

Provisional Guidelines for New Recreational Activities in Jasper National Park

Fall 2011

Background

Millions of visitors have experienced Jasper National Park while taking part in a recreational activity. Providing visitors with opportunities to participate in recreational activities is one way to encourage meaningful and enjoyable visits that contribute to a sense of connection to place.

Parks Canada recently concluded national assessments of several new recreational activities to determine whether or not they can occur in Parks Canada’s protected heritage places. The activities were selected for assessment based on interest expressed by the public, stakeholders, and individual national parks and national historic sites. National guidelines for the activities were approved by the Minister of the Environment in September 2010. Individual parks and sites may now carry out local assessments of these activities to determine whether or not they may occur in that park or site and the conditions under which they may take place.

Banff and Yoho national parks conducted the first local assessment of a new recreational activity—interpreted, guided via ferrata tours—in November 2010. Based on feedback from that assessment, the mountain national parks (Jasper, Banff, Kootenay, Glacier, Mt. Revelstoke, Waterton Lakes and Yoho) assessed and developed guidelines on a mountain-park-basis for all the nationally-approved activities, instead of carrying out individual local assessments for each activity.

This approach respects the unique identity of each park, while ensuring:

- that new activities are not assessed in isolation from one another and from established (traditional) activities
- consistency in decision-making among the different mountain parks
- consistency in the application of the Parks Canada zoning system to new recreational activities
- consideration of cumulative effects and park priorities for visitor experience

The mountain park guidelines build on and refine the national guidelines. They have been further tailored to reflect the unique context of Jasper National Park. Parks Canada is now inviting comments on the *Provisional Guidelines for New Recreational Activities in Jasper National Park*. This document is available on-line at: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/jasper/ne/ne4.aspx>

Table of Contents

Background	1
Focus on New Recreational Activities	2
The Big Picture	2
Management Plan Direction	2
Park Zoning	3
Strategic Environmental Assessment	4
Guided Interpreted Tours	5
Paragliding and Hang Gliding	8
Traction Kiting	11
Mountain Biking	13
Implementation Strategy	16



Focus on New Recreational Activities

New recreational activities offer the potential to reach segments of the Canadian population that are priorities for Parks Canada: urban Canadians, youth and new Canadians. Young urban Canadians and new Canadians represent growing segments of the population; they may also be less familiar with national parks and national historic sites than previous generations.

Reaching youth and new Canadians and building support for heritage protection is essential to ensuring the future of our national parks. Participating for the first time in a new activity located in the park provides a window to the many other possibilities the park offers. For many, this window may act as a bridge to developing a life-long connection.

New activities can also provide more opportunities for new and current visitors to experience national parks. However, these activities need to be managed with the same care and attention as existing activities.

Management Plan Direction

The *Jasper National Park Management Plan* (2010) supports the introduction of new activities and facilities subject to specific criteria, while prioritizing the renewal and refreshing of existing activities and facilities. The plan commits Parks Canada to:

Develop, support, and promote new events and recreational activities that:

1. Promote public understanding and appreciation of Rocky Mountain ecosystems and history, and Parks Canada’s mandate.
2. Involve a diverse range of the park’s partners and stakeholders in their development and delivery.
3. Support outstanding visitor experiences.
4. Respect the park’s character and area concepts.
5. Support relevant ecological and cultural resource protection goals.

The Big Picture

Jasper National Park is home to a multitude of recreational activities. Some, like horseback riding and canoeing, have a long history in the park that pre-dates its establishment. Others are more recent. Mountain biking and ice walks in Maligne Canyon date back to the 1980s; geo-caching has been permitted since 2007. Many of the larger, commercial facilities, such as Marmot Basin Ski Area and Whistlers SkyTram were established in the 1960s. A number of policies related to existing recreational activities have been reviewed and updated recently and are priorities for implementation.

For example, a multi-year planning process for the Three Valley Confluence concluded in 2009 with an approved plan for the multi-use trail network around the Jasper townsite. Trail improvements and adjustments outlined in the plan are being implemented as funding permits.

