



Jasper

National Park of Canada

Annual Report

2017



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada



Introduction

Parks Canada is pleased to present highlights of our work in support of all areas of our mandate in Jasper National Park for 2017. This report complements our annual public forum to provide an update on implementing the Jasper National Park 2010 Management Plan.



2017 marked Canada's 150th birthday and was celebrated across Canada with free entry to national parks.

Welcoming visitors to mountains of opportunity



The 'Learn to Love Winter' event kicked off Canada 150 Celebrations at Jasper National Park.

Learn to Love Winter

Parks Canada kicked off Canada 150 celebrations with a 'Learn to Love Winter' event at Marmot Meadows Winter Hub over Family Day Weekend (February 17 - 20, 2017). We offered 'learn to' snowshoe and winter camping sessions, as well as dark sky and winter wildlife programming. Jasper the Bear made an appearance with musical entertainment around the campfire – including singing Happy Birthday to Canada!

Athabasca River Brigade

More than one hundred paddlers dressed in period attire participated in a five-day paddling brigade on the Athabasca River for Canada 150 celebrations. The group paddled from Jasper National Park to Fort Assiniboine, Alberta. They stopped in neighbouring communities along the way to raise awareness of the historic importance of the Athabasca River as an early travel and commerce route.

Federal Infrastructure Initiative

In 2017, Parks Canada entered the third year of a five-year \$3 billion national infrastructure renewal program. \$270 million is allocated to rehabilitate roads, highways, visitor facilities and critical infrastructure in Jasper National Park. Twenty-eight of the 62 program projects were underway or completed in 2017.



Mount Edith Cavell parking lot and access road renewal

In 2017, construction began on the Mount Edith Cavell day use area to relocate the access road and parking lot out of a flood risk zone, add additional parking spaces, and repair the existing Path of the Glacier trail.

To maintain visitor access to the area during construction, we put in place a free permit system. We issued approximately 16,000 permits from June to September which allowed 40,000 visitors to experience this alpine gem.



The new amphitheatre at Whistlers Campground was completed in July 2017.

New amphitheatre at Whistlers

Parks Canada completed the construction of a new amphitheatre in Whistlers Campground replacing the original theatre built in 1969. The new amphitheatre welcomed almost 6,000 visitors to over 40 interpretive shows from July to September.

Miette Hot Springs

The pool building and staff bunkhouse at Miette Hot Springs were improved to ensure long term sustainability. A new pedestrian bridge was installed over Sulphur Creek to replace two steel

culverts that had reached the end of their lifespan.

Road accessible camping

Parks Canada added an extra seven weeks to the Wabasso camping season and nine weeks to the Wapiti season by opening earlier in the spring and closing later in the fall. This was met with strong demand with average occupancy rates around 70%.

To improve services, we renovated bathrooms in Wabasso and Pochontas campgrounds. We also trimmed vegetation, removed hazard trees and re-vegetated degraded areas at campgrounds throughout the park.

Trails and backcountry camping

Highlights of work completed:

- Vegetation was cleared from 110 km of trail to improve sightlines for visitors and wildlife.
- 112 food storage lockers were installed at 18 backcountry campgrounds.
- Over 130 trail way-finding and junction map signs were installed in the Athabasca Valley.

Skyline Trail upgrades

Extensive work was completed on the Skyline Trail - Jasper's most popular backcountry hiking trail. Work included:

- removing shrubs and small trees from campgrounds
- reconstructing tent pads
- repairing barrel privies
- installing food lockers
- replacing five bridges



Parks Canada Ambassadors

In summer 2017, Parks Canada Ambassadors were at key locations to provide visitors with information about the park. The Ambassador program was very well received and over 30,000 in-person contacts were made from June to the September long weekend.

Interpretation programs

Over 110,000 visitors took part in one of the many interpretation programs offered at Jasper National Park. Parks Canada program themes included species at risk, mountain pine beetle and wildlife watching etiquette. Street theatre, guided walks, including a new fall bat walk, and Indigenous programs helped visitors appreciate the stories and natural and cultural significance of the park.

