife/conflicts, development, protecting the natural environment and controlling human use were identified by respondents as issues they agreed with or were of concern to them. Respondents also did identify a range of issues and concerns that they think should be addressed. Those mentioned most frequently included wildlife mortality, transportation-related issues, development adjacent to the parks, adequate funding for Parks Canada and balancing the expectations of visitors to both the parks. Smaller numbers of respondents mentioned the need to restrict development in the parks, the impacts of diseased forests on adjacent lands, the amalgamation of parks management, access, the need for improved recycling and maintaining horse trails and access to backcountry areas as issues to be addressed.

Yoho and Kootenay National Parks Context and Vision

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you have comments on the vision?**
- **Do you have comments on the plan concept described in Figure 1?**

There was a high level of support for the vision for Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Well over three-quarters of respondents expressed either full or conditional support. There were some questions and concerns



related to specific elements of the vision including negotiations concerning First Nations interests, the need for a stronger ecological statement for the vision and the effects of human activity in areas immediately outside the parks. The respondents expressing disagreement questioned the value of the vision, considered it overly wordy and wondered how it would influence the day-to-day operation of the two parks.

The Plan Concept also received a high level of support with more than three-quarters of respondents indicating full or conditional support. While large numbers of respondents simply agreed with the plan concept, others outlined support for reducing wildlife mortality, maintaining wildlife corridors and continuing to provide premier hiking opportunities. There were three specific proposals where respondents specifically provided comments. They are:

Closing the IA Highway and Relocating the Great Divide Picnic Area. This proposal received a mixed response with roughly the same numbers of respondents agreeing and disagreeing with this proposal. Supporters of the proposed actions think it will improve wildlife safety and movement and reduce impacts. Those opposed to the proposal value the heritage experience, the picnicking and the interpretive opportunities and question the benefits to wildlife.

The Burgess Shale. There is support to strengthen the protection and presentation of the Burgess Shale. At the same time respondents are concerned increased protection of the resource does not result in the closure of hiking opportunities on adjacent trails.

Rockwall and Lake O'Hara Hiking Opportunities. There is support to maintain these hiking opportunities but there were questions on the basis for and extent of proposed restrictions.

A Place For Nature

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you agree with the proposed strategic direction?**
- **Do you agree with the proposed actions?**
- **Are there other issues you believe should be addressed?**
- **Many of the initiatives in this section depend on the cooperation of a variety of people and organizations. Do you have any suggestions on how to encourage this type of cooperation?**
- **What are your ideas for achieving broader regional goals? Ecosystem goals? Socio-economic goals?**

Almost all responses were in agreement with the proposed strategic direction for maintaining healthy ecosystems. Some respondents provided reasons for their support and the reasons included the important roles the two parks play in preserving plant and animal communities, the value of the wildlife movement corridors through the parks in the context of the broader ecosystem and the need to monitor, and if necessary, restrict human use. While there was support for the role of fire in a healthy ecosystem, there were some questions on the proposed use of prescribed burning to duplicate wildfires. The negative responses felt the strategic direction is at the expense of opportunities for visitor enjoyment and think the proposed closures of trails are not warranted.

Overall, the proposed actions have a high level of support from respondents with only a small number of negative responses received. While there was a limited amount of explanations or additional comments on most of the proposed actions, there were three specific areas where respondents provided comments or questions. These were:



Aquatic Resources. While there is general support for the proposed actions related to aquatic resources, respondents are split on whether fishing needs to be eliminated. There are also some questions on the implementation of the proposed actions.

Human-Wildlife Conflicts. There were a number of comments on this theme including suggestions on how to reduce wildlife mortality and the need to emphasize wildlife protection in the context of larger ecosystems.

Road Closures. There was mixed support for proposed road closures. Those in support of the closures cited the benefits to wildlife and those opposed mentioned concerns for visitor access to the parks and wilderness areas.

The suggestions from respondents on other issues that should be addressed included balancing bear protection and human safety, stronger enforcement of environmental standards and increased funding for research.

