Alberta Wilderness Association
"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

Alberta Wilderness Association – Glenbow Ranch Management Plan Feedback

Answers in green

Section 1. Experience in the park

1. What recreational activities have you participated in, if any, in Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park? Check all that apply.
2. Based on your experience, what do you value most about the park?

Unique habitat of native grasslands, riparian, riverside forest, and large river ecosystems within a highly developed subregion type, the Foothills Parkland Natural Subregion. The progression and potential of educational programs, showing the importance of grassland ecosystems and their biodiversity.

Wildlife Biodiversity in the park, home to unique and at-risk species such as Bank swallows, Sprague's pipits, limber pine and rough fescue grassland areas.

Accessible and sustainable recreation opportunities, safe access that reduce trail braiding, erosion, and informal trails. Trail systems that do not function at the expense of native grasslands.

Section 2. Vision

The Vision Statement describes the imagined future state of the management of the park. The draft Vision Statement is:

Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park is a model of collaborative stewardship for Alberta's ecologically sensitive Foothills Parkland Natural Subregion through the maintenance of biodiversity, native grassland, open landscapes and riparian habitats. Diverse opportunities for visitors to learn about and experience Glenbow's unique natural and cultural legacy are supported by partnerships and community connections.*

*Riparian habitats are the areas of land next to rivers, streams, or lakes that are important for protecting water quality, supporting wildlife, and preventing erosion.

3. Please indicate your level of support for the draft vision statement.

This vision statement is well crafted, perhaps mentioning the protection of biodiversity and native grasslands should be mentioned, maintenance can left/open to much interpretation.

Section 3. Guiding Principles

The following principles and approaches will guide decision making for Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park:

Stewardship and environmental leadership: Management and operations demonstrate environmental leadership and stewardship of the natural landscape, species and habitats by employing best practices in environmental design, grassland management, energy and water efficiency, construction practices and products.

Knowledge-based decision making: Decision making is informed by natural and social science, evidence, experience and Indigenous traditional knowledge.

Adaptive management: An iterative process that includes research, monitoring, reporting, learning and adjusting is undertaken to achieve long-term desired conditions in the park.

Integrated management: Management decisions consider the combined impacts of environmental, economic, social and cultural factors.

Collaboration and engagement: The park vision will be achieved through continued collaboration amongst Alberta Parks, the Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation, adjacent communities, municipalities and developments.

Inclusion: Park management will work to ensure facilities and programs are designed so that multiple visitors' needs are considered.

Quality visitor experience: Visitor amenities and services are designed to enhance a unique experience in the park, maximize visitor safety and foster stewardship of the park's resources.

4. Do you support the guiding principles as written above?

Yes

5. Would you like to provide feedback on the draft guiding principles? Yes (continue) No (skip)

Ensuring certain practices that are feasible are integrated into the Adaptive management approach, such as:

- Prescribed fires for controlled renewal of grasslands, control of woody shrub encroachment, and to increase plant diversity, enrich soul. It is important for long-term carbon sequestration and wildfire mitigation
- Beavers to improve the storage and retention of water on the landscape for the mitigation of floods, drought, and wildfires.
- Maintaining floodplain, riparian habitat, riverside forests, ensure room-for-river process to improve the storage and retention of water on the landscape. These are also high biodiversity areas within grasslands/parklands, and assist in flood, drought, and wildfire mitigation
- Noxious weed control:
  Cirsium arvense (Canada thistle), Clematis tangutica (yellow clematis), Cynoglossum officinale (hound's tongue), Hyoscyamus niger (black henbane), Linaria vulgaris (yellow toadflax), Ranunculus acris (tall buttercup), Tripleurospermum perforatum (scentless chamomile), Verbascum thapsus (common mullein)
- Controlling edge effects from upcoming ASP's, development plans, ensuring the protection/reduction of watershed damage/naturalness (Stormwater ponds

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Section 4. Management Issues and Opportunities

The draft Terms of Reference identifies several issues and opportunities to be addressed by the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park (GRPP) management plan. These issues and opportunities are grouped according to the following topics:

- Conservation and protection
- Nature-based recreation and healthy living
- Learning and engagement
- Tourism and community partnerships

6. Would you like to provide feedback on the draft management issues and opportunities? Yes (continue), No (skip)

Where do we want to be in the background report mentions the integration of lands outside the boundary to be considered for transfer and incorporation into the park. This could be mentioned under the tourism and community partnerships, improving ecological connectivity/green network.

