Castle Management Plan

Castle Provincial Park
and Castle Wildland Provincial Park

May 2018

Alberta Environment and Parks

Alberta Environment and Parks

Executive Summary

Vision

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are managed as world-class protected places, employing high standards in protection and conservation, respecting Indigenous rights, and providing sites and facilities for exceptional recreational and tourism experiences.

Value

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are two of the most important natural sites in Alberta. They are part of the unique Crown of the Continent ecosystem that is internationally recognized for its biodiversity and landscapes, and encompasses headwaters that supply one third of the water in the Oldman Watershed. The area also contains valuable habitat for species such as grizzly bear, wolverine, westslope cutthroat trout and harlequin duck. Sharing borders with Waterton Lakes National Park to the south, British Columbia to the west, the Crowsnest Pass to the north, and privately owned ranchlands to the east, the Castle area is an important link to major wildlife habitats and corridors. Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park contain significant cultural sites including numerous archaeological, historical and First Nations traditional use sites. The Castle area has the potential to be a significant driver of the local and provincial tourism economy.

Approach

Due to the complex nature of the landscape, habitats, current and traditional uses and engaged stakeholders, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park must be managed through a balance of diverse objectives. Protection of the high ecological and cultural values will be the primary objectives of the parks. Management of the human footprint to maintain the ecosystem, the natural processes and the visitor experience will be informed by the best available science, the most current information, and First Nations Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Management practices will consider the needs of current and future users, the perspectives of local communities and stakeholders and, where appropriate, incorporate long-standing land management practices such as grazing and hunting. A wide range of recreational activities will be supported, and the development of new compatible experiences will be encouraged.

The Management Plan

This document outlines the unique considerations relevant to managing Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park within the context of the system of Alberta's Provincial Parks. In the plan, each issue is given context, management objectives are identified and corresponding strategies are provided. The management plan is designed to provide a long term and comprehensive framework to guide both park operations and park developments. It has been produced in consultation with Albertans, stakeholders and First Nations, and is intended to help achieve sustainable protection of the valuable natural and cultural resources, and to provide the foundation for long-term economic benefits to the people of Alberta.

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Introduction

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will be managed according to the intent, vision and principles described in this introduction. These two provincial parks play an important role within the Alberta provincial park system, and contain important and unique natural and cultural values.

This section also provides the context from which the provincial parks will be managed, including the regional context, historical context, legislative context and policy context. It describes the parks' classifications, their place in the Natural Regions Framework and the relationship of this management plan to the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

Based on the vision and context provided in this section, subsequent sections outline the management objectives and strategies that will help achieve the conservation of the natural and cultural values, the ongoing respect of Indigenous rights, and the enhancement and development of recreation and tourism opportunities.

1.1 Purpose and Intent

The primary purposes of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are to ensure the conservation of nature, the respect of Indigenous rights, and the provision of recreational and tourism experiences. All management decisions will be consistent with the protection of biodiversity, water resources, ecological integrity and connectivity.

Conservation of Natural Values

The protection of biodiversity and headwaters, and the maintenance of ecological integrity and connectivity constitute the primary objectives for the natural values management of the Castle area. As an area of high biodiversity, including a significant number of rare species and species at risk, the protection focus will help ensure the sustainability and health of ecosystems. By protecting the important headwaters of the Oldman basin and the water resources within the area, the parks will contribute to the "overall health and wellness of our population" (Plan for Parks 2009). Alberta Parks seeks to protect natural systems with recognition that healthy habitat, clean abundant water and freedom of movement are interrelated and necessary to sustain all living things.

Protecting nature in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park specifically includes protecting natural systems, landscapes, landforms, habitats, ecosystems, native species and species at risk. This protection focus extends naturally to the protection of headwaters, water resources and the associated watersheds, both for their importance to communities located downstream and to the wildlife and natural processes the watershed supports. In addition, management of the Castle area includes the protection of valleys, trails, habitats and corridors that connect directly to public lands to the north, Waterton Lakes National Park to the south, private ranchlands to the east, and British Columbia to the west, providing the freedom of movement and extensions of ranges required by many species.

Specialized Terms

Castle area: In this plan the term refers to the area including Castle Provincial Park, Castle Wildland Provincial Park and adjacent provincially managed public lands in Alberta.

Castle region: In this plan the term refer to the Castle area and adjacent communities, private lands, public lands, parks, historic sites and attractions within an approximate radius of 100 kilometres.

Crown of the Continent: The region that includes and surrounds Waterton Glacier International Peace Park (a UNESCO World Heritage site) in southwestern Alberta, southeastern British Columbia, and northwestern Montana.

Respect of Indigenous Rights

First Nations, Métis and other Indigenous Peoples recognize the Castle area for its profound cultural value. The deep respect they have for the landscapes, wildlife and natural systems of the environment is part of their holistic approach to nature and humanity, and is in alignment with the conservation of cultural and natural values. Indigenous ecological knowledge will be considered alongside scientific perspectives in management decisions. Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will provide venues for First Nations to practice their rights and to communicate their stories, culture and identity.

Indigenous people have long hunted, collected food and medicines and performed ceremonies in the Castle area. Respect of these Indigenous rights will be reflected in management practices, including the protection of traditional use sites. Ongoing dialogue with First Nations will be used to inform the sustainable development and protection of the parks. Consideration of Indigenous rights will be maintained through all planning processes, park developments and park management practices.

By conserving healthy habitats, functioning wildlife corridors and intact freshwater systems, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park can act as refugia. In light of changing climates, this is especially important for species of concern and rare species.

Some notable Species of Concern include:

- **Grizzly Bear (Threatened)**
- **Wolverine (Special Concern)**
- **Limber Pine (Endangered)**
- **Whitebark Pine (Endangered)**
- **Westslope Cutthroat Trout (Threatened)**
- **Bull Trout (Threatened)**

Enhancement and Development of Recreation and Tourism

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are premium destinations for four-season outdoor recreational activities and wilderness experiences. Well designed and constructed recreational infrastructure, such as trails, campgrounds and day-use facilities, is an important component in facilitating a positive visitor experience. Maintaining large functional landscapes and ecosystems will help ensure the area remains a place where visitors can experience the physical, social, mental and emotional benefits of spending time in nature.

Existing recreational activities will be evaluated and managed for their compatibility with the conservation objectives and, where required, use and access will be modified to ensure protection of natural and cultural values. The introduction and development of new activities will use existing parks policies for environmental review. Where there is a lack of certainty with regards to their potential environmental impacts, the Precautionary Principle may be applied (see Section 1.4).

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park can act as primary tourist attractions for the region, and development of park facilities and services will be considered where they meet the needs of the main tourism markets. Close cooperation with local communities, area attractions and other organizations will promote the thoughtful and sustainable development of tourism on a regional scale, and the improved quality of life for local communities and Albertans.

1.2 Management Priorities

The establishment of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park adds 105,179ha of protected space to the Alberta Parks' network.

Priorities for Castle Provincial Park

Castle Provincial Park protects 25,501 hectares, and is the primary location for park facilities that support a variety of frontcountry nature-based experiences, such as camping, hiking, boating, picnicking, cross-country skiing and fishing. The Provincial Park is also the primary location for visitors to access park services, including educational and interpretive programs, and information and visitor support. In addition, most new development will be concentrated in the facility zone within the Provincial Park.

Priorities for Castle Wildland Provincial Park

Castle Wildland Provincial Park protects 79,678 hectares, and provides a high-quality destination for low-impact backcountry and wilderness experiences. Facilities, including trails and backcountry huts, will be developed and managed in alignment with the park's conservation values. For park visitors, this new infrastructure will allow managed access to the park area and facilitate connection to transboundary trails.

1.3 Management Vision

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are managed as world-class protected places, employing high standards in protection and conservation, respecting Indigenous rights, and providing sites and facilities for exceptional recreational and tourism experiences.

This management vision will be achieved through the development and use of:

- Thresholds to inform type and volume of human activities.
- Measurable and achievable objectives.
- Evidence-based decision making.
- First Nations Traditional Land Use and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Collaborative approaches to problem solving.
- Priorities for implementation and development of specific strategies.

This management vision will assist in achieving an ideal state of:

- Representative and ecologically functioning ecosystems.
- Large intact spaces that allow for viable, self-sustaining and resilient populations of native organisms, including species at risk.
- Connectivity for wildlife, both within park boundaries and to adjacent areas, accommodating migration of individuals and genes.
- Climate change refugia for species, particularly those at risk.
- Resilient ecosystems that support diversity of species and allow for natural process and disturbances to occur.
- Healthy streams and riparian habitats.
- Protected headwaters, vegetation and associated landscapes that results in:
    - Clean and cold water.
    - Retention of adequate precipitation on the landscape providing a predictable source of water for streams, lakes and wetlands.
    - Intact and healthy populations of native vegetation with minimal invasive species.
- Significant opportunities for wilderness experiences and quiet enjoyment of nature.
- Reasonable access for human activities that is managed with clearly designated access points, and designated uses in appropriate locations.

1.4 Guiding Principles

The following management principles will guide decision making for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park:

- **Environmental leadership:** Management and operations demonstrate environmental leadership and employ best practices in energy and water efficiency, environmental design, construction practices and products.
- **Evidence-based decision making:** Decision making is informed by natural and social science, evidence and experience, and traditional knowledge.
- **Integrated management:** Management decisions consider the combined impacts of environmental, economic and social factors.
- **Accountability:** Milestones and deliverables are established and Albertans receive timely information regarding progress.
- **Collaboration and citizen engagement:** Increased value for visitors will be created and common goals will be achieved through the application of the Alberta Parks engagement and consultation policy.
- **Inclusion:** Apply the Alberta Parks Inclusion Strategy, working to ensure facilities and programs are designed so that multiple needs are considered.
- **The Precautionary Principle:** Alberta Parks recognizes that the lack of certainty regarding a potential threat to the environment should not be used as a reason for not taking action to avert that threat. Application of this principle in situations of uncertainty promotes action to avert the risk of serious or irreversible harm to the environment (International Union for Conservation of Nature 2007).
- **Quality Visitor Experience:** Visitor amenities and services are designed to maximize quality of experience and visitor safety.

1.5 The Planning Process

The planning process is integral to the development of a comprehensive parks management plan. There are seven main stages in the planning process: pre-planning, strategy development, draft plan and reviews, approvals, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and review. Typically, these stages occur in a sequential manner. Occasionally, an expedited planning process may be required to guide immediate actions and set priorities, as is the case with this management plan.

During the pre-planning process and development of this management plan, First Nations and stakeholders were engaged directly through a variety of meetings and one-on-one discussions. Over 40 meetings were held between May and November 2016 and, where feasible, recommendations and advice from those meetings are reflected in the plan.

Draft and final plan content was developed collaboratively between staff from Alberta Parks and other government divisions and departments. The dialogue with other government department or divisions will continue throughout implementation. As identified in the plan, implementation also requires ongoing dialogue and/or partnerships with First Nations, stakeholders and the public.

During the development of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park management plan, two stakeholder working groups were established. One working group focused on matters of ecology, and the other on issues of land use. Individuals with knowledge and expertise in ecology and land use provided recommendations and advice to help shape the management plan.

Several projects initiated within this process contributed to the development of this plan, and will assist in its implementation and future planning. These projects included biodiversity modeling, collection of traditional land use information, collection of historic resource information and an assessment of motorized recreational trails.

A formal 60-day public review and consultation on the draft plan is a critical part of the planning process, as outlined by the Alberta Park Consultation Framework. Feedback from this process contributes to the drafting of the final plan.

Interim park zoning has been included in this management plan, however, it will be updated to align with a Capital Investment Plan. This Capital Investment Plan will outline a campground revitalization strategy, proposed visitor services infrastructure and developments required to support the recreational demands of visitors. First Nations, stakeholders and public will review the Capital Investment Plan.

Monitoring and review will commence as the plan is implemented. Thresholds, targets and strategies will be reviewed and evaluated periodically and status reports will be prepared. A formal plan review will occur in the 10th year of implementation.

1.6 Alberta's Provincial Parks System

1.6.1 Vision of Alberta Parks

The vision for the Provincial Park system is:
Alberta Parks inspire people to discover, value and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.

1.6.2 Desired Outcomes of Alberta Parks

The specific management objectives and actions outlined in this plan are understood in the context of the desired outcomes of the Provincial Park system as a whole.

There are three desired outcomes described in the *Land Use Framework* (*South Saskatchewan Regional Plan*) that are consistent with the goals of the Provincial Parks system:

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

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

Alberta Parks has also set high-level goals that address the important role of parks in conservation, recreation, education and tourism.

The high-level system goals used to frame management plans are:

- **Conservation and Protection:** Parks conserve Alberta's natural heritage and associated cultural heritage for current and future generations.
- **Outdoor Recreation and Healthy Living:** Parks provide diverse, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy lifestyles.
- **Learning and Engagement:** Parks offer an opportunity to learn about, appreciate and care for Alberta's natural and cultural heritage.
- **Tourism and Community:** Parks foster sustainable, nature-based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta.

1.6.3 Natural Regions Framework

One of the core purposes of the Alberta Parks system is to preserve the natural landscapes, features and processes that represent the province's environmental diversity. The Natural Regions Framework describes the environmental diversity and landscape classification hierarchy that divides the province into ecological units based on landscape patterns and natural characteristics, including landform features, hydrology, climate, geology, soils and vegetation. Alberta is divided into six natural regions: Boreal Forest, Rocky Mountains, Foothills, Canadian Shield, Parkland and Grassland. These six natural regions are further subdivided into 21 natural subregions.

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are located entirely within the Rocky Mountain Natural Region, positioned along the Continental Divide. The Rocky Mountain Natural Region is characterized by mountains, high foothills and deep valleys that were carved out by glaciers. Short, cool summers and cold, snowy winters are typical. At high elevations coniferous forests are dominant, with grasslands and mixed wood forests at lower elevations and in valley bottoms. Located within the southwestern part of the Rocky Mountains Natural Region, landscapes of the Castle area form part of the ecological transition to the Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions to the east. As a result, the Castle area includes remarkably high numbers of species on the edge of their range.

The Castle area contains a variety of natural landscape types within the Montane, Subalpine and Alpine natural subregions of the Rocky Mountains Natural Region. Natural Landscape Types portray the natural diversity within the natural subregions and are the base units of protected areas planning. They are also used in measuring progress because they are closely linked to landforms and the variety of life associated with these landforms. Sixteen Natural Landscape Types have been identified for the province as a whole and appear in different combinations in each subregion.

The Montane Natural Subregion is dominant in the lower elevations of both parks and makes up the vast majority of Castle Provincial Park. These landscapes are part of the largest continuous unit of the Montane Natural Subregion in Alberta, spanning lower elevations along the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains extending from just north of the Bow Valley to the Alberta-Montana border. This is the driest and warmest part of the three Rocky Mountain natural subregions, with lower snow accumulation and warmer winters than most of the province. Regional and local climatic influences have led to highly varied plant and soil types that vary rapidly over short distances. Vegetation is characterized by lodgepole pine and aspen forests and grassland complexes, with grasslands occurring on dry and more exposed sites. Glacial activity has left behind moraine and colluvial deposits that comprise most of the natural landscape types in this subregion. Fluvial, glaciofluvial and river natural landscape types are also prevalent.

Open stands of Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir dominate the Subalpine Natural Subregion occurring at elevations between the Montane and Alpine. The entire Wildland Provincial Park and the northern end of the Provincial Park is dominated by this subregion. These landscapes provide valuable wildlife habitat, with a cold year-round climate and slow tree growth rates. Whitebark pine is occasionally located at high elevations and subalpine larch occurs along the tree line. This subregion comprises most of the parks, with natural landscape types dominated by colluvial deposits on valley slopes and significant amounts of bedrock and moraine themes. Lake and rivers are also significant freshwater natural landscape types within the parks.

Alpine landscapes are confined to the highest elevations of the Wildland Provincial Park, concentrated along the Continental Divide and in the southern-most areas. The Alpine Natural Subregion is dominated by rugged landscapes and steep rock faces with short, cold summers, strong winds and high snowfalls that prevent tree growth. Plant growth is limited to low growing shrubs and herbs. Bedrock and colluvial slopes are the dominant natural landscape types of the Alpine within the Wildland Provincial Park.

1.6.4 Role in the System Statement

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park offer protection for important landscapes, habitat and movement corridors for over 200 species of rare wildlife and plants, including many species at risk (Alberta Conservation Information Management System, 2016). These parks play an important role in contributing to landscape scale ecosystem connectivity within the Crown of the Continent and provide significant ecosystem services including increasing protection of critical headwaters and catchments. The parks also contribute to significant regional recreation and tourism opportunities within the southern Canadian Rockies by providing a range of visitor opportunities and settings from wilderness to frontcountry.

1.7 Site Significance Statement

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are part of the iconic Crown of the Continent in North America and protect part of an ecosystem that straddles some of the most environmentally significant areas of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta, British Columbia and Montana. This area is renowned for its impressive scenery, biodiversity and rare species. The landscape is diverse, transitioning from grasslands and aspen forests of the Foothills Parkland to rocky peaks represented by Montane, Subalpine and Alpine Subregions. The rich habitat and the prevalence of wildlife corridors make the Castle area important for many terrestrial and aquatic species of conservation concern.

This incredible diversity of habitats also forms a significant portion of the Oldman River headwaters and accounts for one third of the annual flow in the Oldman River watershed. The patchwork of landscape types contribute to the health, resiliency and functionality of the watershed and broader landscape, making the protection of the Castle area of great significance to the human and wildlife populations downstream.

The Castle area has a storied history, including Indigenous traditional land uses that add to the significant cultural value of the parks. These Indigenous traditional land uses are welcomed within the parks and can contribute to conservation objectives. The parks are endowed with outstanding recreational and tourism potential that will help drive tourism development and diversify the local economy. Through the effective management of recreation opportunities and tourism development, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will be unique, diverse and attractive destinations.

1.8 Integration with Legislation, Policy and Regional Planning Initiatives

1.8.1 Legislation and Parks Classification

Alberta's current classification system consists of eight classes of parks and protected areas: Wildland Provincial Parks; Provincial Parks and Provincial Recreation Areas (established under authority of the Provincial Parks Act); Wilderness Areas; Ecological Reserves; Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands (established under authority of the Wilderness Areas Ecological Reserves Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands (WAERNAHR) Act); and the Willmore Wilderness Park (which is a unique area established under its own Act, the Willmore Wilderness Park Act).

Newly established parks are assigned to the various classes based on defensible, consistent province-wide criteria. The parks comprise two park classes:

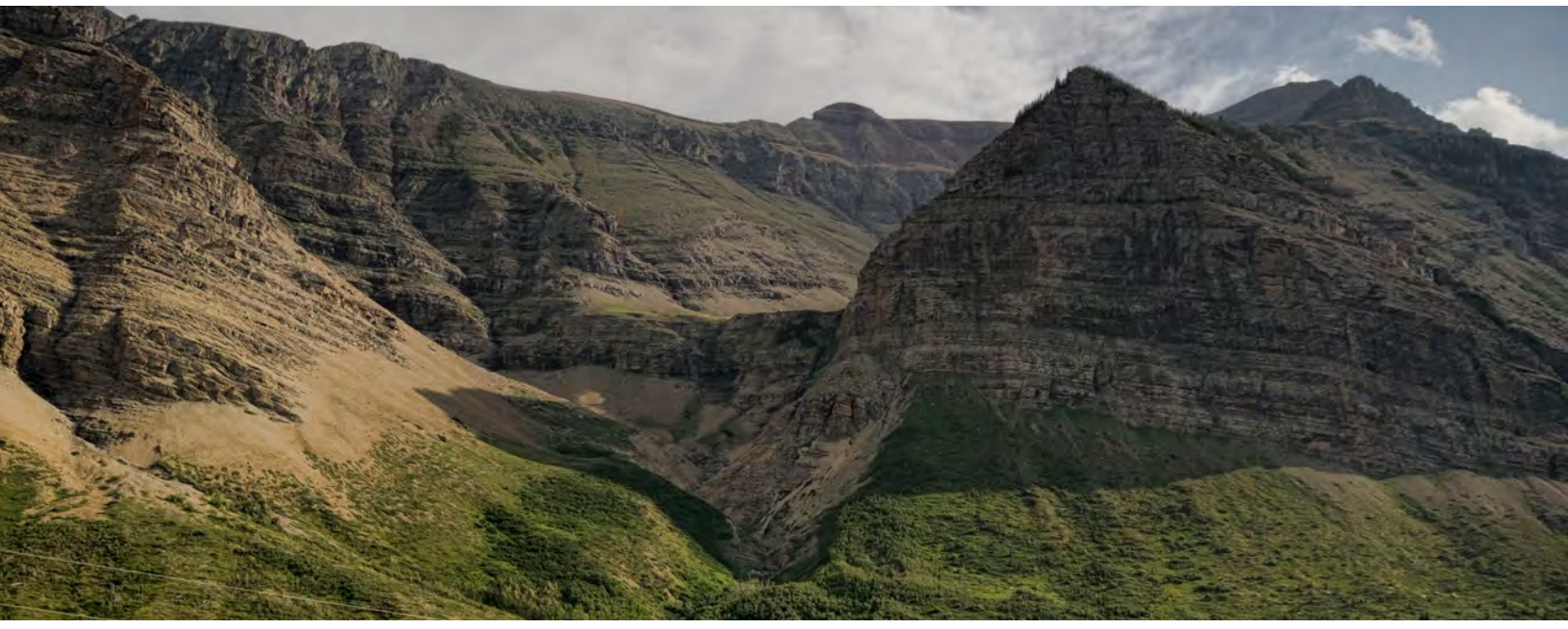
1. **Provincial Parks** are established for the conservation of nature (and associated cultural features) where nature-based outdoor recreation, tourism and education objectives may also be significant. Sites in this class typically provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism and education, which are dependent on, and compatible with, the conservation objectives. This class of parks is distinguished from Wildland Provincial Parks by the greater range of nature-based recreation facilities available, the extent of road access that may be provided, the level of facility development and the availability of interpretive and educational programs. Only sites with provincially significant conservation, recreation and tourism values capable of providing high-quality visitor experiences are suitable for consideration in this class.

