

TOURISM AND RECREATION SYSTEM PLANNING IN ALBERTA PROVINCIAL PARKS

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Abstract.—Traditionally, system planning in parks and protected areas concentrated on biogeographical concepts, while neglecting tourism and recreation. The existing system plan for parks and protected areas in Alberta, Canada, divides the province into six natural regions based on a geographic classification system (Grassland, Parkland, Foothills, Rocky Mountains, Boreal Forest, and Canadian Shield). This plan also identifies four program goals: preservation, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and heritage tourism. Currently, the goal of preservation is met through the selection and creation of a protected area system covering 27,500 km² within 519 sites and 8 classes of protected area. However, the goals of heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and heritage tourism have yet to be addressed to the same level of depth either in policy or in practice, leaving a major policy gap.

The objective of this research is to fill this policy gap through the development of the tourism and recreation components of the system plan for Alberta Parks and Protected Areas.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Adrian and Adrian (1998) define system planning as “an organized approach to macro-level planning. It is not a new concept, but builds on existing knowledge and approaches. System planning is a framework for understanding and using systems ideas. It is also a vehicle for convincing others. It is much more than data gathering. It must be a dynamic process.” Generally, a system plan provides direction and guidance for all components within a protected area’s organization and the coordination of protected areas with other aspects of land use, resources management, and social development in the region. A system plan includes the history, present condition, and future plan for the protected areas (Adrian & Adrian 1998).

System planning is important to the management and development of broad geographical areas. When applied to parks and protected areas, system planning provides guidance on mechanisms, institutions, and procedures to coordinate the balance of land use and social development across a system of protected areas (Adrian & Adrian 1998). Traditionally, system planning concentrated on biogeographic representation within a park system. Conversely, it neglected tourism and recreation components. The main goal in the management of Canada’s National Parks is the protection and maintenance of ecological integrity. Similarly, the Ontario Parks’ system plan is based upon a biogeographical concept, the forest regions of the province. The province of British Columbia’s protected areas system is also based upon a principle of representing classes of natural areas. None of these system plans establish goals for the creation and management of parks based on tourism or recreation principles. Given the importance of tourism and recreation to the park movement in Canada, it behooves strategic planners to more fully consider these concepts in the next generation of park system plans.

Alberta has a well-established and mature protected areas system. The rapid economic and population growth of the province, and the increasing demands from society for tourism and recreation opportunities in Alberta's protected areas, creates a need for additional strategic considerations in system planning. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework for a protected area system plan based on recreation and tourism goals and objectives for Alberta Parks and Protected Areas.

2.0 ALBERTA PARKS AND PROTECTED SYSTEM

The protected area system in Alberta, including National Parks and Provincial Parks and Protected Areas, now exceeds 8,160,300 hectares or approximately 12.3 percent of the province. The system plan for Alberta Parks divides the province into six natural regions: 1) Aspen Parkland, 2) Boreal Forest, 3) Canadian Shield, 4) Grassland, 5) Foothills, and 6) Rocky Mountains. Within each of these natural regions, Alberta Parks has established a network of protected areas ranging from low intensity to high intensity use. The eight protected area classes in the province include: 1) Willmore Wilderness Park, 2) ecological reserves, 3) wilderness areas, 4) heritage rangelands, 5) wildland parks, 6) provincial parks, 7) natural areas, and 8) provincial recreation areas. These areas provide visitors with the opportunity to participate in heritage appreciation, outdoor recreational activities, and heritage tourism.

The four goals of Alberta's network of parks and protected areas are:

1. Preservation - to preserve, in perpetuity, a network of parks and protected areas that represent the diversity of the province's natural heritage and related cultural heritage.
2. Heritage Appreciation - to provide opportunities to explore, understand, and appreciate Alberta's natural heritage, and to enhance public awareness of our relationship to and dependence upon the natural world.
3. Outdoor Recreation - to provide a variety of natural landscape-dependent outdoor recreation opportunities and related facilities and services.

4. Heritage Tourism - to encourage Alberta residents and visitors to discover and enjoy the province's natural heritage through a variety of outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities, facilities and accommodation services (Alberta Parks 2006).

