Who Won the Battle of Village Lake Louise?
Park Planning, Tourism Development, and the Downhill Ski Industry in Banff National Park, 1964-1979

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Recreation and Leisure Studies

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
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Abstract

This study explores the history of stakeholder politics in the controversial debates over proposed plans for Village Lake Louise. A new ski resort village plan proposed for Banff National Park in 1971 triggered intense debate and mobilized protests from the Canadian public. Public consultation hearings attracted high participation and the proposal was ultimately turned down by the Government of Canada. The key proponents of the proposal were the National and Historic Parks Branch, Lake Louise Lifts Ltd. and Imperial Oil. Key opponents included National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, Alpine Club of Canada, Bow Valley Naturalist Society, Environmental Law Association, as well as academics and members of the broader public. Using development to justify preservation was a rationale deeply entrenched in the philosophy of Canadian national parks administration and policy making. During the debate, Premier Peter Lougheed and his Alberta intergovernmental affairs minister Don Getty exercised a new provincialism that challenged Ottawa's jurisdiction in national parks, further complicating the politics of development and tourism pertinent to Lake Louise. Federal Minister Jean Chretien responded with a rejection of the proposal and maintained national parks authority and control. Final victory for conservation advocates in 1972 was an unlikely outcome that warrants closer examination. The Village Lake Louise controversy is a significant turning point for Canada's national parks as it activated huge public input that slowed commercial development in the Bow Valley resulting from compromise among different power forces, helped to formalize

public consultation program in parks policy and challenged Ottawa's control on Alberta National Parks.

The project is based on archival and library research with collections at Library and Archives Canada, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives, Provincial Archives of Alberta, and University of Alberta Library. The importance of the study is to contribute to a understanding of parks and conservation advocacy movements in Canadian civil society as well as ski industry tourism debates. By investigating the Village Lake Louise controversy, we see how the politics of environmental protection were linked to democratic process and engaged public participation, as well as better understand federal-provincial tensions over parks. This research on early conflicts between tourism development and environmental protection in Banff National Park informs our understanding of longstanding issues in Alberta parks. It contributes to a better understanding of environment and tourism concerns in Banff National Park, past and present.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The downhill ski industry and mountain villages are closely associated with attractive economic prospects in snowy mountain ranges. But they often have conflicted meanings informed by complex power relations due to the involvement of a variety of stakeholders and significant landscape transformations.[1] Governments and corporate leaders promote the ski industry's great financial potential as a sustainable development, while environmentalists argue that skiing sacrifices wilderness and public space to corporate gain, tourism, and political struggles.[2] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new ski resort village plan worth $30 million dollars called Village Lake Louise was proposed by the National and Historic Parks Branch for Banff National Park and it triggered intense debate and mobilized protests from the Canadian public. This project will explore the stakeholder politics in the Village Lake Louise development controversy and spans the time period from 1964 to 1979. The project investigates the roles public consultation played in safeguarding national parks for Canadians as a whole, what strategies were designed by the park bureaucracy in policy making to sustain capitalist

[1] Mark Stoddart, *Make Meaning Out of Mountains: The Political Ecology of Skiing* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), Introduction.

[2] Ibid.

development in national parks, and how complex federal-provincial relations shaped the outcome of Village Lake Louise in Alberta.

In this MA thesis research, I demonstrate how the Village Lake Louise controversy in Banff National Park in the 1960s and 1970s activated a conservation movement that slowed commercial development and expansion in the Bow Valley resulting from compromise among different power forces. On one hand, for governmental organizations, such as the Parks Branch, encouraging public participation was designed as a strategy to ease its difficult situation whereby the vague wording of parks policy guaranteed the potential of future economic development; on the other, Parks Canada's reputation was challenged due to the distrust of developers, conservationists, and the public that valued the park as nature.[3] It is also a significant moment to investigate more closely because conservation groups were no longer excluded from the direct parks policy-making process and management, but entered into it through formal structures for the participation in civil society. Public participation was institutionalized and the parks policy statement was revised in the *Parks Canada Policy of 1979*. Nevertheless, increasing environmentalism and social activism did not dispel commercialization or government control all together. The investor, Village Lake Louise Ltd., lost money as a result of public policy outcomes and strong citizen opposition. Parks Canada regained its initiative in managing national parks according to its own objectives and business later became a core concept of its portfolio in the neoliberal 1990s.

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[3] Walter Hildebrandt, *An Historical Analysis of Parks Canada and Banff National Park, 1968-1996* (Banff-Bow Valley Study Task Force, Banff, Alberta), 64-65.

