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# *News Release      Communiqué*

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## **Government of Canada Announces Public Consultation on Reintroducing Plains Bison to Banff National Park**

*Parks Canada to begin dialogue with the province of Alberta, First Nations,  
and interested Canadians on an exciting new stewardship initiative*

**Banff, Alberta, January 27, 2012** – The Honourable Peter Kent, Canada’s Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, today announced the start of public consultation that will shape and inform Parks Canada’s plans to restore plains bison to Banff National Park.

“This is an important step in delivering on Parks Canada’s commitment of restoring the ecological integrity of Banff National Park,” said Minister Kent. “With the Government of Alberta, Aboriginal people, local stakeholders and others, we will be working toward reintroducing the magnificent bison to Canada’s first national park.”

This consultation will provide Canadians with an opportunity to be involved in the stewardship of their national parks. The public’s input helps ensure that potential impacts of reintroducing bison, both in the park and on neighbouring lands, are considered.

“The plains bison were, for thousands of years, the dominant herbivore on the East Slopes of what is now Banff National Park,” said Minister Kent. “Restoring the full complement of native species is an essential conservation goal of Canada’s national parks. Returning the plains bison is a critical step forward for Banff National Park, while offering an opportunity for visitors to discover an important part of Banff’s heritage.”

Parks Canada will use a three-phased consultation approach. The first phase will involve intensive work with the provincial government, key stakeholders and First Nations in Alberta to gather feedback, address concerns, develop mitigation strategies and draft a preliminary bison reintroduction plan. Phase two will engage the broader public in providing feedback on the preliminary plan. The final phase is to consider public comment in the development of a final action plan. Once approved, the Banff National Park Bison Restoration Plan will be shared with the public and made available broadly.

Some key conservation initiatives over the past few decades have provided a solid foundation for bison reintroduction in Banff National Park. These include an extensive prescribed burn program to restore productive grassland habitats, and a sharp reduction in wildlife mortality along the Trans-Canada Highway as the result of the construction of a network of wildlife fencing and safe crossing structures.

Parks Canada works to ensure Canada’s historic and natural heritage is protected and, through a network of 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites, and four national marine conservation areas, invites Canadians and people around the world to engage in personal moments of inspiring discovery at our treasured natural and historic places.

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For more information on the public consultation to restore bison to Banff National Park, please visit [parksCanada.gc.ca](http://parksCanada.gc.ca).

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