



Joffre Lakes Provincial Park

2019 Visitor Use Management Action Plan



BC Parks





Acknowledgments

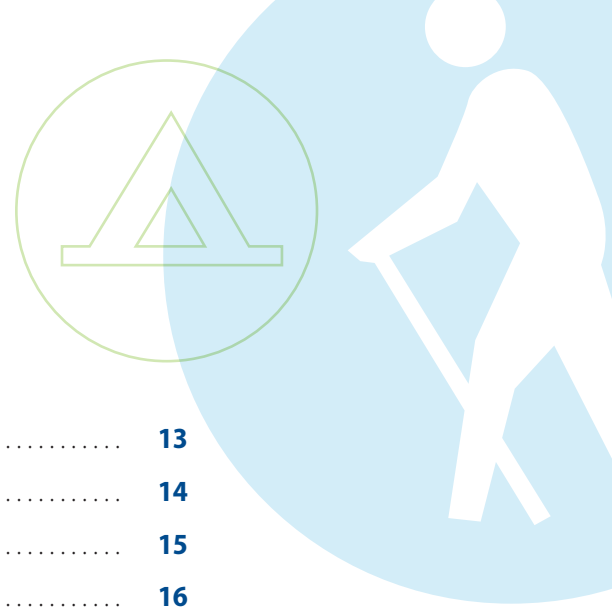
Development of this 2019 Visitor Use Management Action Plan for Joffre Lakes Park has been jointly undertaken by the Lil'wat Nation, N'Quatqua, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), and BC Parks.

Joffre Lakes Park is in the shared territory of the St'at'imc peoples, which includes the N'Quatqua and Lil'wat Nation. BC Parks staff are grateful for their support and cooperation in developing this Action Plan, and for the shared St'at'imc value of *i tmícwsa i ucwalmícwa* (*the people and the land are one*) that has guided this planning process.

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Message from the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua

Joffre Lakes Parks lies within the unceded shared territories of the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua, and the lands are integral to who we are as N'Quatqua and Lil'wat people. The establishment of Joffre Lakes Park has served to protect this unique and beautiful place from impacts of industrial activities; however, it also disrupted our traditional use and access to these lands.

Today, Lil'wat Nation, N'Quatqua, and BC Parks, are working towards a new relationship based on mutual respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights, which will enable us to sustain and revitalize our connection to this important part of our territory. Through this Action Plan and subsequent Strategy, we seek to build upon a strong working relationship that respects our cultural values, interests and uses in the conservancy area.

Kukwstumúlhckalap,

Chief Dean Nelson
Lil'wat Nation

Chief Micah Thevarg
Nquatqua



Message from the Assistant Deputy Minister

BC Parks has been striving to manage the impacts of increasing visitation at Joffre Lakes Park and is committed to improving the management of visitor use in the park. BC Parks has developed the 2019 Visitor Use Management Action Plan, in collaboration with the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua, to ensure BC Parks maintains the natural and cultural values of the park while continuing to provide exceptional recreational opportunities for park visitors.

This is the first collaborative Visitor Use Management Action Plan spearheaded by BC Parks. Visitor safety is one of our top priorities and our focus this season is on addressing the pressing safety concerns. The plan focuses on priority actions for 2019, with a longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy to be developed next. The actions identified in the plan will be monitored, evaluated and may be revised for inclusion in the longer-term strategy.

We are committed to achieving our vision for Joffre Lakes Park: to improve the overall visitor experience, address safety concerns, recognize First Nations' interests, and protect the park's natural and cultural values.

Regards,

Jim Standen,
Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Parks

Part 1: The Foundation

Background

Recreation and tourism growth in the Sea to Sky region has been accelerating since the improvement of the Sea to Sky Highway and the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The Sea to Sky Highway has over 3 million travellers per year, with most visitors seeking a recreation-related experience. This increase in tourism is reflected in the exponential increase in attendance at many provincial parks in the region, particularly Joffre Lakes Park.

In 2018, 183,000 people visited the park; this represents a 168% increase in park attendance since 2010. As a result of this growth, First Nations, the regional district, municipalities, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the public have all raised concerns regarding sustainable recreation and tourism and have expressed concerns for public safety along the highway near Joffre Lakes Park.