There were a number of suggestions and comments relating to the need for fostering

cooperation with a variety of people and organizations. The suggestions included developing a corps of trained volunteers, ongoing consultation with user groups in a transparent fashion, taking advantage of the media to involve people, obtaining involvement and support of local governments and supplementing cooperation with incentives and enforcement.

Respondents were asked for their ideas on achieving broader regional goals, ecosystem goals and socio-economic goals. On the question of broader regional goals, there were a number of comments on the importance of buffer zones around the parks and the importance of building and maintaining support for the broader regional goals. Respondents also suggested the need for effective and integrated park management, planning and operating the two parks as a unit, opening up and maintaining crucial grizzly bear linkages, encouraging other land managers and owners to support wary carnivores and the need to recognize park supporters. On the question of achieving ecosystem goals, there was considerable overlap and duplication with the comments on the broader regional goals. The overriding comment was the support for the protection or park ecosystems and there were suggestions that Parks Canada to take a strong leadership role in taking the actions necessary for achieving protected ecosystems.

There were limited suggestions put forward by respondents on how to achieve socio-economic goals for Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Instead respondents tended to provide comments on the tourism role the parks play. A number of respondents observed that socio-economic goals are secondary to environmental goals for the two parks. Specific suggestions included moving tourism development outside the parks and the need to emphasize appropriate park activities, which require low impact, affordable support services. One respondent mentioned a perception that there are increasing barriers to commercial activities in the national parks.

A Place of Cultural and Palaeontological Significance

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you agree with the proposed strategic direction?**
- **Do you agree with the proposed actions?**
- **Are there other issues you believe should be addressed?**
- **Do you have any suggestions on protecting the Burgess Shale World Heritage Site given the growing interest in the site by researchers and visitors?**

Virtually all the responses were in support of the proposed strategic direction. However, there were a few cautions expressed by respondents including the need for access controls to the Burgess Shale, the need for strict controls of First Nations activities and a requirement to protect the environment around cultural resources. The proposed actions received a similar, high level of support with over ninety per cent of respondents who expressed support. The few negative responses referenced the concessions to First Nation's groups, questioned the commitment to saving and protecting cultural resources and disagreed with any further development in Field.

On the question of other issues related to cultural and Palaeontological resources, there was a combination of issues and suggestions received from respondents. The access to cultural resources in general and palaeontological resources specifically was of concern to respondents and there were suggestions for restricted access and tighter controls. There were also concerns expressed about the impact of commercial activities in the parks, the perceptions that there is not enough emphasis placed on education and a suggestion to have fossils returned from the Smithsonian Museum.

There were numerous suggestions from respondents on the questions relating to

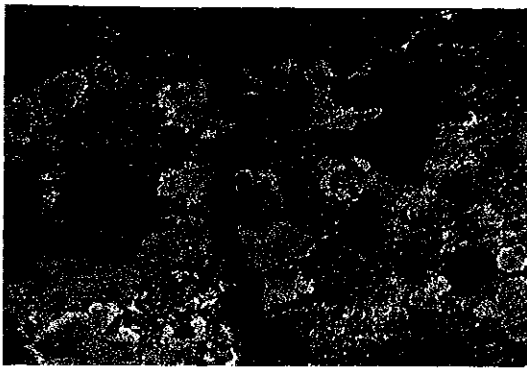
protection of the Burgess Shale World Heritage Site. There were four themes to emerge from the responses and there was considerable overlap between suggestions on protection of the resources and access to the same resources. The four themes included the suggestion the fossils of the Burgess Shale receive a high level of protection, that there be access controls to the fossil bed areas, there was agreement that research was acceptable but some restrictions were warranted and that educational programs could be important tools to help achieve protection of the fossil resources.