2. **Wildland Provincial Parks** are established for the conservation of nature (and associated cultural features) with significant opportunities for backcountry/ wilderness recreation and the experience of nature in a relatively undisturbed state. Sites in this class are intended to retain their primeval character and to protect relatively large, ecologically healthy and functioning landscapes that are representative of Alberta's natural diversity. These parks provide significant opportunities for wilderness exploration and appreciation that are characterized by solitude, challenge and personal interaction with nature and may include nature-based touring, guiding, outfitting and hunting. Nature-based recreation opportunities in sites in this class are dependent on their compatibility with the conservation objectives of the site. Only sites over 5,000 hectares where automobile access is non-existent or confined to the periphery are suitable for consideration in this class.

1.8.2 Regional Planning Initiatives

Nature conservation and nature-based recreation in Alberta can be implemented through a variety of management tools underpinned by provincial legislation or policy. In Alberta, these include public land initiatives such as public land use zones, special management areas, private land stewardship initiatives such as land trusts, and provincial parks and protected areas.

Alberta Parks utilizes a systems approach to parks and protected areas establishment and planning. A systems approach implies that site selection, classification and management intent of a park are guided by a logical and consistent process that is in alignment with international and national standards for parks and protected areas, in addition to being aligned with provincial legislation, policy and regional planning commitments. This systems approach allows for the measurement of progress, the setting of targets for conservation and recreation, and the development of priorities for achieving these targets through park establishment and management. The specific management objectives and actions outlined in this plan are aligned with system objectives and goals, as well as provincial policy and legislation, and regional planning initiatives outlined in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.



1.9 Regional Context

With towering snow-covered peaks, forested slopes, and montane valleys, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park connect Waterton Lakes National Park to the south with provincial public lands to the north, providing a critical connection within the Rocky Mountains. As part of the Crown of the Continent, it is a meeting place of landscapes and continental climates. It is a thoroughfare and refuge for wildlife and an attractive destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Two large Blackfoot reserves, the Blood and Piikani, are within a sixty kilometre radius of the Castle area. Traditional use within the parks is known, and efforts will be made to facilitate First Nations identification of and access to these sites. Alberta Parks considers First Nations to be key partners in the protection and development of this area.

The Castle area is close to multiple communities in both Alberta and British Columbia. Communities near Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park include the Town of Pincher Creek, the Municipality of Crownest Pass (Bellevue, Hillcrest, Frank, Blairmore, Coleman) and the Municipal District of Pincher Creek (Beaver Mines, Lundbreck, and Twin Butte) and the village of Cowley. There are also several ranches and rural residences within the Municipal Districts. Some local landowners have grazing allotments within the park boundaries and will be key conservation partners. These communities play an important role in providing services for visitors and in helping to protect and develop the area. Tourism services in Pincher Creek and the Crowsnest Pass include accommodations and food services, as well as both summer and winter recreational opportunities.

One hundred and twenty kilometres east of the Castle area lies the city of Lethbridge, with a population approaching 100,000 people. Two hundred and twenty kilometres northeast lies the major urban centre of Calgary, with a population of over 1.3 million and an international airport. Across the border into British Columbia, the towns of Fernie and Sparwood, which have their own significant tourism facilities, may act to bolster the regions attractiveness for visitors.

Castle Mountain Ski Area is just south of Castle Provincial Park, surrounded by Castle Wildland Provincial Park and adjacent to the West Castle Ecological Reserves. The Castle Mountain Resort is a major economic contributor and tourism draw to the region, and Castle Mountain Resort and the Castle Mountain Community Association will be key partners.

Provincial Historic Sites and parks in close proximity to the Castle area include Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park and Waterton Lakes National Park. These sites offer public programs and services, and represent an opportunity for cross-promotion and experience bundling.

1.10 Location and Access

Located in the extreme southwest of the province of Alberta, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park contain 105,179 hectares of protected area. They are located at the narrowest point in the Rocky Mountain range, and at the meeting place of Alberta, British Columbia and Montana (via Waterton Lakes National Park).

The area is a natural point of intersection for people, including Indigenous people both in the past and present, as well as a wide variety of recreational users and people seeking a connection with nature. There are four main gateways into the Castle Parks; two enter the Parks from the north and are accessible through the Crowsnest Pass (via the communities of Hillcrest and Blairmore), and two enter the Parks from the east. The two eastern routes come in from Pincher Creek and Burmis and meet near the hamlet of Beaver Mines at Highway 774, which is the only paved roadway into the Castle parks. All four gateways allow access to the parks from Alberta and B.C. via Highway 3, and the route through Pincher Creek also allows access from Waterton Lakes National Park via Highway 6.

The Castle parks can also be accessed by non-motorized means via hiking trails (e.g. the Continental Divide Trail) and multi-use trails connected to logging roads or other industrial roads.

Significant industrial and recreational activity has created a myriad of other access points that will be evaluated, managed, and in some cases reclaimed, to achieve alignment with the conservation values and management strategies of the parks. In addition, connections to cross-boundary trails to facilitate both wildlife movement and non-motorized access will be incorporated into park management practices.

1.11 History of the Castle Area

The Castle area has a long and varied history of traditional use, recreational use, designations and commercial activity. Indigenous people hold the site as sacred and have made practical and ceremonial use of the area since long before the European settlement of western Canada. First Nations such as the Piikani and Blood tribes who still make the region their home “have long hunted, fished, and gathered foods and medicinal plants there” (Weaver 2013).

In 1895 part of the area was included in the newly formed Waterton Dominion Park. In 1921, that area was removed from the Dominion Park boundaries and transferred to the Alberta Government to become a Provincial Game Reserve. In 1954 the Provincial Game Reserve status was removed. As part of the commercial land base, industrial activities such as logging, mining and oil and gas extraction were conducted, and a network of accompanying roads spread through the area.

In 1974, an Alberta Government study recommended a park be established in the headwaters of the Castle River, and that the West and South Castle watersheds be placed under Consultative Notation, indicating the government’s intent to proceed with a protected area. Three years later, the Eastern Slopes Policy created areas of Prime Protection, Critical Wildlife and General Recreation in the Castle area. Through the 1970s and 1980s, integrated resource planning and access management planning was conducted for the Castle area. This period showed a significant growth of off highway vehicle use and random camping throughout the area, which has continued into 2016.

In 1992 an Access Management Plan was developed and put in place to address and provide operational level direction for the recreational use of off highway vehicles in the Castle River area. In 1993 the Special Places 2000 Committee recommended the backlog of sites identified for protection, including the Castle area, be established by the end of 1994.

In 1996, a 112,000-hectare area was endorsed as a candidate site for review under the Special Places program, on the recommendation of the Provincial Coordinating Committee. In May of that year, five Provincial Recreation Areas were established. They are Syncline, Castle River Bridge, Castle Falls, Beaver Mines Lake and Lynx Creek. In October 1996, a Special Places Local Committee was convened. The Local Committee’s role was to recommend boundaries for the site, land use activities and management guidelines, and to facilitate public review and input. In July 1997, a report was submitted outlining a 10-point plan for managing the Castle area. As a result of these recommendations, the 94 hectare West Castle Wetland Ecological Reserve was legislatively established in 1998. The remainder of the candidate site was established as the Castle Special Management Area Forest Land Use Zone, with the intent to better manage motorized access and to protect ecologically sensitive backcountry areas.

In September 2014, the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* identified the prime protection zone of the Castle area as a Wildland Provincial Park.

> "In recognition of the importance of this area, a Wildland Provincial Park will be established. It will include lands in the prime protection zone under the Eastern Slopes Policy (1984) and will also extend into adjacent lower valley areas… This will protect the integrity of this significant area's headwaters, biodiversity and landscapes through the use of a designation under legislation." (South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, 2014).

The *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* also designated a public land use zone for the lower valley areas, referred to as the Castle Conservation Area. In 2015, the Government of Alberta announced its commitment to expand and formalize the protection of the Castle area through the establishment of a Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park, and subsequently initiated a management planning process lead by Alberta Parks.

2

Conservation and Protection

Conservation and protection represent the major over-arching intent for the management of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. The natural and cultural values span across the biological, hydrological, geological, geographical, cultural, historical, prehistorical and spiritual aspects of the parks.

Because of the richness and complexity of these natural and cultural values, a systems approach to management is required. To protect rare species and species of concern, the protection of headwaters and associated water resources is important; the protection of landscape integrity is critical to ensure connectivity of wildlife habitats and migratory routes; the protection of historic resources and traditional use sites is critical to respecting Indigenous rights; the protection of viewscapes and landforms supports a positive visitor experience; and the active management of human activity within the parks contributes to the sustainability of these conservation efforts. The management of these complex and interrelated factors will take into account issues such as climate change, invasive species and the role of fire on the landscape.

Land uses such as grazing, recreation and access by Indigenous Peoples will be managed to achieve a balance between these demands and the conservation intent.

2.1 Geology, Landforms and Soils

The health of an ecosystem is inseparably connected with the abiotic components of the environment. The quality of the air, water and soil is essential to the living things that inhabit the region, and the protection of these components is a critical part of the conservation mandate of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

The geological features of the Castle area record its turbulent prehistory in the layers of rock and landforms, and they provide the context within which modern ecosystems thrive. The varied landscape of the area can support the healthy circulation of water and air through it; natural processes that are critical to the health of humans and non-human species alike. The high mountains and their passes, the well-vegetated valleys and the transition zones provide rich habitat for wildlife and a stunning environment for visitors to explore.

2.1.1 Park Geology

The Castle area is located within the front ranges of the southern Rocky Mountains of Alberta. Between 60-70 million years ago, rocks that were once ancient sea beds were shifted by the collision of tectonic plates. These layers of rock were twisted, folded and lifted to form the Rocky Mountains. Successive ice ages followed and retreating glaciers carved the mountains and the river valleys leaving behind fresh water and masses of glacial till. The result of these large-scale geological events is the rugged landscape of the Castle area, characterized by mountain peaks, numerous streams and forests.

The oldest sediments in North America are found in the southwestern corner of the Castle area and extend south into Waterton Lakes National Park. These sediments are dated to the Precambrian and contain some of the oldest known fossils on earth; stromatolites. In addition, the Castle area contains pyroclastic (volcanic) formations identified as the 10 kilometre thick Purcell supergroup. These ancient rocks surround an island of younger deposits from the Cambrian period. The origins of complex life are from the Cambrian Period, and these rocks are similar to those of the globally significant Burgess Shale fossil site, though likely from a shallower marine environment.

There are far fewer Palaeozoic formations found in the Castle area when compared to the Rocky Mountain ranges to the north, however, in the extreme northwest there are fossiliferous marine sediments deposited during the Devonian, Carboniferous and the Permian periods. Dominated by limestone, shale and dolomite, these rocks are subject to natural erosional processes that can form caves.

To the east and north of the Precambrian and Cambrian sediments, the area is dominated by rocks formed during the age of the dinosaurs. Up until the lower Jurassic this area would have been a “passive margin”, without volcanic activity or noticeable effects of tectonic activity. As the Jurassic period gave way to the Cretaceous, the area became an “active margin”, and there would have been subduction and uplift of massive amounts of rock. It was at this point that the drainage of the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains shifted from a westerly to an easterly flow, and the North American Continental Divide was established. This monumental moment in North America’s geologic history is recorded in the rocks of the Castle area.

Sediments from the late Jurassic’s Fernie formation have yielded large specimens of fossilized wood and other terrestrial plants, as well as dinosaur tracks. Deposited above these sediments sits the Kootenay formation, which has yielded marine fossils, including giant ammonites.

Many of the Cretaceous rocks in the area are coal bearing. The hamlet of Beaver Mines, which is situated just north of the eastern entrance to Castle Provincial Park, was founded with the opening of a coal mine in the early 1900s, alongside communities of the Crowsnest Pass. Geologic surveys during that period largely focused on mining interests, and the local communities were used when naming the geologic formations in the area, including the Beaver Mines formation, the Crowsnest Formation and the Blairmore Group. Another Cretaceous formation in the area is the Bearpaw formation, which is named for one of the large interior seaways that flooded the middle of North America during the time of the dinosaurs. In addition, the area exhibits terrestrial sediments from the late Cretaceous, including the Blood Reserve Formation and the St. Mary's River Formation. The St. Mary's River Formation is the equivalent of the Horseshoe Canyon Formation, which bears vast number of dinosaur fossils and other fossils in the badlands of Alberta.

2.1.2 Landforms

The Castle area contains diverse geomorphic features, including several landforms that have been identified as provincially significant (Alberta Parks, 2014).

The only exposures of volcanic rock in Alberta are found in the Castle area. Purcell Lava in the Drywood Creek formation bisects a lighter Precambrian rock. Another exposure of Purcell Lava occurs in the Newman Peak area where a cirque developed on top of the lava, and the resistant nature of the resulting rocks allowed the development of a 60 metres cliff below the lip of the cirque. The Crowsnest Formation is exposed at Carbondale Hill due to faulting.

The Drywood Hanging Valley is an excellent example of a hanging valley with an approximate 300 metre drop to the creek. Southfork Lakes is another uncommon landform and is of provincial significance; it is made up of a linear series of small lakes occupying rock basins in a glacial valley, which are connected by rapids and waterfalls.

2.1.1 & 2.1.2 Objectives	Strategy
To protect the unique geological and geomorphological features and resources in the Castle area.	Identify and protect unique features through management zoning, education, appropriate infrastructure development and environmental review.
Allow natural geological and geomorphological processes to occur in areas where they do not impact facilities, infrastructure or species of special concern.	Plan new infrastructure development in areas that do not have significant hazards. Existing infrastructure, including facilities, trails and amenities, will be reviewed and, if required, appropriately mitigated and/or relocated.

2.1.3 Soils

The Castle area is located within a topographically and geologically diverse landscape. The landscape, in combination with climate, impacts soil development and ultimately determines the vegetation.

The steep, rocky and sometimes unstable slopes in the Alpine Subregion often prevent significant soil development, which is reflected in the absence or very minimal presence of vegetation. Regosolic soils are common in areas of instability, such as avalanche chutes and steep slopes prevalent in the Alpine and Subalpine Subregions, and in the deposition of sediments on river terraces evident in the montane and more level areas of the subalpine. In those conditions soil development is impeded by the forces of water, temperature and gravity. Regosolic soils are thin and therefore prone to drying.

Brunisolic soils are partially developed soils that lack significant horizon development and are prevalent under coniferous forests on the shifting and eroding valley slopes of the Castle area. Luvisolic soils, associated with well to moderately well-drained colluvium or till, underlie much of the coniferous forest that occupies more stable landscapes.

Chernozemic soils, rich in humus, are generally associated with the relatively dry native grasslands of the Montane Subregion, but may also be dominant under Aspen wooded areas where trees expand onto the grasslands. Gleysolic soils are mineral soils associated with areas of poor drainage and higher water tables. These soils are limited in extent but more widespread in the Castle area as they may occur along creeks and rivers and in depressions.

Soils provide important indicators for the suitability of sites considered for development. Factors such as soil texture, structure and permeability should be considered, and can be relevant factors in mitigating potential impacts from erosion, groundwater contamination and flooding.

2.1.4 Viewscapes

Management planning in the Castle area strives to maintain, protect and enhance the natural visual integrity of the parks. Viewscapes and viewsheds are the extent to which people can see to the horizon in any direction while standing in a specific location. Points of higher elevation in the park provide opportunities to view the park's forested slopes, lakes and alpine ecosystems.

Alberta Parks will identify and map viewsheds that are observable during the daytime and/or nighttime and articulate how they may be impacted by future development. Identification of scenic features, including an analysis of visual resources, will aid in future planning by incorporating results into the management planning process. Viewsheds will be important considerations in the development of all new infrastructure. This will include minimizing the impact of development as well as identifying opportunities for enhancing the visitor experience. These opportunities may include the development of visitor information, signage and infrastructure to facilitate inclusion, access, enjoyment and appreciation of the parks. There are five provincially significant landforms, including three lava exposures, which could serve as featured viewpoints in future trail developments.

The Castle area borders public and private lands, and Alberta Parks will work with local communities to encourage protection of viewscapes located outside of public lands. To create a cohesive viewscape, Alberta Parks will participate in consultations and public engagement with First Nations, adjacent landowners, agencies, municipalities and other stakeholders to help provide viewshed protection and scenic integrity. Local community engagement will help to identify high-value scenic areas and help instill the importance of scenic resources. Alberta Parks will enable and facilitate research within the Castle region to help articulate the value and economic impact of these scenic resources. These efforts will help to enhance the experience for current park users and ensure the protection of viewscapes for future generations.

2.1.4 Objectives	Strategy
Maintain and protect the natural visual integrity within the Castle area.	Identify and map daytime and/or nighttime viewsheds that may be impacted by development. Identify areas that have been impacted by development or recreation activities and, where appropriate, remediate. Analyze all new infrastructure development plans for their potential impact on daytime and nighttime viewsheds. Identify viewpoints to be incorporated into visitor experience and, where required, develop visitor information and infrastructure to facilitate access and enjoyment. Ensure key viewpoints take into consideration Traditional Ecological Knowledge/ Traditional Land Use sites.
Encourage the protection of viewscapes of surrounding lands not managed by Alberta Parks.	Identify areas of high scenic value adjacent to the parks. Participate in consultations with First Nations, adjacent landowners, agencies and municipalities regarding viewshed protection and scenic integrity. Communicate with staff and local communities regarding the importance of scenic resources. Encourage research on economic impact and value of scenic resources.

2.2 Biodiversity

Biological diversity (biodiversity) refers to the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, among species and of ecosystems (Convention on Biological Diversity 2016). High biodiversity ecosystems, including species and genetic diversity, are generally more resilient to external pressures.

The Castle area is recognized as an area of high biodiversity that not only provides rich habitat, but also provides key habitat for many species that have conservation significance, such as rare species and species at risk. Another important feature of the Castle area is that it contains critically important wildlife corridors. Protection of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will assist in providing connectivity between important wildlife habitat along the continental divide, across Highway 3 and between other significant areas.

The location of the Castle area provides the opportunity for movement of wildlife westward across the continental divide into the trans-border Flathead River basin of British Columbia, northward across Highway 3, eastward to the prairies, and southward to Waterton Lakes National Park. The Castle area provides excellent habitat and connectivity to other habitats for species such as grizzly bear and wolverine. In addition, fish habitat in the Castle area is critical to the health and survival of the native trout populations and the associated aquatic ecosystems. Native fish species such as bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout and mountain whitefish are found in the area and are a key component of the ecosystem. The federally designated critical habitat for westslope cutthroat trout highlights the importance of this fish habitat for some of the more sensitive species.

To conserve biodiversity, management practices will not only focus on wildlife, vegetation and fish species, but also the protection of landscapes and their associated natural processes, including headwaters and their associated wetlands, tributaries, alluvial landforms and riparian zones. Intact landscapes can regulate water flow into the Oldman River basin, which can help mitigate the effects of extreme weather events, contribute to downstream water quality and healthy downstream aquatic ecosystems.

2.2.1 Biodiversity Management

Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Park have high biodiversity, the presence of species at risk, species of concern, rare species, rare ecological communities, and unique landforms. Park designation allows for enhanced protection of these biodiversity and species values, and connectivity to adjacent areas. Although many different types of biodiversity or species-specific assessments have been undertaken in the area, there has been no comprehensive biophysical inventory to date. Additional surveys, monitoring and research are required to better understand the ecological processes, biodiversity, focal species and ecological communities present.

Many aspects of resource management in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are mandated under different government agencies, therefore collaboration among relevant resource managers is required. Evidence-based decision making and clear management principles (see Section 1.4) will guide the biodiversity or species-specific management within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. The collection and analysis of information in response to management actions will form the basis for adaptive management of the parks. As an example a science review was completed that assessed the ecological response to human activities in southwestern Alberta (Farr et al 2017). In addition, Traditional Ecological Knowledge and other cultural information sources will be integrated into the implementation of the management plan.

Biodiversity management will include using the best tools and models available. These tools help determine appropriate levels of human activity to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity. Areas demonstrating environmental degradation will be evaluated and prioritized for restoration or reclamation.

2.2.1 Objectives	Strategy
Develop limits and targets to manage biodiversity values across the landscape.	Develop biodiversity targets considering the interrelationship of park land and adjacent lands (e.g. linear disturbances, interior habitat). Periodically review biodiversity targets based on current and relevant science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. This may include using tools such as linear disturbances and total footprint levels. Identify and prioritize areas that require restoration and/or reclamation. Identify and prioritize areas with concentrations of rare species, rare ecological communities, or other sensitive features that require protection. Biodiversity monitoring will commence in 2018.

2.2.2 Connectivity

Waters flowing from the Continental Divide eastward have carved valleys and supported habitats spanning from rocky peaks to lush vegetated valley bottoms. This connectivity allows access to ecozones on a vertical and horizontal scale. The varied landscape creates abundant microhabitats that support specialized species that live in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Many species found in the Castle region require large home ranges and/or are niche specialists. Landscape connectivity beyond park boundaries allows species to migrate to fulfill different life history requirements and provides opportunities for genetic and physical dispersal. In addition, habitat connectivity may provide species the opportunity to adjust their ranges in response to climatic changes (Huntley 2005).

The Castle area is bordered to the west by the Continental Divide of the Canadian Rockies, which is an important wildlife corridor, connecting wildlife habitat from the northern Rockies to Waterton Lakes National Park and habitats south of the 49th parallel. In addition to the north-south connectivity, the Castle parks provide a critical area for east-west connectivity with adjacent grasslands, foothills and mountains. A range of species migrate in and out of the Castle area, including mountain goat, bighorn sheep, grizzly bear, wolverine (Weaver 2013) and elk. The Castle area's inclusion as a protected area will support the functionality and viability of adjacent habitats.

Maintaining ecological connectivity to the Castle area will require collaboration between Alberta Parks, local stakeholders and the managers of adjacent National Parks and public lands. Land management practices will consider and manage connectivity to minimize impacts on the ecological corridors and ecosystems. Alberta Parks is actively engaged with transboundary initiatives, such as the Crown of the Continent, and will continue to consider information and recommendations from these initiatives in park operations and developments.