Action Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Action Plan is to guide the management of Joffre Lakes Park in the short-term by addressing pressing safety and visitor management concerns. This Action Plan:

- ✓ Articulates the key features and values of the park;
- ✓ Identifies the challenges and safety concerns associated with the park;
- ✓ Establishes a long term vision and the goals for the park;
- ✓ Responds to current challenges by defining a set of short term management strategies to achieve the management vision and goals; and,
- ✓ Sets out the framework for the long-term Visitor Use Management Strategy.



Action Plan Planning Process

The Joffre Lakes Park Management was written in 1989; since that time, park use has increased significantly. This change has prompted the development of this Action Plan, and forthcoming Visitor Use Management Strategy, to reflect upon the changing use and pressing park management concerns.

This Action Plan and the subsequent Visitor Use Management Strategy are comprehensive plans that take into consideration the natural values, cultural values, and recreation opportunities within a park when considering park management actions. In order to guide the planning and decision-making process, the United States Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework was applied, with modifications to reflect the British Columbian context.

A Collaborative Approach with First Nations

The Province and First Nations are working towards a relationship based on mutual respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights. This Action Plan was developed in partnership with the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua. Through this Action Plan and subsequent Strategy, we seek to build upon this strong working relationship to ensure that management of the park is consistent with traditional cultural values, interests and uses in the park.

External Engagement

In addition to partnering with the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua, BC Parks also collaborated with MOTI and FLNRORD

to develop this Visitor Use Management Action Plan. Several meetings were held to determine the park vision, goals and strategies for future park management, including an open house for members of the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua to voice their perspectives on the proposed park vision, strategies, and actions.

The public and key stakeholders were invited to provide input through an online survey on BC Parks' website during the month of April. Meetings were also held with staff from the Village of Pemberton, Squamish Lillooet Regional District, RCMP, Destination BC, Tourism Pemberton, and Tourism Whistler. Further public engagement and opportunities for input may become available as BC Parks continues to develop the longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy.

Relationship with Communities

Many residents from the surrounding communities of Mount Currie, D'Arcy, Pemberton, Whistler, Squamish, and Lillooet, as well as outdoor enthusiasts from the Metro Vancouver area share an interest in the management of this park. Recreational activities in and around the park are a tourism driver for the area. Ongoing engagement and outreach with local communities will be required to ensure that residents are aware of management actions undertaken at Joffre Lakes Park. This will include continued dialogue with other provincial Ministries and local governments as well as local user groups who have expressed interest in the use and management of the park.



Duffey Lake Rd

HWY 99

Lower Joffre Lake

Middle Joffre Lake

Upper Joffre Lake

JOFFRE LAKE PARK

Part 2: The Park

Key Management Issues

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Visitors create new trails and viewpoints, which trample vegetation, cause trail braiding and disturb lake shorelines and riparian habitats.
- Visitors feed wildlife such as grey jays (also known as whisky jacks) and chipmunks, causing wildlife habituation.

SAFETY

- Visitor safety is at risk as visitors frequently park on the side of Highway 99 (Duffey Lake Road) and walk along and across the highway to gain access to Joffre Lakes Park.
- Some visitors are not prepared for the rugged nature of the park (e.g., they don't bring enough water and/or wear adequate clothing and footwear).

FACILITIES

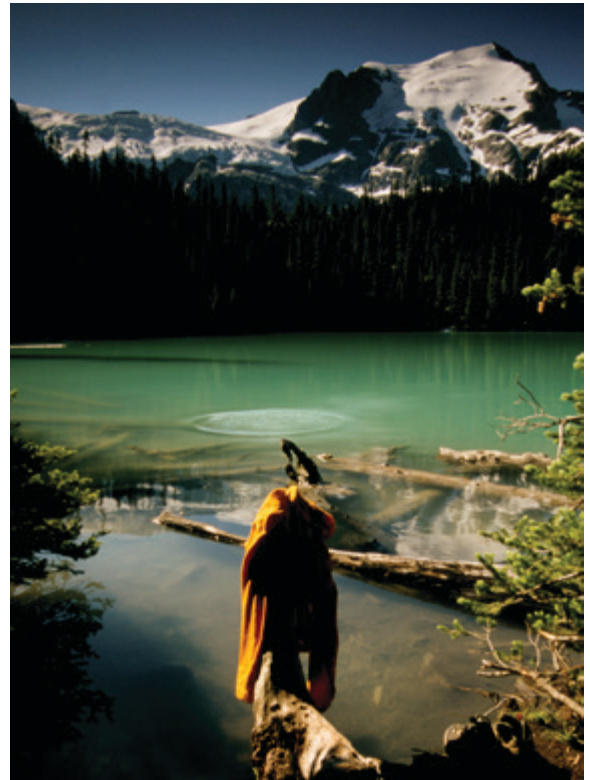
- There is inadequate parking for the level of use.
- Existing infrastructure does not adequately meet the needs of visitors (e.g., number of toilets).

