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"New proposals for large-scale recreation facilities will be directed outside of Kananaskis Country. Protecting the environment and wilderness character of Kananaskis Country is our overriding priority."  
Ralph Klein, Premier

**Government announces a "no new development" recreation policy for Kananaskis Country**

Kananaskis Country – The government will no longer consider new development proposals for major recreation facilities in Kananaskis Country. The announcement, part of a new recreation policy package, was made in Kananaskis Country by Premier Ralph Klein and Environmental Protection Minister Ty Lund. The province will also protect more land in the Barrier Lake area by adding it to Bow Valley Provincial Park.

"Albertans want to escape to a Kananaskis Country that retains its natural environment and wilderness character, and think that Kananaskis Country is approaching the limits for many kinds of development. We've clearly listened to that message," said Klein. "New proposals for major facilities will simply not be considered; they will be directed to communities or public land outside of Kananaskis Country."

There are six recreation facility proposals that have already received some degree of approval prior to the recreation policy review. These six proposals will continue to be eligible for consideration, however they will be subject to stringent environmental review.

The revised recreation policies for Kananaskis Country reflect the results of extensive public input from thousands of Albertans, obtained through an independent consultant (the Praxis Report). Primary consideration was given to a random, scientifically accurate telephone survey of Albertans from across the province. Also considered were the results from comment packages obtained through a toll-free number advertised in Alberta newspapers.

"Kananaskis Country has been a remarkable success for 20 years because we have managed it with Albertans' guidance," said Lund. "That has not changed. These new policies ensure that management decisions will continue to reflect what Albertans tell us they value in this spectacular provincial treasure."

In addition to directing any large-scale development proposals outside of Kananaskis Country, the new recreation policies also restrict and limit other forms of recreation development in Kananaskis Country.

- No recreation development will be permitted in Kananaskis Country's Wildland Parks and Ecological Reserve.
- No development will be permitted in Kananaskis Country's Provincial Parks except to supplement traditional camping accommodation or day-use infrastructure and services, as clearly identified in an approved management plan, developed with public input.
- No townsites will be allowed to develop and no permanent or non-essential residency will be permitted.
- No public land will be sold in Kananaskis Country. No second homes, nor any condominium, time-share, or limited partnership financing will be allowed.

"Kananaskis Country will also receive additional protection," said Janis Tarchuk, MLA, Banff-Cochrane. "Land in the Barrier Lake area will become protected by adding it to Bow Valley Provincial Park, recently expanded under Alberta's Special Places program."

"Another important action to enhance the future management of Kananaskis Country will include the

development of a Regional Sustainable Development Strategy with stakeholder input," added Don Tannas, MLA, Highwood. "The Strategy will include an ecological monitoring program to ensure that the integrity of Kananaskis Country is maintained into the future. The Strategy will address all aspects of human use."

Backgrounders are attached which include a summary of the public consultation results from the Praxis Report. Also included is a description of how proposals are initiated before policy review, and how those exempt from the development moratorium, which has been in place since 1995, will be handled.

The full Praxis Report and recreation policies for Kananaskis Country are also available for viewing at most public libraries in Alberta or through Website access at: <http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/parks.html> (under *Policies, Legislation and Special Programs*).

To purchase a copy of the *Analysis and Recommendations – Results of the Kananaskis Country Recreation Development Policy Review* (also referred to as the Praxis Report) contact the Queen's Printer Bookstore at (780) 427-4952 or fax. (780) 452-0668, or e-mail [qp@gov.ab.ca](mailto:qp@gov.ab.ca), or go to their on-line shopping web-site at: <http://www.gov.ab.ca/qp>.

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## **Kananaskis Country**

### **Kananaskis Country**

- Located in Alberta's Eastern Slopes foothills and mountains, 90 kilometres west of Calgary, Kananaskis Country is a multiple-use recreation area, which covers 4,250 square kilometres and includes the headwaters of the Spray, Kananaskis, Jumpingpound, Elbow, Sheep and Highwood rivers. Its natural attractions, proximity to Calgary and easy access make it the most popular recreation area in the province.
- Kananaskis Country is also extremely well protected. It includes an ecological reserve, two wildland parks, three provincial parks and a wildlife sanctuary. Additional parts of Kananaskis Country are zoned as "Prime Protection" and "Critical Wildlife".