Wildlife Guardians

For the seventh year in a row, Wildlife Guardians offered wildlife information and facilitated safe wildlife viewing opportunities at popular visitor areas. Parks Canada expanded staffing during peak season, the spring elk calving season and the fall rut.

Roving Caribou Ambassadors

Guided by a Parks Canada Caribou Interpreter, a dedicated team of Caribou Ambassador volunteers educated more than 7,700 visitors about woodland caribou in the mountain parks. The Caribou Ambassadors increased awareness about caribou conservation. They reached out to people in Jasper's most visited places, joined visitors on trails, and attended special events to share stories about threatened caribou and the special places they inhabit.



Volunteer Caribou Ambassadors at Jasper National Park.

Park roadways

In 2017, Parks Canada invested \$31 million in projects on Highway 16 and Highway 93N in Jasper National Park to improve user safety.

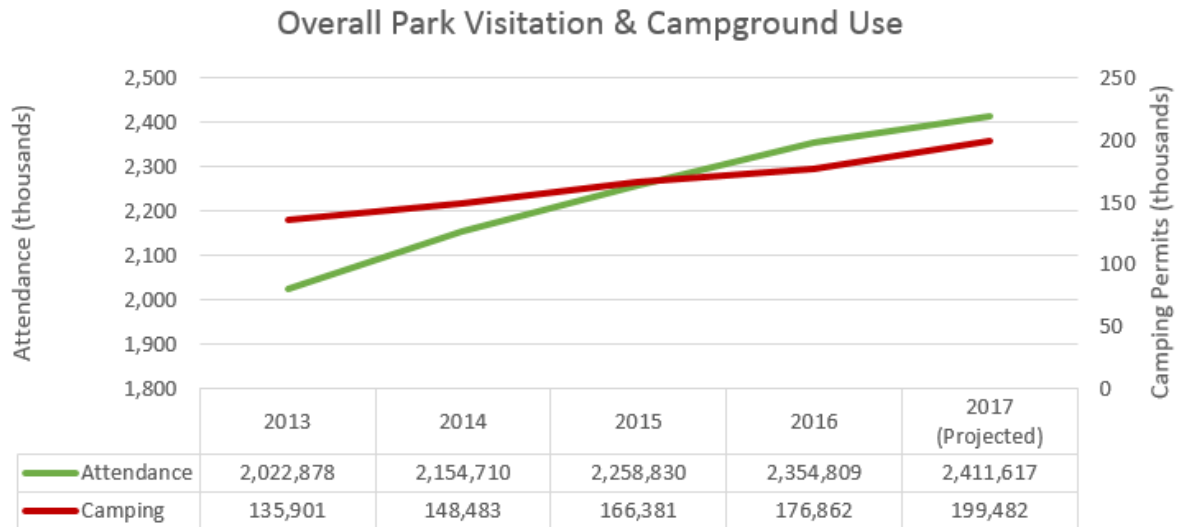
Highlights of major work completed:

- Major structural rehabilitations to four bridges along Highway 16.
- Rock slope rehabilitation work at Sunwapta Falls and Rampart Creek along Highway 93N, and west of the Municipality of Jasper on Highway 16.
- Paving of 22 km of Highway 16, including six pullouts.
- Reconstruction of secondary roads, such as Snaring Road, and the roads to Fifth and Sixth Bridges.
- Over half of the 230 km of Icefields Parkway has now been resurfaced, including 25 km within Jasper National Park.



Attendance

Attendance at Jasper National Park increased again in 2017, continuing an upward trend for the eighth year in a row. Campground occupancy (the proportion of campsites filled or used) was 89%, compared with 78% occupancy in 2016. Backcountry camping increased by 29% in 2017 compared with 2016. The graphic below provides numbers for overall park visitation and camping permits.



Bringing mountains to people where they live



Parks Canada outreach at the Deep Freeze Festival, Edmonton.

Outreach and promotions

Parks Canada raised awareness at numerous events in Edmonton and Vancouver about visitor opportunities at Jasper National Park and ecological issues, such as caribou and grizzly bear conservation.