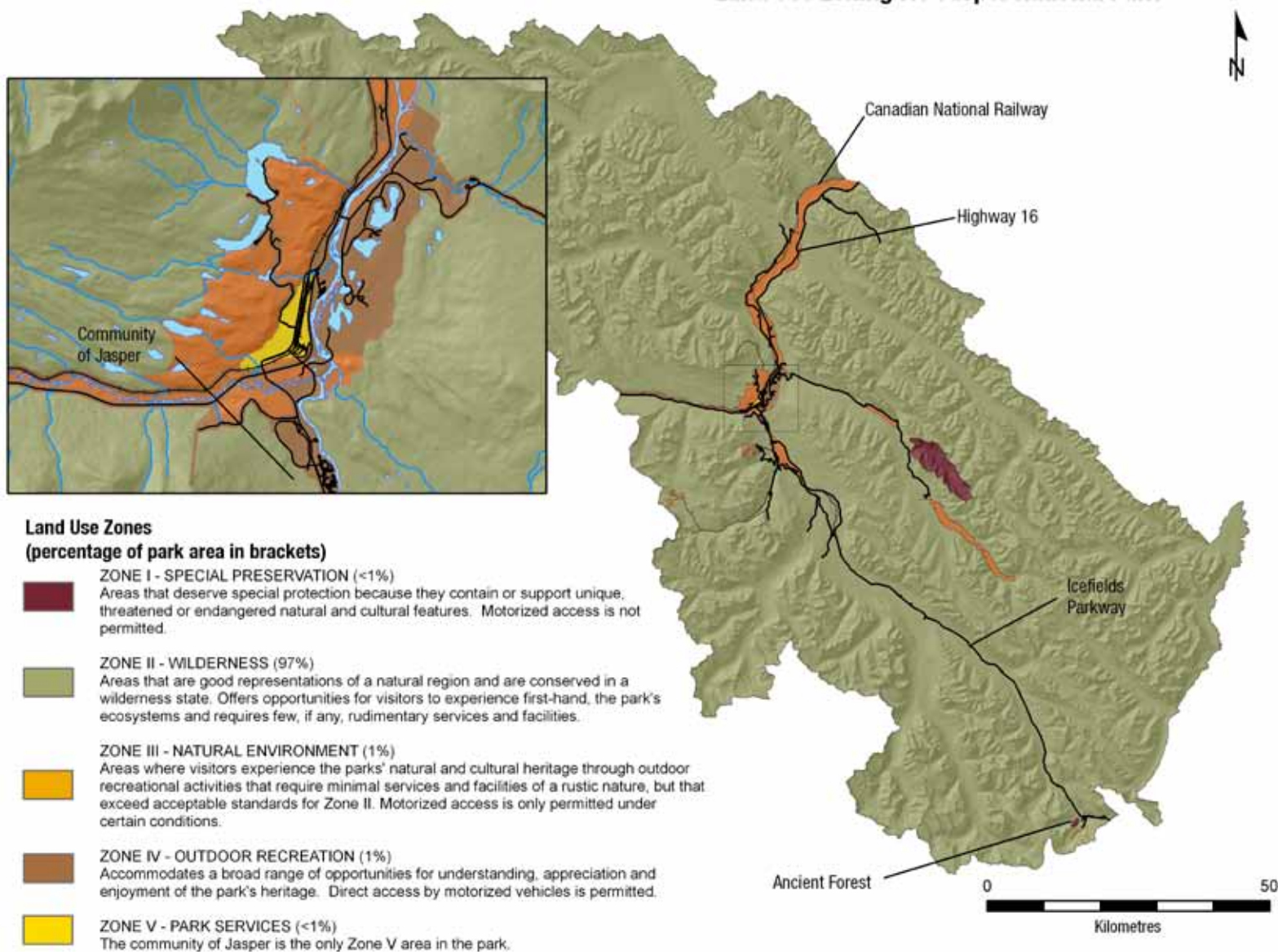
Parks Canada worked with an Advisory Group to develop the Icefields Parkway Strategy (2009). Planning focused on enhancing visitor experiences along the roadway and adjacent opportunities, facilities and services. Improvements to the parking lot at the Icefields Centre and the Toe of the Glacier are just a few of the projects that have resulted from this collaborative planning process.

Refreshing existing facilities and renewing existing products will continue to be the focus for Jasper National Park.

Proposals may be evaluated through a structured public review process.

Additionally, the management plan divides Jasper National Park into six distinct areas and sets visitor experience, resource protection and education objectives for each area. New activities must be consistent with the area strategies and general management plan direction.

Land Use Zoning for Jasper National Park



Park Zoning

During the 2009 review of the management plan, concerns were expressed about the potential effects of new recreational activities and events on the park environment and other visitors. Parks Canada was urged to better define “non-traditional uses” and set clear boundaries in terms of the types of activities and associated development that would be considered. The mountain park guidelines respond to this feedback by setting out what activities will be considered where and the conditions under which they may occur.

