



# Introduction

## About this Plan

In November, 2010 EcoLeaders Interpretation and Environmental Education was contracted by Parks Canada to develop an Interpretive Master Plan for Prince Albert National Park with extensive input from the park's Visitor Experience and Outreach staff. The plan was completed in March, 2011.

### Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction for Visitor Experience and Public Outreach Education (Outreach) interpretive products for the next five years. This includes: onsite personal programming; non personal media; and minor way-finding as well as off-site education products (personal and non personal media some of which will be web-based). This plan outlines key audiences and matches these audiences with a set of tactics which will be based on the park themes.

With the adoption of this plan, staff will:

- be ready to respond to new directives from head office
- keep up to date with and use best practice methods and techniques
- ensure that the park's Visitor Experience and Outreach products support the core goals and outcomes of Parks Canada's Corporate Plan and the park's Management Plan
- be able to quickly make changes in response to findings of evaluations and to changes in direction from regional and head office

The Prince Albert National Park Interpretive Master Plan is designed to guide park staff through the defining, planning, delivery, evaluation and support of effective, innovative and engaging products over the next five years.

### Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are a set of guidelines that represent what is desirable and positive in the development of Visitor Experience and Outreach products.

- A. The implementation of the Interpretive Master Plan is directed by and based on:
  - Parks Canada's Corporate Plan
  - Prince Albert National Park Management Plan (2008)
  - Core Messages: Prince Albert National Park of Canada (November 22, 2010)
  - and may also include:
    - Toolkit For Facilitating Opportunities For Visitor Experience, June 2010
    - External Relations Toolkit, August 2010
- B. Visitor Experience products focus on facilitating targeted and meaningful, engaging experiences that forge sensory, emotional and cognitive connections between the personal interests of target audiences and the park's interpretive themes.
- C. Staff will strive for excellence and will favour quality and effective learning and communication over quantity of products.
- D. Staff will work in an integrated fashion with other sections.
- E. Whenever appropriate, new technologies will be investigated as options for delivery of new products.
- F. Whenever possible, development and delivery of products will model good practice in environmental sustainability.
- H. Staff will work efficiently with partners and stakeholders.



## Objectives

These are the key objectives and associated performance indicators that will be achieved over the next five years.  
Interpretation

Objective	Performance Indicators
<p>1. Staff will follow best practice for planning, developing, delivering and evaluation of products.</p>	<p><b>Defining Audiences, Products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of staff can clearly define and describe priority target audiences for each product.</li> <li>• 90% of products focus on park themes and core messages.</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of products will be planned using a process that identifies:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- target audiences</li> <li>- interpretive themes</li> <li>- learning objectives (knowledge, emotional and behavioural objectives)</li> <li>- providing meaningful experiences</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The External Relations and Visitor Experience (ERVE) team will hold an annual planning and evaluation meetings.</li> <li>• By 2015, all staff will be competent and comfortable with including contented associated with Aboriginal culture and history in products.</li> </ul> <p><b>Delivery of Products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See performance indicators for objectives 6-9.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 percent of new products will be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support/Professional Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prince Albert National Park will maintain a membership in at least two professional interpretive associations.</li> <li>• By 2013, any Visitor Experience staff developing and delivering interpretive products will be certified through the Interpretive Certification with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council.</li> <li>• By 2011 all park interpreters will participate annually in interpretive training available through Parks Canada.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Products will incorporate key objectives of the Reconnecting Grasslands Bison and People in Prince Albert National Park (Reconnecting) project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 2011 and 2015 20% of all products will include Reconnecting themes.</li> <li>• By 2015 all commitments associated with the Reconnecting project will be completed</li> </ul>
<p>3. Participation by people in Aboriginal communities in the park's products will increase significantly over five years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2015, the park will increase participation of Aboriginal schools/youth groups in park products by 20%.</li> </ul>