Edmonton events reached more than 8,000 people. Park Canada's Vancouver outreach team reached an additional 75,000 people at events in Vancouver.

Reaching Canadians and international visitors

The new Parks Canada website was launched on April 1, 2017. The new website provides significant enhancements to the user experience, especially on mobile devices, through better navigation, layout, content and images: www.pc.gc.ca/jasper

Engagement through social media channels continues to grow. In 2017, Jasper National Park social media saw a 34% increase on Twitter to 21,000



followers and an 11% increase on Facebook with 36,000 fans.

What's the connection?

In 2017, 37,000 people in Alberta and BC interacted with 'What's the connection?' a travelling exhibit that weaves the story of woodland caribou, whitebark pine, and the role of forest fire in the mountain parks through the eyes of a bird, a Clark's nutcracker.



The 'What's the connection?' educational exhibit.

Palisades Stewardship Education Centre

In partnership with the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, the Palisades welcomed youth from across Alberta and British Columbia for a range of environmental stewardship programs. The Palisades opened five buildings to the public through the Parks Canada Reservation Service in January 2017. Revenue from public accommodation rentals supports the environmental stewardship education programs.



A school group enjoying programming at the Palisades Stewardship Education Centre.

Celebrating history, culture and the World Heritage Site

Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House National Historic Site

Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada unveiled a plaque commemorating the Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House National Historic Site. Guests gathered to hear stories of early guide outfitting in the Maligne Lake area and took part in the formal unveiling ceremony. The Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House is the fifth national historic site in Jasper National Park.



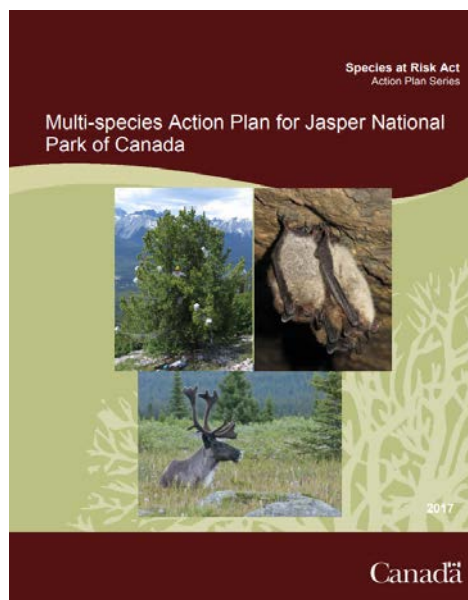
The unveiling of the plaque for the Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House National Historic Site.



Ensuring healthy ecosystems

Multi-Species Action Plan

Parks Canada completed the Multi-Species Action Plan to support the recovery and management of seven species at risk in Jasper National Park. The seven species are woodland caribou, whitebark pine, Haller's apple moss, two species of bats (northern myotis and little brown myotis), and two birds (common nighthawk and olive-sided flycatcher). These species are listed as endangered or threatened under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*. The Multi-Species Action Plan aims to contribute to the recovery of species at risk, and build Canadians' awareness, appreciation and support for species at risk conservation.



The Multi-Species Action Plan for Jasper National Park of Canada.

Woodland caribou conservation

Parks Canada continues to monitor woodland caribou in accordance with the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population in Canada*. We conduct impact assessments

on activities in critical habitat to ensure that potential projects do not jeopardize the survival and recovery of the herds in Jasper National Park.

Wolf density is at a historic low in Jasper National Park, indicating that conditions for caribou survival and recovery continue to improve. Despite this, herd sizes are now too small to recover on their own. We continue to research the feasibility of captive breeding for caribou recovery, and continue to monitor ecological conditions in caribou habitat.

Our monitoring suggests caribou herd numbers are similar to last year. Through DNA analysis and visual surveys, the Tonquin herd is estimated at 31 individuals, the Brazeau herd at ten individuals, and the Maligne herd at three individuals. We continue to work with the Government of Alberta to monitor the larger and healthier A La Peche herd. This herd is estimated at over one hundred individuals that live both inside and outside the park.