Some activities may be appropriate in certain areas of the park, but not in others. Zoning is a key tool used to manage development and recreational use of the park. The national parks zoning system contains five zones. A description of each zone and a map depicting their location in Jasper National Park is provided in the figure above. The provisional guidelines set out the zones in which recreational activities may occur.



Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the mountain park guidelines for new recreational activities was conducted in accordance with the Cabinet Directive on the *Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*. Strategic environmental assessment is a tool used to ensure that environmental considerations are systematically assessed before policy decisions are made.

The key findings of the strategic environmental assessment are:

1. New recreational activities have the potential to contribute to visitor experience in ways that are consistent with the character of place that is unique or representative of the mountain parks' natural and cultural environments.
2. Site-specific impacts of new activities to vegetation, wildlife and visitor experience resources and values can be dealt with effectively by considering location, design, management and mitigation measures and visitor education.
3. Cumulative impacts of new recreational activities may be largely addressed through the application of management plan area concepts, park zoning systems and the mitigations of the SEA. The key aspects of managing potential impacts to wildlife and visitor experience are reflected in the provisional guidelines.

For More Information

For more information about the public review process, please contact:

Pam Clark, Manager, Visitor Experience, Jasper National Park, at (780) 852-6193 or pam.clark@pc.gc.ca

or

Amber Stewart, Land Use Planner, Jasper National Park, at (780) 852-6147 or amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca

Understanding the Guidelines

Each guideline is followed by a bracketed letter or letters. The letter tells you where the guideline originated: whether it was developed nationally or by the mountain parks or is unique to Jasper National Park.

(N) = National Guideline: National guidelines apply to the activity anywhere it is offered within the national park and national historic site system. These guidelines have been approved by the Minister and cannot be changed by an individual park.

(MP) = Mountain Park Guidelines: These guidelines were developed by the mountain parks (Banff, Jasper, Yoho, Kootenay, Waterton, Mt. Revelstoke and Glacier). They can be adjusted as required to fit the unique context of a particular park.

(JNP) = Jasper National Park Guidelines: These guidelines are specific to Jasper National Park and can be adjusted as required to fit the unique context of this park.

Next Steps

- The public review period for these guidelines starts on Tuesday, November 15, 2011.
- The deadline for comments on the guidelines is Monday, January 31, 2012.
- Parks Canada will revise the guidelines based on public input.
- The Superintendent of Jasper National Park will approve the guidelines.
- Once the guidelines have been approved, Parks Canada will be able to consider proposals for new recreational activities that are consistent with the guidelines.
- Proposals will be subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Proposals may also be required to go through the development review process.



Guided Interpreted Tours: Aerial Adventure Parks, Canopy Tours and Via Ferrata

This class of activity requires infrastructure and includes via ferrata, canopy tours and aerial adventure parks. These activities will only be allowed to take place as guided, interpreted activities. They do not currently exist in Jasper National Park.

Aerial Adventure Parks

Description	Opportunities	Challenges
Elevated paths progress through various obstacles and are equipped with ropes, ladders, suspended bridges, zip lines and via ferrata components. Challenge and ropes courses belong to this category.	<p>To encourage people to test their physical abilities.</p> <p>To enjoy an experience in a natural setting.</p> <p>Like playgrounds, can be very enjoyable to some visitors, such as children.</p>	<p>Less opportunity to encourage connection to the unique landscapes and environments of the mountain national parks, than other types of guided, interpreted tours.</p> <p>Potential impacts to trees, tree-dependent vegetation, wildlife and visitor safety.</p>

Provisional Guidelines for Aerial Adventure Parks

Parks Canada may consider aerial park proposals within existing leases in the mountain national parks provided that the tours are consistent with the management plan, are not stand alone attractions (i.e., are value-added additions to existing opportunities), are small in scale and are secondary/incidental to the existing operation.

Parks Canada will only consider aerial park tour proposals that require new leases or licenses of occupation in under-utilized campgrounds or day use areas, because of the limited ability for these tours to connect visitors to the unique landscapes and environments of the mountain national parks.

Commercial operators may propose playgrounds (small, unsupervised play areas) with characteristics that are similar to an aerial park (e.g. bouldering area. challenge elements close to the ground) under existing Parks Canada environmental assessment and development review policies.

