SAMPLE
PAGES

Chapter 3: Interpretive Themes and Subthemes

Introduction

Interpretive Themes and Subthemes

Themes and subthemes are essential in program planning and evaluation. They provide the key direction in development of interpretation products. Staff should refer to this chapter as an early step when contemplating the development of new products.

This chapter is designed to be a short reference document that defines interpretive themes and subthemes and describes how they are used by staff.

The interpretive themes and subthemes were developed during workshops attended by staff aided and facilitated by EcoLeaders Interpretation and Environmental Education, an external consulting company. The themes/subthemes package was then peer-reviewed by staff of other sections of Prince Albert National Park. As a result, they represent a consensus of what is important about this park.

Reconnecting Grasslands, Bison and People

As stated elsewhere in this plan, this five year (2010-2014) project focuses on the southern section of the park. It makes a number of commitments for land and wildlife management and Visitor Experience and Outreach products. These commitments will strongly influence the park's overall Visitor Experience and Outreach programming for much of the life-span of this plan.

Terminology

Themes and subthemes provide focus and structure and help to identify major areas of Visitor Experience and Outreach effort.

Overall Park Interpretive Theme

> *Prince Albert National Park is lake country. It protects the meeting place between the southern edge of the boreal forest and the aspen parkland. The transition of these two ecosystems results in a rich diversity of habitats, plants and wildlife which has attracted and supported people for thousands of years.*

The overall park theme is the unifying idea that is a recurrent element in interpretive offerings at Prince Albert National Park. It guides the development of all Visitor Experience and Outreach products.

Using the Overall Park Interpretive Theme

All products must fit the overall theme. Staff use the theme as an overall guide and to ensure the appropriateness of all new products.

National Theme

> *Prince Albert National Park is part of a network of national parks, national historic sites and marine conservation areas that span the nation from sea to sea to sea.*

Park staff have included this theme to ensure that park visitors and Outreach audiences understand the overall importance of Parks Canada as a national entity that protects and educates about Canada's natural and cultural heritage. The National theme is also over-arching. A product or program may touch on both the Central Park Theme and the National Theme or only one.

Park Interpretive Themes

The overall park theme is supported by four themes that are written short sentence or paragraphs. These explain or clarify the meaning and direction of the overall theme and are stated in terms of the key ideas that audiences should walk away with—they are the overall learning outcomes of products.

Themes for Prince Albert National Park are listed on the following pages. Themes guide the development of both personal and non-personal services and reflect the direction of the Parks's Management Plan and Parks Canada's Corporate Plan.

Subthemes

Whereas themes are the big ideas, subthemes are a group of smaller ideas or concepts that add together to make or support a specific theme. Each theme has several subthemes which are usually stated as simple sentences or short paragraphs.

Using Subthemes

Subthemes guide staff in developing accurate, relevant and timely interpretive products. They provide more focus. Most products will include several subthemes from one, sometimes two themes.

Using Themes and Subthemes in Planning and Evaluating Products

All products must fit into the matrix of themes and subthemes. When developing a new program, staff will choose between one to two themes (usually one) as the guidelines for developing the focus of a product. For adding further structure, several subthemes can be used to develop the offering.

Another way of thinking is that themes and subthemes are the main learning objectives for the target audiences. Staff will then use additional information to develop engaging and meaningful experiences for park visitors and outreach audiences.

Core Messages

This is a compilation and distillation of information about key natural and cultural features if the park. It was developed by staff and represents a consensus of what is important about Prince Albert National Park.

When planning a product or service using these themes staff should also review the following criteria:

1) **Is there a challenge associated with this theme? (i.e., Bison excursions from the park)**
2) **Is there something PANP is doing about this challenge? (ie Bison research)**
3) **Is there a call to action for the public? (visit the West Side to see the bison or become a member of the bison stewards)**
4) **Can I incorporate Aboriginal perspective?**

National Theme	
Prince Albert National Park is part of a network of national parks, national historic sites and marine conservation areas that span the nation from sea to sea to sea.	
Subthemes	**Core Messages**
Subtheme A : **The park is one of a network of 42 Canadian National Parks that span the country and represent many nationally significant examples of our natural and cultural heritage.**	• Evolution and Expression of the National Park Concept • Park Establishment
Subtheme B: **The maintenance of ecological integrity, the protection of cultural resources, the provision of educational opportunities and memorable visitor experiences are central objectives of Parks Canada and Prince Albert National Park.**	All Core Messages
Park Themes	
Theme 1: Prince Albert National Park is the site of several conservation challenges and success stories	
Subthemes	**Core Messages**
Subtheme 1A : **Plains bison were accidentally reintroduced to the park in the late 1960s. Today, the park cooperatively manages with other stakeholders the only unfenced, free-ranging population that lives on its historic range in Canada.**	• Bison Conservation Value • Plains Bison • Management of Plains Bison • Predators & Prey— Grey Wolf & Hooved Prey
Subtheme 1B **The park is home to one of Canada's largest white pelican nesting colonies in a protected area.**	• American White Pelican Colony • White Pelican Conservation Value
Subtheme 1C **The park is managing the restoration of areas of rare plains rough fescue prairie.**	• Aboriginal People and Northern Grassland • Grasslands Need Fire To Survive • Protected Pockets of Plains Rough Fescue • Conservation Value of Plains Rough Fescue • Invasive Non-native Plants
Subtheme 1D **The renowned English author conservationist Archie Belaney (Grey Owl) and his wife Anahareo lived in the park from 1931 to 1938. Belaney is a controversial figure, but his conservation efforts with beaver as well as his writings inspired people across the world to care about the vanishing wilderness and protect what was left.**	• Grey Owl and Anahareo • Beaver • Iconic Boreal Wildlife
Subtheme 1E: **Small populations of woodland caribou live in and around Prince Albert National Park. These populations are dramatically declining. Parks Canada is working with the provincial government and other stakeholder groups to develop a recovery strategy. Woodland caribou are a threatened species under the Species at Risk Act.**	• Iconic Boreal Wildlife • Southern Boreal Forest is Unique • Predators & Prey— Grey Wolf & Hooved Prey • Woodland Caribou