The first goal, preservation, is the main focus of Alberta Parks' existing system plan. This goal was implemented through the creation of many parks and protected areas during the Special Places Program from 1995 to 1999. This program added 81 new parks to the system, and expanded 13 existing sites for an addition of over 2,000,000 hectares to the system (Alberta Parks 2006b). At the time this paper was written, there was no strategic plan for Alberta's protected areas system dealing with the implementation of the goals of heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and heritage tourism. This policy void is recognized by planners with the park agency and by parks' scholars.

Eagles et al. (2002) define goals as, "the broadly stated social purposes for which a protected areas is established" and "objectives are more explicit statements of what is to be accomplished." Objectives are sub-goals that provide more explicit statements of what is to be accomplished. Schoemaker (1984) provided five foundational characteristics from which to systematically construct objectives: 1) output-oriented, 2) time-bound, 3) specific, 4) measurable, and 5) attainable. "Output-oriented" means that objectives deal with the results of an activity by describing what is to be accomplished, but not how. Time-bound objectives provide the direction to develop the appropriate management actions, and require accountability. Specific objectives should provide all parties with a clear vision of what is to be accomplished. Measurable objectives provide a clear basis for evaluating progress and allow managers to determine where efforts need to be placed in the future. "Attainable" suggests that objectives must be achievable with the available funding and staffing resources, sometimes compromising between the idealistic vision and the reality of the impacts of tourism (Zealand et al. 2005). All goals and objectives should be worded so as to have these characteristics.

To assist with the development of a strategic plan that deals with the three underrepresented elements of the Alberta protected areas goals, the researchers developed a methodology and an approach aimed at adding a visitor-based element to the existing system plan for Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

Three stages of research were utilized to in this policy development. Initially, a broad scanning was undertaken of a large number of potential themes relating to recreation, tourism and visitor management. These themes were derived from the literature. Secondly, these themes were then compared to the current goals and policies of Alberta Parks. This comparison produced a narrowed and focused list of conceptual areas that could have relevance within the Alberta parks and protected areas context. Ultimately the research led to the adoption of four key areas: 1) economics and finance, 2) education and heritage appreciation, 3) outdoor recreation and health, and, 4) marketing and management. Thirdly, policies were developed for each of the four key areas. A three tiered system of specific goals, objectives and tactics was used to provide the structure for each topic area. These topic areas were condensed into a concise final planning document. Each of the four key areas is dealt with in turn. Goals, objectives, and tactics were defined for each and comprise a working policy document.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Economics and Finance Theme

As nature-based tourism rises in popularity, parks and protected area use can have significant economic and financial repercussions for management organizations and local communities. The financial and economic benefits of parks and protected areas to the local community include generating income, improving economic structures, and encouraging entrepreneurial activity. The Federal Provincial Park Council (2002) created a benefit framework for parks and protected areas. The benefits are divided into three categories: personal benefits, which identify all benefits accruing to stakeholders; commercial benefits, which are benefits of a park from the perspective of a defined area (e.g. local community); and societal (or public) benefits, which serve society as a whole (beyond those to stakeholders and businesses).

The World Conservation Union (1998) believes that the total economic value of a protected area consists of its use values and non-use values. There are several ways in which the economic value of a park can be estimated in monetary terms. The Money Generation Model, which is used by the U.S. National Parks Service to inform local communities of the value of nearby parks, can be used to capture the value of the protected area (IUCN 1998). The Department of Canadian Heritage (1999) designed the Provincial Economic Impact Model to estimate both traditional economic impact measurements (e.g., tourism spending, spending on capital development), direct user benefits (e.g., consumer surplus, existence benefits), and societal benefits (e.g., benefits from biodiversity, water production, scientific and educational benefits).

Alberta Parks does not attempt to generate money for the agency or for the government; however, tourism development does have significant positive economic impacts on local and regional communities. Community economic development is a community-based and directed process that combines social and economic development. Community economic development works towards fostering the economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being of communities and regions.

This research proposes two goals for the area of economics and finance within the Alberta Protected Areas System Plan.

Economics and Finance Goal 1: Encourage the creation of tourism-based income for parks, local communities, and the allied public and private sectors.

Objective 1.1: Within the next five years, the tourism-based income of the community located nearest the park entrance should increase by 10 percent. This goal is applicable to those operating parks that are open and available for visitor utilization.