Guidelines applicable to entire class of activity (i.e. aerial adventure parks, canopy tours, via ferrata)

The focus of guided, interpreted tours will be the opportunity to experience and learn about unique mountain national park landscapes (such as dynamic views, cordilleran geology and montane environments). Infrastructure will not be the primary focus of the activity. Infrastructure will be designed to immerse the visitor in the landscape and provide learning opportunities. (MP, JNP)

Management of tours will preferably be assumed by a third party, who must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance. (N)

Education related to park heritage values will be a core component of the experience. Guides will also teach best practices associated with low-impact travel. (MP)



Provisional Guidelines for Aerial Parks (con't)

Commercial operators offering guided interpreted tours will be well versed in Parks Canada's mandate. (N) Guides must be certified by the Interpretive Guides Association (or equivalent) to provide heritage interpretation to participants. (MP)

Access to these tours must be controlled. (N)

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout ongoing management of guided interpreted tours that include these elements. (N)

Design, construction and operation must adhere to applicable industry standards and engineering and other codes as necessary. (N)

Infrastructure will use materials and colours that blend with the natural environment and take advantage of existing landscape and topography to encourage authentic connection to the landscape and to minimize aesthetic impacts. (N)

Resource inventories, assessments and ongoing monitoring will inform the site selection and ongoing management as necessary. (N) Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada. (MP)

Tours will only be considered in areas where the activity is consistent with the area management concepts and visitor experience and protection objectives as outlined in the park management plan. (MP)

Tours will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails etc.) with sufficient capacity as much as possible. (MP)

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered under license of occupation or other agreement. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded, constructed and maintained by operators. Other supporting facilities and operations, such as concession stands and ticketing will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services. (MP)

New or modified staging areas to support these tours can only occur in zones IV and V. (JNP)

In Banff, Jasper, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks, outside of existing leases, the disturbed footprint of development associated with any new licenses of occupation for commercial tours will be offset by at least an equal amount of rehabilitation of lands to a natural state elsewhere in the park. This will ensure no net increase in disturbed footprint. (MP)

Seasonal and daily timing of visitor activities will facilitate wildlife lifecycle requirements. (MP)



Site and route selection will be informed by a detailed survey of:

- Sensitive vegetation species and communities and associated wildlife habitat values, including species at risk, rare and fragile vegetation;
- Special resources (i.e., fossils, iconic landform or den site);
- Cultural resources; and
- Existing visitor activity and values (including viewsapes). (MP)

Potential erosion will be monitored and mitigated on an ongoing basis by the proponent/operator. Active restoration measures will be employed to prevent erosion and restore vegetation affected by construction activities. (MP)

No new roads will be created to support these types of tours. (N)

Operators will be encouraged to provide affordable opportunities for youth and families to participate. (MP)

Guidelines specific to aerial parks

Aerial parks that require a new lease or license of occupation will only be considered in under-utilized campgrounds and day use areas. (JNP) Existing leaseholders and licensees can submit proposals for aerial parks provided they are:

- Consistent with OCA guidelines and other relevant policies;
- Incidental to the existing operation (i.e. value-added or an enhancement to the existing offer); and
- Small in scale. (MP)

Aerial parks can be considered in zones IV and V. They will not be considered in Environmentally Sensitive Sites, zone I, zone II / Declared Wilderness or zone III. (JNP)

Guided, Interpreted Activities that will not be Considered in Jasper National Park

Via Ferrata

Description	Rationale
Via ferrata typically consist of a combination of ladders, rungs, bridges and other structures that take a visitor onto a vertical rock face. Via ferrata can offer a unique opportunity for visitors who may not be able to develop the experience or skills to engage in mountaineering and rock climbing to experience a vertical environment.	Parks Canada will only consider proposals for guided, interpreted via ferrata in Zones III and IV. No suitable locations have been identified in these zones in Jasper National Park that would provide outstanding opportunities to experience the vertical alpine environment. Via ferrata will not be considered for Zone II - only basic user facilities (e.g. trails, wilderness campgrounds) are permitted in Zone II.

Stand-Alone Zip Lines

Description	Rationale
This activity involves a descent from one fixed point to another using a zip line.	Stand alone zip lines are not permitted under the national guidelines for new recreational activities due to the limited opportunity for learning associated with this activity.



Guided, Interpreted Activities that will not be Considered in Jasper National Park

Canopy Tours

Description	Rationale
This activity involves elevated walkways or other infrastructure that take visitors off the ground and allow them to explore the forest canopy.	Canopy tours will not be considered in Jasper National Park, due to the absence of suitable terrain (i.e. trees that are able to support elevated pathways) and little potential for canopy-based interpretation. In Jasper National Park, Douglas fir communities might offer the best prospect for canopy tours, however stands are dispersed throughout the montane and these communities are a priority for habitat restoration.