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- The trail is frequently congested, which may impact the recreational experience of some visitors.

AREA DESCRIPTION

Joffre Lakes Park is located approximately 30 kilometres (km) northeast of Pemberton, 62 km northeast of Whistler, and 185 km northeast of Vancouver. This Class A Provincial Park is 1,460 hectares in size and borders the Nl'háxten/Cerise Creek Conservancy. Joffre Lakes Park is located in the shared territories of the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua and within the traditional territory of the St'at'imc people.



View across middle Joffre Lake toward the Matier Glacier

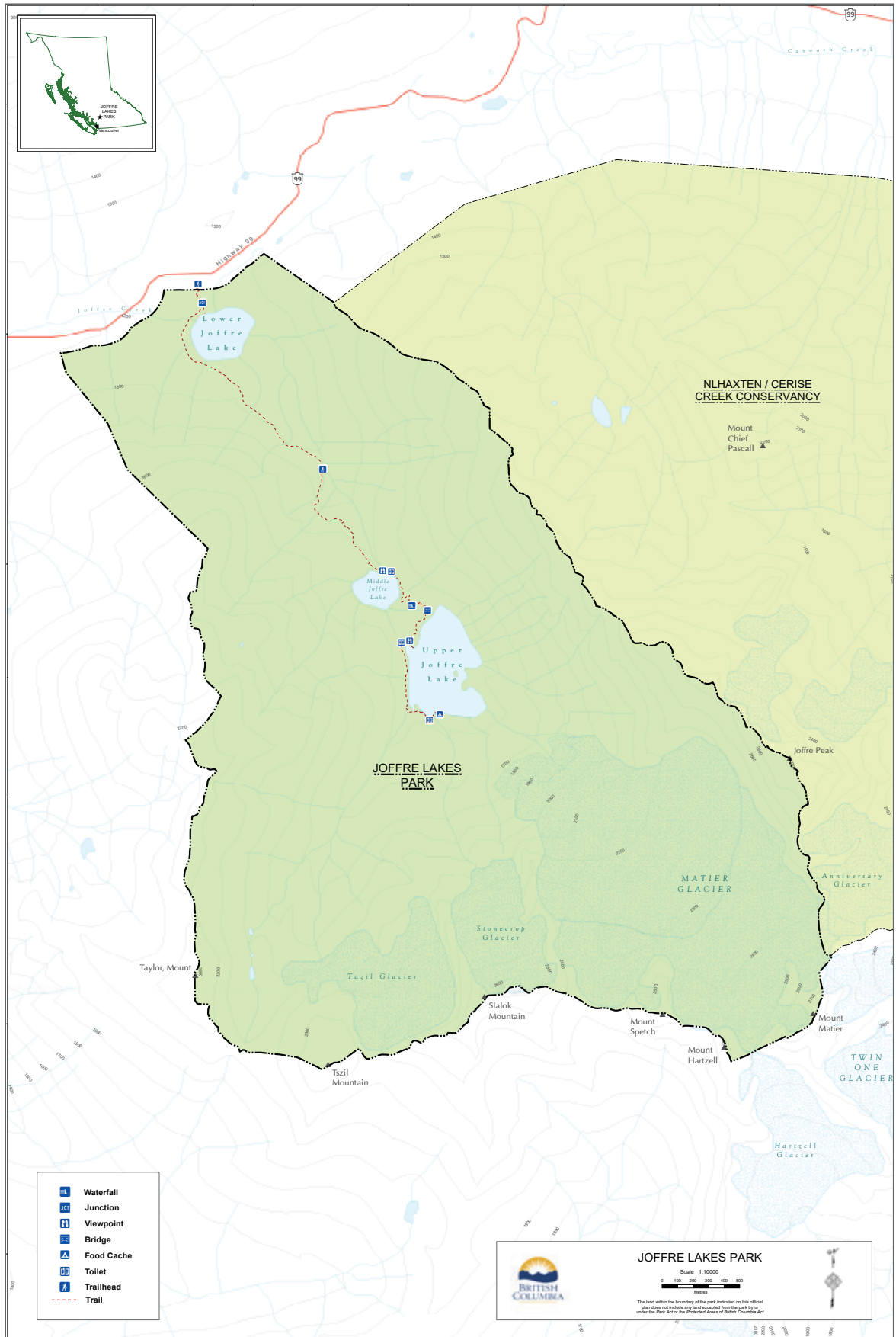


Figure 1: Map of Joffre Lakes Park

Natural Values

Joffre Lakes Park is home to a diversity of vegetation types and ecosystems, including a transition from coastal forest to subalpine forest to alpine vegetation. The park's lakes, streams, wetlands and riparian habitat also contribute to the diversity of ecosystems and habitat found in the park. Most of the forest is old growth with many trees estimated to be greater than 250 years old.

The park is located in the mountainous Joffre Group between the Pacific and Cayoosh ranges. There are three glaciers within the park: Stonecrop, Matier, and Tszil. A number of mountain peaks are within the park, including Mount Matier, Cone Mountain, Green Peace Mountain, Rex's Pillar, Mount Gorman, and Joffre Peak.

Indigenous Values, Culture, and History

Joffre Lakes Park and the larger Duffey corridor is known as the "banquet place", where minerals and plants can be gathered, berries harvested, animals such as mountain goat and deer hunted, mammals trapped, and fish caught. Traditional trade and travel routes used to access the Fraser River Valley can still be found today. Joffre Lakes Park continues to be highly valued by Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua as a place for people to connect with the land and traditional cultural practices.

Recreational Values

The park is a well-known destination for summer hiking, and to a lesser extent, backcountry camping, backcountry skiing, and mountaineering. Primary access to the park is via a five kilometer trail that begins along the southern side of Highway 99 (Duffey Lake Road) and gains 480 m of elevation between the trailhead and the upper lake.

Joffre Lakes is a high-use park that has seen a dramatic increase in park visitation over the last several years. In 2018, day use reached new records, with the majority of visitors arriving on weekends or long weekends (Saturday, Sunday and Monday). The average attendance during the top 10 busiest days in 2018 was 2,303 visitors.