### **The Recreation Policy Review**

- The policy review was initiated by the Government to ensure that Kananaskis Country continues to be managed with Albertans' guidance. An extensive public consultation process was conducted through an independent consultant to update the original 20 year-old policies.

## Current Proposals

- Six proposals that received some degree of approval, prior to the recreation policy review, will continue to be eligible for review, but will be subject to stringent environmental review. "Sunset clauses" will be applied to these proposals, beyond which they will be asked to resubmit under the new recreation development policies. Major proposals require Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) review, which includes public input to determine if they are in the best interest of the public.

## Summary Results of the Praxis Report

### Albertans' Opinions About the Future Of Recreation Development In Kananaskis Country

#### How Albertans were consulted

A Process Advisory Committee of stakeholders advised an independent consultant (Praxis) about how to consult Albertans in a fair and transparent manner about their opinions. The consultation process included:

- A telephone survey to a statistically valid, random sample of Albertans with a margin of error +/- 2.8 per cent, at the 95 per cent confidence level.
- An information book and "workbook" completed by self-selected individuals or groups. This opportunity was advertised in newspapers across Alberta and through a media release.
- The opportunity for groups to make independent, written submissions.

#### Response from the public and organizations

• Random telephone survey	1,272
• Workbooks from individuals	2,524
• Workbooks from organizations	18
• Written submissions	13
• Petitions and surveys from organizations	2

#### Messages from the Public Consultation

- Albertans go to Kananaskis Country instead of other mountain national parks for the location, the access, because it is less crowded and it feels more like "wilderness".
- The diversity of recreation experience found in Kananaskis Country is important to Albertans. The

preference is for activities to be compatible with the wilderness experience and the "escape" to solitude. This is a core value of Kananaskis Country for Albertans.

- Albertans view themselves as stewards of this unique area and want to promote the wilderness aspect over all others. This should take priority over recreation development.
- Albertans do not favour a blanket elimination of development, but do not want any more large-scale facilities. They want to know that there are strict plans to control any additional small-scale facilities, because they believe Kananaskis Country is approaching its development limit.
- Albertans like what they find in Kananaskis Country now and the policies that led us there, but want them tightened to eliminate the potential for over-development.

## **What Albertans Said in the Random Telephone Survey**

- About 50 per cent preferred Kananaskis Country to other mountain destinations.
- Approximately 75 per cent said the multiple-use aspect of Kananaskis Country did not affect their experience.
- A theme of high satisfaction with the present state of development emerged repeatedly.
- 76 per cent of respondents agreed that Kananaskis Country is a delicate ecosystem and may be at risk with further development.
- There was a high premium placed upon the wilderness character of Kananaskis Country, support for additional protected areas and opposition to large-scale facilities. However, most opposed blanket limitations on development.
- There was a strong preference for small-scale over large-scale development options, for recreational opportunities that maintain the wilderness character of Kananaskis Country and adjust human impact accordingly. 93 per cent selected options to enjoy nature with basic facilities. For example, hiking opportunities, increased number of small lodges and rustic accommodation were preferred over hotels, golf courses, off-road vehicle use, etc.
- 78 per cent felt additional overnight accommodation should be placed outside Kananaskis Country.
- Concerning future recreation proposals, 88 per cent felt that the greatest priority should be given to environmental protection, even if this meant fewer recreational opportunities for people.
- 79 per cent agreed that no town sites or non-essential residency should be permitted.
- 85 per cent supported broad public accessibility by agreeing that time-share, condominium or second home developments were inappropriate.