Objective	Performance Indicators
4. ERVE staff will collaborate with representatives from Aboriginal communities and organizations to create interpretive products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal perspectives will be present in products where appropriate.</li> <li>• Each year, Aboriginal people will deliver or help develop at least three Visitor Experience products.</li> <li>• By 2015, Outreach staff will collaborate with Aboriginal people on at least two products.</li> </ul>
5. Products will encourage Canadians to actively participate in the stewardship of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2013, staff will have made contact with provincial and national citizen science organizations to discuss opportunities to work together.</li> <li>• By 2014 the park will have a pilot citizen science program.</li> </ul>
6. Canadians will appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada Agency and support their protection and their presentation.	<p>Outreach staff in Prince Albert National Park will contribute to national performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of Canadians will appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada by March, 2014.</li> <li>• 60% of Canadians will support the protection and presentation of places administered by Parks Canada by March, 2014.</li> </ul>
7. Canadians learning about the heritage of Parks Canada's administered places understand that these places are protected and presented on their behalf.	<p>Outreach staff in Prince Albert National Park will contribute to national performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of Canadians that consider that they learned about the heritage of Parks Canada's administered places by March, 2014.</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of Canadians that understand that nationally significant places that are administered by Parks Canada are protected and presented on their behalf by March, 2014</li> </ul>
8. Visitor Experience interpretive products will contribute to visitors feeling a sense of personal connection to Prince Albert National Park.	<p>Prince Albert National Park Visitor Experience interpretive products will contribute to national performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of visitors will consider Prince Albert National Park meaningful.</li> <li>• 90% of visitors will be satisfied and 50% will be very satisfied with their visit to Prince Albert National Park.</li> </ul>
9. Visitors to Prince Albert National Park will learn from experience and active participation.	<p>Prince Albert National Park Visitor Experience products will contribute to national performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 % of visitors considered they learned about the natural heritage of Prince Albert National Park.</li> </ul>

National performance indicators will be measured by the Visitor Information Program (VIP) Survey (Visitor Experience) and the National Survey of Canadians (Outreach).



## Key Terms Used in this Plan

### Interpretation

Parks Canada defines interpretation as follows:

*Interpretation is a communication process based on Parks Canada mandate that facilitates opportunities for visitor experiences. This process forges emotional and intellectual connections between the specific interests of a target audience and the meanings and values inherent in a protected area, as well as its natural and cultural resources.\**

Further, The agency defines the role of interpretation as:

*Interpretation plays a crucial role in meeting Parks Canada's accountabilities regarding visitor experience. Interpretation provides the support that visitors need to learn and discover, on their own terms, about resources and the place. For a visitor, this process can be as simple as asking a question about the place, participating in an interpretation activity or meditating by the beach.*

*Visitors come to our heritage areas for different reasons. Our challenge is to find innovative ways to support these reasons using interpretation, help them discover and learn about the place, improve their satisfaction, and increase their numbers, while ensuring the place is protected for the enjoyment of future generations.\**

\* Source: *Visitor Experience Programs And Tools Fact Sheet*

Interpretation Canada, our national association of professional heritage interpreters uses a broader definition. Heritage Interpretation is:

*Any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to the public, through first-hand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape or site.*

Interpretation Canada website: [www.interpcan.ca/new/](http://www.interpcan.ca/new/)

This definition has been adopted by many organizations across Canada and around the world. It recognizes that interpretation is a communication process, not simply a way of presenting information. This process translates raw information, from the technical language of the expert, to the everyday language of the audience and forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the real and virtual audience and the park.

This broad definition inspired the park's core planning team to title this plan as an *Interpretive Master Plan* because interpretation is a communication style that best fits the functions of both Visitor Experience and Outreach.



## Visitor Experience and Outreach

At Prince Albert National Park, interpretation is divided into two streams.

### Visitor Experience

Parks Canada defines the function of the Visitor Experience as:

*... to facilitate opportunities for park visitors to feel a sense of personal connection to Canada's national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas. This can be achieved by reaching the visitor at each stage of the visitor cycle (wishing, planning, travelling, arriving, visiting, departing, and remembering).*

### Outreach

According to Parks Canada documentation:

*Public Outreach Education efforts aim to reach Canadians at home, leisure, at school and in their communities by providing effective and relevant learning opportunities by engaging audiences in formal, non-formal and informal learning and by being grounded in collaborations with audiences and strategic partners.*

#### Formal Outreach

*The Centre of Expertise for Formal Education('s) ... main role is to build awareness and support amongst the future stewards of our protected areas and heritage sites, by connecting with youth in grades 4 to 12 through the school curricula*

*Public Outreach Education staff at the park level, build local relationships and partnerships with multipliers such as teachers, curriculum consultants, and provincial Departments of Education.*

#### Non-Formal Outreach

*Non-formal outreach education is linked to organisations and institutions that have an educational mandate that is not formalized through a set curriculum, yet facilitates lifelong and community-based learning...(Canadian Wildlife Federation, Royal Canadian Geographic Society); parks; historic sites; museums; science centres; botanical gardens and zoos; cultural centres; community and faith groups; youth organizations; Aboriginal organizations and educational broadcasters...staff develop regional and local programs with strategic direction from National Office.*

#### Informal Outreach

*Informal Public Outreach Education is not structured... learning occurs through social interactions (in-person or virtual), through reading and events whose primary purpose is not educational, but allows learning to take place. For example; Internet, newspaper features and magazine articles, television, arts and festivals. ... Public Outreach Education staff in the park develop regional and local programs with strategic direction from National Office.*



## Plan Overview

This plan has seven chapters and covers the entire planning process.