Constantly changing park ideals and parks policies tipped toward commodification effectively making national parks that die slowly. Whether the public voice was actually heard during the Village Lake Louise planning controversy is still in question and warrants closer study. In the battle for national parks, I propose that each "stakeholder" gained something and lost something; in other words, there was no absolute winner or loser. Even though conservation groups shifted parks policy much farther towards environmental preservation, the pursuit of economic development has never ceased in parks – the difference with Lake Louise was that one kind of exploitation took the place of another. According to Leslie Bella, small-scale ski resort development was supplanted by the aggressive Village Lake Louise proposal in the early 1970s encroaching piece by piece on Canada's glittering crown jewels. This is an interpretation I plan to probe farther in my own research. As such, the case of Village Lake Louise has implications for the history of national park and tourism development politics in a pivotal period of change, as well as citizen involvement in conservation movements challenging government and corporate agendas in mountain parks.[4]

In the 1970s, civil society brought expertise and knowledge into the new conservation movement sweeping Canada. Meanwhile, American foreign investment, such as Imperial Oil's interests in Village Lake Louise and its potential international target market for mountain ski tourism, made many post-war Canadians uneasy about economic independence and political manipulation from the United States. The Lake Louise controversy emerged at the crossroads of both trends. Originating from the Changbai Mountain region of China, I am acutely aware of

[4] Bella, 127.

how mountain tourism plays out around major ski resorts internationally, and, in this sense, the history of the Village Lake Louise controversy intrigues me as an early example of conservation and economic development politics in the Canadian Rockies with broader implications for other locales. To begin my analysis, it is necessary to situate the origins of skiing in the region and period of study.

Skiing has developed in Banff National Park for more than a century. The first ski club was organized and operated on Mount Norquay in 1928.[5] It was in 1930 that private enterprise was involved for the first time and built ski lodges in Skoki Valley and Deception Pass.[6] Near Lake Louise, 35 kilometers west of Banff, Mount Temple Lodge was built in 1939 by a private developer in Skoki Valley. Closer to Banff townsite the first chairlift was constructed on Mount Norquay in 1948 also by private developers.[7] Ski development went through a transformation from being organized by voluntary groups to being commercially operated by private investors, and, in time, even a consortium of private and public sectors emerged in the national park. With full support from the Parks Branch in the 1940s, the Ski Club of the Canadian Rockies (SCCR) implemented its development plan for Lake Louise ski area step by step. In the 1950s, the concept of a modern mechanized ski resort proliferated and competition in Europe and the United States increased. By contrast, the reality in Canada was that poorly equipped ski areas

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[5] National and Historic Parks Branch, *The Provisional Master Plan for Banff National Park, 1969* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1969), 13, University of Alberta Library.

[6] Ibid., 13.

[7] Ibid., 14.

could not meet increasing demands from skiers asking for modern and high-technology ski facilities, such as lifts and hotels. Consequently, the first gondola lift was constructed on the lower slopes of Mount Whitehorn at the lower Lake Louise ski hill and opened in 1959, which had been proposed earlier in 1948.[8] In 1961, Lake Louise Lifts Ltd., a subsidiary of the SCCR, was formed. And improvements were made to the Whitehorn ski complex by erecting chairlifts on the slopes east of the Bow River and Banff-Jasper Road in 1966 and 1967.[9]

A plan to build up Lower Lake Louise as a Visitor Services Centre on the Bow River and Banff-Jasper Road was submitted to the Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce by the Parks Branch in 1961. According to the plan, development would only be allowed on the floor of Bow Valley. In 1964, the first parks policy statement was announced by the Parks Branch to further define the general purpose of national parks written in the *National Parks Act*. It encouraged preservation of significant natural features and was dedicated to the expansion of park systems. According to it, "any resource harvesting activities for the primary purpose of commercial gain" should not be permitted in national parks.[10] "Artificial or urban type recreational developments will not be permitted in National Parks if their presence is not in harmony with park purposes, or causes impairment of significant natural or scenic values, or lessens the opportunity for others to

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Natural and Historic Resource Branch, *The National Parks Policy, 1964* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1964), 5, University of Alberta Library.

enjoy the park."[11] The policy also articulated a tougher stance toward limiting the growth of park townsites, nonetheless, in March 1965, Minister Arthur Laing announced a policy statement regarding winter recreation that encouraged overnight accommodation development in national park ski areas. Justified by the document *Winter Recreation and the National Parks: A Management Policy and Development Program*, ski hills would be considered compatible with national park values if intensive ski resort development was confined in certain areas with limited scenic values.[12] Nevertheless, the bigger policy environment did not change. The Branch was very cautious and sensitive, and the policy did not depart from the existing mandate in a radical way. In 1967, a comprehensive statement about the federal government's attitude toward leasing policy was introduced by Laing, which terminated the perpetual renewal clause for leaseholds and fixed the term of park leaseholds as Crown land. Given the unstable leasing environment and less desirable development prospects, the Visitor Services Centre initiative received little response from private investors and only two small hotels were constructed on the haphazardly planned valley floor.