2.2.2 Objectives	Strategy
Ensure connectivity corridors are identified and maintained.	Work with adjacent land managers to identify connectivity corridors and ensure they are maintained. Work with partners to establish Highway 3 connectivity priorities and appropriate linkages through the Castle parks. Minimize the impact of recreational activity through the key mountain passes and develop metrics and standards for appropriate use (e.g. types, timing, and capacity). Minimize impacts of park activities to corridors within and adjacent to the parks.

2.2.3 Species at Risk

Within the Castle area, there are many conservation concerns including species that may be at risk or species at risk designated under federal or provincial endangered species legislation. Individual species can be identified for protective status through the Alberta Wildlife Act, the Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC), the Canadian Species at Risk Act (SARA), the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESC) and by NatureServe (tracking and watch lists). Species of conservation concern have high conservation value and many have specific habitat requirements. Some species, such as the vagrant (wandering) shrew, are found only in the Castle area in Alberta, while others such as grizzly bear are more widespread.

Recovery plans are developed for species at risk and special conservation measures may be developed for those species or ecological communities not currently listed. In addition, critical habitat may be identified for those species designated under Schedule 1 of SARA. In the Castle area, to date, there is federally designated critical habitat identified for the westslope cutthroat trout. Alberta Parks will work to protect species of conservation concern by incorporating known requirements into planning processes, implementing recovery plans and strategies, protecting critical habitat and collaborating with resource managers for activities such as monitoring, action implementation and assessments.

Within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, several species of conservation concern have been documented (see Appendix A). This list represents the species currently known to occur within the Castle area as determined by a search of records in the Alberta Conservation Information Management Centre (ACIMS) or Fisheries and Wildlife Management Information System (FWMIS) (July 2016). Additional surveys within the area may result in finding other species or additional locations of known species. As the listing process is lengthy, species currently designated “may be at risk” may undergo formal assessment resulting in listing under federal or provincial endangered species legislation.

2.2.3 Objectives	Strategy
Identify and protect rare and significant ecosystems, rare and significant plant species and areas of special ecological concern.	Develop management intent statements for sites of significance. Maintain a list of rare and significant species and ecosystems (as in Appendix A and B). Update provincial database (ACIMS) to include locations of significant species and communities.
Protect, maintain or enhance habitat for species of concern.	Monitor recreational trail use and, if necessary, limit density and frequency of use to minimize stressors on grizzly bears. Encourage the appropriate mix of native grassland communities and native forest communities to support a variety of species. Manage vegetation to control impacts of invasive species and encroachment. Define a vision for the extent, health and biodiversity of the native forest and grasslands and incorporate that vision into the Vegetation Management Strategy.
Protect current and future species at risk identified through the federal *Species at Risk Act* and the *Alberta Wildlife Act*.	Apply appropriate management strategies for identified species of concern. Apply best practices to manage westslope cutthroat trout habitat and buffer zones. Additional buffers will be established in areas that will enhance the critical habitat. Identify opportunities to enhance or restore critical habit for any species at risk. Periodically update a list of species at risk found in the Castle parks (included in Appendix A and B).

2.2.4 Vegetation

The mosaic of native plants and plant communities forms an integral component of the biodiversity of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. This mosaic has been influenced by topography, natural processes and human activity (e.g. recreational and industrial, etc.).

Within the Castle area, there are many plant species and communities that are considered to have a high biological conservation value; these may include species that are globally, nationally, and/or provincially rare. For example, Jones' columbine and dwarf alpine poppy are two vascular plant species that are both globally rare and in Alberta are only reported in the Castle area. Whitebark pine, listed as endangered both provincially and federally, and limber pine, endangered provincially, are found extensively within the Castle area, typically along exposed ridges. At higher elevations, whitebark pine is particularly known as a keystone species which means that it has a significant influence on an ecosystem. In addition, both whitebark and limber pine influence snow distribution and snow retention, which in turn influence the regulation of downstream flow and water quality (Tomback 2016).

Ecological communities dominated by big sagebrush are also significant. ACIMS ranks big sagebrush as provincially rare. The big sagebrush ecological community in the Castle area has been reported as one of the largest stands in Alberta (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, date unknown).

There are many other species and ecological communities in the Castle parks that are of conservation concern. This list, found in Appendix B, is not exhaustive; it is a snapshot of the species and ecological communities of conservation concern (tracked or listed) that have been reported to occur in the Castle area through the Alberta Conservation and Information Management System. Surveys of vegetation have been ad hoc and there are likely additional occurrences within both parks.

Key risks to native plants and ecosystems include invasive species, climate change, disturbances from recreational use and infrastructure development.

2.2.4 Objectives	Strategy
Manage native forests and grasslands to conserve their extent, health and biodiversity.	Working with other government agencies, monitor and maintain health of forests and grasslands (see Section 7). Incorporate the results of the range health surveys into the Vegetation Management Strategy. Encourage other Government of Alberta departments to maintain existing permanent sample plots and tree genetic plots, and incorporated findings into park management activities as appropriate.
Identify, protect and maintain native plant communities within the Castle Parks.	Where possible, plant or replant native vegetation using seeds sourced from within the Castle area; where not possible, use best native seed sources (with certificate of analysis) or best available alternative sources. Conduct restoration and reclamation projects in the Castle parks to protect genetic integrity, utilizing relevant best practices as specified and approved by Alberta Parks.

2.2.5 Fauna

The high biodiversity in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park includes a vast array of species that fulfill some part of their life history requirements in the Castle area; birds, amphibians, invertebrates, reptiles, fish and mammals are all represented. Some of these are of conservation concern and may be included on tracking lists or designated under federal or provincial endangered species legislation. Mammals found in the Castle area include black bear, grizzly bear, cougar, bobcat, Canada lynx, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, mule deer, white-tailed deer, fisher, wolverine and gray wolf. Some of these species, such as grizzly bears, have large home ranges and may utilize a variety of different habitats at different times of the year or during different stages of their life history.
In addition to these larger mammals, there are some lesser-known mammals such as the vagrant (or wandering) shrew that in Alberta are known only from the Castle area.

Several different bird species occur in the Castle area including harlequin duck, golden eagle, sharp-tailed grouse, prairie falcon, rufous hummingbird and golden-crowned kinglet. Some examples of amphibians reported for the Castle area include the western (boreal) toad, Columbia spotted frog and long-toed salamander. Lastly, some examples of fish species documented include mountain whitefish, burbot, bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.

Overall, the Castle area remains vital to support the diverse habitat needs for many species. The management of these species is complex and will require multi-agency and resource management collaboration.

2.2.5 Objectives	Strategy
Protect the diversity and abundance of fauna and their habitat.	Identify and protect habitats, including those for species that have special requirements.
	Monitor and ensure viable fish and wildlife populations in consultation with appropriate resource managers.
	Evaluate current and new recreational activities that disrupt wildlife or are potentially damaging to managing conservation values, and consider their potential inclusion or exclusion as an appropriate activity.
	Work with provincial and federal government agencies to develop species specific management strategies to address identified issues and concerns within the park and on adjacent lands.

2.3 Water Resources

The importance of protecting and maintaining headwaters is recognized in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. The Castle area headwaters are extremely important for wildlife, visitors, residents in the greater area, and anyone living downstream. Recent studies have highlighted the value of functioning headwaters as part of ecosystem services in providing clean drinkable water and protection from flooding events and erosion (Odell 2011).

Protecting the land is an integral part of protecting the water that ends up in wetlands, streams, rivers and lakes. To achieve this it is necessary to carefully manage any land use which may impact the terrestrial components that in turn affect the associated aquatic systems. Anything that alters snow accumulation, timing of melt, permeability of the ground, rate of surface flow, rate of underground flow, filtering of sediments, etc. can alter the quality and quantity of water in a watershed.

Some of the many watercourses that flow through the Castle area include the West Castle, South Castle and the Carbondale River drainages. Some streams in the Castle headwaters are designated as critical or key habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout; both species are listed as threatened federally and provincially. While some sections of waterbodies within the Castle headwaters are not currently designated as either critical or key habitat for listed fish species, these sections are still considered high priority watercourses. Many waterbodies have the potential, by using sound restoration efforts and careful management actions, to become streams in which populations of listed fish species can flourish. Managing habitat for aquatic species in the Castle area is vital to retaining its status as one of the richest and most popular sport-fishing regions in Alberta.

Riparian areas and wetlands have diverse functions and provide important ecosystem services. These areas are also important sites to First Nations as they can contain plants collected for medicinal and traditional uses. Functioning riparian areas and wetlands can filter sediments, provide sources of nutrient inputs for the aquatic environment, reduce the magnitude of flooding, contribute to natural regulation of downstream flow, contribute to better water quality (Cows and Fish, date unknown), provide wildlife habitat, and provide shade to cool water temperatures. Riparian areas and wetlands are sensitive to disturbance and can

Alberta Parks will continue to participate in and promote the Government of Alberta Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Programme and use the Clean – Drain – Dry slogan. The objective is to halt the spread of the following aquatic invasive species into Alberta water bodies: quagga mussel, zebra mussel and Eurasian water milfoil. More species may be added to this list in the future, depending on their level of threat. Prevention is critical, as once these species enter Alberta waterbodies it is almost impossible to eradicate them.

The program uses the following approaches: monitoring, education and awareness, communication, interception/rapid response, inspection, containment/quarantine, decontamination and enforcement. Managing for high-risk watercraft and other vectors is especially important.

easily be damaged (Jones et al. 1999). Preventative measures to minimize impacts will be incorporated into park management. This will be achieved through rigorous and science-based assessments of any land use or development proposed for the area that could potentially impact the integrity of headwaters. Riparian areas and wetlands have been identified as areas that will require additional surveys and research, and will be considered priorities for restoration.

Riparian areas and wetlands frequently have an abundance of wildlife and biodiversity (Parks Canada 2013) as they provide important habitat for a vast number of species. There are many riparian areas and wetlands in the Castle parks, and the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve is immediately adjacent. This ecological reserve is "a dynamic ecosystem that is strongly influenced by both groundwater and discharge from the West Castle River" (Hurkett 2009). This unique area provides important fish habitat at significant points within the life cycle for species such as bull trout (McLeod 2007). Some species that are often be found in riparian areas and wetlands in the Castle area include boreal chorus frog, long-toed salamander, moose, grizzly bear, mink, beaver and Columbia spotted frog.

2.3 Objectives	Strategy
Protect the headwaters of the Oldman River Watershed.	Identify priority surface water areas. Minimize disturbances to the land that may affect surface water quality and quantity.
Maintain and enhance water quality and quantity in waterbodies in the Castle area.	Consider the impacts of development, activities and park management strategies on water quality and quantity.
Protect and enhance the integrity of riparian and wetland ecosystems.	Establish setbacks and specific management direction to appropriate areas based on best practices, using tools like Wet Areas Mapping and species specific recovery strategies.

2.4 Vegetation Management

Vegetation management applies the principles of ecology, considering how the living and non-living components of the ecosystem interact, and how adjusting that ecosystem will affect the interactions of each component.

Where natural processes (e.g. fire) are permitted to occur, a valid approach is to allow native vegetation to grow, reproduce, die and decay naturally. However, when these natural processes are removed from the landscape, active vegetation management may be necessary to maintain or restore functioning ecosystems and biological diversity, to ensure visitor safety, to protect facilities or to facilitate approved activities. In all cases, vegetation management is undertaken using an ecologically sensitive approach.

Ecological restoration will take place, where required, with the intent of “assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed” (Society for Ecological Restoration 2004). For successful restoration, it is important to consider successional pathways and ecological trajectories.

Natural ecological processes include disturbances and disturbance regimes that permit the persistence and regeneration of native plant communities within a natural range of variability . These natural disturbance regimes include: fire, windfall, wildlife grazing, flooding, drought, avalanches/rock slides, insect infestation, forest pathogens, beaver activities and climatic variability. However, we must also consider how the natural disturbance regimes and corresponding natural range of variability will change with the current and future effects of climate change.

Ongoing science, research and monitoring (including cultural based monitoring) are critical to understanding the intricacies of managing for ecosystem objectives. Therefore, research priorities need to be developed in partnership with academic institutions, non-government organizations, First Nations, and other government departments and agencies.

Active vegetation management may be considered for:

- Maintaining or restoring natural processes (including natural disturbance regimes), special ecological communities and species of concern or their habitats.
- Enhancing public safety or security of core facilities.
- Combating noxious and prohibited noxious weeds, invasive species, insects, pests and forest pathogens.

Tools that may be used for vegetation management include grazing, haying, mowing, controlled burning, cutting/pruning, non-commercial timber harvesting, replanting, reclamation/restoration, bio-control and herbicide.

A Vegetation Management Strategy will be developed with the intent of managing for a natural mosaic of vegetation throughout the landscape. The strategy will be informed by an understanding of the natural range of variability and biodiversity indicators. It will also contain recommendations regarding invasive species, fire management and livestock grazing.

2.4 Objectives	Strategy
Develop a Vegetation Management Strategy with the primary objective of conserving natural biodiversity.	The Vegetation Management Strategy will include strategies and actions to manage a mosaic of vegetation across the landscape while protecting important habitat and species of concern. Key elements of the strategy will include: • A review of the natural range of variability, fire history and past human uses to develop a vision for the desired mosaic of vegetation. • Management recommendations to achieve the desired mosaic of vegetation that will improve the quality of habitat and forage. • Actions to control the risk of fire. • Actions to prioritize and address invasive species. • Identification of areas where firewood and Christmas tree harvesting is appropriate and sustainable. • Identification and prioritization of areas that require reclamation and/or restoration. • Recommended practices for the protection and/or enhancement of areas that contribute to the practicing of First Nations traditional uses. • Research priorities. • Identification of and recommendations to protect existing forestry permanent sample plots and genetic research areas. • Identification of partnerships with other government divisions, departments, organizations, academic institutions and First Nations to assist with implementing the recommended actions. • Permitting of firewood and Christmas tree harvesting to meet forest management objectives.

2.4.1 Invasive Species

Globally, invasive species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss (International Union for Conservation of Nature 2000). Invasive species degrade habitats, reduce health of ecosystems and environments, threaten native species and plant communities, limit recreational experience and satisfaction, and increase management costs.

The impacts of the Lost Creek Fire are partially located within Castle Provincial Park; this disturbance allowed a significant infestation of noxious and prohibited noxious weeds. To date there are 23 species of “listed weeds” that are monitored within the Castle area and this list does not include the invasive agronomic species. By far, the most prevalent species are ox-eye daisy and various non-native hawkweed species.

Under the Weed Control Act, the Government of Alberta regulates plants that are referred to as “weed” species. The related Weed Control Regulation (2010) lists two categories of weed species: Noxious and Prohibited Noxious. However, some species that are not listed also pose serious threats to the natural biodiversity and ecological integrity of the Castle area (e.g. invasive agronomics, invasive ornamentals and aquatic invasive plants). Prohibited Noxious weeds must be destroyed, eradicated and eliminated immediately. It is therefore necessary to focus on prevention, early detection, rapid response and eradication. There are more weeds listed on the Prohibited Noxious list than on the Noxious list, as many of these species have not yet established themselves in Alberta. Noxious weeds must be controlled and contained to prevent their spread and expansion (some tolerance). It is therefore necessary to focus on monitoring, containment, control and adaptive management.

By using an integrated ecosystem approach, Alberta Parks strives to understand threats and vectors, prevent introduction, halt spread, initiate containment and control or eradicate invasive plant species that have the potential to negatively impact the Castle area. Prevention of invasive species establishment and spread is an ongoing part of all park operations and developments, including its specific inclusion in the environmental review process.

In addition, management and control of invasive forest insect pests and forest pathogens may be required, especially when they are highly infectious and deadly to native trees. Alberta Parks will co-operate with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, who are the lead on invasive forest insect and pathogen pests.

2.4.1 Objectives	Strategy
Manage and monitor invasive species, insect and pathogen infestations according to Government of Alberta policies, legislation and best practices.	Incorporate invasive species management into the Vegetation Management Strategy. Consider closing recreational trails during period of potentially high seed transmission. Employ Integrated Weed Management (IWM) – a process that is both proactive and reactive and employs a variety of options to manage invasive plants. Detect and monitor known invasive plant populations, and monitor the effectiveness of various control methods and techniques, adapting to improve future methods. Upon detection of new invasive plant species, mobilize resources rapidly to contain or eradicate the invasion. Employ approved bio-control options where possible. As needed and appropriate, employ ecologically-appropriate herbicides, mowing, grazing, haying, pulling and digging to control invasive plant species. Help to ensure containment of invasive species by controlling their spread along roads and ditches. Ensure equestrian users only bring in feed that is processed (e.g. pellets, oats, etc.) or certified weed-free hay. Horse quarantines may be considered. Educate the public that key transmission vectors for invasive species include vehicles, trailers, OHVs, boats and other recreational equipment. Coordinate a communication and education strategy to inform, inspire and create community stewardship as part of invasive-plant management (e.g. Play-Clean-Go campaign, Alberta Invasive Species Council). Actively engage with other federal and provincial government agencies, NGOs, municipalities/counties, partners, neighbours, co-operative weed working groups and stakeholders to manage invasive species when the situation spans across multiple jurisdictions.

2.4.2 Fire

The number of hectares burned by wildland fires in the southern Canadian Rocky Mountains has declined precipitously over the last century, a phenomenon that is without precedent in the historic record (Hawkes 1979, Tande 1979, White 1985, Van Wagner et al. 2006). This abrupt change in fire frequency is attributed to fire control and other human influences.

There is growing concern that low fire frequency is having profound effects on ecosystems and linked social-ecological systems (Day 1972, Parks Canada 2004, Turner 2010). Low fire frequency may alter the structure and composition of vegetation communities by increasing amounts of older, closed-canopied conifer forest, thereby reducing areas of young seral stage vegetation, resulting in low aspen regeneration and the disappearance of grassland and shrub communities (Achuff et al. 1996, Rhemtulla et al. 2002, Gallant et al. 2003, Chavardes and Daniels 2016). Loss of vegetation heterogeneity may reduce species habitat and diversity, and older and less age-diverse forests may lack resilience to insect outbreaks, disease, drought and changing climate (Keane et al. 2002, Perry et al. 2011). Increased forest continuity and changes in fuel structure may make montane ecosystems more vulnerable to severe and extensive fires with greater potential for crown fires (Van Wagner 1977, Arno et al. 2000).

The preferred approach for management of vegetation in Alberta's protected areas is to allow natural processes to shape native vegetation without intervention (Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Parks Division 2009). This approach maintains healthy and more naturally resilient ecosystems. However, it is recognized that passive management is not always possible and that active vegetation management is sometimes necessary, especially if restoration efforts are required to return a human-altered ecosystem to a native state. The current policy of suppressing all wildfires is one example of how vegetation is actively managed. Small to medium scale prescribed burns may be considered, where appropriate and feasible, to re-introduce the natural disturbance of fire onto the landscape. Vegetation management is generally acceptable in the Alberta Parks system when required for ecosystem protection, habitat restoration, visitor safety, facility protection or to facilitate approved activities. Implementation of FireSmart principles is an important component of managing vegetation to reduce risks to facilities and adjacent private lands.

2.4.2 Objectives	Strategy
Explore the use of fire as a vegetation management strategy.	Wildland fire management will be incorporated into the Vegetation Management Strategy. Historic forest and grassland cover will be considered as a desired outcome. Given the historic use of fire by First Nations, the TLU/TEK information will be used in the development of any fire management activities. First Nations will be engaged in the planning phases of any prescribed burning. Address how naturally occurring forest fires are managed in the fire management section of the Vegetation Management Strategy. Identify fire research priorities in the Vegetation Management Strategy. Incorporate FireSmart principles on both a landscape and site level. Landscape level activities will be specified in the Vegetation Management Strategy; site level activities will be addressed in conjunction with capital improvements. Use prescribed burning as a vegetation management tool where appropriate, feasible and safe.

2.4.3 Grazing

Grazing by native ungulates, including bison and elk, has influenced the ecosystem in the Castle area. As bison disappeared from the landscape in the late 1880s, cattle were introduced by European settlers, primarily through summer grazing, which has shaped the present composition of vegetation. The primary purpose for continued grazing is to contribute to achieving the desired mosaic of vegetation that will be identified through the Vegetation Management Strategy. Existing grazing allotments and preference quotas that have been previously established for the Castle area will be honoured.

The livestock grazing opportunity in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park contributes to the viability of ranches in the region, and supports a less fragmented ecosystem. Range management has improved over the past century and continued research that supports the enhancement of livestock grazing and range management practices contributes to the vegetation available for both cattle and wildlife. Livestock grazing can also be incorporated into vegetation management strategies aimed at controlling invasive or non-native plants and can assist in maintaining grassland ecosystems that are at risk of forest encroachment.

Grazing may impact recreation experiences, at times damaging or precluding the use of natural tread and singletrack mountain bike trails. Grazing can be compatible with some forms of recreation (e.g. equestrian use); however, the presence of cattle may diminish mountain biking, hiking and walking experiences.

Grazing allotments in the Castle parks are managed through forage-based preference quotas. Permits that range from one to ten years, according to stewardship and resulting rangeland health, are then issued allowing the use of this forage. The individuals and stock associations that operate in these parks are part of the Rocky Mountain Forest Range Association, and one of the key tasks they perform is the coordination of independent range vegetation inventories. These assessments are key drivers for adjusting range management strategies that maintain or improve range and riparian health. Best practices to further improve range health, riparian health, cattle distribution and water quality are needed in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park to ensure the viability of the grazing allotments and the habitat required for native species, including species at risk.

The management of grazing requires that the practices are aligned with achieving the overall conservation and recreation intent for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Further, range management activities that improve natural biodiversity, minimize or eliminate disturbance of habitat, minimize or eliminate cattle from the Alpine Subregion, reduce cattle access to sensitive riparian areas and water sources, and reduce conflicts with recreational users are essential to sustaining cattle grazing in the protected areas.