A Place For People

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you agree with the proposed strategic direction?**
- **Do you agree with the proposed actions?**
- **Are there other issues you believe should be addressed?**
- **What are your ideas on how the parks can communicate important messages and provide quality programs to the widest possible audience?**

The proposed strategic direction for providing quality visitor experiences while at the same time maintaining healthy park ecosystems received strong support with over three-quarters of respondents expressing agreement. In addition, most of the people that disagreed thought the proposed direction did not go far enough in committing to maintaining healthy ecosystems. There was a similar level of support for the proposed actions. There were comments for and against continued horse use in the parks. Some concerns were also expressed on the proposal to develop a heritage tourism strategy as respondents felt this may lead to increased commercialism in the parks. There were a few concerns on the trail closures in the Lake O'Hara area and the proposed closure of the IA Highway.



The respondents did identify a number of issues related to visitor use they feel should be addressed in Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Some of the issues outlined which are not addressed in other sections of the analysis included the reduction of interpretive programs and staff, the need for a human use management plan for trails, the increasing impact of tour buses and a perception the parks are in a “cash for access” mode.

Overall, respondents think there is a need to increase exposure of the important messages to park visitors and the public. Almost all respondents provided suggestions on how to increase exposure. They suggested there be more interpretive programs and interpretive staff and that advantage be taken of mass media opportunities. Importance was also attached to creating and reinforcing realistic visitor expectations for the park experiences available in the two parks, working with volunteers and developing school curriculum programs.

- **The document describes visitor use objectives and management actions for each of the parks' 13 planning units.**
- **Do you agree with the visitor use objectives?**
- **Do you agree with the management actions?**
- **Do you agree with the principles described for managing human use?**

More than three-quarters of respondents were in agreement with the proposed visitor use objectives and management actions for each of the parks' 13 planning units. There is support for restricting or managing visitor use,

capping commercial development and limiting the growth of park communities. Some respondents also questioned the closing of the IA Highway, the relocation of the Emerald Lake parking lot and the closures or restrictions on hiking trails in the vicinity of the Burgess Shales. There was also some disagreement with the proposals to close campgrounds or trails with low use. Respondents suggested this would result in concentrating visitor use on the remaining trails and campgrounds. Some respondents had questions on the details of some of the proposed actions.

More than three-quarters of respondents agreed with the proposed principles for managing human use. Many respondents did not distinguish between management actions and the principles. There was support for the direction to keep human use in currently developed areas, restricting horse use, protecting wold dens with closures and matching visitor expectations with the available experiences. The small number of respondents who disagreed either did not like the principles or disagreed with some of the actions related to the principles.

Transportation and Utilities

The public was asked to respond to the following questions:

- **Do you agree with the proposed strategic direction?**
- **Do you agree with the proposed actions?**
- **Are there other issues related to the use and potential impact of these corridors?**
- **Do you agree that public transportation in the Yoho Valley and Emerald Lake should be considered?**

There was a high level of support for the proposed strategic direction related to transportation and utilities with almost all respondents expressing agreement. From the comments, there was support for reducing animal mortality, increasing public safety,

assessing the possible use of wildlife underpasses and considering public transport as a means of alleviating congestion on secondary roads. Respondents also expressed concern about the levels of service for highways and roads in the parks, the risks associated with upgrading the highways and the difficulties in reducing impacts associated with the national transportation corridors within the parks.

The support for the proposed actions related to transportation was slightly lower than the support for the strategic direction. While three-quarters of the respondents agreed with the proposed actions, one-quarter of respondents disagreed with some or all of the actions. There was support for reducing both highway and railroad wildlife mortality, reducing the aesthetic impact of new utilities, the review of Highway 93 roadsides and the need for more monitoring and restrictions on over-flights. Those who do not support the actions disagree with reducing speed limits, do not think there has been enough assessment of options and do not agree with the closing of Highway 1A or any other roads. It appears that when respondents have more detail on the proposed actions, they are more likely to raise objections, questions and concerns.