Whirling disease

Whirling disease is a microscopic parasite that affects salmonid fish such as trout and whitefish. The disease is affecting watersheds in southern Alberta. So far, all locations we have sampled in Jasper National Park have been free of whirling disease.

To prevent the spread of whirling disease Parks Canada promotes the 'Clean, Drain and Dry' protocol for watersports equipment. We have also introduced protocols for commercial operators and companies working in the park to disinfect their water gear.



Mountain pine beetle management

Parks Canada and the Canadian Forest Service conducted aerial surveys to estimate mountain pine beetle population distribution and abundance. Parks Canada also worked with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to determine mountain pine beetle population infection levels.

In 2017, about 550 mountain pine beetle infected trees were removed from the leading edge zone in locations where prescribed fire is not feasible. The leading edge zone is a large area containing beetle populations that are threatening to spread eastward into the boreal forest. In addition, we removed 1,100 infected trees in Whistler, Wapiti and Wabasso campgrounds.

We will also implement an aggressive forest fuel reduction program on the Pyramid Bench in late winter 2018 and in winter 2019. This will augment fire guards for community protection and to support future prescribed burns for managing forest fuels and mountain pine beetle.

Fire restoration

Parks Canada burned eighty hectares of park land in the Fiddle West prescribed fire in May 2017. The objective of the prescribed fire is to reduce the risk of wildfire to neighbouring lands east of Jasper National Park. The prescribed burn allows for a wider range of responses to wildfires and reduces the complexity of future prescribed fires in the lower Athabasca Valley.



A prescribed burn at Fiddle West, near the East Gate of the park in May 2017.

Strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples

Simpcw First Nation harvest and camp

In October 2017, members of Simpcw First Nation held a harvest and camp on lands that they consider part of their traditional territory in Jasper National Park. The harvest is a historic step for Simpcw First Nation and Parks Canada to foster reconciliation and reconnection with Jasper National Park.



The Simpcw First Nation traditional harvest and camp was a historic step to return cultural practices to the national park landscape.



Indigenous exhibit

Parks Canada is collaborating with Indigenous partners to develop a permanent outdoor Indigenous exhibit in the Town of Jasper. Parks Canada is working with communities to gather stories to include in the exhibit panels. The exhibit is due to open in 2019.

Jasper Indigenous Cultural Use Area

Twelve Indigenous ceremonies and gatherings were held at the Jasper Indigenous Cultural Use Area in summer 2017.

Teachings of the Mountain Peoples

The Palisades Stewardship Education Centre delivered the 'Teachings of the Mountain Peoples' program. Through an Indigenous knowledge keeper, the program taught participants about the contribution of Indigenous people to the area and traditional technologies, skills and knowledge that allowed people to live in the mountains.

Consultation and engagement

Parks Canada consulted with Indigenous partner communities on the Icefields Trail (North), on a Federal Infrastructure Investment project at the East Gate, and for the Multi-Species Action Plan. Parks Canada is also supporting Indigenous consultation on ATCO Electric's proposed Jasper Interconnection Project and the Trans Mountain Pipeline Reactivation.



Parks Canada consulted with Indigenous partners on the Multi-Species Action Plan.

Fostering open management and innovation

Whistlers Summit Trail

Parks Canada, in partnership with Friends of Jasper National Park and Jasper Skytram continued the third year of work to renew the Whistlers Summit Trail. The Whistlers Summit Trail is one of most popular short alpine hikes in Jasper National Park. Volunteers marked the trail with rock borders, installed new directional signage, and replaced six benches. The area is already showing promising signs of alpine vegetation re-growth.



Volunteers renew the Whistlers Summit Trail.



Supporting whitebark pine

Parks Canada collaborated with clothing retailer tentree to support whitebark pine planting in the mountain national parks. Tentree will help generate awareness about the endangered whitebark pine by reaching tentree's more than two million followers on social media.



