

KANANASKIS COUNTRY

RECREATION
POLICY
May 1999



Kananaskis
Country

Alberta
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Foreword

From the Premier . . .

Alberta is committed to the wise management of our natural resources and environment for the benefit of all Albertans. We must ensure we continue this approach in Kananaskis Country, which has been a remarkable success for over 20 years.

This Recreation Policy sets out the approach to sustainable recreation management in Kananaskis Country within the context of integrated resource and environmental management. Alberta is a leader in sustainable development; ensuring a healthy environment, a healthy economy, and a high quality of life in the present, and in the future. My government will keep working with Albertans to strike the best balance.

The Recreation Policy for Kananaskis Country recognizes the need to preserve and maintain our rich environment for future generations with the need to balance opportunities for growth. This recreation policy for our treasured Kananaskis Country allows us to ensure its availability for all Albertans . . . for all generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph Klein', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ralph Klein
Premier
Province of Alberta

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1. The Vision

Kananaskis Country – spectacular landscapes and natural resources providing Albertans with diverse benefits and a high quality environment for current and future generations, while at the same time retaining the ecological diversity that has made it such a special part of Alberta.

Kananaskis Country provides:

- Clean air and water.
- Heritage appreciation.
- High quality and accessible opportunities for a wide range of outdoor recreation.
- Opportunities for diverse social, cultural and economic benefits.
- A spectrum of protected areas and natural resources integrated with a wide range of sustainable environmentally responsible uses on the regional land base.

2. The Recreation Policy

Planning

1. Recreation activities and facility developments will be consistent with the Kananaskis Country Subregional Integrated Resource Plan and all other resource and environmental policy.
2. A **Regional Sustainable Development Strategy** based on integrated resource management for Kananaskis Country is required. It will provide direction to attaining goals for recreation, timber, watershed integrity, fish and wildlife resources, biodiversity and endangered species. Forest management plans, water management plans and protected area management plans will address operational needs within an overall context of sustainability.
 - Forest and protected area management plans will identify nodes for recreation development.
 - Management plans will deal with issues of levels of use and allocation.
 - Adaptive management using the best science available will ensure Kananaskis Country keeps pace with the evolution of economic and social values of Albertans.

Development

1. No town-sites (i.e. city, town, village, summer village, municipal district or specialized municipality), and no permanent or non-essential residency will be permitted in Kananaskis Country.
2. Adjacent communities will act as the service centres for Kananaskis Country.

3. Large-scale development proposals will be directed outside Kananaskis Country.
 - Proposals currently in the Alberta Tourism and Recreation Leasing (ATRL) process and exempt from the moratorium should proceed through the process.
 - No developments are permitted in Wildland Parks and Ecological Reserves.
 - Development in Provincial Parks will be limited to traditional camping (including rustic fixed-roof accommodation) and/or day use infrastructure and services as identified in an approved management plan (with public involvement).
 - Small-scale recreation developments may be considered in Provincial Recreation Areas.
 - New recreation development on all other public land will be limited to small-scale developments as per approved management (with public involvement).
4. Caution will be exercised to ensure there is no threat of serious or irreversible damage to future options whether through effects on ecosystems, the economy or social values. Government's existing review processes (i.e. ATRL and Environmental Impact Assessment) will be applied. Criteria include:
 - Upgrading/improvement of existing facilities will be considered.
 - New small facilities (e.g. small fixed-roof accommodation, extensive recreation) directed to nodes where possible.
 - New big facilities such as golf courses, ski hills and large fixed-roof accommodation (i.e. over 15 000 square feet of accommodation and support buildings, 3 hectares) are directed outside Kananaskis Country.
 - Total regional environmental effects must be avoided, managed or mitigated.
 - If environmental effects are mitigated or acceptable then the proponent must demonstrate existence and source of financing to ensure no liability to government and the reclamation deposit is in place.

Ownership

1. No second-home (cottage subdivisions, residences) developments will be permitted.
2. Public land will not be sold in Kananaskis Country.
3. No *third party* ownership or private/exclusive benefits will be permitted on leased land. (This includes condominiums, time-shares, limited partnerships, and other financing arrangements.)

3. Implementation

The *Regional Sustainable Development Strategy* will be based on integrated resource management and multiple use. The government's commitment to integrated resource management will be maintained by using the Kananaskis Country Subregional Integrated Resource Plan as the foundation for the *Regional Sustainable Development Strategy* and subsequent management plans.

Completing Special Places

1. Incorporate Barrier Lake Provincial Recreation Area (PRA) into the Bow Valley Provincial Park and identify and zone a node for small-scale (i.e. fixed-roof accommodation) development.
2. The Special Places nomination process is complete for Kananaskis Country. Existing nominated sites such as Sheep River should proceed through the process.

Decision-Making

1. Existing review and approval processes are sufficient and will be utilized when considering proposals for development.
2. Opportunities to expand public awareness will be used to ensure adequate public consultation/information is included in existing processes.
3. Sunset clauses will be included in project approvals.
4. Roles of Regional Board of Directors, Environmental Resource Committee and Kananaskis Country Interdepartmental Committee will be reviewed with respect to planning, management and decision-making processes within Kananaskis Country.

Segregation of Conflicting Uses

1. Existing segregation policy will be used to minimize conflicts between recreational activities, within a context of Integrated Resource Management and multiple use. Monitoring of recreational trends will assist in the application of this policy.

Landscape and Environmental Monitoring

1. An ecosystem monitoring program will be established:
 - As part of the *Regional Sustainable Development Strategy*.
 - Consistent with the principles of Adaptive Management.
 - Using the best science knowledge and information available to enable quantitative assessment of the environment encompassing Kananaskis Country.

2. This monitoring program will be developed in partnership with existing stakeholders and will ensure that the government is able to report on the status of the environment.

Vegetation Management

1. Vegetation management will form an important component of Kananaskis Country's *Regional Sustainable Development Strategy*. Integrated programs will be implemented to address situations such as vegetation restoration, facility protection, fire management and public safety, insect and disease infestations, and habitat enhancement.

4. Compliance Assurance

Alberta government departments, boards and agencies will implement the Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy through management decisions made pursuant to existing legislation.

The goal for all compliance assurance activities that are done in support of the Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy is to ensure:

Compliance with all provincial and federal legislation to protect the environment and effectively manage and protect our natural resources.

To achieve this goal, the following approach will be taken to compliance assurance activities:

- Compliance assurance activities will be done in a predictable, fair, consistent and timely manner using rules, sanctions and processes founded in law.
- Education, prevention and enforcement activities will be utilized to achieve compliance.
- Non-compliance will be responded to using the most appropriate resources and staff who will use the most appropriate legislation and compliance assurance tools.
- Every suspected violation will be treated seriously, and appropriate and timely action will be taken.
- All enforcement responses will be firm but fair.
- Enforcement responses will be directed at the responsible party with the following considerations in mind:
 - (a) restoration to the state that existed prior to the non-compliance occurrence,
 - (b) the costs of bringing situations into compliance will be born by the responsible party,
 - (c) appropriate deterrence.

