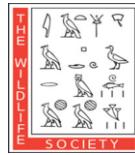




ACTWS
Alberta Chapter of
The Wildlife Society



BCTWS
British Columbia Chapter of
The Wildlife Society



Mr. Shawn Cardiff
Integrated Land Use Policy & Planning Manager
Jasper Field Unit
P.O. Box 10
Jasper, AB
T0E 1E0

30 April 2019

Re: Mountain Park Management Planning — Key Topics

Dear Mr. Cardiff:

The Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society, including our Alberta and British Columbia Provincial chapters represent over 700 wildlife professionals from across Canada and are a part of a broader network of leaders in wildlife science, management, and conservation across North America and beyond. We would like to add our voice to the process of scoping topics of interest to Canadians as you embark on a round of management planning for the Rocky Mountain national parks.

Throughout its history, Parks Canada has been a world leader in wildlife management and protection. Given the Agency's legislative commitment to considering ecological integrity before all other elements of a park's operations, we urge you to include the implications of increased visitation on habitat suitability for wildlife in national parks in your ongoing planning process. To this end, we encourage you to include measurement, reporting and mitigate of the impacts of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) in park management plans.

Decades of research has shown that wildlife habituation¹, as well as Parks Canada's own experience with managing people in wilderness settings², necessitates careful attention to human behaviour and animal populations where encounters with wildlife are a desirable and promoted visitor experience. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the mountain national parks where bear and elk jams along roadways occupy the public imagination, and encounters with wildlife in townsites and campgrounds are a thrilling, albeit dangerous experience.

¹ Bejder, L. et al. (2009) Impact assessment research: use and misuse of habituation, sensitisation and tolerance in describing wildlife responses to anthropogenic stimuli. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 395, 177–185.; Geffroy, B. et al. (2017) Physiological and Behavioral Consequences of Human Visitation. In *Ecotourism's Promise and Peril: A Biological Evaluation* (Blumstein, D.T. et al. eds), pp. 9–27, Springer International Publishing.

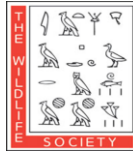
² Bath, A. et al. (2019) Wildlife-Human Interactions in National Parks in Canada and the USA. *Social Science Research Review* 4 (1), 1–32.; Waithaka, J., Parks Canada's Protected Area Management Approaches that Prevent or Minimise Human Wildlife Conflicts, World Parks Congress, www.worldparkscongress.org, Sydney, Australia, 2014.

ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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As an organization committed to improving wildlife management through the application of reliable, scientific knowledge, we recognize the dedication and professionalism of your existing HWC staff. We are nevertheless concerned about the decline in HWC reporting and the reduction of staff dedicated to this important issue. Our concern extends to the potential long-term negative consequences for the viability of wildlife populations, and the safety of visitors in national parks. Notably, these declines appear to be associated with the number of HWC staff following cuts to Parks Canada's operations beginning in 2012. We believe it is necessary that Parks Canada ensure adequate staff are in place to advance HWC science and management through progressive policies and operations that reflect current knowledge. We perceive this round of mountain park management planning to be an opportunity to revisit this policy decision, and we urge Parks Canada to reallocate resources to this important issue.

As you scope themes for inclusion in the new management plans, we urge you to include the roles of visitation, HWC, adaptive management and science in your discussions and subsequent planning documents. This means seeking public feedback on: 1. Increasing HWC staff within the Resource Conservation function, 2. Reinstating funding for programs to collect scientific data on HWC across the mountain national parks, 3. Reinvestment in social science capacity within Parks Canada to measure and report on the effects of changes in human use, and 4. Re-engaging with the wildlife management community across Alberta and Canada towards continuous improvement of HWC management practices within and outside of national parks.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute at this early stage in your park management planning process, and we look forward to contributing as planning proceeds. If you would like further context, or would like to meet to discuss our ideas, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

X

Andrea Morehouse, PhD
 ACTWS President

X

J. Scott Yaeger, MSc
 BCTWS President
 Signed by: scott.yaeger@gov.bc.ca

X

Rick Baydack, PhD
 CSTWS Past President

- cc: Sheila Luey, Senior Strategic Policy & Planning Advisor, Banff Field Unit
- Alex Kolesch, Senior Advisor, Lake Louise, Yoho, Kootenay Field Unit
- Patti Mullins, Policy Manager, Mount Revelstoke-Glacier Field Unit
- Mark Boyce, Chair, Conservation Affairs Committee, ACTWS
- Tyler Muhly, Chair, Conservation Affairs Committee, BCTWS
- Chris Smith, Chair, Conservation Affairs Committee, CSTWS

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