2.3.4 Objectives	Strategy
Maintain livestock grazing as a legitimate and valued activity within the Castle parks using Alberta Environment and Parks Rangelands Approval Team for oversight of this resource use.	Continue livestock grazing in both Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Implement a Memorandum of Agreement to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Rangeland Agrologist within the Castle parks to ensure that appropriate communication and collaboration occurs with management of other resources within these designations. The Rangeland Agrologist will be the primary point of contact for allotment holders and will maintain responsibility for daily operations of the Forest Reserve Grazing Allotments. Continue to administer and manage grazing allotments within the Castle Area under the Forest Reserves Act and Regulation. The rights granted under the act and regulation will remain, including the right to transfer preference quotas. Honour existing Forest Reserve grazing permits and preference quotas. The system and procedures will be consistent and seamless with those applied in the rest of the Forest Reserve. The Rangeland Agrologist will continue to oversee the administration and operational management of livestock grazing in the Castle Parks. This will include the assessment, allocation and permitting of sustainable forage use within each grazing allotment. Grazing disposition holders will continue to be involved in the development of Range Management plans, working with the Rangeland Agrologist to ensure delivery rangeland objectives in the Castle Area is operationally feasible. Should additional grazing be required for vegetation management or other ecological purposes, additional quotas will be offered c to the existing allotment holders. Include grazing disposition holders in the development of plans and strategies for infrastructure or other changes on the landscape, as per Section 21 of the Forest Reserves Regulation. Unless required for vegetation management purposes, cattle will be the only domestic livestock permitted.

2.3.4 Objectives	Strategy
Enhanced conservation and management of native grasslands will be achieved through range management practices that support the overall conservation intent for both Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.	Review and update existing range management plans and strategies and ensure they are consistent with meeting the values of the protected areas. Range management plans and strategies will be informed by range and riparian health assessments, conservation objectives for critical habitat, protection of critical fish habitat and the vegetation management strategy. Sustain and protect foothills fescue, held under Protective Notation, by ensuring that all uses adhere to AER guideline #7. Apply best management practices to achieve appropriate and successful integration with other resource uses. Review riparian health data and current range management practices with respect to riparian areas. Explore ways to further protect water quality and fish habitat, continuing to collaborate and build on the partnership with Cows and Fish. Apply best management practices to minimize impacts of livestock grazing in sensitive sites (e.g. riparian areas and alpine sites). Initial priorities for implementation will be in critical habitat areas for westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout and harlequin ducks. Encourage and support new strategies and innovations to effectively manage livestock. Identify mechanisms to re-establish native grasslands as a result of forest encroachment and include these in the vegetation management strategy (see Section 2.6.1 and 2.6.2). This may also include the re-introduction of controlled burns to enhance forage availability for both wildlife and cattle. Develop zoning within the parks in consultation with grazing disposition holders and other stakeholders. Through this process, areas of high recreation use will be identified and measures may be taken to limit or restrict livestock access to these areas. Request additional government resources to help ensure the effective management of livestock grazing in the park, specifically including additional field presence and resources to develop and maintain infrastructure to manage livestock distribution. Develop a communication strategy to communicate the value of livestock grazing within the Castle area to park visitors. Alberta Environment and Parks will monitor the efficacy of grazing in achieving overall conservation objectives. Minimize user conflicts by implementing infrastructure improvements and best practices. Explore and implement practices to reduce the impact from grazing in the alpine region, the upper elevations of the sub-alpine and other sensitive areas identified for recovery, while maintaining preference quotas. Develop specific practices and implementation strategies in collaboration with grazing disposition holders and government rangeland agrologists.

2.5 Climate Change

Climate change is recognized as a critical threat to biodiversity that impacts ecosystems and individual species. Parks and protected areas play important roles in climate change strategy. Some of these roles include protection of ecosystems services, protection of habitat to provide climate refuge for plants and animals, and increasing resiliency of ecosystems.

Some of the ecosystem services provided by the Castle area include headwater protection, climate regulation, and carbon sequestration.

2.5 Objectives	Strategy
Align management practices with provincial climate change strategies.	Reduce environmental impacts by incorporating sustainable practices across all aspects of park operations and developments. Where practical and appropriate, incorporate energy efficiency and green building design principles. Develop pathways and trail to encourage non-motorized travel within the parks.
Incorporate recent and future climate change modelling and data into management decisions.	Analyze and strategically manage the long-term viability of recreational activities and developments considering changes in climate and environmental factors related to the activity (e.g. impacts of reduced snowfall on ski hill, etc.). Develop public safety plans that address severe weather events (see Section 6.11). Evaluate and strategically manage connectivity of habitat, linear disturbance and recreation use to provide climate refugia for species (minimize fragmentation to allow species movement as climate changes).
To develop infrastructure, facilities and programs that consider and that are resilient to changes in climate, including severe weather events.	Review existing facility location considering severe weather events; mitigate or relocate as appropriate. Design public recreation opportunities considering the potential impacts of severe weather events. Design and locate new developments in areas that will be less likely to be impacted or are resilient enough to withstand severe weather events. .

2.6 Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is a fragile, non-renewable resource that must be protected to maintain its authenticity. Cultural heritage is composed of both tangible and intangible elements that define human groups and their interactions within a landscape. For the Castle area, it can be defined through a combination of traditional uses of the natural landscape and built environment, oral histories and the artifacts that represent human activities practiced in earlier times. Preservation of cultural heritage is essential for providing the context to understanding human diversity, fostering acceptance of other people and practices and ensuring that future generations may benefit from the knowledge of the past and present.

Within Alberta, there are two approaches to the protection of cultural heritage. Since 1973, the Historical Resources Act has provided legislation that results in the preservation, study, interpretation and promotion of the appreciation of historic resources. Under the Act "historic resources" are the tangible expressions of heritage. They include sites, structures and objects that are valued for their "… palaeontological, archaeological, prehistoric, historic, cultural, natural, scientific or aesthetic interest" (Historical Resources Act RSA 2000).

The intangible expressions of cultural heritage are based on the stories, traditions and beliefs that are shaped by the land and embedded in the identities of generations of local Indigenous communities. Sometimes referred to as "living heritage," it is represented in the practices and customs of living groups of people, the language they speak and the skills they have acquired from living on the land. Although expression of some elements of this intangible heritage are represented in traditional land use sites, there are many other aspects that are transitory, making them difficult to preserve. This intangible quality, and its close connection with community identity in the Castle area, makes it important to employ a diverse range of tools to protect and preserve cultural values.

2.6.1 Cultural Heritage and Historic Resources

The effective protection of historic resources requires preservation at two levels: the preservation of the physical remains (e.g. artifacts, structures, residues) and the preservation of site contexts. The physical remains provide the direct evidence of human activities within a landscape, the time periods during which they take place and the cultural affiliations of the people practicing them. It is the contextual information, however, that gives meaning to these physical remains by showing the interconnected relationships they have on a site, regional or national level.

In addition to the Historical Resources Act (RSA 2000), the tools used to protect historic resources in Alberta include: databases of known archaeological and historic sites (the Archaeological Sites Inventory and the Heritage Survey databases); Alberta Culture and Tourism's referral-review and Historic Resources Impact Assessment processes (to understand the relationship between historic resources and potential development impacts); and, tools to assist with project planning, such as the Listing of Historic Resources and Historic Resource Baseline Assessments. For the Castle area, initial planning will incorporate existing historic resource database information as well as information gained through the completion of a Historic Resources Baseline Assessment. Using both desktop and field-derived data, an understanding will be developed regarding the historic resource potential of the Castle area, the duration of human occupation in the area and the ways the landscape supported the development of local lifestyles and cultural adaptations during both the pre-contact and historic periods.

To date, the Castle area is known to have 92 archaeological sites, of which 75% represent the pre-contact period of Indigenous occupation. The sites represent activities as diverse as small scale tool-making and camping locations, to more industrial historic mining and logging sites. A notable feature of the sites is that nearly 30% of those currently known in the Castle area represent locations and features of spiritual importance, both during the pre-contact and historic periods. It is the cultural themes represented in these sites, as well as the sites that will be identified during the Historic Resources Baseline Assessment, that will provide the basis for developing management strategies for the protection of historic resources within the Castle area.

A current listing of Historical Resources in the Castle area can be found on the Alberta Culture and Tourism website.

2.6.1 Objectives	Strategy
Identify and protect historic resources	Complete a Historic Resources Impact Assessment baseline study.
	Work with the Historic Resources Management Branch to define strategies for the protection of historic resources.
	Develop management intent statements for historic sites of significance.
	Identify historic resources that may provide opportunities for scientific research and public education.

2.6.2 Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Land Use

Fieldwork was undertaken with participating Treaty 7 First Nations during the summer and fall of 2016. Interested Treaty 6 First Nations that are a part of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan First Nations table will be engaged to conduct traditional use fieldwork during the summer of 2017.

Spatial data collected will be mapped and provided back to the respective First Nations and used during the consultations with First Nations throughout the planning process. In addition, non-spatial information on cultural landscapes will be recorded and used to facilitate an understanding of cultural and ceremonial uses of the land to assist in land management and cultural awareness.

Traditional land use fieldwork is conducted with the objective of locating sites and areas of cultural and traditional ecological uses that are significant to Indigenous people. The Castle area is known as an important cultural landscape to many First Nations.

Through traditional land use fieldwork with participating First Nations, sites are identified as significant. These sites include locations for spiritual or ceremonial practices, sites for harvesting of medicinal plants, burial grounds and areas used for the exercise of Treaty rights, such as hunting. Once such sites are recorded, these areas can be managed to minimize and avoid negative impacts. In addition, these sites will be preserved and/or protected for their continued traditional use by First Nations.

Broader areas such as headwaters and geographic features like mountains are integral to Indigenous oral histories and used for the transmission and sharing of cultural knowledge. These places can be areas used by Elders and traditional knowledge keepers to educate youth about their culture, language and history. In addition, traditional place names for geographic features can enrich knowledge and awareness for Indigenous and non-indigenous people on the deep historic and cultural connections First Nations have with the landscape.

2.6.2 Objectives	Strategy
Protect or enhance sites identified as important for First Nations traditional uses.	Continue to work with First Nations to collect, protect and appropriately curate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Land Use information, respecting confidentiality and ensuring security. Where appropriate, consider and implement zoning and buffering to protect traditional use sites and sites of cultural significance. Provide support and communicate with First Nations regarding their use of traditional sites.

2.7 Adjacent Land Use and Development

Despite managing parks within clear boundaries and under dedicated legislation, management does not occur in isolation of adjacent areas as decisions made within the parks may have potential consequences for adjacent lands. Consequences may include the shifting of recreation pressures and activities, development of visitor or tourism infrastructure and changes in species densities and wildlife movements. Conversely, the management of adjacent lands can influence biological and human dimensions of the parks as regional land management decisions and associated outcomes may transcend park boundaries.

Alberta Parks continues to partner with First Nations and local and regional stakeholders on initiatives relevant to conservation, recreation and tourism, municipal development and agriculture, through collaborations with non-governmental organizations and land trusts, universities and researchers, industry groups, recreational groups and a range of other stakeholders. Alberta Parks also maintains close working relationships with internal government partners who are responsible for various natural resources and the planning and management of adjacent public lands. This helps to ensure that decisions in the parks that may affect its neighbours are transparent and effectively communicated.

2.7 Objectives	Strategy
Encourage conservation efforts and initiatives on adjacent public and private lands that optimize conservation practices and enhance wildlife corridors and habitat.	Continue to participate in the following initiatives: • Highway 3 connectivity. • Southwest Area Invasive Species Team. • South West Alberta Cooperative Weed Management Area. Participate in regional land-planning initiatives (e.g. Crown of Continent, Waterton Biosphere, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative). Participate in new partnerships as opportunities arise.

3

First Nations

The Indigenous Peoples of North America have had a spiritual, practical and personal connection to this land since time immemorial. In the past and present First Nations hunt, gather food and medicines, collect materials for traditional uses and conduct ceremonies in the area. Alberta Parks, with the assistance of other Government of Alberta departments, has worked with, and will continue to work with First Nations to identify sites where First Nations exercise treaty rights and traditional uses within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

First Nations values include the respectful use of natural resources in consideration of future generations, the protection of areas for solitude and reflection, and care and respect for the land, plants and animals. These values were identified in collaboration with First Nations. They are consistent with the overall vision and conservation intent for the Castle area, and take a holistic approach that is compatible with scientific approaches to ecology, conservation and natural resource management. These values naturally align with a desirable state for the Castle area that is conducive to supporting low-impact wilderness experiences for all visitors.

In accordance with applicable government policy, Alberta Parks will continue to consult with First Nations on decisions that may affect the continued exercise of constitutionally protected rights in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

The Blackfoot Confederacy, known as the Siksikaitsittapi, includes the tribes of the Piikani, Kainai (Blood) and Siksika. The Piikani and Blood tribes reside in direct proximity to the Castle area, so ongoing communication and cooperation with them is of great importance.

The Blackfoot Confederacy Nations and other First Nations have long identified with and used the territory that includes Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Collaboration with First Nations can contribute to the development of meaningful educational and recreational opportunities for visitors, including the use of First Nations names for sites, and the development of interpretive materials and experiences that allow visitors to understand and appreciate First Nations cultures. Ongoing collaboration includes exploring economic opportunities for Indigenous people within or adjacent to the parks.

Respecting First Nations constitutionally protected rights and their traditional use activities requires commitment to understanding First Nations needs and practices, and to providing a welcoming environment where their rights and traditional use activities can be practiced. This requires education of field staff, land managers and the public through active cultural awareness education programs. It also requires the development of relationships and mechanisms to facilitate communication and ensure consistency of the processes that facilitate First Nations access. Alberta Parks is committed to working with First Nations to identify and resolve issues as they arise. The collection of Traditional Land Use information and Traditional Ecological Knowledge will continue, and will be used to assist in the management of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park now and in the future.

The following practices have been identified as important and relevant to the specific interest of First Nations:

- Acknowledgement of First Nations rights and traditional use activities.
- Cultural awareness education of non-Indigenous people, including land managers, locals and visitors.
- Provision of access to practice constitutionally protected rights and traditional use activities, including:
    - Hunting, trapping and fishing for food.
    - Gathering of food and medicine.
    - Conducting ceremonies.
    - Collecting of materials for ceremonial, cultural and artistic purposes (e.g. teepee poles, paint).
    - Indigenous naming of natural and cultural features and sites.
    - Protection of ceremonial sites and medicinal plant localities.
    - Participation in future park planning.
    - Exploration of economic opportunities for Indigenous people.

To inform operations and development, Alberta Parks is dedicated to establishing an open and ongoing conversation with First Nations, maintaining a spirit of collaboration on issues of mutual interest, and drawing on the rich cultural, ecological and traditional land use knowledge and stewardship practices of Indigenous communities.

3.0 Objectives	Strategy
Develop an effective and practical model for the cooperative management of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.	Establish a collaborative process with First Nations to review the implementation of this management plan. Explore opportunities to establish ongoing cooperative management approaches with First Nations to address issues of park management and development.
Identify opportunities to recognize and share First Nations culture and history.	Work with First Nations to develop and deliver programs and services as part of the visitor experience.
Develop cultural sensitivity and awareness training for Provincial Park staff.	Deliver cultural awareness and sensitivity training, with First Nations involvement, through annual training of permanent and seasonal staff. Encourage First Nations cultural events that are accessible to local communities and build relationships and appreciation. Work with First Nations to develop a landmark and offering site, including interpretive materials, to promote cross-cultural awareness and share cultural experiences with non-indigenous people.
Protect First Nations ceremonial and cultural sites.	Utilize Historic Resource Impact Assessments and Traditional Ecological Knowledge/ Traditional Land Use studies to protect sites and, where appropriate, apply buffers. Where Traditional Ecological Knowledge/Traditional Land Use information is not available, consult First Nations on Provincial Park infrastructure activities that significantly expand beyond the existing footprint. Explore funding opportunities to continue with collection of traditional ecological knowledge and land use information.
Consult First Nations when vegetation management activities are proposed that may affect traditional use activities.	Include First Nations in the development and review of the Vegetation Management Strategy. Provide opportunities for First Nations to collect medicinal plants and other traditional or ceremonial materials sometime prior to a prescribed burn being conducted or other tools being considered to enhance or restore habitat and native vegetation. Develop community-based monitoring process or other research methodologies to determine if the vegetation management was effective and if medicinal and other plants used for traditional purposes thrive post treatment.
Ensure the protection of traditional use sites where materials for cultural, ceremonial and historical practices are located.	Identify important traditional use sites through Traditional Ecological Knowledge/ Traditional Land Use studies, and allow First Nations access to collect traditional materials (e.g. teepee poles, medicinal plants, materials for ceremonies or artistic expression, etc.). Apply appropriate measures, such as mitigation or avoidance, to protect traditional use sites.

3.0 Objectives	Strategy
Enable access to traditional use sites (subject to applicable provincial legislation).	Within the confines of public safety and conservation management, Alberta Parks staff will develop a mechanism with First Nations to provide access. In collaboration with First Nations, identify sites for specific traditional use activities or purposes. However, this does not limit the ability for First Nations to practice traditional use activities throughout the Castle parks (where permitted).
Identify and name natural, cultural and historic site or features using Indigenous names.	Prepare a First Nations Naming Strategy with First Nations Elders for key natural, cultural and historical sites or features within the Castle Parks.
Ensure that First Nations can hunt, fish and trap for food in both Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Parks (subject to applicable provincial legislation).	Identify key areas where access is required. Educate staff and the public about First Nations constitutionally protected rights and traditional-use activities. Implement appropriate safety measures to ensure visitor safety. Work with First Nations to identify types of access required to facilitate hunting and trapping for food.
Protect and/or enhance areas that are important for First Nations hunting, fishing and trapping for food.	Use Traditional Ecological Knowledge/Traditional Land Use studies to identify areas sensitive to recreational development and or other park activities such as grazing, and incorporate strategies to minimize disturbance or enhance vegetation.
Explore opportunities for First Nations to participate in Castle park operational activities.	Review strategies for employment utilized in other provincial parks and work with First Nations to develop similar opportunities in the Castle Parks. Explore tourism development opportunities with First Nations.

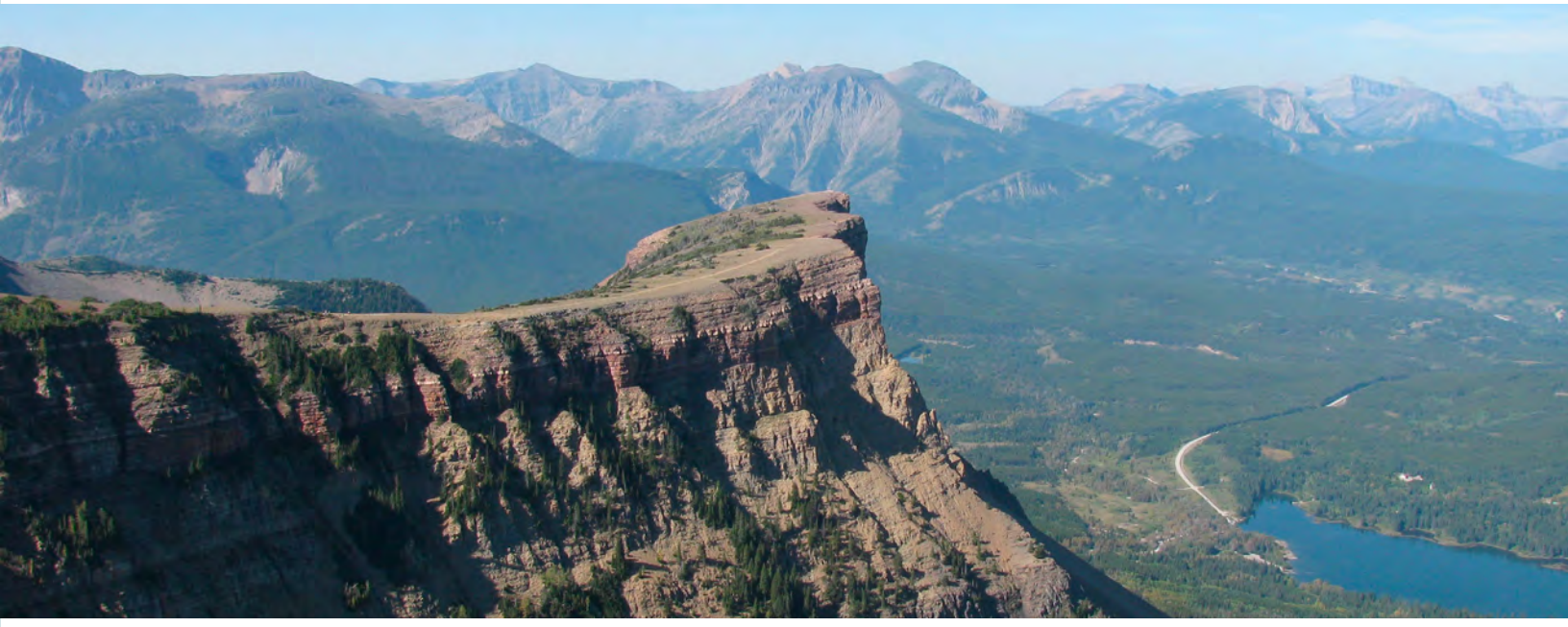
4

Tourism and Community

Alberta's Provincial Parks inspire people to appreciate, discover and protect their natural environment. They also play a major role in regional, provincial and international tourism. Parks can contribute significantly to the economic prosperity and quality of life of local communities and Alberta. As a cornerstone of some regional economies, parks generate significant and stable employment and contribute to economic diversification and development. In 2013, visitors to Alberta's Provincial Parks, both multi-day and day visitors, contributed $565 million to Alberta's economy (Econometrics Research limited 2015).

To ensure the ongoing success of Alberta's Provincial Parks, development of experiences and facilities within the Castle area must take into consideration current demand and potential tourism markets, the role the parks may play within a larger set of tourism opportunities, and the impact tourism activities can have on the cultural and natural values of the area.

In addition, meaningful ongoing engagement with local communities, other tourism attractions and tourism marketing and development organizations is critical to ensure the appropriate and successful development of tourism opportunities. The development and enhancement of these tourism opportunities must be balanced with the needs of local communities, minimizing negative impacts and maximizing social and economic benefits.