Chapter 1: Parks Canada Agency Directions, reviews the directions for the overall Visitor Experience and Outreach programs contained in two recent documents:

- *Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan*
- *Prince Albert National Park Management Plan (2008)*

and analyses how staff can work to meet them.

Chapter 2: Audience Analysis, reviews current knowledge about current and potential park visitors and outreach audience. This chapter also review current audience segmentation models used by Parks Canada and makes recommendation on how staff can best serve each segment.

Chapter 3: Interpretive Themes: This chapter identifies the park's interpretive themes and subthemes which provide focus and structure and help to identify major areas of Visitor Experience and Outreach effort.

Each theme is further elaborated by several subthemes.

Chapter 4: Stakeholders and Partnerships describes and analyses current and potential stakeholders and partners who do or could work with ERVE staff.

Chapter 5: Policies and Procedures, features a series of policies and procedures aimed at assisting staff to Define, Plan, Develop Deliver and Support effective products.

Chapter 6: Tactics. At Prince Albert National Park tactics are defined as; central ideas for products. This chapter includes a series of tactic statements that identify optimal:

- target audience
- theme/subtheme
- possible locations
- potential media and methods
- critical success factors
- support required

This chapter also includes a break down of target audience segments and the tactics that will best serve each.

Chapter 7: Implementation, features a tactics developed by ERVE staff. It identifies key tactics and how and when they will be deployed over the next five years. This chapter also includes timelines for development of planning and evaluation tools and support structures.

## Current Obligations

The Prince Albert National Park Interpretive Master Plan addresses issues and priorities of the Visitor Experience and Outreach programs at various levels. These include the integration of prior obligations with new innovative products.

The main prior obligation is *Reconnecting*, a multi-year project ending in 2014 that focuses on the West Side of the park. This project includes many commitments to Visitor Experience and Outreach programming. Throughout most of the period of this Interpretive Master Plan, park staff will be integrating the products and initiatives identified in the Reconnecting project into the annual product planning cycle. See the sidebar on the facing page for a summary of the *Reconnecting* project.

### Reconnecting Grasslands, Bison and People: Summary of Project Objectives and Outcomes

#### Project Objectives:

- increase the extent of rough fescue grasslands and renew the process of fire in maintenance of grasslands
- undertake a pilot invasive plant species control program in select areas to decrease distribution and abundance of target species
- rehabilitate disturbed areas within fescue grasslands
- re-establish and maintain a genetically viable population of free-ranging plains bison at landscape level through collaborative management action to eliminate or decrease the conflicts between bison and the neighbouring agricultural community
- provide opportunities Aboriginal peoples reconnect to their traditional cultural landscape and its restored healthy ecosystem
- provide onsite and off site visitor experience and outreach education opportunities that will allow the public to enjoy, appreciate, and understand the need to reconnect all peoples with this landscape and its ecological processes.

#### Commitments to Visitor Experience and Outreach Products

- develop curriculum linked web-based lesson plans about plains bison, fescue grasslands and Aboriginal culture for the Teachers' Corner website to reach schools across Canada
- develop a travelling exhibit incorporating new media to inform urban audiences at places such as science centres, museums and airports outside the park
- develop innovative web media products to reconnect with virtual audiences
- develop onsite personal interpretation products targeted at school groups, youth, special interest groups and the general public that incorporate new media and Reconnecting themes
- develop townsite exhibits at the Nature Centre, Visitor Centre and other townsite locales
- upgrade or develop the West Side, Paspiwin, and South East Grassland interpretive trails and day-use nodes to connect visitors to the grasslands, bison and Aboriginal cultural
- develop orientation information products to improve access and to encourage more visitors to explore the area independently



# Chapter 1: Parks Canada Agency Direction

## Introduction

Visitor Experience and Outreach products are integral to the overall operation of Prince Albert National Park and make significant contributions to many of Parks Canada's National programs. Their importance is stated clearly in the park's two main foundation documents, *Parks Canada*

*Agency Corporate Plan 2010–2011/–2014–2015* and *Prince Albert National Park Management Plan (2008)*. This chapter is a brief summary of the key elements of these documents that outline the direction of the park's Visitor Experience and Outreach programs.