## **Current Recreation Proposals**

### **How They Will Be Handled Under the New Kananaskis Country Recreation Policies**

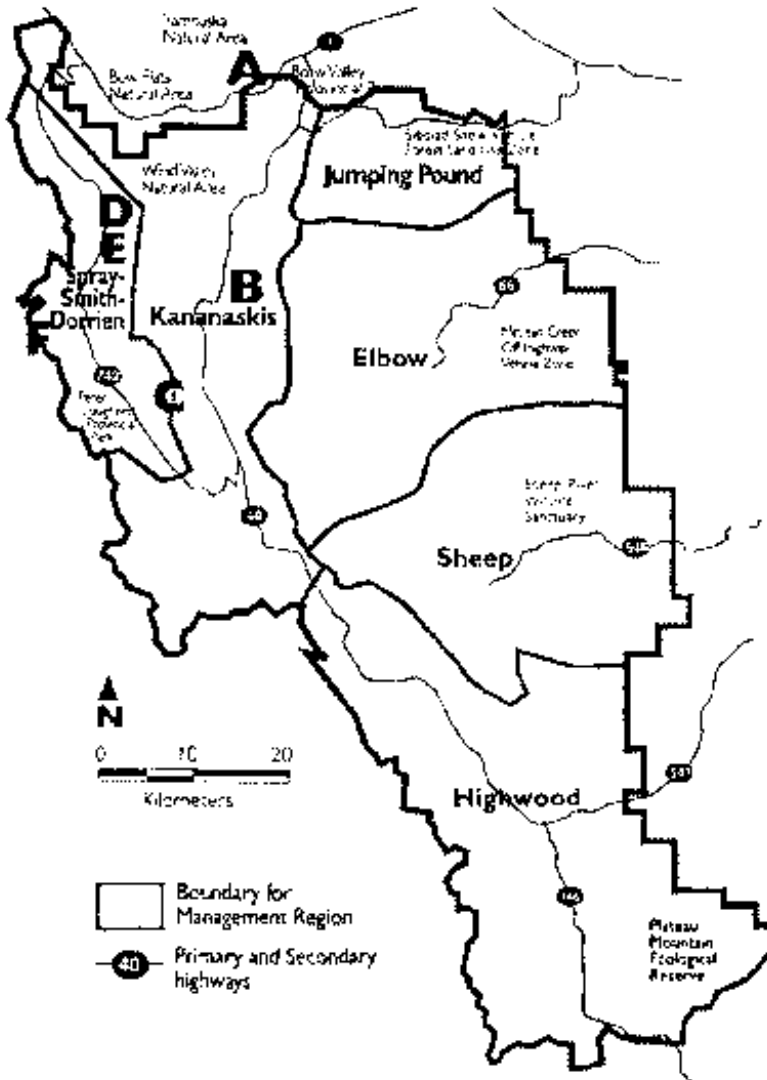
A moratorium on new recreation development in Kananaskis Country has been in effect in Kananaskis Country since late 1995. However, six proposals for additional recreation facilities in Kananaskis Country received some degree of approval prior to the recreation policy review.

These proposals remain eligible for further consideration under the policies in effect at the time they were accepted for review. They range from campground enhancements to a resort facility near Spray Lake. No final approvals have been given to this proposal for the Spray.

**Although these proposals will continue to be eligible for review, any proposal for major resort development will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and review by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). The NRCB would examine environmental, social and**

economic implications to determine whether the proposal was in the public interest.

"Sunset clauses" will also be developed for proposals that are still eligible for review - that is, developers will be asked to proceed within a specified period of time or resubmit.



*The six proposed developments are shown on the adjacent map, and described below.*

- A** - Buffalo Nations Cultural Park- preliminary consideration
- B** - Evan Thomas 18 hole golf course- approved by NRCB in 1991 but not yet constructed
- C** - Fortress Mountain rental accommodation (up to 24 units)-approved in 1994 and partially constructed
- D** - Kananaskis Pathways tour boat on Spray Lakes- approved in 1994 but not yet constructed
- E** - Kananaskis Pathways half-assisted skiing on Mount Sparrowhawk- EIA and NRCB public review required
- F** - Spray Development Corporation Resort at Tent Ridge- EIA and NRCB public review required

Comments regarding presentation should be forwarded to [WebEditor@gov.ab.ca](mailto:WebEditor@gov.ab.ca)

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