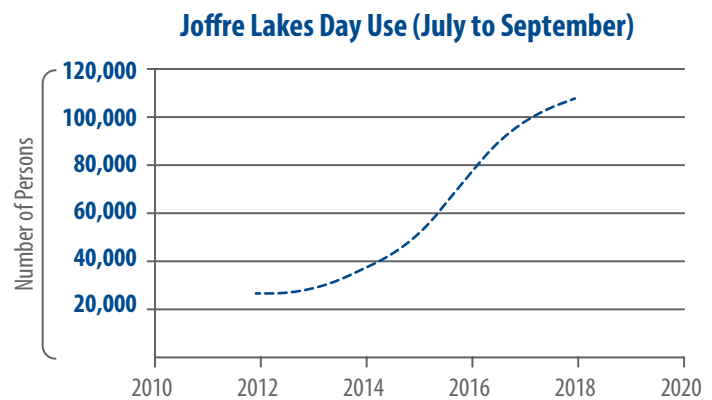
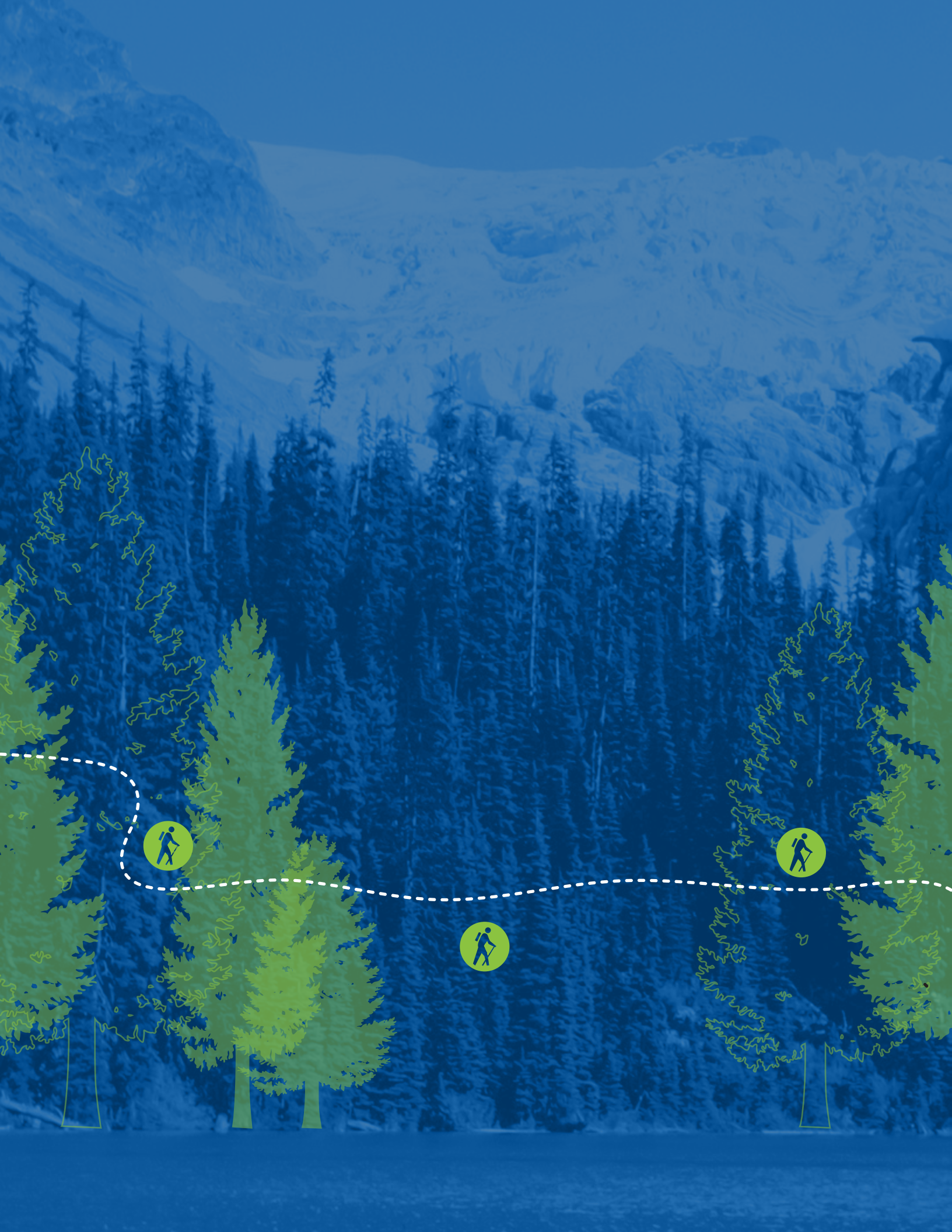


Figure 2: Graph showing visitation increase from 2012 to 2018



Part 3: Vision for Joffre Lakes Park

The following long-term vision has been developed collaboratively to protect First Nations uses and interests as well as to protect biological diversity and sensitive habitats within the park. The focus of this Action Plan is to identify short-term actions that will help achieve this vision and inform the development of a longer-term strategy. This vision recognizes that access and recreational use require management to ensure protection of First Nations interests and to support a sustainable recreational experience.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Joffre Lakes Park is primarily managed to maintain its natural state with some development for recreational opportunities. The park is managed collaboratively with BC Parks, N'Quatqua and Lil'wat Nation to protect Indigenous cultural values, and ensure resource protection, public safety, and minimal visitor conflict.

Although recreational use is high when compared to the surrounding areas, only a focused portion of the park is frequented by large numbers of visitors; leaving the majority of the park remote with limited human access and use. Visitors come to the park to enjoy the diversity of recreation experiences that are available for users of various abilities, skills, and demographics. The impacts of park visitors are concentrated to well-maintained, safe, and challenging hiking trails, day-use areas, and a campground with infrastructure to match appropriate levels of use.

The park provides an opportunity to access stunning natural scenery with views of largely undeveloped landscapes, including glaciers and turquoise lakes. Wildlife populations continue to thrive, including pikas and beavers. The lakes, streams, and waterfall are clean and free of pollution. Park vegetation, especially within the alpine areas, is vigorous and healthy.

Important cultural resources and sites are protected and Indigenous culture is celebrated. First Nations access the park and cultural sites to engage in cultural practices, food sustenance activities, and to enjoy the park.