Non-Motorized Paragliding and Hang Gliding

Non-motorized paragliding and hang gliding have not been permitted in national parks by regulation for at least 30 years.

Description	Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Participants launch from a high point and use a chute or rigid wing to catch rising currents of air. They eventually land at a different location.</p> <p>Hang glider wings are made of rigid or semi-rigid materials and are heavier and less portable than the chutes used by paragliders. However, paragliders are slower than hang gliders.</p> <p>Structured flights: Involve launching and landing at designated sites, which may have some infrastructure, such as a windsock or hardened launching surface.</p> <p>Unstructured flights: Involves launching and landing at undesignated sites.</p> <p>Commercial applications involve offering tandem opportunities to participants who have little or no experience gliding.</p>	<p>To see landscapes from an entirely different perspective; to understand landscapes and landscape change. Flying, self-propelled and silent, over a valley at elevation provides a view and sensations that are not unlike those afforded by a small aircraft or helicopter (without the engine and associated noise and pollution).</p> <p>Hang gliding and paragliding involves considerable skill and preparation. Pilots are directly connected to the environment and are particularly in tune with air currents and weather. Flying provides significant opportunity for personal growth and accomplishment.</p> <p>The world-renowned scenery of the mountain national parks provides unique and spectacular opportunities for these types of experiences.</p>	<p>Potential impacts to fragile vegetation associated with alpine or rocky sites.</p> <p>Disturbances to sensitive species including mountain goats, eagles, grizzly bears and caribou.</p> <p>Visitor safety and user conflicts.</p>



Provisional Guidelines for Hang Gliding and Paragliding

[Note that Parks Canada's National Park Aircraft Access Regulations must be amended prior to hang gliding or paragliding being allowed in any National Park. National guidelines will be approved when this occurs.]

Only non-motorized forms of hang gliding and paragliding will be allowed (no motorized launches/towed launches). (N)

Parks Canada will work with the Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association of Canada and local flying clubs in order to:

- Identify the management approach (structured, unstructured) (N)
- Identify necessary safety measures (N)
- Manage communications with pilots (N)
- Manage potential impacts, including to iconic viewsapes (MP)

Hang gliding and paragliding will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules. (N)

Pilots are required to have proper certification and insurance.¹ (N)

Participants will use existing trails and routes to access areas for hang gliding and paragliding and will respect any existing/new closures or restrictions. (N) A Wilderness Pass is required for overnight use of wilderness areas. (JNP)

No new roads will be created to support hang gliding and paragliding. (N)

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity. (N)

Take offs and landings cannot occur in Environmentally Sensitive Sites or in zone I areas. (MP)
Landings in zone V are not permitted. (JNP)

Unstructured take offs and landings can occur in zone II / Declared Wilderness, III and IV areas. (MP)

Unstructured take offs, landings and flights should avoid disrupting sensitive wildlife (e.g. nesting birds, mountain goats, woodland caribou). (JNP)

Non-commercial structured hang gliding and paragliding launch and land sites must be approved by Parks Canada (N) and will be managed by third parties (i.e., local flying clubs) through a license of occupation. (MP)

Structured hang gliding and paragliding launch and land sites can occur in zone III and IV areas. (MP)

¹ HPAC has secured the authority from Transport Canada to self-regulate its own hang gliding and paragliding activities, subject to Canadian Aviation Regulations. In Canada, all pilots need to be members of HPAC in order to have the applicable Limited Liability coverage or temporary membership based on International Pilot Proficiency Information cards (IPPI).



Provisional Guidelines for Hang Gliding and Paragliding (con't)

Resource inventories, assessments and monitoring will inform site selection and ongoing management as necessary. (N) Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management associated with structured launch/land locations will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator/club and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada. (MP)

Structured launch/land sites will:

- Be located on and make use of durable surfaces;
- Will avoid direct disruption to areas known to be important to wildlife lifecycle requirements (including important mountain goat habitat) and maintain appropriate distance buffers;
- Avoid impact to sensitive species and important resource values;
- Avoid impact to, or alteration of, cultural resources;
- Be located and designed in ways that are sympathetic to the values that connect other visitors to place, and which do not physically displace or diminish other established uses; and
- Avoid disruption of iconic viewsapes. (MP)

Structured launch/land sites will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails etc.) with sufficient capacity as much as possible. (MP)