4.1 Park Facilities and Infrastructure

Park facilities and infrastructure within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will be developed to achieve conservation objectives, while providing rewarding recreational and tourism experiences for visitors. Government of Alberta will work with local municipalities to support regional economic development opportunities. Wherever possible, facilities will be located inside the facility zone of the Provincial Park and located along existing major roadways. Additionally, efficiency in design will be emphasized to meet the array of visitor and staff needs.

To facilitate effective communication with visitors, unstaffed information and wayfinding kiosks located at key entry points and staging areas will be improved. The development of a visitor centre or staffed information booth will be considered along the main roadway south of Beaver Mines. Other infrastructure developments, such as trailheads, washrooms, day-use areas and campgrounds will be improved as part of an overall Facilities Development Plan.

Design and development of facilities will be practical, sustainable and complementary to the landscape aesthetic. The use of best practices will achieve energy efficient buildings with minimal geographic and environmental footprints, and minimal waste production. In addition, facilities will be developed from a visitor-centric orientation, considering the various needs of multiple users throughout the seasons.

Facility development within the Wildland Provincial Park will be minimal, largely focusing on staging areas for backcountry use. As within the Provincial Park, it is important to develop infrastructure to assist in the communication of critical information, to ensure visitor safety and the protection of the natural and cultural values.

4.1 Objectives	Strategy
Ensure that visitor facilities provide a wide range of services that support nature-based recreation and tourism and are consistent with the conservation objectives of the park.	Develop a Capital Investment Plan, including the campground revitalization strategy, to support existing and emerging recreation activities and visitor needs. Consider input from permit holders, First Nations, and stakeholders groups in plan development. Locate and design facilities and infrastructure to optimize visitor experience while avoiding user conflicts. As recreation activities evolve, supporting infrastructure requires change over time. Implement a process for reviewing and approving facility developments based on conservation objectives, zoning, public safety and current and emerging tourism needs. Where possible, develop infrastructure only within designated facility zones. Limit facility development to structures that have a small footprint and limited need for municipal-type utilities and services. Maintain the fescue grasslands community by applying the Foothills Fescue Grassland Principles for Minimizing Disturbance and Principles for Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Grasslands. Continue to plan and implement: • Rustic group campsites • Blackfoot offering site • Trail and road improvements • Wayfinding and regulatory signage
Develop infrastructure that will encourage and support multi-day visits and that is complementary to opportunities in the region.	Engage with recreation and tourism partners to develop a regional tourism strategy to help support and encourage multi-day visits. In collaboration with Alberta Tourism, utilize recreation surveys to inform the suite of activities and infrastructure that is desired.
Provide accessible infrastructure to facilitate experiences for all park users.	Apply Provincial Inclusion Strategy as outlined in Plan for Parks and the Push to Open program. Review all infrastructure developments in the Castle parks from an accessibility perspective, and where possible, provide accessible opportunities. Develop a fully accessible pathway around Bathing Lake, including accessible fishing platforms. Explore opportunities to develop access for persons with limited mobility, including the elderly, to reach select backcountry locations in Castle Provincial Park, using trails or roads specified for that purpose. Enhance accessibility to wilderness areas by making improvements to the South Castle Road to Grizzly Lake trailhead, Lynx Creek Road to the snowmobile shelter and the road adjacent to the Carbondale River to the Wildland Provincial Park Boundary.
Ensure access to the Castle parks from the north (Crowsnest Pass) and from the east (Beaver Mines and Pincher Creek)	Maintain key road access into the Castle parks along the Adanac and Sartoris roads. Maintain key road access into the Castle parks along Highway 774. Work with Alberta Transportation and municipalities to upgrade main access roads.

4.2 Tourism Planning, Services and Facilities

Tourism opportunities within the Castle area have significant and sustainable economic benefits for local communities, First Nations, businesses and the province. The development of tourism opportunities will be planned and coordinated in conjunction with local historic sites, communities, businesses and tourism development and planning organizations.

Adjacent to the parks, a suite of complementary tourism facilities, services and opportunities that encourage multi-day visits in the region will bring additional economic benefit in the form of demand for accommodations, food, fuel and other support services.

The participation of private operators and small businesses in the local tourism economy will be encouraged. Castle Mountain Resort and the Beaver Mines General Store will be key partners in ongoing tourism development. The Castle parks will be major tourist attractions for the region. Secondary services outside of the parks, and the facilitation of experiences within the parks, can be provided by the private sector, government and/or non-government organizations.

A focus on responsible, sustainable, low-impact, wilderness-based tourism experiences (e.g. bird-watching, hiking, hunting) means that the conservation of natural and cultural values within the parks will not conflict with recreational demands, but rather serve as a critical component of their success. In addition to the health and environmental benefits of the conservation of nature, the potential long-term sustainable economic benefits are significant.

4.2 Objectives	Strategy
Support the creation of mutually beneficial and complementary tourism facilities, services and development opportunities within the Castle region.	Participate in the development of the Regional Tourism Strategy. Support tourism literacy education to help communicate the benefits of tourism for local economies and quality of life. Encourage the development of tourism activities and services in adjacent municipalities. Explore opportunities with adjacent municipalities to develop infrastructure that will service camping and day-use recreation (e.g. dump stations, recreation based businesses, potable water).
Support local, regional and provincial tourism developments that will encourage multi-day stays within the region.	Track annual visitation to Castle parks and set targets for growth, considering recreational carrying capacities, available facilities and services, and capacity of local tourism businesses. Work with local communities and businesses to measure, meet and potentially grow demand for camping and fixed-roof accommodations. Cooperate with local communities, First Nations, businesses and tourism-related organizations to create a robust suite of regional tourism opportunities that are complementary and reduce competition between various providers. Work with Castle Mountain Resort and Castle Mountain Community Association to support their investment in long-term, sustainable infrastructure through coordinated infrastructure planning and development, including trail connections, shared trails and shared staging areas.

4.3 Community Engagement

Community engagement is highly valued by Alberta Parks. It is required for local support of the parks and for achieving shared objectives. As such, the integration of local perspectives in park planning and operations will be ongoing.

Recognizing the past and current relationship of local individuals and communities to the landscapes and ecosystems of the Castle area is an important starting point. As the parks evolve and management strategies are implemented, close-working relationships with local communities and First Nations will be established and maintained.

Fostering a sense of community stewardship is a high priority and can be achieved by inviting local individuals and groups to participate in park activities and planning processes. Provincial Parks located in rural areas often provide volunteer and employment opportunities that can significantly contribute to building employment skills for individuals, while also bringing local knowledge into the parks. Having Alberta Parks staff participate in local events, meetings and community planning also helps establish important relationships.

As many issues faced by Alberta Parks will also affect local communities, regular and transparent communication is required. Both formal and informal channels of communication will be used as an ongoing source of community engagement to help guide and improve park operations and developments.

4.3 Objectives	Strategy
Foster a sense of community stewardship for the Castle area among local communities and encourage community engagement.	Assess appropriate and desired levels of community involvement. Provide opportunities to community members for meaningful engagement within the Castle parks. Encourage locals to seek employment and/or volunteer opportunities within the Castle parks.
Engage in local communities.	Respond to requests from organizations and groups, and, if appropriate, provide information, representation and other forms of support. Where possible and appropriate, take an active role in local events, meetings, community activities and community initiatives.
Maintain open and productive dialogue with local communities regarding the management of the Castle area.	Conduct regular community engagement activities to communicate and discuss issues of park management in a transparent and responsive manner. Consider local perspectives and impacts to communities in decisions related to the operations and development of the Castle parks. Where appropriate, consider formal agreements with organizations (e.g. The Alpine Club of Canada, Syncline Castle Trails Association, Castle Crown Wilderness Association, Grazing Associations) to achieve objectives related to specific projects (e.g. hut-to-hut system, trail maintenance) or to address specific operational challenges (e.g. stewardship activities).

5

Visitor Services

Visitor experience within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park is supported by a suite of visitor services that have a direct interface with park visitors. These services are largely focused on providing information, education, facilitation of experiences, and the means to tell “the story” of the parks.

Through annual and long-term planning, Alberta Parks employ a variety of tools to provide visitors with accurate information and support in their pursuit of outdoor activities, learning and inspiration. The visitor experience moves through stages of information gathering, imagining a visit, planning a visit, visiting the park and participating in experiences, and the memory and extension of the experience after the visitor has left the park. Throughout this cycle, Alberta Parks strives to provide services that will help visitors maximize their experience and conduct themselves responsibly in a protected place.

The Castle area features rugged peaks, lush valleys, clear cold lakes and streams; it is a veritable playground for outdoor enthusiasts and a living laboratory for researchers and students. This rugged landscape can present hazards to visitors, so information and interpretive services are provided to assist visitors in experiencing the outdoors in a safe and respectful manner. These services may be in the form of face-to-face information and interpretation and non-personal communications (e.g. signs, brochures, websites).

5.1 Experience Planning and Design

Planning the visitor's experience includes understanding current and potential visitors, communicating with them effectively before their arrival and providing them with information and services within the parks to facilitate a safe and enjoyable visit. This is accomplished by a variety of means, which, if planned well, create multiple levels of support for all types of visitors.

With its varied and complex landscape and opportunities, the Castle area has the potential to support many different outdoor experiences. Planning experiences that are compatible with conservation objectives and with each other will be a major focus. Whether experiences are facilitated directly by park staff, are self-guided or employ a private, non-profit, NGO or volunteer guide, the interplay of these experiences and their impact on the effective management of the parks will be paramount.

Cooperation with First Nations, and other Indigenous Peoples will be built into experience planning processes. Where appropriate and desired, First Nations names, sites and cultural information will be incorporated into the visitor experience.

Planning high-quality visitor experiences requires the consideration and understanding of visitor needs on a variety of levels. There are basic needs for safety and comfort, which includes safe drinking water, accurate wayfinding and emergency services. From these basics, needs range all the way up to the visitor's opportunity to interface with nature to improve physical, mental and emotional health. Experience planning for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will take a holistic approach to developing a set of facilities and services that complement each other, and contribute to the sustainable conservation of the parks' natural and cultural values.

5.1 Objectives	Strategy
Develop a Visitor Services Plan.	Determine the appropriate and most effective suite of visitor services for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, considering: • How visitor services can support the management objectives. • The history of the area. • The natural and cultural values and features. • The needs, interests and expectations of current and future visitors. • The role of First Nations traditional cultural practices and ecological knowledge. • Issues of public safety.
Take an active role in developing, enhancing and managing visitor experiences in the park.	Identify existing and new visitor experiences that are compatible with each other and consistent with the natural values and management objectives for the parks. Develop a strategy for facilitating experiences that will consider how they will be integrated into overall park management. Develop experiences that will encourage multi-day visits within the parks that are complementary to the visitor opportunities in the region. Establish a Blackfoot offering site and interpretation materials as identified through the Traditional Ecological Knowledge/Traditional Land Use study. Work with First Nations, Métis and local communities to identify and interpret cultural sites, if desired.

5.2 Marketing

Marketing is the primary means of informing potential visitors of the variety of experiences they can enjoy in the Castle area and region.

Current and potential users of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park will be identified and a marketing plan developed to determine the best means to connect these visitors with the opportunities and services in the area. The plan will also address social marketing to influence visitor behaviour for the benefit of park conservation and contribution to local economies.

The development of an Alberta Parks and Castle co-brand will be important in capturing the essence of the parks' features, opportunities and values. A strong brand will help differentiate the Castle parks from other protected places in the Rocky Mountains, and place them in the context of the Alberta Parks system and regional identities like the Crown of the Continent. Marketing materials and communication tools should reflect this co-brand and help to communicate the essence of the parks and their conservation intent.

5.2 Objectives	Strategy
Prepare a marketing plan.	Identify current and new markets for the Castle parks and analyze their current and potential influence on visitation, partnership development and stewardship. Develop a Castle brand that is compatible with and supportive of the Alberta Parks brand and reflective of the nature, culture and opportunities of the area. Determine marketing tactics that will effectively communicate relevant information to identified markets and that will positively influence use and behavior. Collaborate with regional tourism organizations and Travel Alberta to maximize effectiveness of marketing activities.

5.3 Information and Wayfinding

Providing accurate and timely information is critical for public safety and an overall positive visitor experience. This information is communicated through a variety of media and face-to-face information services.

Current wayfinding and interpretive signage in the Castle area will be assessed and redeveloped to ensure that it is accurate, current and consistent in messaging and branding. Clear and well-placed regulatory signage and other media are critical to the positive visitor experience and the protection of the environment. Examples of important regulatory messages include how to identify fish for catch and release, dangers of introducing invasive species and hazard warnings.

New print and electronic information products will be developed to assist visitors in traveling to locations inside the parks and taking advantage of natural features and experiential opportunities. New information on trails, zoning and access to services will be incorporated into various media and shared.

Main access points will be analyzed, and signage and information kiosks will be developed. Given that most visitors will arrive along Highway 774, the feasibility of providing personal information services along that route, in way of a visitor centre, will be considered. Due to the complex nature of the ecosystems, weather patterns, recreational opportunities and natural hazards, a point of personal contact between Alberta Parks staff and visitors will be valuable in ensuring public safety and conservation of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

5.3 Objectives	Strategy
Provide accurate, relevant, consistent, timely and current information for clients throughout all phases of the visitor experience cycle.	Immediately prepare new maps and trail guides that provide effective wayfinding and identify available services and activities. Immediately develop and implement new and improved information, wayfinding and regulatory signage and media. Ensure online information services are effective and current. Develop and distribute a new park guide to assist visitors on-site. Develop, print and distribute “lure piece” for use in marketing outside of the park. Establish information kiosks at key entry points and/or facility areas. Include key messages such as fishing regulations, public safety issues and the prevention and control of invasive species.
Provide opportunities for public to connect with park staff directly and through phone, email and social media tools.	Consider the establishment of a visitor centre along the Highway 774 corridor. Establish a network for disseminating park information, programs and services. Establish a social media presence to encourage visitor feedback, information sharing and peer-to-peer marketing. Explore the feasibility of experiences that incorporate new media and technologies such as virtual and augmented reality.

5.4 Programming

Programming refers to educational and interpretive activities and services delivered within the parks. It also includes programs delivered outside of the parks by Alberta Parks staff. Interpretive themes may include the natural history of the park, cultural history, wildlife research, outdoor skills development and park management practices. Programs that help people to enjoy the outdoors safely and sustainability will be a major focus.

Programming led by Alberta Parks staff can bring great value to public visitors and can be an excellent venue to communicate the history, features and management practices of the parks. Public programs for immediate development may include guided winter recreational experiences such as snowshoeing, winter survival, and fat-biking, supported through infrastructure development such as groomed trails and warm-up huts. Summer program for immediate development may include activity-based programming for families, guided hikes, and outdoor skills development (e.g., learn to fish). Additionally, the development of curriculum-fit educational programs will be considered, and developed in cooperation with the school systems.

Guided experiences for park visitors can be accessed through programs provided by park staff and those provided by non-park guides. A set of guidelines and standards will be developed for non-park guides and programs, and a system to ensure cross-communication and coordination will be implemented. All standards and training programs will seek to maximize safety and benefit to guides, organizations and participants. Empowering these partners to act as stewards of the park will be an important strategy.

Within the parks, non-personal interpretive services such as signage, audio guides and interpretive apps will be developed to help bring an educational layer into the visitor experience. The communication and promotion of First Nations history and values will be considered for inclusion in the content of new programs under development.

Outreach activities conducted by Alberta Parks staff are a key component in community engagement and can help to promote use and conservation of the parks.

In the development of interpretive themes and content, and in the implementation of personal programming services, Alberta Parks will collaborate with First Nations groups, private guides, local communities and non-government organizations.

5.4 Objectives	Strategy
Conduct outreach activities to educate, inform and promote.	Identify and attend external events that provide valuable outreach opportunities. Identify, present to, and collaborate with external organizations.
Enable opportunities for guided park experiences.	Develop and implement park-led educational, interpretive and experiential programs. Encourage and support private sector, non-profit, NGO and volunteer guiding and experiential opportunities. Implement an application and approvals process for non-park-led guiding and experiential programming. Analyze all new and existing guided activities considering environmental impacts, public safety and visitor experience. Establish and monitor standards of program delivery (e.g. accuracy, safety) in park-led and externally-led programs.
Provide non-personal interpretation material throughout the park.	Develop non-personal interpretive products such as interpretive signage, pamphlets, audio guides and electronic media.
Provide opportunities for local communities and First Nations to share their stories.	Implement and promote use of First Nations naming (dual naming) within the park. Incorporate interpretive content from First Nations, Métis and local communities into personal programs. Provide a venue for First Nations, Métis and local communities to share their culture and stories.
Position the Castle area as a prime location for outdoor skills development and nature-based programming.	Develop and deliver a variety of parks-led nature-based programs. Develop and deliver training program for NGOs and volunteers to deliver programs. Encourage initiatives that support youth participation in outdoor recreation through education and training. Establish links to the Alberta curriculum for use in the development of park-led and non-park-led programs designed for students.

5.5 Reservation, Retail and Event Services

Reservations, retail and event services represent an aspect of Visitor Services that can help meet the needs of visitors and greatly enhance their experience.

An accessible and user-friendly reservation system can provide an essential service in the critical pre-visit portion of the visitor experience cycle. Campground reservations are typically handled through the provincial Reserve-Alberta-Parks system, which provides both online and telephone access to sites designated as reservable through that system. With multiple frontcountry and backcountry camping opportunities, a systematic approach will be applied to create an appropriate mix of reservable and first come, first-serve campsites. Using models successfully applied in other groups of Provincial parks and protected sites (e.g. Kananaskis Country), a system for tracking and permitting backcountry camping may be implemented.

As public programs and other experiential opportunities develop, a reservation system to help manage the scheduling and attendance to these events will be considered. Where possible, reservations will be handled under the existing Reserve-Alberta-Parks system or similar system (e.g. Vantix ATMS). Integrated reservation systems can provide the benefits of a convenient user interface for visitors and provide staff the ability to track inventory and help coordinate complex schedules of events, facilities and programs.

Retail services to fulfill visitor needs are available at the Castle Mountain Resort, the Beaver Mines General Store and adjacent communities. These items are sold as a service to visitors and these retail locations can serve as another venue for the dissemination of information (e.g. warning of closures due to bears) if the proprietor is willing. Where opportunities exist for retail sales within the parks (e.g. at Visitor Information Centre or campgrounds) Alberta Parks will work with communities and local business to explore opportunities for these services to be provided by the private sector.

Provincial Parks can be an ideal venue for various types of events, including small meetings, family reunions, and sporting competitions. Alberta Parks can help facilitate this use by having a comprehensive event services program. The development of such a program includes identifying venues, determining appropriate rental costs, usage agreements and permitting, developing an event scheduling system and determining necessary support services. By coordinating events within the park, or facilitating external organizations to do so, the parks can bring in new users, potential revenue sources, sponsorship and opportunities for media exposure

5.5 Objectives	Strategy
Where appropriate, ensure effective reservation services are available for park-managed accommodations and experiences.	Where possible use Reserve-Alberta-Parks. Add campgrounds in Castle Provincial Park to the Reserve-Alberta-Parks system over the next two years. If needed, utilize other reservation systems, including call-in options and online (e.g. ATMS).
Develop an Events Strategy.	Determine the appropriate types and mix of park coordinated and externally coordinated events. Based on current successful models, implement a system for scheduling, permitting and supporting events within the Castle parks.

5.6 Volunteer, Community and Partnerships

Involving individuals and organizations in park programs and activities can be extremely valuable for Alberta Parks and stakeholders. In consideration of limited park resources, partnerships must be developed strategically and carefully managed.

To bring true benefit to the parks and meaningful engagement for volunteers, the development of an ongoing volunteer program must be carefully considered. Albertans can continue to volunteer individually with Alberta Parks under long-established programs, like the Campground Host program. The engagement of community groups or volunteer organizations is also valuable and can have the advantage of involving larger numbers of individuals who are recruited and pre-screened by a trusted partnering organization. Clear recruitment processes, volunteer roles and duties, volunteer retention strategies and staff support systems, are all critical for a successful volunteer program. A phased-in approach to build a volunteer program may be the appropriate way to move forward.

Other strategic partnerships can help advance park mandates, program objectives and specific project objectives. Partners may include community groups, user associations, not-for-profit organizations, corporations, post-secondary institutions and other government organizations. A partnership strategy will be developed to identify and engage partners who share common goals and have compatible values, and who can aid in achieving specific park mandates and objectives.

5.6 Objectives	Strategy
Consider the feasibility and structure of a volunteer program that will encourage individuals and communities to engage with the park system and build stewardship.	Establish protocols for engagement with individuals and groups of volunteers. Develop a prioritized list of meaningful volunteer opportunities. Build relationships with existing groups and organizations that have a connection to the Castle area. Develop partnerships with existing or new organizations to implement and manage volunteers within the parks.
Explore strategic partnerships to encourage external engagement and support park mandates.	Consider all the potential partnership types that will best advance park recreational and conservation objectives, programs and projects. Develop a Strategic Partnership Plan.
Develop mechanism for managing citizen-science.	Ensure community or citizen based-research is coordinated by dedicated park staff or run through another research or approved non-profit organization. Ensure community or citizen-based research aligns with research priorities and is directly beneficial to the management and/or visitor experience of the park.

6

Outdoor Recreation and Healthy Living

Spending time in natural settings contributes positively to physical, mental and emotional health. Alberta Parks has a key role to play in providing opportunities for healthy living to Albertans and visitors to our province. The ways in which people spend their time in the outdoors are highly varied and continue to change with the emergence of new sports and new technologies. Many of the most popular activities are directly addressed in this management plan, with a focus on striking a balance between activities that can be managed to be compatible with each other, and with the protection of the natural and cultural values.

6.1 Recreation

The landscape and natural features of the Castle area make it an ideal location for outdoor pursuits, from quiet, nature-based activities to intense adventure sports. A wide variety of recreational activities are already being conducted in the Castle area, and there is potential to develop more. The strong conservation mandate of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, requires that each recreational activity be considered for its compatibility with natural values, individual and cumulative impacts on the environment, and potential impacts on other park visitors.