Tactic I: Encourage hospitality service businesses (accommodations, food/beverage, and related services) to develop in the local community.

Tactic II: Encourage recreation service businesses (guiding services, equipment sales and rental, etc.) to develop in the local community.

Tactic III: Encourage the local community to create or re-create a cultural event, recreation opportunity, or tourist attraction that will increase participation rates and attract park visitors.

Objective 1.2: Within the next five years, the tourism-based income of the operating parks should increase by 10 percent.

Tactic I: Charge suitable fees for recreation opportunities provided in the parks.

Tactic II: Provide concession opportunities for the private sector.

Economics and Finance Goal 2: Minimize the economic leakage from expenditures related to parks and protected spending.

Objective 2.1: By 2010, develop and implement a measurement system of the economic impact generated by park tourism in Alberta.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks should work with allied institutions to develop an economic measurement system.

Tactic II: Alberta Parks should publish a financial benefits report on provincial parks every five years.

4.2 Education and Heritage Appreciation Theme

Natural Heritage includes features of the natural environment, consisting of physical and biological formations, habitats, ecological functions, wildlife, or natural sites that have significant value from an aesthetic, scientific, or conservation point of view (UNESCO 1972). Cultural Heritage includes significant elements or structures of human society as architecture, buildings, sites of historical importance, artifacts, or other features representative of cultural, religious, ethnic, or historical values that have significant value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological, or anthropological point of view (UNESCO 1972). In this paper, heritage refers to both natural and cultural heritage.

Education is an important focus of society and has the potential to play a powerful role in protected areas. Education and heritage appreciation within parks can clarify and validate the protection of areas. These protected areas are intrinsically valuable and the

protection and maintenance of these sites and/or artifacts is invaluable for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of future generations. Therefore, by offering education in, for, and about parks and protected areas, public participation can be promoted while encouraging citizens to subscribe to a change in attitude and individual habits that will support environmentally responsible ethics (Blanco 2002).

Parks and protected areas should be viewed as more than areas of nature conservation; rather, they should also be considered as invaluable educational resources with opportunities for heritage appreciation (Blanco 2002). The possibilities for educational opportunities within these areas are incredibly vast. For instance, while visiting parks, people can partake of several interpretive programs or participate in informal environmental educational, and heritage appreciation programs. Some examples of these programs could involve guided hikes presenting local parks, natural and cultural heritage, a discussion with park staff on land management practices, or hands-on exploration about the geology or history of the park (Taylor & Caldarelli 2004). The opportunities to utilize parks and protected areas as learning facilities for guests are present; the challenge is initiating, implementing, and maintaining these programs.

Education is included in the system plan, as it is a priority in the overall plan for Alberta parks and it has not been sufficiently addressed at the policy planning level. System goals will make education an underlying function throughout the parks system. In the context of this section, "base knowledge" is defined as general knowledge such as flora, fauna, wildlife, landforms, and points of historical or cultural interest.

This research proposes three goals for the area of education and heritage appreciation within the Alberta Protected Areas System Plan.

Education and Heritage Appreciation Goal 1: Alberta Parks will provide opportunities to explore, understand, appreciate, and celebrate Alberta's natural and cultural heritage.

Objective 2.1: Within each operating park, the park agency will communicate the historically,

culturally and ecologically significant events, people, landscapes, sites, and themes to all visitors.

Tactic I: Conduct and maintain an inventory of historically, culturally, and ecologically significant sites that exist within the current parks system.

Tactic II: Designate sites as historically, culturally, and ecologically significant in each natural region within the next five years (within existing parks only).

Tactic III: The interpretive staff at each operating park that has such programs will research and design an interpretive program that exemplifies the significant features of the park. The program should be tailored to various age levels and levels of interest. Development of new and updated interpretive programs that exemplify significant features of parks should occur as staff and monetary resources become available.

Education and Heritage Appreciation Goal 2: All visitors to Alberta Parks shall have basic knowledge of Alberta's natural regions and sub-regions.

Objective 2.2: Every Albertan, other Canadian, and international tourist who visits Alberta's parks will gain a base of knowledge of the natural regions and parks they are visiting.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks and the Province of Alberta will promote Alberta natural regions across Canada and to the international community (i.e., travel shows, travel magazines) to develop knowledge of the regions and the parks.