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered for structured launch and land sites under license of occupation or other agreement. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded and maintained by 3rd parties. Other supporting facilities associated with commercial operations, such as concession stands and ticketing, will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services. (MP)

In Banff, Jasper, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks, outside of existing leases, the disturbed footprint of development associated with new licenses of occupation will be offset by at least an equal amount of rehabilitation of lands to a natural state elsewhere in the park. This will ensure no net increase in disturbed footprint. (MP)

New or modified staging areas to support structured launch and land sites can only occur in zones III, IV and V. (MP)

Commercial tandem operations must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance. (N)

Commercial operators offering tandem tours will be well versed in Parks Canada's mandate. (N) Guides must be certified by the Interpretive Guides Association (or equivalent) to provide heritage interpretation to participants (MP).

In both Banff and Jasper National Parks, no new licenses of occupation will be issued for commercial tandem launch sites. (MP)

Special event proposals will go through normal park approval processes. (MP)



Traction Kiting

You may already have seen this activity in Jasper National Park. Traction kiting does not require any specialized infrastructure, relying instead on existing access and facilities.

Description	Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Kite surfers or skiers harness the wind's energy with a large kite to propel themselves across snow, ice, water or land.</p> <p>Land-based participants stand on a buggy, skateboard or roller skates. Water-based participants use a board similar to a wakeboard or a surfboard.</p> <p>Traction kiting on frozen surfaces is commonly called kite skiing or snow kiting. Kites use the power of a kite to glide over snow or ice while strapped to a snowboard, skis or skates.</p> <p>Given open terrain, kites are able to travel significant distances, particularly over open water or over frozen lakes and snowfields.</p>	<p>To experience and interact with the wind and natural terrain in a natural setting.</p> <p>To build on traction kiting already occurring in many of the mountain national parks.</p> <p>To use an alternate travel mode in the backcountry in winter.</p> <p>To take advantage of the accessible terrain, in the form of large lakes in winter and summer, that exists in Jasper National Park.</p>	<p>Impacts on soil and vegetation from land-based traction kiting.</p> <p>Potential conflicts with overwintering ungulates in certain locations.</p> <p>Impacts on iconic viewsapes.</p> <p>Visitor safety in higher use areas.</p>

Provisional Guidelines for Traction Kiting

Participants will use existing trails and routes to access areas for traction kiting and will respect any existing/new closures or restrictions. (N)

No new roads will be created to support traction kiting. (N)

Kiting in any season will be limited to durable surfaces (i.e., snow, ice, water, gravel, parking lots, playing fields in communities etc.), including the consideration of appropriate depth of snow/ice cover. (MP) Traction kiting on grasslands will not be permitted. (JNP)

Water-based traction kiting will avoid direct disruption to areas known to be important to waterfowl lifecycle requirements. (MP) Parks Canada will develop web-based information for users to identify areas and time periods to be avoided. (JNP)

Water and snow/ice based traction kiting can take place in zone II / Declared Wilderness, III, IV and V areas. (MP)



Provisional Guidelines for Traction Kiting (con't)

Land based traction kiting can take place in zone III, IV and V areas, but not in zone II. (MP)

Traction kiting cannot take place in Environmentally Sensitive Sites or in zone I areas. (MP)

Winter kiting will avoid disturbance to important ungulate wintering and subnivean wildlife habitat, including consideration of adequate snow or ice cover. (MP)

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity. (N)

Traction kiting will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules. (N)

In areas that have high amounts of traction kiting, Parks Canada will work with local organizations in order to:

- Manage communications with participants; and
- Manage potential impacts of high-use traction kiting areas so that they:
 - Avoid impact to sensitive species and important resource values (N);
 - Avoid impact to, or alteration of, cultural resources (N);
 - Not physically displace or diminish the value of other established uses (MP); and
 - Avoid disruption of iconic viewscales. (MP)

Commercial operations must obtain appropriate permits and licenses, and adequate liability insurance. (N)

Commercial operators will be well versed in Parks Canada's mandate. (N) Guides/instructors must be certified by the Interpretive Guides Association (or equivalent) to provide heritage interpretation to participants (MP).

Commercial operations will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails etc.) with sufficient capacity as much as possible. (MP)

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered for commercial traction kiting operations under license of occupation or other agreement. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded and maintained by the proponent/operator. Other supporting facilities associated with commercial operations, such as concession stands and ticketing, will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services. (MP)

Resource inventories, assessment and ongoing monitoring will inform ongoing management as necessary. (N) Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management of special events or commercial operations will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada. (MP)



Provisional Guidelines for Traction Kiting (con't)

New or modified staging areas to support traction kiting can only occur in zones III, IV and V. (MP)

Special event proposals will go through normal park approval processes. (MP)

Mountain Biking

Although mountain bikes have been a part of Jasper’s landscape for thirty years, this activity does not occur in all national parks. Emerging aspects of the sport, such as downhill biking, the use of technical trail features and the establishment of bike parks, had never been formally reviewed by Parks Canada.

