

Communications

Introduction

Providing current information about provincial parks is an important aspect of visitor service management. Information about the parks will serve a number of functions. Firstly, it will assist visitors in planning their visit. Secondly, this information will promote outdoor etiquette, respect for the natural environment and careful appreciation of the wide variety of values found within the park. Thirdly, it will foster an awareness of the cultural and conservation values and features of this area.

Height of the Rockies and Elk Lakes are primarily wilderness parks which provide opportunities for recreation in semi-primitive and primitive settings. They offer challenges to the backcountry enthusiast who enjoys an experience in a rugged and remote area. The information provided about these parks will reflect their wilderness recreation emphasis.

Marketing and Promotion

Promotion of a park can affect the level of use and the type of visitors it attracts. Consequently, promotion strategies must be consistent with the management plan of the parks.

The conservation significance and wilderness values of the parks must be incorporated in strategies for marketing. There are concerns that promoting backcountry recreation can lead to significant increases in visitors, which in turn can affect park resources and wilderness qualities. As a result, care must be taken in the type of promotion and marketing programs undertaken. An aggressive marketing campaign is not appropriate for these parks.

In addition to BC Parks, operators and tourism agencies promote the parks. Coordination is needed to ensure that promotional information is consistent, accurate and in keeping with park objectives, and that marketing is consistent with the role of the park and objectives of the management plan.

Objectives:

To ensure that promotion and marketing is consistent and appropriate for these wilderness parks.

To portray the parks' role in conserving important habitats and biodiversity.

To provide accurate and appropriate information for low impact backcountry recreation opportunities.

Actions:

- Work with commercial operators, tourism associations and the media to portray the park in an appropriate manner and create expectations fitting of a wilderness park.
- Work with commercial operators through a code of conduct to develop a coordinated approach in advertising so as to not unduly promote the park.
- Use an informal approach to promoting and advertising the park.
- Create an information strategy that will focus on maintaining low backcountry use levels.

Pre-trip Planning

Awareness and pre-trip planning information can help to set expectations and influence attitudes and behaviors. Specific information on pre-trip planning can be found at the BC Parks District Office in Wasa, BC. Printed brochures detailing the park resources, facilities, trails and safety considerations can be found at BC Tourism Infocentres.

Due to the variable climate, rugged nature and remoteness of this park, visitors are urged to be especially vigilant in their pre-trip preparations. They are encouraged to seek additional information, including weather reports, and to register their departure and return times at the District Office. Communications from within the park are limited and rescue services are not readily available.

Objectives:

To provide consistent, current and accurate information to visitors to plan their trip to the park.

To clearly indicate to visitors and other tourism outlets that the rugged and remote nature of this park requires special pre-trip planning considerations.

Actions:

- Work with local communities and tourism associations in providing appropriate pre-trip planning information.
- Ensure brochures on Height of the Rockies and Elk Lakes provincial parks are current and accurate.

- Maintain the natural character of the park by limiting any signage to where it is necessary for visitor safety or the protection of sensitive sites.
- Prepare information for backcountry visitors which describes the natural and cultural features of the parks, wilderness recreation etiquette and safety, low impact camping, wildlife viewing techniques, and ways of avoiding bear encounters. The focus will be on pre-trip planning as much as possible.
- Work with National and Alberta Parks to coordinate park information to ensure public information is current and accurate.

Natural and Cultural Heritage Education

These parks represent wilderness areas that protect significant recreation, cultural and natural values. They play an important role in sharing information about the natural processes and features and cultural history that are unique to this area. They also represent several unique themes that could be explored in an education or research program. These include:

Natural Heritage: regional landscapes, role of the parks in the Southern Rocky Mountains ecosystem, conservation biology.

Cultural Heritage: archeological significance of specific sites in the parks, role in First Nations culture, early explorers and travelers, role in guide-outfitting history.

Wilderness Recreation: opportunities available in the park, outdoor safety, wilderness and conservation ethics, human waste disposal, horseback riding etiquette.

Objective:

To share information about the natural, recreational and cultural features and values in the park in order to foster and maintain appreciation and understanding of their significance and the importance of protecting these features and values.

To interpret the cultural heritage for the public's appreciation and education.

Actions:

- Ensure that research relating to the role of First Nations in the parks involves First Nations peoples and the Heritage Conservation Branch. Research opportunities will require a Park Use Permit.
- Produce education and information brochures on the themes described above. In concert with First Nations, develop and present information on aboriginal cultural heritage features and themes of the park.