Opportunities to learn about the park values, stewardship, and First Nations culture are readily available, and visitor behaviour reflects an appreciation and respect for the cultural heritage, wildlife, the park environment, and other users. Park visitors can easily find information about the park, and are strongly encouraged to be well-equipped to have a safe experience in the outdoors.



View across middle Joffre Lake toward the Matier Glacier





Part 4: Management Strategies and Actions

These goals, strategies, and actions were developed and refined through a collaborative process with BC Parks and the N'Quatqua and Lil'wat Nation, as well as through engaging with the public and stakeholders. The input gathered from our engagement will carry forward into the development of the longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy.

The goal of these short-term management actions is to identify specific, high-priority, and time-sensitive goals and actions for implementation in 2019. These high-level initiatives are not intended to address all park management issues within the park, but to pin-point essential actions to resolve high-priority challenges.

Goal 1: Address Illegal Parking and Safety Concerns with Park Access



Addressing the limited access to parking and subsequent unsafe conditions caused by parking along the highway is a priority of this Action Plan and will require support from our visitors. This Action Plan seeks to enforce existing highway parking prohibitions to ensure visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience on their way to and from the park.

| Strategies | Actions |
|--|--|
| <p>1.1 Support the enforcement of illegal parking on highway shoulders.</p> | <p>1.1.1 Install signage to inform visitors of no-parking zones.</p> <p>1.1.2 Partner with MOTI and RCMP to enforce parking restrictions by towing vehicles and/or issuing tickets to drivers that disregard no-parking zones.</p> |
| <p>1.2 Improve public safety.</p> | <p>1.2.1 Install a communication service for park visitors to use during an emergency or in the event their vehicle is towed.</p> <p>1.2.2 Explore the feasibility of installing a highway webcam, to enable visitors to see road conditions.</p> <p>1.2.3 Install an emergency helipad near the backcountry campground.</p> <p>1.2.4 Continue to remove danger trees and monitor fuel load and fire risk.</p> <p>1.2.5 Create a pathway from the secondary parking lot to the main lot entrance, providing visitors a safe route to the trailhead.</p> |
| <p>1.3 Offer alternative ways to access the park.</p> | <p>1.3.1 Provide a shuttle bus service on weekends and holidays from Duffey Lake Park to the Joffre Lakes Park trailhead.</p> <p>1.3.2 Increase the Parkbus* service frequency to the park from Vancouver.</p> <p>1.3.3 Encourage car-pooling.</p> |

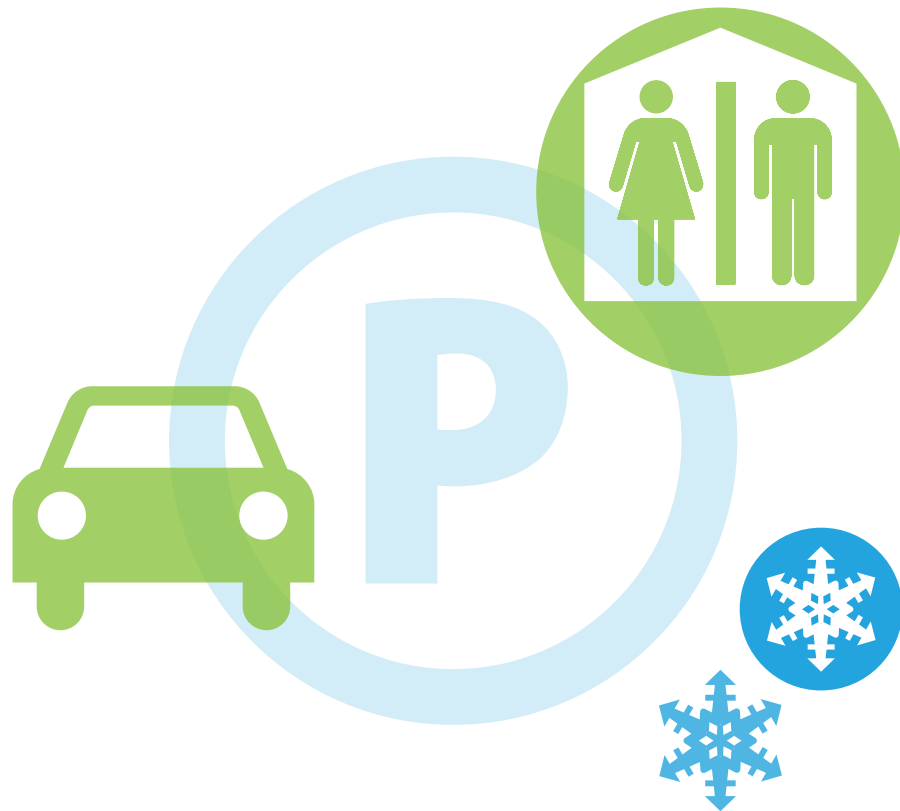
*Parkbus is a non-profit charitable organization that partners with BC Parks to provide sustainable transportation options.

