



# **Blackstrap Provincial Park Management Plan Preliminary Public Review Draft**

## **Introduction**

The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport is updating the management plan for Blackstrap Provincial Park. This preliminary public review draft is based on ideas arising from local park advisory groups over the past few years, park surveys in 2005, private sector suggestions and from an internal review by the Ministry. The suggested actions included in this draft plan may or may not occur. Public input is needed to help determine which actions should be undertaken.

A final park management plan will be prepared after public input is received. Subject to applicable government approvals, the recommended actions will be implemented as resources and provincial park system priorities permit.

## **Background and Current Status**

Blackstrap Provincial Park saw its beginnings in 1968 when facilities were developed to enable access to the newly-created reservoir. Mount Blackstrap was built in 1971 as a venue for the Canada Winter Games. Designation as a recreation-class provincial park occurred in 1986.

Blackstrap Provincial Park is situated 50 km south of Saskatoon on 656 hectares (1620 acres) of land stretched along the southeast shore of Blackstrap Lake. It provides water-based and land-based outdoor recreational activities in a natural setting.

The park is one of 34 in the provincial park system. As with all parks, it serves several functions: conserving natural features; providing facilities and space for outdoor recreation; providing opportunities to study and appreciate nature; and supporting the province's tourism economy.

As shown on the facilities map on page 5, Blackstrap provides a large beach with change facilities and irrigated lawns, extensive picnic grounds, a boat launch and fish-cleaning facilities. There are two campgrounds, one with modern washrooms. Summer attendance averages 50,000 visits and 2,000 camping days. A concession at the main beach is open weekends during the summer.

Winter recreation includes 5 km of groomed cross-country skiing, ice fishing access and, historically, a downhill ski hill.

## **Park Values and Principles**

In planning future directions for the park, the Ministry uses the following provincial park values and guiding principles in assessing what actions to take.

### Core Values

- protection of ecosystems and natural/cultural features and resources;
- diverse recreational and learning opportunities;
- clean, secure, accessible and affordable;
- peace and serenity for personal renewal;
- places for friends and family to meet and connect; and
- cornerstone for Saskatchewan tourism.

### Guiding Principles

- give precedence to conservation;
- ensure public access to outdoor recreation;
- model environmentally-sustainable practices;
- ensure opportunities for people to explore and learn;
- respect Aboriginal and Treaty rights and different cultural perspectives;
- public benefits take priority over private interests;
- retain revenue generated by park fees for use in the provincial park system;
- public involvement and collaboration; and
- accountability.

## **Draft Future Plan**

In drafting the plan for the future, five key areas were examined: conservation; recreation; heritage appreciation; tourism and partnerships. The following sections outline possible goals and objectives, and actions that **may** be taken in each of these areas.

### **1. Conservation:**

#### Goal:

- The preservation of Blackstrap's ecosystems and natural and cultural features.

#### Objectives:

- To retain the natural wooded coulee habitat and native grasslands

#### Potential Actions:

- To develop and implement a vegetation management plan to sustain the ecological health of the remnant prairie and wooded coulees and to control invasive, exotic vegetation and noxious weeds encroaching on these areas
- To develop and implement a wildfire mitigation strategy to protect park visitors, park infrastructure and other values at risk

## **2. Recreation:**

### Goal:

- A variety of clean, affordable, safe and secure public recreational services and facilities.

### Objectives:

- To provide summer day use, water access and camping facilities; and
- To provide cost effective winter recreational facilities.

### Potential Actions:

- Increase the number of campsites near the Kevin Misfeldt campground and build new washroom/shower facilities for existing and proposed campgrounds;
- Construct a small amphitheatre to host special events in the park;
- Upgrade boat launch area, including providing lighting;
- Upgrade beach and picnic area with more showers and upgraded picnic tables and barbeques; and
- Pursue operation and development of the downhill ski facility as a non-subsidized commercial operation and, if no private sector operator is found, remove the existing downhill ski facilities.

## **3. Heritage Appreciation:**

### Goal:

- People have a better understanding of their relationship with the park's natural and cultural heritage and improve their stewardship of our resources and our memories.

### Objectives:

- To provide self-use opportunities for people to learn of and understand the natural and cultural heritage of Blackstrap.

### Potential Actions

- Develop and provide multi-use interpretive trails and signage; and
- Provide print and web-based interpretive materials.

## **4. Tourism:**

### Goal:

- Retain and maintain a public outdoor recreational area in keeping with the natural and cultural features of the park that support tourism activity.

### Objectives:

- To extend the shoulder season access, day use and camping; and
- To expand facilities and services.

#### Potential Actions:

- Extend seasonal operations;
- Develop a cottage sub-division;
- Invite private sector to develop and operate recreational facilities such as:
  - golf course;
  - restaurant;
  - new beach concession;
  - boat and equipment rentals or marina;
  - long-term seasonal campground;
  - multi-unit condominium complex for time share opportunities; and
  - rental accommodations such as camping cabins<sup>1</sup>.

#### **5. Partnerships:**

##### Goal:

- Private sector, communities, Aboriginal peoples, clients and interest group involvement in the planning and management of park lands.

##### Objectives:

- To work with communities in the area; and
- To work with non government organizations and the private sector in providing enhanced services and facilities.

##### Potential Actions:

- Participate with local area municipal water and sewage disposal boards to upgrade municipal potable water and sewage disposal systems for the mutual benefit of the park and the municipalities;
- Reestablish the Local Park Advisory Board to provide stakeholders with a venue for input on park management;
- Maintain the agreement with the Town of Dundurn for fire protection;
- Continue collaboration with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority and communities on the reservoir on how to maintain good quality lake water; and
- Maintain the marketing and promotion partnerships with the area tourism associations and park area partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Camping cabins are small cabins that provide a camping experience without having to tent on the ground or have a camper or motorhome. The cabins contain sleeping, cooking and eating facilities but no interior washrooms or water source.