Tactic II: Alberta Parks will maintain an appealing and easy-to-use website that promotes and highlights Alberta natural regions and parks, allowing visitors to begin their educational experience of the parks even before they leave their home.

Objective 2.3: Every Albertan will have a basic knowledge of Alberta's natural regions and parks and will be familiar with the basic knowledge of the natural regions closest to their home.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks will develop information and education programs within the parks concerning Alberta's natural regions.

Tactic II: The interpretive programs in each operating park will be age-specific and family-oriented.

Objective 2.4: Every Albertan student will have a base knowledge of Alberta's natural regions and parks through the Alberta public education system by the time they graduate from high school.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks will work with its allies to encourage the Alberta Ministry of Education to include curriculum goals concerning the natural regions and parks of Alberta.

Tactic II: Alberta Parks will provide supplementary curriculum activities to the Provincial Education Ministry within one year to encourage awareness and education regarding the provinces national and provincial parks.

Tactic III: Alberta Parks will provide school-based education programs, where individuals visit local schools to educate students about their nearby park.

Tactic IV: Alberta Parks and the Ministry of Education will create an interactive website within the next year where students can learn about Alberta's natural regions, its parks, and its flora and fauna.

Tactic V: Alberta Parks will work with schools to organize field trips to local parks where curriculum affiliated material will be covered in the interpretation activities.

Education and Heritage Appreciation Goal 3: Involve local communities near Alberta's parks in education programs.

Objective 2.5: Create partnerships between the local community, local schools and local parks.

Tactic I: Alberta parks shall be involved in community festivals, fairs, and celebrations, that celebrate the ecological and cultural values of the natural regions and parks.

Tactic II: Alberta Provincial Parks will host events at each park for the local community at least once a year to provide education about the park.

Objective 2.6: Have the local community participate in the designation and deliverance of heritage and education functions within the parks system.

Tactic I: Create an advisory committee for each park, where feasible, consisting of knowledgeable community member volunteers, including representatives from various cultural groups in the area. The committee will be responsible for aiding parks' staff in the research, selection, and designation of significant heritage features and in the delivery and development of heritage appreciation programs.

Tactic II: Where appropriate, hold heritage-based activities within the park and involve and invite locals to participate.

4.3 Outdoor Recreation and Health Theme

Alberta is home to some of the most spectacular natural landscapes in North America. Alberta parks and protected areas offer a diverse selection of year-round nature-based outdoor recreation activities and facilities (Alberta Community Development 2005). By providing various different recreational settings and types of recreational activities, park managers allow visitors the opportunity to have many different experiences (Clark & Stankey 1979). This is important because individuals like to have choice in the activities, settings, and experiences; diversity is key when it comes to the provision of recreational opportunities.

Many opportunities are available within Alberta parks and protected areas for wilderness recreation and solitude, which can lead to the improvement of physical health, the testing of outdoor skills, and an increase in quality of life (Alberta Community Development 2005). Solitude, health, skill testing, and quality of life are features of "healthy living" obtained through outdoor recreation pursuits. Not only does Alberta Parks need to identify these features but the agency also needs to communicate these to current and future visitors. For the purpose of this paper, health is defined as a combination of mental, spiritual, social, physical, and environmental components (Maller et al. 2002). Therefore, if park visitors are given information about the health benefits of different recreation opportunities, they can choose the

most appropriate location, type, and style of activity to achieve their own personal health benefits and goals. This research proposed two goals for outdoor recreation and health parts of the system plan for parks and protected areas in Alberta.

Outdoor Recreation and Health Goal 1: Alberta Parks will continue to offer diverse, safe, accessible, enjoyable, and healthy nature-based, outdoor recreation opportunities.

Objective 3.1: Alberta Parks will identify the outdoor recreation activities that occur in the parks and protected areas. It will monitor the use level of the activities. At the same time, the park agency must determine if these activities are appropriate for each park.

Tactic I: Develop an outdoor recreation classification scheme based on those experiences individuals wish to achieve in parks.

Tactic II: Develop an outdoor recreation monitoring scheme.

Tactic III: Monitor the levels of each recreation activity in each park, where feasible. Produce a general report each year and a specific report every five years.