2

Goal 2: Ensure Park Facilities Support Levels of Use

The significant rise in visitor attendance has out-paced the facilities and parking space available at the park. This Action Plan includes measures to upgrade and build new facilities to meet the growing use and improve the visitor experience.

| Strategies | Actions |
|--|---|
| <p>2.1 Expand facilities and increase trailhead service levels.</p> | <p>2.1.1 Expand the capacity and improve the layout of the main and secondary parking lots.</p> <p>2.1.2 Upgrade and expand toilet facilities at the main parking lot.</p> <p>2.1.3 Build toilets at the overflow parking lot.</p> <p>2.1.4 Increase toilet cleaning frequency and Park Operator staff presence.</p> <p>2.1.5 Continue to plow the parking lot in the winter season.</p> |



Goal 3: Effectively Manage Day-Use Visitation



The seasonality of park use within Joffre Lakes Park is evolving, with more visitors than ever before choosing to visit during the spring and fall seasons when the park has reduced service levels. During the peak season the visitation continues to climb; stretching facility capacity, parking availability, and congesting viewpoints. Effectively managing day-use visitation is key to ensuring visitors have an excellent experience and that conservation values are protected. This Action Plan contains short-term strategies to manage visitation.

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|--|
| <p>3.1 Encourage visitors to visit during less busy days and times.</p> | <p>3.1.1 Use social media and BC Parks website to inform visitors about the less busy times to visit (e.g., mid-week).</p> |
| <p>3.2 Explore limiting number of day users.</p> | <p>3.2.1 Engage with stakeholders and the public to explore the support for tools to limit visitation (e.g., day use permits) without causing displacement of visitors to other areas.</p> <p>3.2.2 Explore the concept of establishing a carrying capacity to ensure visitation levels are sustainable.</p> <p>3.2.3 Assess whether actions implemented in 2019 (e.g., expanded parking lot size and new shuttle bus service) are sufficient to accommodate sustainable visitation levels.</p> |
| <p>3.3 Limit the number of users at the backcountry campground to the amount of available tent pads.</p> | <p>3.3.1 Add Joffre Lakes campground to the Discover Camping Reservation Service.</p> <p>3.3.2 Educate overnight visitors to carpool and arrive early to increase their likelihood of obtaining a parking space.</p> |
| <p>3.4 Educate and inform visitors when parking lot reaches capacity.</p> | <p>3.4.1 Place temporary digital highway signs at strategic points to inform visitors of key messages.</p> <p>3.4.2 Post parking information on the BC Parks website to encourage visitors to arrive early to increase their likelihood of finding parking.</p> <p>3.4.3 Share important parking information through social media.</p> <p>3.4.4 Explore options for creating real-time updates on parking conditions at the park on the BC Parks website.</p> |

4

Goal 4: Increase Public Appreciation and Respect for the Park

Outdoor nature-based recreation and the stewardship of protected areas are mutually dependent; protection is often supported and enhanced by those who directly experience BC Parks. By providing quality outdoor recreation, BC Parks enhances people’s quality of life. This Action Plan seeks to further engage with park visitors, and foster appreciation and respect for the park.

| Strategies | Actions |
|--|--|
| <p>4.1 Educate visitors on appropriate behavior, park values, and Indigenous culture.</p> | <p>4.1.1 Utilize a variety of mediums to share messaging with visitors (i.e. blog posts, social media, videos, signage).</p> <p>4.1.2 Share information with visitors on-site through park ranger and park steward presence.</p> |
| <p>4.2 Share messages about park values with a broader audience.</p> | <p>4.2.1 Partner with First Nations, our stakeholders, and tourism agencies to create and share stewardship messaging.</p> |

5

Goal 5: Increase our Knowledge of Park Users and Recreation Trends

Information about park visitors and their use patterns is required to help protect park values, and ensure the management of one value does not adversely affect another.