Respondents did provide a number of suggestions and comments on issues related to the use and potential impacts of the transportation corridors. The issues identified included the need to enforce speed limits and the perceived lack of resources or commitment to do so, the loss of the scenic parkway experience through conflicts with through traffic, increasing levels of commercial traffic, grain spills and wildlife movement across the Kootenay Parkway. There are also concerns with the cumulative impacts related to roads, herbicide use in the parks and over-flights of airplanes and helicopters. Some suggestions included looking for alternatives to twinning of the highways, emphasizing prevention of spills, developing a highway/railway response patrol for spills and using a salt substitute on highways in the winter.

When asked if public transportation in the Yoho Valley and Emerald Lake should be considered, roughly sixty percent of respondents agreed public transit should be considered, roughly twenty per cent support it conditionally and twenty per cent are opposed. Some caution should be exercised in interpreting these results. From the responses it is not clear whether the respondents thought public transit would replace private vehicle access or thought public transit would augment private access. Reasons cited in favour of the proposal included a reduction in visitor crowding, lessened the impacts of private vehicles using the secondary roads, will provide more control over visitors and should increase the quality of the visitor experience. Those opposed mention the loss of individual freedom, the costs, the need for building infrastructure to support the public transit and logistical problems associated with overnight visitors at Emerald Lake and the Yoho Valley. Those respondents who conditionally support the idea asked questions and sought clarification of the details of implementing and operating the public transportation system.

A Place For Open Management

The public was asked to respond to the following question:

▀ **Is there a need for an annual forum to discuss progress in achieving management plan objectives?**

There is strong support for a mechanism to have a public discussion of progress in achieving the management plan objectives with over eighty per cent of respondents to this question expressing agreement with the need. Three-quarters of the respondents expressing support agree with the proposed annual forum. The balance of those respondents who are supportive have suggestions for other ways of communicating progress and getting public feedback. The respondents who disagreed question the purpose of the forum, are concerned about

the costs, suggest the forum is not required and think that there will be too many meetings.

Final Comments

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions relating to the Plan Concept. Many of the respondents who completed the response form also added additional comments. In addition, roughly one-half of the respondents providing feedback on the Kootenay and Yoho National Park Management Plan Concepts chose to send their comments as letters, faxes or electronic mail. Almost all of these respondents did not follow the format of the response form. Where possible this input was analyzed and reported as input to the specific questions from the response form. Comments of a general nature have been reported in this section.

There were some recurring themes to the input from respondents to this question. There is strong support for the proposed vision and directions for the two parks with over ninety per cent of the general comments in favour of the proposed direction. There are numerous references to the importance of placing a priority on the need to protect the ecological integrity of the parks over the use of the parks by humans. Respondents want to see the protection of wildlife and their habitat and keeping the parks as natural as possible. It was suggested that the principle of protecting ecological integrity guide decisions by Parks Canada on the future of these two parks. A number of the respondents advocating this position also recognize this could require limitation or restrictions on human use within the parks.

There were a number of comments and concerns concerning the commitment of Parks Canada to the strategic directions in the management plan. Doubt in the commitment of Parks to follow through with the proposed management actions was the most common reservation held by people who supported

the strategic directions in the plan. People agreed with the directions and key actions, but they were skeptical that management would follow through and implement them.

There were a number of references and comments on the consultation related to the management plans for the parks. There were favourable comments on the proposal to inform the public on the progress in implementing the park management plan and there were alternatives suggested to the annual forum as the mechanism for informing the public. Some respondents were concerned with the timing of the consultations for Jasper, Waterton Lakes and Kootenay and Yoho and suggested the consultations be staggered to allow the public more time to respond. There were some negative comments on the consultation process. Some respondents viewed the process as inadequate and felt there was not dialogue with the public on the development of the plan concepts and others thought the plan concepts were vague and hard to follow. There were also some suggestions to have more advance notice of the opportunities for public involvement.

There were a small number of references to the application of zoning in the Plan Concept. There is concern that the value of zoning is being compromised by restricting the use of Zone 3 to accommodate existing developments. The respondents would rather see existing developments treated as anomalies. There was also a suggestion to increase the amount of Zone 1 if required.





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