Objective 3.2: Alberta Parks will work with the wide range of Alberta recreation service providers to develop an overall outdoor recreation plan for Alberta.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks will encourage the Government of Alberta to undertake, every five years, an Alberta Recreation Survey to determine various information about recreational activities within the province.

Objective 3.3: Every Albertan will have access to appropriate levels of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Tactic I: Alberta Parks will determine what level of outdoor recreation opportunities should be provided in Alberta's parks and protected areas.

Tactic II: Alberta Parks will work with the wide range of Alberta outdoor recreation service

providers to coordinate the delivery of outdoor recreation opportunities across the province.

Outdoor Recreation and Health Goal 2: Every Albertan shall have a healthy park experience at least once a year.

Objective 3.4: Alberta Parks will identify and communicate the health benefits associated with visiting parks and protected areas.

Tactic I: The Government of Alberta will encourage each citizen of Alberta to undertake a health-related leisure activity in Alberta parks and protected areas at least once a year.

Tactic II: Alberta Parks will undertake ongoing partnerships with government and research agencies to investigate and promote healthful outdoor recreation activities within Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas.

4.4 Marketing and Management Theme

Alberta's Provincial System of Parks and Protected Areas is a public service product, which means that it should be focused on meeting the needs of its customers, the visitors, and its owners, the citizens of Alberta. In order to do this, Alberta Parks as an agency needs to know and understand the visitors and the citizens. Thus, marketing and management play a key role in the system plan framework. In order to effectively market or promote any idea or service, one needs to develop a thorough understanding of the customer, and in the case of Alberta Parks, it is park visitors (Peakin 1986). As Eagles (2000) states, it is vital for managers and staff to know who is coming to their parks and protected areas, when they are coming, why they are coming, what they are doing during their visit, and finally, why they return or do not return.

One way to determine what is bringing visitors to a certain park or protected area is to conduct a customer analysis, which typically consists of surveys or interviews in parks and protected areas. These surveys and interviews help managers and staff determine "the link between motivation and opportunity" (Peakin 1986) for each individual park. Motivation is an important concept when it comes to planning and managing parks and

protected areas since visitors must be motivated to visit. Motivation has been termed as many different things in recreation literature but one overlaying idea that has been seen is the idea of intrinsic motivation, that is, the desire for individuals to participate in a given activity or pursuit for their own sake (Mannell and Kleiber 1997). The importance of examining motivation when planning and marketing outdoor recreational opportunities must be recognized since it relates directly to benefits sought in recreational activity participation (Iso-Ahola 1980).

To efficiently and effectively market and manage outdoor recreational opportunities with Alberta's Provincial Parks and Protected Areas one needs to develop a thorough understanding of its customers, or visitors. The following four goals and associated objectives and tactics are intended to develop this understanding within the Alberta Parks and Protected Areas System Plan.

Marketing and Management Goal 1: Develop a profile and understanding of visitors to Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas, including what motivates them to visit.

Objective 4.1: Determine what motivates people to visit Alberta's Provincial Parks and Protected Areas.

Tactic I: Use pre- and post-visit surveys that focus on the motivations for visitation.

Objective 4.2: Determine whether the motivations of visitors to Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas are satisfied during their visit.

Tactic I: Use pre- and post-visit surveys to determine whether motivations for visitation are satisfied during their visit.

Objective 4.3: Determine whether there is a relationship between outdoor recreational activities participated in and motivation.

Tactic I: Use a visitor survey that focuses on recreational activities participated in and motivation to determine the relationship between motivation, participation and satisfaction.

Tactic II: Develop a list of common motivations for participating in recreational activities at Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas.

Tactic III: Use motivations in future planning initiatives to meet the needs of visitors.

Objective 4.4: Determine whether there is a relationship between the motivations of visitors and the park or protected area they choose to visit.

Tactic I: Using the information obtained from the pre- and post-visit survey, visitors can be segmented by park to determine whether motivations differ between and among parks and protected areas.

Tactic II: Develop a summary report describing the general motivations of visitors to parks found in each of Alberta's Natural Regions (Boreal Forest, Rocky Mountain, Foothills, Canadian Shield, Parkland, and Grassland) currently used in the Park's System Plan.

Marketing and Management Goal 2: Develop a short- and long-term marketing strategy for Alberta Parks.

Objective 4.5: To determine and/or establish the target markets for Alberta Parks.