Section 5. Desired Conditions

The following desired condition statements describe an ideal future if the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park management plan meets its vision and objectives. Desired conditions paint a picture of the experience of visitors and the state of the environmental and cultural resources in the park.

The draft Desired Conditions are:

•Natural landscapes and scenic vistas are largely free from visual disruptions and open the imagination of the meaning of this place for the generations of people before us.
•Native grasslands are maintained in a healthy state where plant communities retain natural integrity.
•Wildlife populations continue to thrive, and conflicts between wildlife and humans, including visitors with dogs, are avoided.
•Water and streams are free flowing, including largely intact riparian areas and streambanks.
•The historic and cultural resources from the generations of Indigenous use and ranching history are retained and cherished. Indigenous traditional activities and uses in GRPP are welcomed and sustainable grazing practices are supported.
•Visitors can experience a unique spectrum of settings from a front-country setting with sustainable and well-developed trails and facilities that are integrated with nature, providing public access and amenities where social interaction predominates, to a more mid-country setting where interaction with people is less frequent and there are opportunities for solitude.
•Visitors have opportunities to connect with nature through natural sounds, smells and views of largely undeveloped landscapes.
•Interactions between different types of park users are generally positive with a sense of unity in the opportunity of having access to a beautiful natural place. Visitors have opportunities to learn about nature and the cultural heritage of GRPP, participate in the stewardship of the area and act in a way that conveys respect for wildlife and the land.
•Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park is valued as an important outdoor recreation and tourism asset for local communities and organizations where park boundaries and values are known and respected.
•Onsite management ensures resource protection, public safety, and minimal visitor conflict.
•Information about the area is readily available, and opportunities to be outdoors are provided for a wide range of abilities.



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7. Would you like to provide feedback on the draft desired conditions statements? **Yes** (continue), No (skip)

"Native grasslands are maintained in a healthy state where plant communities retain natural integrity, **abundance, and resilience."**

"GRPP is managed to support ecological function, processes, and services, which helps mitigate the severity of natural disasters and climate change."

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Section 6. Objectives

Issues and opportunities were presented earlier in the survey (Section 4) within four main topic areas. To achieve the desired conditions for the park, specific objectives will need to be implemented within each of these topic areas:

- Conservation and protection
- Nature-based recreation and healthy living
- Learning and engagement
- Tourism and community partnerships

8. Would you like to provide feedback on the draft objectives? Yes (continue), No (skip)

Conservation and Protection

Support/re-establish ecological processes/disturbances in the park to control woody shrub encroachment, support native grasslands/river ecosystems biodiversity and function, and build climate change resilience and adaptation into park management plan.

- Prescribed fires for controlled renewal of grasslands, control of woody shrub encroachment, and to increase plant diversity, enrich soul. It is important for long-term carbon sequestration and wildfire mitigation
- Beavers to improve the storage and retention of water on the landscape for the mitigation of floods, drought, and wildfires.
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Nature-based recreation and healthy living

- Trail system improvements that do not alter or affect the native grasslands and riparian, and wetlands of the park.
- Following up on the items that may be need further consideration

- Safe and accessible pedestrian access points into GRPP from future residential areas.
- A complementary regional trail system on top of the river valley with strategic connections to GRPP.
- Advanced preplanning on future municipal stormwater treatment, and urban utility connections to minimize
- disruption on the recreational experience and environmental sustainability of GRPP.
- **Connectivity between natural spaces and wildlife movement corridors within the broader region.**
    - **Ensuring these key pieces are integrated further into developments in and around the park within all municipalities involved in development (Cochrane, Rocky View County, and Calgary)**

Learning and Engagement

- The progression and potential of educational programs, showing the importance of grassland ecosystems and their biodiversity.
- Invasive species programs
    - Higher risk with surrounding agricultural lands
- Continued expansion of staffing and programs to support the projected increase of park attendance and connectivity