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|--|
| <p>5.1 Learn about visitor motivations and recreation desires.</p> | <p>5.1.1 Survey visitors coming to Joffre Lakes Park.</p> |

Goal 6: Protect Biological Diversity and the Natural Environment



Joffre Lakes Park protects important and sometimes critical habitats for plants and wildlife; this protection also helps to mitigate and improve adaptation to climate change. This Action Plan contains actions that protect the unique and sensitive habitat at the park.

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|--|
| <p>6.1 Reduce impacts on vegetation and wildlife caused by domestic animals.</p> | <p>6.1.1 Continue to educate visitors and enforce park restriction on domestic animals, such as dogs.</p> |
| <p>6.2 Ensure visitors do not enter environmentally sensitive areas.</p> | <p>6.2.1 Install vegetation restoration barriers and signage, where appropriate.</p> |
| <p>6.3 Limit the number of campers in overcrowded or ecologically sensitive areas.</p> | <p>6.3.1 Require backcountry camping reservations through Discover Camping, thereby limiting backcountry camping to designated tent pads.</p> |
| <p>6.4 Understand baseline data and determine acceptable limits of impacts.</p> | <p>6.4.1 Conduct a backcountry impact monitoring assessment to gather baseline data.</p> |

7

Goal 7: Manage the Park in a Financially Sustainable Manner

Providing high-quality recreational opportunities to the public requires significant investment. As visitation to BC Parks grows, so does the cost to provide services to the public. Generally, the public has demonstrated a willingness to pay for their recreational experience where there is a service provided (e.g., campground facilities), and where the revenues collected are reinvested back into the park. Under this goal, we are exploring options for sustainable revenue streams to invest into park management.

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|--|
| <p>7.1 Identify ways to increase revenue that can be re-invested into Joffre Lakes Park.</p> | <p>7.1.1 Explore feasibility and public support for day-use fees by soliciting public input and engaging with all key stakeholders.</p> |



Goal 8: Recognition of First Nation Territories



Joffre Lakes Park holds historic and contemporary significance to the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua, communities whose traditional lands are within the park boundaries. BC Parks is working together with Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua to sustain and revitalize their connection to this important area for their communities.

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|--|
| 8.1 Increase Indigenous park presence. | 8.1.1 Introduce a First Nations Park Stewards pilot program. 8.1.2 Explore opportunities for local First Nations members to share their culture and history within the park. 8.1.3 Support community access for berry picking and food sustenance activities. |

Goal 9: Celebrate First Nations Culture throughout the Park



BC Parks recognizes the importance of Joffre Lakes Park for the ongoing practices related to traditional and cultural use and livelihood for the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua. BC Parks supports the long-term continuation of First Nations social, cultural and ceremonial practices and will strive to ensure these cultural practices are respected by the public. This Action Plan supports the reconnection of Indigenous communities in area management by incorporating historical and cultural elements of stewardship in the park..

| Strategies | Actions |
|---|---|
| 9.1 Educate users on Indigenous culture and history. | 9.1.1 Incorporate Indigenous culture and information into park signs. 9.1.2 Explore opportunities to offer cultural tours by local First Nations in the park. 9.1.3 Explore opportunities to showcase local First Nations culture and art within the park. |

Part 5: Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Adjust

Implementation

This Action Plan will be implemented in collaboration with the Lil'wat Nation and N'Quatqua, as well as other inter-agency partners and the RCMP. Where possible, partnerships will be developed with stakeholders and local communities to achieve specific actions.

Action Plan Assessment

BC Parks will continually monitor and implement actions to ensure the safety of all who use the park. As new information arises, management challenges evolve, and new recreational trends are identified, BC Parks commits to adapting and meeting those challenges. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will occur throughout 2019 and the learnings from this Action Plan will be incorporated into the longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy for Joffre Lakes Park.

Next Steps

The intention is to implement the short-term strategies in 2019 to address immediate concerns, and continue to engage with our First Nations partners, stakeholders, and the public to create a more comprehensive and longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy to achieve our vision.

Timeline

The timeline below sets out three stages of progress towards the release of the longer-term Visitor Use Management Strategy.





For more information please visit:
<http://bcparks.ca/parks/joffre-lakes/>



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