Tactic I: Establish a profile of visitors to Alberta's parks and protected areas, both one time and repeat visitors.

Tactic II: Divide visitors into different target markets to determine their specific motivations and visit characteristics.

Tactic III: Establish visitation targets for each target market.

Marketing and Management Goal 3: Develop an integrated marketing plan for Alberta Parks.

Objective 4.6: Within 10 years, make Alberta a well-known international and national tourism destination.

Tactic I: Develop a comprehensive marketing program using basic marketing principles.

Tactic II: Establish a good working relationship with other tourism providers and institutions.

Tactic III: Use this marketing plan to implement the goals and objectives for: 1) economics and finance, 2) education and heritage appreciation, and 3) outdoor recreation and health.

Objective 4.7: Ensure that the local community is part of an integrated provincial park marketing plan.

Tactic I: Develop a working relationship with surrounding communities and businesses.

Tactic II: Work with communities and tourism bureaus surrounding Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas to develop common marketing tools to reach a wide range of tourists and visitors.

Marketing and Management Goal 4: Maintain good service quality in Alberta Provincial Parks' visitation and tourism.

Objective 4.8: Develop a service quality measurement system for Alberta's Provincial Parks and Protected Areas to act as a minimum target.

Tactic I: Work with other governmental departments to create an ongoing tool that can be used on a province-wide basis to assess service quality within parks and protected areas.

Tactic II: Work with park staff to develop a working strategy specific to their area/park to monitor service quality on an on-going basis.

Tactic III: Develop and implement service quality goals for each park.

5.0 DISCUSSION

System planning is an important process in parks and protected areas, and as with any form of high-level management there are limitations, benefits, and implications that result from the process and the policy that is implemented.

Limitations encountered in the development of this working policy document include those related to using a group approach, defining topic areas, limits of knowledge, and a lack of previous work in this area. The researchers could not find any similar plan related to these aspects for parks and recreation planning in a senior government agency. Due to most managers' lack of direct experience working within the Alberta Parks system, specifically in management and planning, secondary sources of information were used. This approach does not allow for a full and complete understanding of the current and past management and planning practices of the organization. It is also challenging to attempt to develop and implement new priorities within a current

system planning document in an established park system. In terms of the research and writing process, time and resources were also a factor that limited the number of concepts and topic areas that could be fully explored. Several topic areas were combined and reduced to result in a more concise document, which may result in some exclusion of background information.

Additionally, Alberta Parks will likely experience limitations when implementing this working system policy. These limitations may be related to the allocation of resources including monetary, human, and physical assets. Alberta Parks will need to assess the available resources and allocate them appropriately. It is probable that a complete implementation of this proposed system plan will require additional financial and human resources beyond those currently available to the park system.

By fully implementing this system approach to visitor and recreation planning within the protected areas system, the overall protected areas system will benefit. The main objective of the implementation of this policy is to work toward the complete achievement of Alberta Parks goals. To do so, Alberta Parks requires the framework for recreation and tourism planning in a system context. By integrating these concepts into an inclusive system plan, a more integrated management approach will fulfill the existing policy gaps and address the deficiencies of the current system. Additionally, the initiation and implementation of this research and policy will demonstrate Alberta Parks' progressive and adaptive management strategies. As this is the first system plan to address visitor and recreation needs within Canada, such forward thinking will serve to make Alberta Parks a leader in parks and protected areas planning.

It is important to note that since the work on this paper began, the goals of Alberta Parks and Protected Areas have changed through a strategic planning exercise. The new goals are: 1) Preservation and Protection, 2) Heritage Appreciation and Education, 3) Outdoor Recreation and Healthy Living, and 4) Tourism and Community (Lazaruk, pers. comm.). These goals are sufficiently

similar to the ones outlined in this paper that the contents of the exercise are still valid.

By taking a new perspective to system planning within parks and protected areas, the researchers were able to demonstrate the necessity for a more integrated approach to planning and management of Alberta Parks. By focusing on concepts surrounding visitor management, tourism, finance, marketing, recreation, health and education, a more comprehensive approach to system planning was developed. Further refinement of the goals, objectives, and tactics needs to be undertaken by Alberta Parks. Research into the effectiveness of the plan will determine what further concepts and aspects of park management needs to be included.

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