Description	Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Cross-country is the main form of mountain biking in Jasper and will be the principal form of mountain biking offered in national protected heritage places. We will continue to focus on designing, creating and managing sustainable multiple-use trails. Implementation of the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan will address the needs of mountain bikers and other recreational users around the Jasper townsite and is a priority for implementation. Cross-country riding is off-road cycling using specially adapted bikes, typically on dirt, gravel, or natural surface trails, from wide gravel roads to narrow “single track” paths.</p>	<p>To build on an already popular and established activity in most of the mountain national parks and a part of mountain community culture.</p> <p>To provide a chance to experience nature and landscapes, relax, and have fun doing a physically rewarding activity that provides a sense of growth and accomplishment.</p>	<p>Impacts on soils and vegetation.</p> <p>Conflicts with wildlife and other visitors using trails (e.g. hikers, horseback riders).</p> <p>Most mountain biking trails are hiking trails. The planning and development of hiking/biking trails needs to be integrated and reflect the different user needs and respond to ecological concerns.</p>

Provisional Guidelines for Mountain Biking

Cross country will be the principal form of mountain biking offered. Parks Canada will not offer downhill-specific trails for mountain biking due to visitor safety concerns and potential wildlife conflict. (N)

Mountain biking will only be offered on trails that have been approved and identified (by affirmative signage) by Parks Canada. (N)

Participants will respect any existing/new closures or restrictions. (N)

No new roads will be created to support mountain biking. (N)



Provisional Guidelines for Mountain Biking

Resource inventories, assessments and monitoring will inform trail selection and ongoing management of mountain biking as necessary. (N) Costs for resource surveys, environmental assessments, ongoing monitoring and active management of special events or commercial operations will be the responsibility of the proponent/operator and will be based on terms of reference provided by Parks Canada. (MP)

Mountain biking will not be allowed on trails where the increase in visitor activity would result in unacceptable impacts to important wildlife habitat areas (i.e., critical caribou habitat, core grizzly bear areas etc.). (MP)

Trail development and improvements will be informed by an analysis of vulnerable species and seasonal habitat use and importance. (MP)

Active restoration measures will be employed to prevent erosion and restore vegetation in areas affected by informal trail development activities. (MP)

Safety, risk and liability will be considered throughout the ongoing management of the activity. (N)

Mountain biking will be practiced according to industry/association standards and rules. (N)

Heritage interpretation, educational messaging and etiquette and safety information will be incorporated into the mountain biking offer. (N)

Parks Canada will work with local bike organizations to help manage potential impacts associated with cross-country mountain biking, including:

- Avoiding impacts to sensitive species and important resource values;
- Avoiding impact to, or alteration of, cultural resources,
- Discouraging the development of informal trails and reducing trail conflict. (MP)

Mountain biking can take place on approved, signed trails in zone II / Declared Wilderness, zone III, zone IV and zone V areas. (N)

Mountain biking can not take place in Environmentally Sensitive Sites or zone I areas. (MP)

The development or construction of technical trail features (TTFs) may be considered where impacts to sensitive vegetation or soils can be avoided or where technical features may be determined to provide more effective protection. (MP)

TTFs will be designed in a way that respect the heritage area's character of place and will appeal to different skill levels. (N)

Technical trail features will be designed to facilitate the convenient passage by all trail users. (MP)

Technical Trail Features are obstacles or design elements on a mountain biking trail that improve trail flow or add difficulty in order to challenge the skill of trail users.

Natural features already exist along a trail. Examples include the use of rock slabs, boulders, rock gardens, and fallen trees.

Enhanced natural features involve moving natural materials such as rocks, logs etc. to create drop-offs, rock gardens, boulder rides, log pyramids and log rides.

Engineered or Human-Made TTF are constructed structures, including ladder bridges, wooden ramps, teeter-totters, etc.