Upon determining the appropriate mix of allowable recreational activities, the needs of these recreational users will be considered in infrastructure development and in placement of services; for example, development of the Bathing Lake accessible fishing loop, staging areas at trail heads and enhanced campsites for equestrian use. In addition, a communication strategy will be developed to effectively convey appropriate locations and parameters of recreational activities.

With a focus on low-impact, nature-based recreation, the Castle area can support a wide variety of recreational activities spanning across all four seasons. Though it is not possible to list all of them here, some of the main recreational activities are included below. Additionally, some activities (e.g. hunting, camping, fishing) are complex enough to warrant separate descriptions later in this section.

- Backcountry Skiing and Snowboarding
- Backpacking
- Birdwatching and Wildlife Viewing
- Canoeing
- Caving
- Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing
- Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding
- Equestrian
- Hiking
- Ice Climbing
- Kayaking
- Mountain Biking
- Snowmobiling
- Mountaineering
- Photography
- Rock Climbing
- Stargazing

Alberta Parks will seek input from various user groups in order to design a suite of compatible recreational opportunities in appropriate locations and with appropriate supporting infrastructure.

6.1 Objectives	Strategy
Provide and support a wide range of recreational activities and visitor experiences that are consistent with the conservation objectives of the parks.	Incorporate infrastructure that supports recreational activities into the Capital Investment Plan. Enhance access to wilderness for all recreational users by making improvements to the South Castle Road to Grizzly Lake trailhead, Lynx Creek Road to the snowmobile shelter and the road adjacent to the Carbondale River to the Wildland Provincial Park Boundary. Plan, develop and manage recreational experiences in a manner that is responsive to evidence of impacts and disturbances, and that minimizes those impacts on natural and cultural values. Communicate allowable activities and their approved locations through a variety of information tools. Develop and deploy appropriate signage to communicate prohibited recreational activities (e.g. unmanned aerial vehicles). Seek input from recreational user groups to help determine appropriate locations, infrastructure, timing and modes of use for various recreational activities to help optimize visitor experience and minimize user conflicts and impacts to natural and cultural values.

6.2 Camping

Providing camping facilities is one of the cornerstones of facilitating a multi-day experience in the Castle region. Camping opportunities are tailored to reflect the character and intent of the landscapes and zones in which they are planned (See Section 8.0). Facilities for camping are planned to enhance the nature-based experiences that are aligned with the protected status of the Castle parks, and support a range of recreation types that are compatible with each other and appropriate to their surroundings.

- Automobile accessible frontcountry campsites are offered primarily in the provincial park. Frontcountry camping may include a wide range of facilities such as campsites with power and/or water, amenities such as showers and laundry facilities, equestrian sites, and various visitor services and commercial services
  (e.g. retail stores). Sites can include pads for tents and recreational vehicles, as well as options for fixed-roof accommodation such as “comfort-camping” (e.g. canvas-walled tents, yurts, small cabins or acceptable variations of these). Hostel-style accommodation may be considered where it connects with a hut-to-hut system and provides a fixed-roof opportunity for visitors not otherwise served through existing amenities.
- Designated rustic group camping opportunities will be identified in the facility zone of the Provincial Park. These types of opportunities are valued by small to medium sized groups that prefer a group experience with little or no amenities provided.
- Designated backcountry camping sites are located in more remote sites and are accessible by trail. They feature basic facilities such as toilets and fire rings. A high level of self-sufficiency is required by visitors to enjoy this rustic, backcountry experience. The installation of infrastructure to support equestrian-based camping will be considered for some locations.
- Backcountry cabins are non-automobile accessible cabins or huts that are connected by trails. They are designed to be low impact, unobtrusive and accessible in all four seasons (to accommodate recreational activities such as backpacking, mountain biking and backcountry skiing). As with designated backcountry sites, a high level of self-sufficiency is required. These types of opportunities may or may not be reservable, depending on demand.
- Undesignated or park boundry backcountry camping within the Wildland Provincial Park allows visitors to enjoy an entirely self-sufficient wilderness experience by camping in desirable undesignated locations. Visitors must camp using “leave-no-trace” principles and in an area prescribed for undesignated camping, or be no closer than 1 kilometre from a designated campground or public roadway.

6.2 Objectives	Strategy
Provide a range of high-quality camping experiences that are consistent with Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park classifications and the overall conservation intent of the parks.	Develop a Revitalization Strategy for all camping areas identified in the facility zone and backcountry designated camping areas. The strategy will: • Evaluate previous Provincial Recreation Areas (PRA) facilities (e.g. Lynx Creek PRA, Castle Falls PRA, Castle River Bridge PRA, Syncline PRA and Beaver Mines Lake PRA). • Identify the potential for enhanced, expanded, four-season, and new camping opportunities. • Identify opportunities for fixed-roof accommodation such as “comfort-camping” in appropriate locations (e.g. canvas-walled tents, yurts, small cabins or acceptable variations of these). • Identify opportunities for partnerships in the development, operations and maintenance of non-traditional camping facilities (e.g. hut-to-hut). • Identify infrastructure needs such as water, sewer and power. • Ensure integration with recreational trails and visitor services. • Identify reservation needs. This strategy will be developed in 2017/2018 and implementation will begin in 2018. The strategy will include a range of camping opportunities specifically for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, as appropriate, such as: • Frontcountry automobile accessible campsites and designated rustic group camping (primarily in the Provincial Park). • Backcountry designated camping (Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park). • Backcountry remote camping (Wildland Provincial Park only). Prior to the development of the strategy and the 2017 camping season, temporary rustic group camping areas will be identified and designated in the provincial park. These sites will be reviewed and may be relocated as the long-term strategy is developed, considering natural values, public safety, and recreational trail and visitor services development. Prior to the development of the strategy, capital improvements to existing campgrounds that were located in the previous PRAs will be limited to addressing immediate safety, minor improvements or environmental needs (e.g. campsite upgrades, washroom replacements, shelter repairs and access improvements).

6.3 Recreational Trails

The current trail systems throughout the Castle area present both opportunity and challenges in the parks. The absence of an approved overarching direction for the trail system and dedicated operational program has resulted in an inefficient trail system that has significant impacts on the landscape. The proliferation and unfettered growth of undesignated trails and routes throughout the area has also created significant issues related to wildlife, vegetation, erosion, user conflicts, safety and liability. A comprehensive trail plan will help ensure users enjoy high-quality recreational opportunities and experiences that are ecologically, socially and operationally sustainable, and that contribute to growing tourism in the region.

The approach to providing and managing a trail network in the Castle area will:

- Consider trail density and linear disturbance to minimize cumulative impacts on the watershed and biodiversity.
- Mitigate disturbance to sensitive natural values.
- Recognize user demands and influences on user experience.
- Minimize user conflicts by implementing pragmatic solutions.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the Park's operational capacity to ensure reasonable expectations for managing the trail network.

Trail planning and management will endeavor to follow established processes for designating and supporting a well-functioning multi-use trail system. Capital development planning will formally establish the trail network by enhancing or rerouting existing trails, and actively decommissioning and enforcing closure of trails in inappropriate areas. Operational planning will set objectives and actions for on-site management of the trails system, including approaches to trails maintenance, education, enforcement and conflict resolution. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the trail network will help ensure a greater understanding of current and trending use along with greater reliability of data and information to help make effective operational decisions.

6.3 Objectives	Strategy
Develop trails within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park to accommodate a wide variety of high-quality experiences for current and future park users.	In consultation with user groups, develop a comprehensive Trail Strategy. This strategy will commence with the campground revitalization strategy. Prior to development of the strategy, prepare an inventory of non-motorized trails that identify location, condition, accessibility, experience and uses. Annually identify trail uses for the beginning of the summer visitor season: • All trails will be multi-use unless otherwise posted. • Existing hiking, equestrian and cross country ski trails will be evaluated and improved as part of the regular capital investment priorities.
Develop and implement a "Share the Trail" Communications Strategy.	Formalize and implement policies and guidelines for the use and management of informal and designated trails. Improve trail and trailhead signage. Work cooperatively with private sector, user groups, volunteers, surrounding landowners and stock associations to review trail use policies and communication materials.
Manage the impact of trail development and types of use to be consistent with biodiversity thresholds.	Collect, analyze and review all relevant information to develop an integrated trail system that is consistent with biodiversity and other conservation outcomes. Monitor trails to measure and mitigate erosion, compaction to adjacent areas and effects on surrounding vegetation, including invasive species. Ensure that wildlife disturbance is kept to a minimum on trails through communication, education and enforcement. Trail closures (permanent or temporary) may be considered to address immediate conservation objectives until alternative routes have been established and mitigation or remediation completed.
Develop a network of trails that provide a range of high-quality visitor experiences and contribute to the development of tourism in the region.	Invest in the trail network with the goal of developing high-quality visitor experiences, including the development of new trails or the rerouting or reclamation of existing trails. Develop a network of trails to support non-motorized trail uses, offering opportunities from short day use to multi-day use. Identify, assess and manage trails within the park that have regional connections to Waterton Lakes National Park, British Columbia or are part of long trail networks such as the Great Divide Trail.

6.3.1 Summer Recreational Off Highway Vehicle Trails

Recreational off highway vehicles (OHVs) refer to motorized transportation typically used off road, including quads, dirt-bikes, side-by-sides, snowmobiles, etc. Summer recreational off highway vehicle use refers to activities from May 1st to November 30th using vehicles such as quads, side-by-sides and motorcycles. OHV use is typically not permitted in Provincial Parks and is permitted in only 50% of existing Wildland Provincial Parks, on designated trails only. Scientific research has been conducted which substantiates that summer recreational OHV use is incompatible with the conservation objectives for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Both parks have high levels of biodiversity, important headwaters that are highly susceptible to damage and critical habitat for species at risk, including genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout.

Summer recreational off highway vehicle use will be phased out over the next three years. A reclamation plan for previously designated and illegal summer OHV trails will be developed. Those trails that are appropriate for non-motorized recreational uses compatible with the conservation objectives of the parks will be designated as such, and, where required, modified for the newly designated use. Trails not designated for new uses will be identified and reclaimed.

As sustainable motorized trail network, with significant capital investment, will be available in the Livingstone/Porcupine Public Land Use Zone, and in other areas of the province.

6.3.1 Objectives	Strategy
To protect the exceptional environmental values of the Castle area, and to be consistent with Alberta Parks practice, summer recreational off highway vehicle (OHV) use will not be permitted.	Transition summer recreational off highway vehicle use out of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Phase out to be completed by 2021. Off highway vehicle use will be allowed to continue on the previously designed trail to Ptolemy Pass. Recreational use of highway vehicles (e.g. 4x4 trucks, Jeeps, etc.) is not permitted off road in the Castle area. Enforcement of off highway vehicle use on designated trails will be a priority for provincial parks staff.
Defragment habitats and landscapes that have been disturbed by off highway vehicle and industrial use.	Identify those linear disturbances, including random trails and industrial roads, to be restored. Implement practices to actively or passively reclaim trails to a state of intact and functional habitats and landscapes. Where practical, OHV trail infrastructure (e.g. bridges) may be relocated for use on other trails on Public Lands. Identify linear disturbances that can be designated for approved recreational uses and reclaim them for that use.

6.3.2 Winter Recreational Off Highway Vehicle Trails

It is recognized that summer and winter off highway vehicle use differ in terms of their potential impact on the natural environment and on other recreational uses. Because of the relatively lower impact of winter OHV use, this activity will be permitted. Further study is required to fully understand the implication of allowing winter OHV use in the Castle parks, and this research will inform the design of the winter OHV trail network. Alberta Environment and Parks will work with the Alberta Snowmobile Association to undertake this collaborative work.

6.3.2 Objectives	Strategy
Permit winter off highway vehicle use on a sustainable network of designated trails in a manner that is consistent with conservation objectives for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park	Alberta Parks will work with the Alberta Snowmobile Associations to design a sustainable winter OHV trail network. Consider issues of connectivity and consistency of use on transboundary winter OHV trails (e.g. trails that connect to British Columbia or Alberta public lands). Conduct a thorough review of existing research to inform trail design and provide clear management direction.

6.4 Extreme and Emerging Sports

Located primarily within an Alpine, Subalpine and Montane landscape, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park have many natural features that support a wide range of activities involving a higher level of danger. Some extreme activities and sports (e.g. base-jumping) can have significant risk and liability associated with them. Such existing and emerging activities present challenges in planning for the potential issues and impacts they may have on wildlife, the landscape and operations.

The approach to managing extreme and emerging sports in the Castle parks should balance the consideration of these activities with the realities of operational capacity, public safety and compliance. It will be important to identify and communicate the range of hazards on the landscape and inherent risks associated with each activity, and work within provincial policy to ensure alignment and consistency in managing these activities.

6.4 Objectives	Strategy
Identify opportunities, issues and concerns around extreme and emerging sports.	Engage with user groups to identify the scope, opportunities and concerns regarding extreme and emerging sports in the Castle area. Assess the public safety risks, concerns and liabilities associated with these activities. Assess the environmental conditions and risks associated with these opportunities. Establish a list of allowable activities, conditions and protocols to assist in the tracking and management of these activities.

6.5 Commercial Recreation

Commercial recreation and nature-based tourism can be instrumental in supporting quality visitor experiences. By working with commercial operators, the Government of Alberta can help ensure safe and responsible use of Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

Alberta Parks can manage commercial recreation through permits, which effectively allow commercial operators to conduct their business, provided they adhere to the conditions and requirements of their permits. Permitting is also valuable in monitoring and assessing the types and levels of commercial use benefitting from management of the land and is a simple indicator of direct tourism revenues in the Castle parks.

Alberta Parks will support opportunities in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park that are consistent with protecting and conserving other park values and resources, as well as ensuring public access, safety and enjoyment.

Facility-based services and opportunities may be considered in the frontcountry areas of Castle Provincial Park, while more low-intensity adventure and ecotourism type opportunities using trails and natural features may be considered in Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Regardless, commercial recreation and nature-based tourism must complement and not adversely impact the conservation values of the parks.

6.5 Objectives	Strategy
Assess, manage and develop opportunities for commercial and guided recreation experiences.	Conduct an inventory of current commercial recreational activities, and evaluate their appropriateness based on their compatibility with conservation and visitor experience objectives.
	Identify and encourage opportunities for the development of new commercial and guided recreation opportunities.
	Identify the need for infrastructure to support approved commercial recreation activities.
	Establish communication, training and monitoring protocols with guides and users to ensure public safety, minimize ecological impacts and encourage a sense of stewardship.
	Alberta Parks will support commercial recreation through applicable permitting processes.
	Where appropriate, establish Special Protection Zones to help manage access and use (e.g. caves).

6.6 Water-Based Recreation

Conservation of the watershed is one of the key management intents for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. Opportunities for compatible activities (e.g. kayaking, canoeing, sportfishing) that complement heritage values and enhance appreciation of water within the parks are encouraged. The types and levels of existing water-based recreation are not well known and will need to be inventoried and monitored. Where applicable, this should be done in concert with land-based recreation planning to address interrelated activities and cumulative impacts of use.

Infrastructure that supports desirable water-based recreation without compromising watershed quality, quantity of flow or health of aquatic ecosystems may be considered. Such developments will help manage access into and across waterbodies and minimize or mitigate undesirable impacts.

6.6 Objectives	Strategy
Assess, maintain and enhance opportunities for water-based recreation activities.	Assess current water-based recreation activities. Where ecologically and environmentally appropriate, identify infrastructure needs to support water-based recreation. Take actions to minimize risks and impacts, or restrict access to areas that are environmentally sensitive, contain rare or at-risk species, or pose a high risk for the introduction of aquatic invasive species.

6.7 Hunting

Licensed hunting is a permitted and managed land use within both park areas. Currently, Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park are fully contained within Wildlife Management Unit 400 (WMU400), also known as the Castle-Carbondale Management Unit. Hunting is recognized as a nature-based human use and is enshrined under the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act (2008). Hunting is managed by the province in accordance with species conservation objectives as a first priority. The determination of seasons, the allocation of hunting quotas and the issuance of hunting licenses is the mandate of the Alberta Fish and Wildlife. Alberta Parks collaborates closely with Alberta Fish and Wildlife and will remain partners in helping to determine park specific needs for managing species within WMU400, as the two parks comprise over 80% of the Castle-Carbondale Wildlife Management Unit.

In addition to the Alberta Wildlife Act and Alberta Wildlife Regulation, the Provincial Parks Act and Provincial Parks (General) Regulation set out additional regulatory oversight that can be administered within parks sites. Alberta Parks can regulate hunter access, particularly within provincial parks, and issue discharge permits in a manner that maintains a quality hunting experience, considers public safety and assesses the impacts of hunting on wildlife viewing and overall visitor experiences. Human uses, including hunting, account for some level of impact and disturbance to wildlife, and management practices will be implemented to minimize those stressors. Regulations include prohibitions on hunting, weapons discharge and game processing or storage within facility zones (see Section 8.0), game storage within designated camping or day-use areas and includes a 183 metre no-discharge buffer around facility zones, structures, roads and any designated camping or day-use areas that are not already within facility zones.

Within the Provincial Parks class, hunting is not typically permitted, with the exception of hunting that is used as a specific species management tool (e.g. the Cypress Hills Provincial Park elk hunt). A broader set of hunting opportunities is permitted within Castle Provincial Park to help manage some species within the park and to minimize negative impacts on adjacent private land. Alberta Parks will collaborate with Fish and Wildlife to determine management needs for game species and subsequent hunting allocations.

In a Wildland Provincial Park, hunting is typically a use that is congruent with the intent of the classification, as it aligns with the purposes of minimal development, large natural landscapes and lower density backcountry nature-based recreation. Hunting within the Wildland Provincial Park may not require a parks discharge

Indigenous people and many modern hunters and their families have recognized the importance of preserving healthy populations and species are therefore harvested in a sustainable manner. Today, Indigenous hunting rights will be respected within the parks. Recreational hunting will be allowed in the Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park, and conducted to achieve conservation management objectives.

permit but remains subject to the same discharge and game processing rules that help to enhance the wilderness experience and facilitate a range of quality recreation experiences in the Provincial Park. Game may not to be stored within designated backcountry campsites as this may attract predators. Outside of designated backcountry campsites hunters are encouraged to store harvested game in a manner that keeps it out of reach of predators, as is consistent with typical food and odour management practices.

Off highway vehicle use, such as quads, may be permitted for the retrieval of big game on selected routes specifically designated for those purposes. Game retrieval policies will be developed in consultation with equestrian outfitters and fish and game associations, such as the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

The current big game and game bird seasons are included in Appendix C and, pending further review, may be modified to achieve the conservation, recreation and tourism objectives in this plan.

6.7 Objectives	Strategy
In Castle Wildland Provincial Park, manage hunting according to the current hunting regulations and allocation process.	If any serious conservation or recreation experience issues are identified, Alberta Parks will work with Fish and Wildlife on relevant seasons and allocations. Enforce the prohibition of hunting within 183m buffer zones surrounding designated backcountry campgrounds. In collaboration with Fish and Wildlife, consider the implementation of larger buffer zones for reasons of public safety.
In Castle Provincial Park, Alberta Parks will work collaboratively with Alberta Fish and Wildlife to manage hunting. Within a short timeframe, after the establishment of the provincial park, the main aim will be to communicate to hunters the parks regulations specific to hunting activities. In medium term implementation will involve collaboration with Alberta Fish and Wildlife to explore ways in which Castle Provincial Park can have its hunting managed as a discreet geographical unit. This may include options to manage hunting allocations, seasons and license types to align with the overall management of Castle Provincial Park. Consideration may be given to the development of a separate Wildlife Management Unit that could facilitate the governance of unit-specific regulations.	Communicate regulatory requirements around discharge buffers, game processing and carcass storage, and the requirement for hunters to obtain a parks discharge permit. Review all available hunter harvest and activity data that are available to inform managers of the trends in hunter use of WMU 400. For public safety reasons, prohibit hunting in facility zones and within 183 metre (or larger) buffer zones surrounding designated camping areas, designated day-use areas and roads. Hunting may also be prohibited by Alberta Parks in specific areas of the park where hunting is not compatible with other recreational activities. Work towards management actions within Castle Provincial Park that permit recreational hunting for the purposes of managing wildlife populations, minimizing impacts on adjacent lands and maintaining quality visitor experiences across the full spectrum of recreation activities. Through all stages, Alberta Parks will collaborate with Alberta Fish and Wildlife on existing hunter harvest and activity data collection to inform park management.
Facilitate hunting access and game retrieval.	Review best practices and consider the development of guidelines for the responsible use of OHVs for the purposes of retrieving game on selected routes. Guidelines for Park staff and users will address various management issues including the potential of permitting mechanisms, hours and seasonal limitations, code of conduct for users, alignment with OHV phase out, etc. Make improvements to the South Castle Road to Grizzly Lake trailhead, Lynx Creek Road to the snowmobile shelter and the road adjacent to the Carbondale River to the Wildland Provincial Park Boundary. Encourage and collaborate with outfitting operations to assist with game retrieval using horses or other non-motorized means.

6.8 Trapping

Trapping is an existing activity in Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park that reflects cultural and traditional lifestyles that are part of the area's history. Environment and Parks will work with Registered Fur Management Area (RFMA) holders to ensure appropriate access and trapline management that aligns with the *Program Policy for Managing Fur Trapping in Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas* (2003).

There are seven RFMAs represented within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park. The active traplines are an existing commitment that can be compatible with the overall conservation intent of the parks, providing the natural values are maintained and species at risk or of special concern are protected. In addition to the Wildlife Act, trapping in the parks must be consistent with the *Provincial Parks Act* and regulations. Additional measures can be implemented in parks to reduce conflict with other uses and align practices with the conservation objectives. Motorized access and trapping cabins are an important part of managing a trapline and, within the Provincial Park, renovations and/or relocation of existing trapping cabins and necessary changes to access will be subject to review of associated environmental impacts, aesthetics and other factors influencing visitor experiences.