Parks Canada staff planting whitebark pine seedlings.
Photo: K.Emsley/tentree

Managing growth and development

Community development

Fifteen additional dwelling units were completed or under construction in the Town of Jasper in 2017. To increase housing supply and density, Parks Canada focused on maximising the number of units on lots and infilling existing lots.

In 2017, Parks Canada issued permits for three new restaurants. In total, we issued 180 permits in town in 2017, which is identical to the number issued in 2016.

Commercial Floor Area (CFA) Cap 2001	9,290 (m ²)	100%
Developed CFA	5,481	59%
CFA Not Developed, but Allocated	3,453	37%
C1/C2/C3/C4 CFA available for Allocation	356	4%
S Block CFA available for Allocation	0	0%

In the community, a new commercial laundry opened; Bear Hill Lodge entered the third phase of their master development plan; the Shell Fuel Station

reopened; and 206 solar panels were installed on the roof of the high school.

Marmot Basin Tres Hombres

In November 2017, Ski Marmot Basin announced the opening of the Tres Hombres ski area. Use of this area is consistent with the *Marmot Basin Site Guidelines for Development and Use (2008)*. Tres Hombres will remain an off piste area to maintain ecological integrity, while allowing access for visitors to experience this slope.

Jasper Interconnection Project

ATCO Electric has determined that their Palisades Power Plant, which powers Jasper National Park, is nearing the end of its life expectancy. ATCO Electric is proposing to replace this isolated generating facility, which burns natural gas and diesel fuel, with a 45 km power line that would connect the park to the provincial electrical system.

In March 2017, ATCO Electric released a Detailed Impact Analysis for public and Indigenous review. Parks Canada is reviewing the proposal, and will consider information presented at the January



2018 Alberta Utilities Commission hearing before reaching a decision.

Trans Mountain pipeline reactivation

Trans Mountain has operated and maintained a pipeline through Jasper National Park since 1953. After the pipeline was twinned in 2008, Line 1 was deactivated, with corrosion protection. Trans Mountain is working with Parks Canada to obtain the national park permits required to carry out maintenance activities, toward reactivating Line 1 in 2020, in accordance with safety standards and the requirements of the National Energy Board.



Cyclists on the existing Icefields Parkway.

Proposed Icefields Trail (North)

In 2017, Parks Canada completed Part 1 of consultations with Indigenous peoples, partners, stakeholders and the public on the proposed Icefields Trail (North) concept.

The proposal calls for an environmentally friendly recreational trail that will meet the needs of a range of visitors that would encourage families in particular to explore the park outside of their vehicles. This would also improve safety by moving cyclists away from the highway and onto the trail.

The majority of the proposed route would wind through land already zoned for

outdoor recreation (Zone 4), roughly parallel to the Icefields Parkway.

The proposed Icefields Trail is currently in the conceptual phase and no final decisions have been made. We will share updates when available at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/icefields-trail>

Environmental stewardship

Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper direct and fund an environmental stewardship program to improve environmental sustainability in the town and park. The priorities of the program include waste diversion, energy efficiency, dark sky friendly lighting and conserving native vegetation.

In 2017, the program placed 300 deterrent pouches on vulnerable, mature pine trees throughout the Town of Jasper. The pouches contain a pheromone to deter mountain pine beetle from infecting the trees.

The environmental stewardship program developed the Efficient Outdoor Lighting community handbook to assist Jasper residents and businesses select outdoor lighting to promote the dark sky environment and the livability of the community.



Dark sky lighting at a local business in the town of Jasper.



PARK STATS 2017



VISITORS TO THE PARK 2.4 MILLION



BOTTLES AND CANS RECYCLED 345,322



FRONTCOUNTRY CAMPERS 555,620



WASHROOMS CLEANED 40,000



BACKCOUNTRY CAMPERS 16,163



WINTER ROAD PATROL AND PLOWING >140,000 km



VOLUNTEERS 196 Hours 3409



RESCUES 130



GARBAGE COLLECTED 954,900 kg



THEATRE PROGRAMS DELIVERED 126