Provisional Guidelines for Mountain Biking (con't)

TTFs can be created using existing natural features , enhanced natural features or engineered / human-made structures :

- The use of existing natural features can occur in zones II, III, IV and V.
- The use of enhanced natural features can only occur in zones III, IV and V.
- The use of engineered or human-made structures can only occur in bike parks and in zones III, IV and V. Higher maintenance, cost and liability must be taken into account when considering their addition to a trail or bike park. (N)

The design, construction, operation and maintenance of TTFs must adhere to applicable industry standards and codes as necessary. (N)

Bike parks can only occur in zones IV and V. Priority will be given to locations with existing supporting infrastructure and to disturbed sites. (N)

Commercial operators will be well versed in Parks Canada's mandate. (N) Guides/instructors must be certified by the Interpretive Guides Association (or equivalent) to provide heritage interpretation to participants. (MP)

Bike Parks are generally a variety of natural obstacles such as rocks and logs, constructed features such as ladder bridges, pumptracks and mounds of dirt for jumping over, all arranged in a controlled and defined area.

Commercial operations will make use of existing facilities (parking, toilets, trails etc.) with sufficient capacity as much as possible. (MP)

Where supported by park management plan direction, new or modified staging areas could be considered for commercial mountain biking operations under license of occupation or other agreement. These would include only basic infrastructure (parking, picnic tables, and toilets). New or existing staging areas requiring modification will be funded and maintained by the proponent/operator. Other supporting facilities associated with commercial operations, such as concession stands and ticketing, will be managed off-site in areas already leased or licensed for commercial services. (MP)

New or modified staging areas to support mountain biking can only occur in zones III, IV and V. (MP)

Special event proposals will go through normal park approval processes. (MP)

Parks Canada will consider competitive biking events only on existing roads. (MP)

Elements of Mountain Biking that will not be Considered in Jasper National Park

Mountain Bike Racing

Description	Rationale
A competitive event where mountain bikers are timed on a circuit.	Parks Canada will not consider mountain bike races, due to the potential for soil erosion, impacts to vegetation and conflicts with other trail users. This would not preclude non-competitive rally where bikes are used primarily as a mode of transportation and in small numbers.



Elements of Mountain Biking that will not be Considered in Jasper National Park

Downhill Mountain Biking

Description	Rationale
<p>This gravity-assisted discipline involves manoeuvring a sustained descending trail. The terrain for this trail can be steep and often includes jump, drops, rock gardens, and roots. Participants are seeking challenge and speed. Due to the bikes' heavy frames, it is very difficult to bike uphill. Bikers tend to seek road access for a vehicle shuttle, or locations with a lift or gondola, to bring them to the top of a downhill trail.</p>	<p>Parks Canada will not offer downhill-specific trails for mountain biking due to visitor safety concerns and potential wildlife conflicts. Given the direction to focus on cross-country mountain biking, Parks Canada will be closing and rehabilitating a loop trail off of the Marmot Basin Road that is used primarily for downhill mountain biking. The informal trail is located in an important wildlife corridor used seasonally by bears.</p>

Community Gardening

A community garden is a publicly owned parcel of land used by individuals and groups for growing ornamentals or produce for non-commercial use. The community of Jasper has a long tradition of gardening. A community garden already exists in the townsite. The national guidelines apply to Jasper and the other mountain parks; no further direction is provided in the mountain park guidelines.

Implementation Strategy

Parks Canada will develop an implementation strategy for these activities once the guidelines for Jasper National Park have been finalized. Funding priorities will be set during annual business planning for the park.

Aerial Adventure Parks

Once guidelines for Jasper National Park have been approved, proponents may submit proposals to Parks Canada for consideration. If they are consistent with Parks Canada policies and objectives, the proposals would enter the Environmental Assessment and Development Review processes.

Hang Gliding and Paragliding

Parks Canada will work with the Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association of Canada to explore parameters for the introduction of unstructured hang gliding and paragliding to Jasper National Park. Depending on the results of unstructured flying in the park and interest from recreational users and commercial proponents, Parks Canada may assess the feasibility of introducing a structured site and/or commercial applications.

Traction Kiting

Parks Canada will monitor this activity to see how popular it becomes. Information and orientation material will be developed to assist Parks Canada staff and recreational users.

Mountain Biking

Parks Canada will continue to implement the Three Valley Confluence Trail Plan. Mountain biking will continue to be permitted on the following trails outside of the Three Valley Confluence: the portion of the North Boundary Trail from Celestine Lake Road to Rock Lake; Whirlpool Road to Tie Camp Campground; Sunwapta Falls to Fortress Lake; Geraldine Fire Road; Fryatt Trail to Lower Fryatt campsite; and the South Boundary Trail between Beaver Lake parking area and Jacques Lake.