6.8 Objectives	Strategy
Manage existing Registered Fur Management Areas within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park in collaboration with Fish and Wildlife.	Policy and guidelines for managing the Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMAs) will be directed toward ensuring that: • Trapping is consistent with the conservation intent of the parks. • Viable and healthy populations of furbearing species are maintained. • Species at risk are protected. • Conflict is minimized between trapping and other uses. • The public's desire to experience the park in a natural and safe setting is fulfilled. Existing cabins will be honoured. Maintenance of existing cabins will be permitted within existing footprint and square footage. New cabins must not exceed the square footage as per Alberta Parks' Program Policy for Managing Fur Trapping in Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas. New cabins and relocation requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, providing they meet conservation and visitor experience objectives. The use of cabins and access routes will be for the sole purpose of conducting trapping operations. Alberta Parks, in collaboration with Fish and Wildlife, will annually review trapping quotas, as per the existing regulations. Annual trapping reports will be submitted to both Alberta Parks and Fish and Wildlife. The trapping of rare species and species at risk will be reviewed annually. In addition to following the Wildlife Act, trapping in the Castle area must also adhere to the Provincial Parks Act and Regulations. This includes requiring motorized access permits and firearm discharge permits, should a firearm be required to carry-out trapping activities. When an RFMA becomes vacant, Alberta Parks and Fish and Wildlife will collaborate and evaluate the need to keep the RMFA active within the parks. Existing program policies, as occasionally updated, will be used for managing registered fur management areas.

6.9 Sportfishing

Sportfishing is a popular recreational activity in the Castle area as there is a wealth of angling opportunities for a variety of species. The angling opportunities are comprised of lentic and lotic environments for stocked fish and wild populations of native and introduced species. Alberta Parks collaborates with Alberta Fish and Wildlife to develop sport fishery plans and work towards fish conservation objectives.

There are three stocked lakes within park boundaries: Beaver Mines Lake within Castle Provincial Park is stocked with rainbow trout; Bathing Lake within the Wildland Provincial Park is stocked with rainbow trout; and Butcher Lake within the Wildland Provincial Park is stocked with brook trout. The creeks and rivers within the parks provide high-quality fishing experiences within scenic mountain environments.

The conservation and recovery of native species and their habitats is a management priority for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park and aligns with the management objectives of watershed protection, lotic connectivity and the federal Westslope Cutthroat Trout Critical Habitat Order.

Alberta Parks continues to evaluate sportfishing opportunities considering conservation objectives for the Castle parks and may, where possible, enhance sportfishing opportunities provided these efforts do not negatively impact native species and their habitats. The annual Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations contains the most recent fishing regulations. In addition to the regulations set out for fish management zone ES1, Alberta Parks encourages adherence to catch and release best practices and the judicious use or voluntary non-use of “bait” (where “bait” is permitted, see the above mentioned regulations) to minimize the introduction of pathogens and aquatic invasive species. Alberta Parks also encourages anglers to minimize the transfer of pathogens and invasive species by ensuring that angling equipment is clean and dry before use.

6.9 Objectives	Strategy
Maintain sportfishing opportunities in the Castle parks.	In collaboration with Alberta Environment and Parks' fish and wildlife biologists, develop strategies to improve sportfishing opportunities that are consistent with fisheries management and park objectives, referencing existing species management and recovery plans where available (e.g. westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout). Work towards the conservation of native species as a primary management goal. Evaluate the potential and capacity to expand sportfishing opportunities and incorporate findings into the Sport Fishery Plan. In collaboration with Alberta Environment and Parks' fisheries biologists, implemented recovery initiatives within the Castle Park to support recovery of the Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout as per existing species management and recovery plans.

6.10 Public Safety

The Castle area is a remarkable landscape that provides many opportunities to experience primitive and rugged terrain. Consequently, it also has a relatively high potential for natural and human-caused disasters such as avalanches, wildfires and floods. The area also has tremendous wildlife resources, which means significant potential for human-wildlife conflict. Prevention of, and acute response to, negative interactions between humans and wildlife is a priority to manage public safety while protecting park values and resources. Problem wildlife and wildlife-human conflict situations are managed through a variety of strategies, including trail or area closures and selective vegetation alteration.

Alberta Parks will work collaboratively with nearby towns, municipal districts and other agencies to aid visitors who are reported lost or injured. In the backcountry, injured persons are stabilized and evacuated to the next level of medical attention. Deliberate park infrastructure, careful development and operation, and comprehensive visitor programming can help minimize or mitigate incidents and their consequences.

6.10 Objectives	Strategy
Alberta Parks will respond to initial public safety incidences and will partner with local authorities, governments and agencies for larger or more complicated responses.	Parks and public lands staff will be trained to a level that can respond to and support initial public incidents. An Emergency Response Plan will be developed for the Castle parks in collaboration with other public safety response agencies and local municipalities.
Manage human-wildlife interactions for conservation purposes and visitor experience.	Enhance existing or develop new wildlife viewing opportunities (see Section 4). Reduce wildlife-traffic collisions in the parks by identifying conflict areas and applying appropriate mitigation efforts. Increase knowledge of current operational, management and visitor impacts on wildlife behaviour and habitat. Provide human-wildlife conflict training to appropriate staff and volunteers. Implement WildSmart and BearSmart programs

7

Research, Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Alberta Parks strives to incorporate scientific and evidence-based decisions and policies in the management of its parks. Ongoing research in the natural and social sciences ensures that Alberta Parks maintains updated knowledge about the Castle parks and extends this knowledge to our partners and visitors. Monitoring within parks is one the cornerstones of data collection and helps achieve the systematic generation of current information. Monitoring of wildlife, plant communities, physical processes and recreation activities provides the evidence that is needed to adapt management practices to best achieve the objectives of the parks. Monitoring the impacts of recreational use and their associated facilities and infrastructure would include, for example, disturbances to habitats from changes in sedimentation.

To achieve desired research outcomes, collaboration with a range of research partners at universities, colleges, non-government organizations and government agencies is essential. Partnering with other researchers opens parks as laboratories for pragmatic research, and enables the Castle area and its visitors to benefit from the results. Research permitting processes consider the appropriateness of all research proposals for the Castle parks, including impacts to the environment and visitors, and the potential outcomes for parks management. In addition to partnering with formal research programs, Alberta Parks encourages non-intrusive citizen science through established citizen monitoring platforms such as e-Bird, NatureLynx and others.

Due to the complexity of natural systems, and the complex interplay between these systems and human activities, Alberta Parks recognizes that an adaptive management approach is required to best achieve ecosystem objectives. As management strategies are implemented, close monitoring of the results of these actions allows for their adjustment in real time, with the aim of reducing uncertainty, increasing the immediate effectiveness of the management practice and improving future management efforts. Ideally, this approach not only incorporates responsiveness and adaptability into management practices, but also facilitates improved understanding of the natural systems themselves.

7.0 Objectives	Strategy
Encourage scientific research in and about the Castle area, and conduct monitoring of biodiversity in accordance with conservation objectives.	Applications for Research and Collection permits will use established permitting processes in accordance with restrictions, requirements and priorities set by Alberta Parks staff, while considering impacts on natural and cultural values and visitor experience. Encourage research and surveys of rare and globally significant species and plant communities. Develop partnerships with academic and research organizations to conduct research that informs park management. Work with other Government of Alberta departments to maintain existing permanent sample plots and tree genetic plots. Encourage research opportunities to help identify and implement best management practices. Monitor health and abundance of species, especially species at risk, and the quality of their habitats (e.g. westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, grizzly bears).
Encourage social-science research in and about the Castle area, and conduct monitoring of outdoor recreation activities.	Applications for Research and Collection permits will use established permitting processes in accordance with restrictions, requirements and priorities set by Alberta Parks staff, while considering impacts on natural and cultural values and visitor experience. Encourage research of recreational uses, including aspects such as their sustainability, compatibility with conservation objectives, and environmental, economic and social impacts. Develop partnerships with academic and research organizations to conduct research on recreational uses that informs park management.

8

Provincial Park Zoning Framework

Zoning is a tool for managing Provincial Parks and Wildland Provincial Parks that have multiple objectives and management priorities. Zoning works by dividing each park into spatial units based on coarse ecological values, consistent management objectives and permitted uses. Zones help provide certainty and clarity around the area's management intent for the public, park stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples and parks staff. As far as possible, the zones are described using identifiable boundaries or legal units. Once set, zones require public consultation to amend or change; this process is designed to offer security and transparency in terms of large changes to park management intent.

Summary of the four types of zones is as follows:

Natural Landscape Zone:

- The conservation of nature is the primary objective, allowing for a range of nature-based, low-impact outdoor recreation, tourism and learning opportunities.
- Incorporates most of the natural or near-natural landscapes outside of a Wilderness Zone.
- Includes wilderness areas that do not meet criteria for Wilderness Zone due to industrial commitments

Wilderness Zone:

- Large remote areas that are free of industrial activities, are relatively undisturbed by human activities and where there are no roads.
- Typically >10,000 hectares, but smaller areas that exemplify remoteness and distance from road access may justify inclusion.
- Conservation of biodiversity is a primary focus where natural forces and processes predominate.
- Public access must be managed to a level that maintains remoteness and wilderness qualities.
- Backcountry or wilderness setting.
- Few if any facilities and designated trails kept to a minimum.

Facility Zone:

- Outlines and confines development and facility footprint to a strictly bounded area.
- Minimizes extent of impact on natural values by curbing “development creep”.
- Facility-oriented and focused on infrastructure related to visitor experience.
- Facility zones are best limited to areas with current facility footprints or areas identified in approved or publicly developed plans that have undergone environmental review.

Special Protection Zone:

- These zones are designed for the conservation or showcasing of superlative, sensitive, unique or rare features or areas, such as natural and cultural features of provincial or greater significance.
- Uses in each Special Protection Zone will be prescribed for each site on an “as needed” basis.
- Access and/or use may be restricted or prohibited in the zone in either space or time.
- Facilities are limited to those necessary to safely experience the site, but may be entirely restricted otherwise.

8.1 Interim Zoning for Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park

In the short-term (two to five years) it is necessary to establish interim facility zones to enable the use, maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure. The interim facility zones will formalize areas for rustic group camping opportunities, visitor services and park operations (e.g. parks' yard, staff housing). The facility zones will also capture areas where there is existing camping and day-use development, such as in the previous provincial recreation areas or areas that have existing leases (e.g. boy scout camp). It is expected that these zones are interim until a full Capital Investment Strategy is completed and an environmental review is undertaken for new developments. Through this process, the interim zones will be confirmed, reduced, expanded or eliminated based on managing for the overall conservation values and the desired visitor experiences.

A map of the interim facility zones and their intended short-term uses is identified in Appendix D. The facility zones that encompass proposed rustic group camping areas were primarily placed in areas that have been previously disturbed. Regardless, environmental reviews will be completed to ensure that appropriate setbacks for specific species and the overall conservation objectives are not impacted.

Other zones will not be formally established at this time; the default zone for Provincial and Wildland Provincial Parks is the natural landscape zone. In the future, the wilderness zone and protection zone may be considered where there are areas or features that are compatible with the intent of these zones. Zone changes or amendments will undergo a public consultation process.

9

Implementation and Review

Upon review and approval, this management plan will be implemented by the Government of Alberta with support from its partners. Both Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park fall under the legislative purview of the Alberta Provincial Parks Act.

The objectives and strategies highlighted in this management plan will be used to develop a priority listing of actions to be implemented over the duration of the plan. Priorities include the implementation of a temporary visitor centre, new rustic group campsites, a fully accessible fishing opportunity and a Blackfoot Offering Site.

Collaboration with government agencies, First Nations and stakeholder groups will be critical to achieving these priorities. In addition, Alberta Parks will conduct further consultation with the public, First Nations and major stakeholders as needed.

Periodic reviews will be conducted as the management plan is implemented to assess if objectives and strategies are being achieved. A formal review will occur in the 10th year.

Using the strategies outlined in this plan, the Government of Alberta is committed to managing Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park as world-class protected places, employing high standards in conservation, respecting Indigenous rights and providing the opportunity for exceptional recreational experiences.

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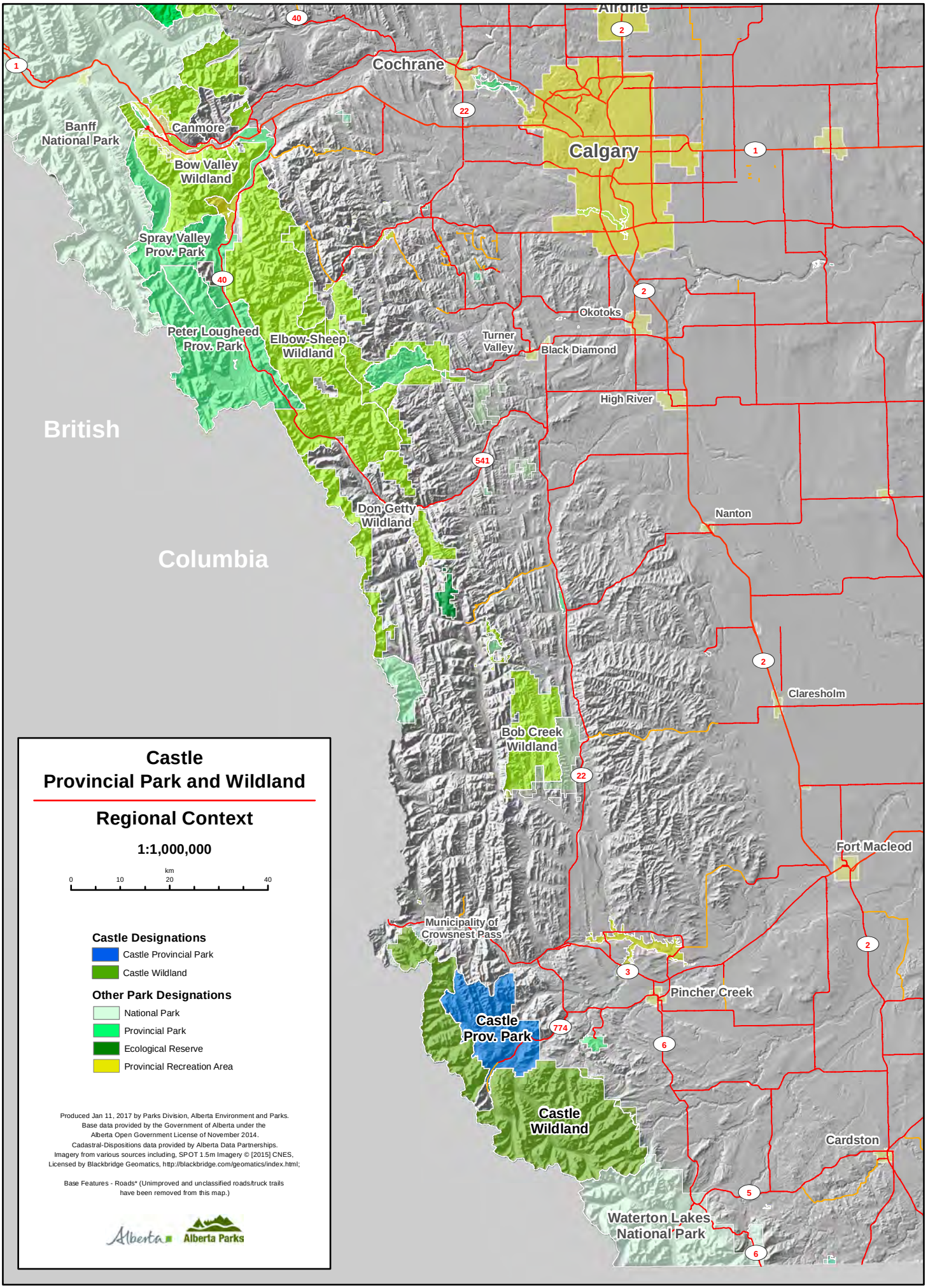
Maps



Castle
Provincial Park and Wildland

Regional Context

1:1,000,000

km
0 10 20 40

Castle Designations

- Castle Provincial Park
- Castle Wildland

Other Park Designations

- National Park
- Provincial Park
- Ecological Reserve
- Provincial Recreation Area

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Base Features - Roads* (Unimproved and unclassified roads/truck trails
have been removed from this map.)

Alberta Alberta Parks

Castle - Provincial Park and Wildland

General Overview

1:225,000

km
0 2.5 5 10

Castle Designations
- Castle Provincial Park
- Castle Wildland

Other Park Designations
- National Park
- Provincial Park
- Ecological Reserve
- Provincial Recreation Area

Existing Park Facilities
- Campground
- Group Use Area

Castle Mountain Resort
- Castle Mountain Resort

Base Features - Roads*
- ROAD-PAVED-4 LANE or DIVIDED
- ROAD-PAVED-UNDIV-1 or 2 LANE
- ROAD-GRAVEL-1 or 2 LANE

Great Divide Trail
- Main Route
- Alternate Route

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Base Features - Roads* (Unimproved and unclassified roads/truck trails have been removed from this map.)

Alberta Alberta Parks

Island Lake Provincial Recreation Area
Coleman
Blairmore
Bellevue
Hillcrest Mines
Crowsnest River
Lundbreck
Cowley
Oldman Dam Provincial Recreation Area
Oldman River
Pincher Creek
Castle River
Lynx Creek
Carbondale River
Lost Creek
Castle Falls
Castle Provincial Park
Castle River Bridge
Syncline
Beaver Mines Lake
Gardiner Creek
Castle Wildland
Beauvais Lake Provincial Park
West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve
Castle Mountain Resort
Mill Creek
Grizzly Creek
West Castle River
S. Drywood Creek
Spionkop Creek
Yarrow Creek
Waterton Lakes National Park
British
Columbia
40
3
22
510
3A
785
507
775
774
6
505
5

Castle - Provincial Park and Wildland

Natural Regions/Subregions

1:225,000

km
0 2.5 5 10

Rocky Mountains Natural Region
- Alpine
- Subalpine
- Montane

Parkland Natural Region
- Foothills Parkland
- Foothills Fescue

Grassland Natural Region
- Mixedgrass

Base Features - Roads*
- ROAD-PAVED-4 LANE or DIVIDED
- ROAD-PAVED-UNDIV-1 or 2 LANE
- ROAD-GRAVEL-1 or 2 LANE

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Alberta Alberta Parks

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Castle Provincial Park
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Castle Mountain Resort
Castle Wildland
Waterton Lakes National Park
40
3
22
510
3A
785
507
775
774
6
505
5

Castle - Provincial Park and Wildland

General Overview

1:225,000

km
0 2.5 5 10

Castle Designations
- Castle Provincial Park
- Castle Wildland

Other Park Designations
- National Park
- Provincial Park
- Ecological Reserve
- Provincial Recreation Area

Existing Park Facilities
- Campground
- Group Use Area

Castle Mountain Resort
- Castle Mountain Resort

Base Features - Roads*
- ROAD-PAVED-4 LANE or DIVIDED
- ROAD-PAVED-UNDIV-1 or 2 LANE
- ROAD-GRAVEL-1 or 2 LANE

Great Divide Trail
- Main Route
- Alternate Route

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Base Features - Roads* (Unimproved and unclassified roads/truck trails have been removed form this map.)

Alberta Alberta Parks

Island Lake Provincial Recreation Area
Coleman
Blairmore
Bellevue
Hillcrest Mines
Crowsnest River
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Oldman Dam Provincial Recreation Area
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Gardiner Creek
West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve
Castle Mountain Resort
West Castle River
Mill Creek
Grizzly Creek
Castle River
S. Drywood Creek
Spionkop Creek
Yarrow Creek
Waterton Lakes National Park
British
Columbia

Appendix A

Known Species of Concern Found in the Castle Area
(As of Fall 2016)

Known Species of Concern Found in the Castle Area

Table A.1

Wildlife Species Found Within Castle Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Alberta General Status	Alberta Detailed Status	Alberta Wildlife Act	COSEWIC Status	Schedule 1?	SARA Status
American badger	Taxidea taxus	Sensitive	Data Deficient		Special Concern	No	No Status
bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Sensitive			Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
bobcat	Lynx rufus	Sensitive			n/a	n/a	n/a
boreal (western) toad [calling population]	Anaxyrus boreas	Sensitive			Special Concern	Schedule 1	Special Concern
boreal (western) toad [non-calling population]	Anaxyrus boreas	Sensitive			Special Concern	Schedule 1	Special Concern
Canada lynx	Lynx canaden-sis	Sensitive			Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
Cassin's vireo	Vireo cassinii	Undeter-mined			n/a	n/a	n/a
Columbia spotted frog	Rana luteiven-tris	Sensitive	n/a		Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
ferruginous hawk*	Buteo regalis	At Risk	Endangered	Endangered	Threatened	Schedule 1	Threatened
fisher	Martes pen-nanti	Sensitive			n/a	n/a	n/a
golden eagle	Aquila chrysaetos	Sensitive			Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
grizzly bear (western population)	Ursus arctos	At risk	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	No Schedule	No Status
harlequin duck	Histrionicus	Sensitive	Species of Special Concern		n/a	n/a	n/a
long-toed salamander	Ambystoma macrodacty-lum	Sensitive	Species of Special Concern		Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
northern leopard frog*	Rana pipiens	At Risk	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Special Concern
northern pygmy owl	Glaucidium gnoma	Sensitive	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a

Table A.1 (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Alberta General Status	Alberta Detailed Status	Alberta Wildlife Act	COSEWIC Status	Schedule 1?	SARA Status
prairie falcon	Falco mexi-canus	Sensitive	Species of Special Concern		Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
red-naped sapsucker	Sphyrapicus nuchalis	Undeter-mined			n/a	n/a	n/a
red-tailed chipmunk	Neotamias ru-ficaudus	Sensitive			n/a	n/a	n/a
sharp-tailed grouse	Tympanuchus phasianellus	Sensitive			n/a	n/a	n/a
tiger salamander [prairie/boreal population]	Ambystoma mavortium	Secure			Special Concern	No Schedule	No Status
trumpeter swan*	Cygnus bucci-nator	At Risk	Species of Special Concern		Not at Risk	n/a	n/a
wandering (vagrant) shrew	Sorex vagrans	May be at Risk			n/a	n/a	n/a
wolverine	Gulo	May be at Risk	Data Deficient		Special Concern	No Schedule	No Status
olive-sided flycatcher*	Contopus cooperi	May be at Risk			Threatened	Schedule 1	Threatened
peregrine falcon (anatum/ tundrius)*	Falco peregri-nus	At Risk	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Special Concern