The *National Parks Policy of 1964* and radical alterations to leasing policy provoked strong reactions from local businesses and the Government of Alberta. Federal policies alienated many Banff interests and relationships between park residents and Ottawa deteriorated. A motion seeking autonomy was brought forward by Banff and Jasper townsites with the assistance of the

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[11] Ibid., 21.

[12] National and Historic Parks Branch, *Winter Recreation and the National Parks: A Management Policy and Development Program* (Ottawa: Ontario, 1965), 2, FC 215 C345 1965.c3, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

Government Alberta. Nonetheless, even though intentions to restrict development were articulated by the parks administration, a window was still left open for recreation development and international events if they would leave parks unimpaired and be important to the nation.

Lake Louise was a particularly attractive site in this regard. In 1959, the Lake Louise-Banff area had been put forward as a potential site to hold the 1964 Winter Olympics. Local commercial interests considered it a promising opportunity to realize expansive development of the ski area at Lake Louise, and saw that "the bidding process would take some actions" to advance development and commercial success.[13] But the Olympic Games for 1964 were ultimately awarded by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to the city of Innsbruck, Austria, not Banff and Lake Louise.[14] In 1964, the Calgary Olympic Development Association (CODA) submitted its second bid for the 1968 Winter Olympics to the IOC. Two ski runs were cut during 1962 and 1963 on Mt. Whitehorn to enhance the chance of winning; however, this second Canadian bid lost to Grenoble, France by only two votes.[15] And the third bid for the 1972 Olympics in Banff National Park was also unsuccessful and eventually awarded to Sapporo, Japan.[16] The three failures to hold Olympic events in Banff National Park were largely attributed in public to the strong lobbies of vocal conservationists.

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[13] Rodney Touche, *Brown Cows, Sacred Cows: A True Story of Lake Louise* (Hanna: Gorman Gorman, 1990), 105.

[14] Hildebrandt, 62.

[15] Ibid., 63.

[16] Ibid.

No private investors showed any interest in the idea of a Lake Louise Visitor Services Centre and the Parks Branch then "invited firms to submit proposals for larger developments in 1968."[17] In 1971, a Letter of Intention was signed between the Parks Branch and Village Lake Louise Ltd., jointly owned by Lake Louise Lift Ltd. and the international petroleum giant Imperial Oil. Notably, the information was not released to the public. In the same year, a conceptual development plan of building an all-season alpine village-like ski resort to accommodate nearly 3,000 visitors was submitted to the Parks Branch by Village Lake Louise Ltd. "The planning ski area of Lake Louise is located along the Trans-Canada Highway approximately 35 miles northwest of Banff and one mile southeast of the intersection with the Banff-Jasper Highway."[18] A lower village would be located in the valley floor and was mainly used for highway services and visitors in transit.[19] An upper village at Lake Louise was planned on the Fish Creek bench where there were better mountain views. "The upper village was anticipated to accommodate 3,000 overnight visitors, 2,500 staff employees and dependents, and for 160,000 square feet of related commercial and office space."[20] Along with the Windermere Highway, the upgraded TransCanada highway system made travel by car to mountain parks easier and faster. The original trans-continental railway, built by Canadian Pacific Railway

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[17] Peter Walls, "Lake Louise: What the Shouting is about," *The Calgary Herald,* March 10, 1972, page 37, University of Alberta Library.

[18] National and Historic Parks Branch, *Village Lake Louise* (Ottawa, Ontario: 1971), 10, University of Alberta Library.

[19] Ibid., 37.

[20] Ibid., 56.

(CPR) in the 1880s, was another choice for passenger travel and tourism even in the automobile-dominated era. As well, Calgary Airport facilitated the access of domestic and international visitors. According to Village Lake Louise Ltd.'s estimates, after the completion of Village Lake Louise, the total number of skier-days would more than double from only 10,000 in 1970 to 22,500 in 1979.