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Table A.2

Fish Species Found Within the Castle Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Alberta General Status	Alberta Detailed Status	Alberta Wildlife Act	COSEWIC Status	Schedule 1?	SARA Status
westslope cutthroat trout	Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi	At Risk	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	Schedule 1	Threatened
bull trout [Saskatchewan-Nelson Rivers population]	Salvelinus confluentus	Sensitive	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	No Schedule	No Status
spoonhead sculpin*	Cottus ricei	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	Schedule 1	Threatened	n/a
lake trout*	Salvelinus namaycush	Sensitive					

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Appendix B

Rare, Listed, Tracked or Watched Vegetation Species and Communities in the Castle Area
(As of Fall 2016)

Table B.1

Plant Species Found Within Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Alberta General Status	Alberta Detailed Status	Alberta Wildlife Act	COSEWIC Status	Schedule 1?	SARA Status
limber pine	Pinus flexilis	At Risk	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	No Schedule	No Status
whitebark pine	Pinus albicaulis	At Risk	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	Schedule 1	Endangered

Table B.2

Additional Plant Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that Are Globally Rare and only Found in SW Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
Jones' columbine	Aquilegia jonesii	S1	G3
cordilleran sedge*	Carex cordillerana	S1	G3G4
trifid-leaved fleabane	Erigeron trifidus	S3	G2G3Q
dwarf alpine poppy	Papaver pygmaeum	S1	G3
Lyall's scorpionweed	Phacelia lyallii	S2	G3
least lupine	Lupinus minimus	S2	G3G4

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Table B.3

Additional Plant Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that are not Globally Rare, but Rare and are only found in SW Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
large-flowered ragwort	Senecio megacepha-lus	S1	G4
blue suksdorfia	Suksdorfia violacea	S1	G4
Smith's oniongrass	Melica smithii	S2	G4
crested beardtongue	Penstemon erian-therus	S2	G4
Regel's rush	Juncus regelii	S1	G4?
alpine lady fern	Athyrium distentifo-lium var. americanum	S1	G4G5
small-leaved montia	Montia parvifolia	S1	G4G5
white-veined wintergreen	Pyrola picta	S1	G4G5
diffuse fleabane	Erigeron divergens	S1	G5
two-leaved bed-straw	Galium bifolium	S1	G5
racemose groundsmoke	Gayophytum race-mosum	S1	G5
Merten's saxifrage	Saxifraga mertensiana	S1	G5
weak-nerved sedge	Carex infirminervia	S1	G5
bearded fescue	Festuca subulata	S1	G5
bitter-root*	Lewisia rediviva	S1	G5
fringe-cups	Tellima grandiflora	S1	G5
snowbrush ceanothus	Ceanothus velutinus	S2	G5
alpine lupine	Lupinus lepidus	S2	G5
Geyer's sedge	Carex geyeri	S2	G5
western maiden-hair fern	Adiantum aleuticum	S2	G5?
pathfinder	Adenocaulon bicolor	S2	G5?
Austin's knotweed*	Polygonum austiniae	S1	G5T4
glaucous willowherb	Epilobium glaberri-mum ssp. fastigiatum	S1	G5T4T5
broad leaved yellow prairie violet	Viola praemorsa ssp. linguifolia	S2	G5T5
big sagebrush	Artemisia tridentata	S2	G5
large-flowered brickellia	Brickellia grandiflora	S2	G5
western fescue	Festuca occidentalis	S2	G5
onion grass	Melica spectabilis	S2	G5
large-flowered lungwort	Mertensia longiflora	S2	G4G5
small yellow monkeyflower	Mimulus floribundus	S2	G5

Table B.3 (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
large mountain monkeyflower	Mimulus tilingii	S1	G5
western twayblade	Neottia banksiana	S2	G4?
little rice grass	Piptatherum exiguum	S2	G5
least knotweed	Polygonum minimum	S2	G5
Macoun's rabbit-tobacco	Pseudognaphalium macounii	SH	G5
suksdorfia	Suksdorfia ranunculifolia	S1	G5
tall trisetum	Trisetum canescens	S2	GNR
nodding trisetum	Trisetum cernuum	S2	GNR

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Table B.4

Additional Plant Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that are Globally Rare but not restricted to just SW Alberta, they are found in other areas of Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK	
straight-leaf moonwort	Botrychium lineare	S1	G2G3	
moss spp.	Tortula leucostoma	S2S3	G2G4	
front-range fleabane	Erigeron lackschewitzii	S1	G3	
alderleaf buckthorn shrubland	Rhamnus alnifolia shrubland	S1S2	G3	Plant community, not just species
moss spp.	Bryum calobryoides	S2	G3	
ascending grape fern*	Botrychium ascendens	S3	G3	
spatulate grape fern*	Botrychium spathulatum	S3	G3	
arctic butterweed	Packera contermina	S2	G3G4	
field grape fern	Botrychium campestre	S3	G3G4	
Michigan grapefern	Botrychium michiganense	SU	G3	

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Table B.5

Additional Plant Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that are not globally rare, but are rare and are found in other areas outside of SW Alberta in Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
scented pussytoes	Antennaria aromatica	S3	G4
nodding arnica	Arnica parryi	S2	G5
sunken disc lichen	Aspicilia sublapponica	S1	GNR
little groove moss	Aulacomnium androgynum	S2S3	G5
Collins' rockcress*	Boechera collinsii	S1	G5T5
Lemmon's rock-cress	Boechera lemmonii	S3	G5T5
western grape fern	Botrychium hesperium	S3	G4
moss spp	Brachythecium frigidum	S1S2	G4
Canada brome*	Bromus latiglumis	S1	G5
moss spp	Bucklandiella sudetica	S2S3	G5?
thoroughwax	Bupleurum americanum	S2	G5
moss spp	Buxbaumia piperi	S1	G4
green shield moss	Buxbaumia viridis	S1	G4G5
firedot lichen	Caloplaca chrysophthalma	S1	GNR
blue camas	Camassia quamash var. quamash	S3	G5T3T5
purple sedge	Carex mertensii	S2	G5
pasture sedge	Carex petasata	S3	G5
broom sedge	Carex scoparia var. scoparia	S2	G5T5
meadow thistle	Cirsium scariosum	S2	G5
conimitella	Conimitella williamsii	S2	G4
cat-tongue liverwort	Conocephalum salebrosum	S2S4	G5
slender hawk's-beard	Crepis atribarba	S2	G5
mountain lady's-slipper	Cypripedium montanum	S2	G4
leather lichen	Dermatocarpon intestiniforme	S3	GNR
slender hair grass	Deschampsia elongata	S2	G5
moss spp	Dichodontium olympicum	S1	G3G5
silky fork moss*	Dicranella heteromalla	S2S3	G5?
alpine curly heron's bill moss	Dicranum pallidisetum	S1S2	GU
broken-leaf moss	Dicranum tauricum	S1S3	G4

Table B.5 (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
moss spp*	Didymodon vinealis	S2S3	G5
liverwort	Diplophyllum taxifolium	SU	G5
downingia	Downingia laeta	S3	G5
dense-leaved draba	Draba densifolia	S2	G5
squirreltail	Elymus elymoides ssp. Elymoides	S2S3	G5T5
Scribner's wheat grass	Elymus scribneri	S2	G5
candle-snuffer moss	Encalypta spathulata	S2S3	G4
creeping fleabane	Erigeron flagellaris	S2	G5
moss spp	Fontinalis neomexicana	S1S2	G3G5
mountain forest grimmia moss	Grimmia anomala	S2S3	G5
Donian grimmia moss	Grimmia donniana	S1S2	G4G5
spreading fringe moss	Grimmia ramondii	S1S2	G4G5
long-stalked beardless moss	Hennediella heimii	S2S3	G5
pinesap	Hypopitys monotropa	S3	G5
Parry's rush	Juncus parryi	S2	G4G5
liverwort	Jungermannia atrovirens	SU	G4G5
liverwort	Jungermannia leiantha	SU	G5
liverwort	Jungermannia sphaerocarpa	SU	G5
western larch	Larix occidentalis	S2	G5
dust lichen	Lepraria incana	S3	GNR
northern linanthus	Leptosiphon septentrionalis	S2	G5
alpine lewisia	Lewisia pygmaea	S2	G5
rockstar	Lithophragma glabrum	S2	G4G5
small-flowered rockstar	Lithophragma parviflorum	S2	G5
lance-leaved lung-wort	Mertensia lanceolata	S2	G5
brook saxifrage	Micranthes odontoloma	S2	G5
nodding microseris	Microseris nutans	S2	G5
slender phlox	Microsteris gracilis ssp. gracilis	S1	G5T5
bloody-heart lichen	Mycoblastus sanguinarius	S2	G4G5
small baby-blue-eyes	Nemophila breviflora	S3	G5
broad-lipped tway-blade	Neottia convallarioides	S2	G5

Table B.5 (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
tufted foxtail lichen	Nodobryoria abbreviata	S1S2	G4?
moss spp*	Orthotrichum pumilum	S2S3	G5
linear-leaved scorpionweed	Phacelia linearis	S3	G5
dark shadow lichen*	Phaeophyscia sciastra	S3	G5
lichen	Phaeorrhiza sareptana	SU	GNR
blue phlox*	Phlox alyssifolia	S2	G5
urn moss	Physcomitrium pyriforme	S2	G5
western white pine*	Pinus monticola	S2	G4G5
Alaska bog orchid	Piperia unalascensis	S2	G5
earthscale lichen	Placidium lachneum	S1S2	G5
narrow-flowered bluegrass	Poa stenantha	S2	G5
Engelmann's knotweed	Polygonum engel-mannii	S2	G5T3T5
liverwort	Porella cordaeana	SU	G4
liverwort	Porella platyphylla	SU	G5
smooth-leaved cinquefoil	Potentilla multisecta	S2	GNR
hairy cinquefoil	Potentilla villosa	SU	G5
moss spp	Pseudoleskea patens	S1S2	G5
moss spp	Pseudoleskea stenophylla	S2S3	G5?
blackberry scale	Psora globifera	S1S2	G4G5
butterfly scale*	Psora nipponica	S2S3	G4G5
bracken fern	Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens	SU	G5T3T5
liverwort	Radula complanata	SU	G5
early buttercup	Ranunculus glaberrimus	S3	G5
moss spp	Rhizomnium magnifolium	S2S3	G4G5
moss spp	Rhizomnium nudum	S2S3	G4
pipecleaner moss	Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus	S1S2	G4G5
mountain goose-berry	Ribes inerme var. inerme	S2?	G5T5
pepper-spore lichen	Rinodina colobina	S1	GNR
Sitka romanzoffia	Romanzoffia sitchensis	S2	G4
slender cress	Rorippa tenerrima	S3	G5
Sylvan hairstreak	Satyrium sylvinus	S1	G5
liverwort	Scapania curta	S2S3	G5

Table B.5 (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK
liverwort	Scapania subalpina	SU	G4G5
moss spp	Sciuro-hypnum hylotapetum	S1S3	GU
cedar moss	Sciuro-hypnum reflexum	S2S3	G5
moss spp	Seligeria campylopoda	S2S3	G3G5
black-eye lichen	Tephromela atra	S2S4	G5
western red cedar	Thuja plicata	S2	G5
alpine townsendia	Townsendia condensata	S2	G4
American rock tripe lichen*	Umbilicaria americana	S2S3	G5?
yellow wood violet	Viola glabella	S2	G5
brown-eyed sunshine lichen	Vulpicida canadensis	S2S3	G3G5
bear-grass herbaceous vegetation	Xerophyllum tenax herbaceous vegetation	S1S2	GNR
linear-leaved montia	Montia linearis	S2	G5
alpine meadow groundsel	Packera subnuda var. subnuda	S2	G5

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Table B.6

Additional Invertebrate Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that are Globally Rare but not restricted to just SW Alberta, they are found in other areas of Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK	
Gillette's checkerspot	Euphydryas gillettii	S2	G3	invertebrate

Table B.7

Additional Invertebrate and Fungi Species that are outside of the Species at Risk Listing Process that are Ranked or Watched through Nature Serve and/or ACIMS: Species that are not globally rare, but are rare and are found in other areas outside of SW Alberta in Alberta.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_RANK	G_RANK	
western meadow fritillary	Boloria epithore	S2	G5	invertebrate
Moss's elfin	Callophrys mossii	S1	G4	invertebrate
Sheridan's green hairstreak	Callophrys sheridanii	S1	G5	invertebrate
purple azure	Celastrina echo nigrescens	S1	G5T4	invertebrate
arrowhead blue*	Glaucopsyche piasus	S2	G5	invertebrate
pacific forktail	Ischnura cervula	S2S3	G5	invertebrate
brown earth-crust	Lecidoma demissum	S2	G4G5	fungi
Lorquin's admiral	Limenitis lorquini	S2	G5	invertebrate
little copper	Lycaena phlaeas	S2	G5	invertebrate
woodland skipper	Ochlodes sylvanoides	S2	G5	invertebrate
icarioides blue	Plebejus icarioides	S2S3	G5	invertebrate
oreas comma	Polygonia oreas	S1S2	G5	invertebrate
Acadian hairstreak	Satyrium acadica	S2	G5	invertebrate
striped meadowhawk*	Sympetrum pallipes	S3	G5	invertebrate
thicket hairstreak*	Callophrys spinetorum	S1S2	G5	invertebrate

*Found adjacent to Castle park boundaries.

Appendix C

Current Big Game and Game Bird Seasons

Table C.1

Current Big Game seasons applicable to the Provincial Park and Wildland Provincial Park

WMU400 Seasons – Big Game

Species	Type	Season	License Type
white-tailed deer	Antlered	Archery Only Sept. 1-23	'General' [1]
		General – Sept. 24-Nov 30	'General' [1]
	Antlerless	Archery Only Sept. 1-23	'General' [1]
		General – Nov 1-15	'General' [1]
mule deer	Antlered	Archery Only Sept. 1-23	'Special' [2]
		General – Sept. 24-Nov 30	'Special' [2]
	Antlerless	Archery Only Sept. 1-23	'General' [1]
		General – Sept. 24-Nov 30	'Special' [2]
elk	Antlered (3-point or larger)	Archery Only Sept. 1-16	'General' [1]
		General – Sept. 17-Nov 30	'General' [1]
	Antlerless	Archery Only Sept. 1-16	'General' [1]
		General – Sept. 17-Nov 30	'Special' [2]
moose	Antlered	Archery Only Sept. 1-16	'Special' [2]
		General – Sept. 17-Nov 30	'Special' [2]
goat (three licences in designated GHA's only)		General – Sept. 17-Oct. 31	'Special' [2]
trophy sheep (full curl only)		General – Sept. 7-Oct. 31	'General' [1]
black bear		General – Sept. 1-Nov. 30	'General' [1]
		General – Apr. 1-May. 31	'General' [1]
cougar[3]		General Dec. 1-Feb. 28	'General' [1]

[1] — 'over the counter' licence, no draws required

[2] — Species/class requires a special licence through a draw

[3] — There is currently no fall season in WMU 400 for cougar. The cougar season in specific WMUs may close prior to the closing date on this table. There is a male quota and a female quota. If either the male quota or the female quota for those WMUs is reached, the season will remain open until the other quota is filled. Before hunting cougar in any WMU, hunters must ensure that the season in that WMU remains open by calling the toll-free cougar hotline.

Table C.2

Current Big Game seasons applicable to the Provincial Parks and Wildland Provincial Park

WMU400 Seasons – Big Game

Species	Season	Daily Limit[1]	Possession Limit[1]
snow or Ross's geese[2]	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16 Mar. 15 – Jun. 15	50 combined	None
Canada or white-fronted geese[2]	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	8	24
ducks, coots and snipe[2]	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	8	24
male pheasant[2]	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	2	6
ruffed grouse	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	5	15
spruce grouse	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	5	15
sharp-tailed grouse[2]		5	15
ptarmigan	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	5	15
blue grouse	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	5	15
gray partridge[2]	Sept. 1 – Jan. 15	5	15
Merriam's turkey	Mar. 1 – Mar. 31	1	1

[1] — See *Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations* for specific species limit and possession requirements

[2] — It is unlikely that these species will see much, if any, pursuit within the park boundaries. Others, with the exception of turkeys, are likely taken mostly as incidental prey by big game hunters.

Appendix D

Interim Facility Zones and Intended Uses

Castle - Provincial Park and Wildland

Facility Zones

1:225,000

km
0 2.5 5 10

Castle Designations
- Castle Provincial Park
- Castle Wildland

Castle - Facility Zones
- Facility Zone
- Facility Zone

Other Park Designations
- National Park
- Provincial Park
- Ecological Reserve
- Provincial Recreation Area

Castle Mountain Resort
- Castle Mountain Resort

Base Features - Roads*
- ROAD-PAVED-4 LANE or DIVIDED
- ROAD-PAVED-UNDIV-1 or 2 LANE
- ROAD-GRAVEL-1 or 2 LANE

Produced Jan 16, 2017 by Parks Division, Alberta Environment and Parks.
Base data provided by the Government of Alberta under the Alberta Open Government License of November 2014.
Cadastral-Dispositions data provided by Alberta Data Partnerships.
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Base Features - Roads* (Unimproved and unclassified roads/truck trails have been removed from this map.)

Alberta Alberta Parks

Island Lake Provincial Recreation Area
Coleman
Blairmore
Ptolemy Creek
Bellevue
Hillcrest Mines
Crowsnest River
Lundbreck
Cowley
Oldman Dam Provincial Recreation Area
Oldman River
Pincher Creek
Castle River
Lynx Creek
Willoughby Ridge
Carbondale River
Maverick Hill
Lost Creek
Lynx Creek
Lost Creek
Castle Falls
Carbondale Hill
Cherry Hill
Castle Provincial Park
Castle Wildland
North Kootenay Pass
O'Hagen Junction
Castle River Bridge
Castle Confluence
West Castle River
Syncline Mountain
Beaver Mines Lake
Gardiner Creek
Beauvais Lake Provincial Park
West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve
Mill Creek
Pincher Creek
Butcher's Lake
Grizzly Creek
Castle River
Bathing Lake
Castle Mountain Resort
West Castle River
Castle Wildland
S. Drywood Creek
Bovin Lake
Spionkop Creek
Yarrow Creek
Columbia
Waterton Lakes National Park
British

Facility Zones in the Provincial Park

1. **Beaver Mines Lake**
   - Encompasses the existing boy scout camp, the former provincial recreation area (camping and day-use) and an interim area for designated rustic grouping.
   - The facilities in this zone may include the existing camp sites, washrooms, boy scout camp amenities, fire rings, garbage receptacles, day-use areas and a trail head.
   - The new rustic group camp area will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.

2. **Syncline Mountain**
   - Intended use is rustic group camp areas south of the road and a potential yurt site north of the road.
   - The new rustic group camp area will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.
   - The potential yurt sites will have pads, picnic tables, fire rings, garbage receptacle and central washrooms.

3. **West Castle River**
   - Covers the former provincial recreation area and includes day-use/staging areas, 2 groups camps, parking, washrooms and garbage receptacles.

4. **Castle Confluence**
   - Intended use if for Visitor Services and park operations (no camping).
   - This is a newly defined facility zone that is expected to contain a parks yard, visitor information services (personal and non-personal), firewood and permit sales, staff accommodation areas, garbage receptacles, and washrooms.
   - The physical size of this zone will be fine-tuned and reduced once the initial environmental review is complete and appropriate setbacks are established along the river.

5. **Castle River Bridge**
   - This facility zone encompasses the former provincial recreation area and contains camping and day-use facilities such as washrooms, fire rings, garbage receptacles and parking.

6. **O'Hagen Junction**
   - This facility zone is new and will provide for tenting-only rustic group camping experiences.
   - The infrastructure may include a parking area, tent pads, a communal cooking area, food storage containers and washrooms.

7. **Carbondale Hill**
   - This facility zone is new and will provide for rustic group camping experiences.
   - Rustic group camp areas will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.

8. **Castle Falls**
   - This facility zone encompasses the previous PRA and includes a rustic group camping node west of the road.
   - Existing camping sites will be retained or enhanced within the existing footprint.
   - Site amenities include fire rings, picnic tables, washrooms and garbage receptacles.
   - The new rustic group camp area will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.

9. **Maverick Hill**
   - This facility zone is new and will provide for rustic group camping experiences.
   - Rustic group camp areas will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.

Facility Zones in the Wildland Provincial Park

10. **Lynx Creek**
    - This facility zone encompasses the former provincial recreation area and contains camping and day-use facilities such as washrooms, fire rings, garbage receptacles and parking.

11. **Cherry Hill**
    - This facility zone encompasses the former provincial recreation area and contains camping and day-use facilities such as washrooms, fire rings, garbage receptacles and parking.

12. **North Kootenay Pass**
    - This facility zone is new and will provide for tenting-only rustic group camping experiences and a staging area for day-use.
    - The infrastructure may include a parking area, tent pads, a communal cooking area, food storage containers and washrooms.

13. **Lost Creek**
    - This facility zone encompasses an existing snowmobile shelter and staging area; no new amenities are expected.
    - Camping will not be permitted at this site; day-use only.

14. **Willoughby Ridge**
    - This facility zone is new and will provide for rustic group camping experiences.
    - Rustic group camp areas will be hardened off and have picnic tables, fire rings, central washroom and garbage and will accommodate between 3 and 6 RV units.

1. **Butcher Lake**
    - Establishment and maintenance of facilities for day-use only that will facilitate fishing and picnicking.
    - Examples of infrastructure includes picnic tables, washrooms, parking, docks, garbage receptacle and hiking/walking trails.

2. **Bathing Lake**
    - Establishment and maintenance of facilities for day-use only that will focus on providing a barrier-free access for fishing.
    - Examples of infrastructure include picnic tables, washrooms, accessible trail around the lake (something that is durable, low maintenance and accessible by all), parking, docks and garbage receptacles.

3. **Bovin Lake**
    - Designated backcountry campsites and day-use area.
    - Examples of infrastructure include rustic tent sites, fire rings, bearsafe food storage and washrooms.

4. **Ptolemy Creek**
    - The intent of this zone is to formalize a staging area for recreational day-use activities.
    - Infrastructure may include a parking area, washrooms, and picnic tables.

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