In the spring of 1968, the first Banff provisional master development plan was approved. It proposed construction of extensive new roads, outdoor activity facilities, and winter use facilities and recreational access. For winter recreation, "ski areas plans were being prepared for Norquay, Sunshine, and Lake Louise, the three major ski developments in the park, to ensure that the potential expansion was developed to its optimum."[21] Other promising ski terrain, such as Bow Summit north on the Banff-Jasper Road, would be targeted as potential ski touring and casual recreational skiing sites.[22] The plan also outlined the basic guidelines for capital investment from private developers: new developments would be announced publicly and receive proposals submitted by various public tenders or interested parties.[23] This shift provoked vigorous opposition from various conservation groups. In April 1971, public hearings on the Four Mountain Parks Management Plans were held in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Already aware of plans for the Village Lake Louise proposal, the National and Provincial Parks

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[21] National and Historic Parks Branch, *The Provisional Master Plan for Banff National Park, 1969* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1969), 12, University of Alberta Library.

[22] Ibid., 12.

[23] Ibid., 13.

Association of Canada (NPPAC) strongly demanded separate public hearings to be held on proposals for Village Lake Louise. Consequently, the Village Lake Louise public hearings were held in Calgary from March 9 to 11, 1972. The federal Parks Branch received a great number of brief and petition letters in response to the controversial Lake Louise plans, and the majority were opposed to expansion.

This episode of public stakeholder politics in the making of federal parks under Parks Canada has not been closely examined by scholars to date. It warrants more investigation for what it indicates about public process and environmental conservation. It is a success story that stemmed the tide of ski hill development in a mountain national park, especially in the Bow Valley's montane areas as well as higher elevations. A huge change in Banff National Park seemed to be on the horizon in the early 1970s and stimulated planning. Likewise, nation-wide discussion aroused over whether it was legal to permit such business development, what roles national parks should play, and who should be involved in the national parks policy-making process in Canada.

The Alberta Government stated its position toward Village Lake Louise in a five-page letter to Minister Jean Chretien, the successor of Arthur Laing, on May 24, 1972. Alberta would not support it unless significant concessions could be made to the province and its citizens. Chretien eventually turned down the plan in 1972 explaining that "it was too large and could possibly have resulted in environmentally unacceptable concentrations of visitors in the Lake Louise

area."[24] But he also pointed out that "there still exists, however, the problem of meeting the essential needs of an increasing number of visitors to this area both in summer and in winter, and of through traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway."[25] After the Minister's announcement, Imperial Oil withdrew its investment and the project was left in the hands of Lake Louise Lift Ltd.

In February 1979, Parks Canada announced a new policy statement with respect to downhill ski areas in the mountain national parks. It reiterated that the "major development of downhill skiing facilities in the mountain national parks would be limited to the areas known as Sunshine, Mt. Norquay, Lake Louise and Marmot Basin."[26] Long range plans for these four ski areas were initiated, involving an Environment and Park Value study to be completed as the first step. In 1979, the *Parks Canada Policy*, also known as the Beaver Book, was introduced. The policy statement was revised leading to a full acknowledgement of public ownership. The principle of public participation in the development of policies and plans was institutionalized in the 1979 policy. However, it still emphasized that "the ultimate responsibility for policies and plans and their implementation rests with the Minister responsible for Parks Canada."[27] The concept of ecological integrity began to take shape in the policy, but, at the same time, tourism industry

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[24] Parks Canada, *Public Hearing Report Mountain Parks and Lake Louise Area* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1974), 1, University of Alberta Library.

[25] Ibid., 1.

[26] Parks Canada, *Parks Canada Policy-Downhill Skiing* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1979), 1-2, University of Alberta Library.

[27] Parks Canada, *Parks Canada Policy* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1979), 13, University of Alberta Library.

development was given a comparatively substantial weight. As we will see it was a significant period for the definition of ski industry services and policy.

Academic research has contributed insights to understand national park conservation movements through many disciplinary lenses, including environmental science, law, political science, public policy, economics, and history. Influenced by American conservation movements, Canadian conservationists have criticized the ambiguities embedded in both national parks administration and legislation. My study will assess how the conservation movement, seen through the gaze of the Village Lake Louise issue in Banff National Park, shaped administration, management and policy making related to Canada's national parks during the 1960s and 1970s. My study will chart how the ideals of Canadian national parks changed through the 1960s and 1970s. It will interpret the backstage legal and political environment of national parks' development presented by various stakeholders including, but not limited to, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and the public. The study is focused on Banff, the first national park in Canada, and an aesthetic and environmental symbol that persists today as a national icon, as well as one of its major ski resorts that is now host to Canada's highest-profile international alpine ski race - the FIS Lake Louise Alpine Ski World Cup - and other year-round tourism draws.

This project examines how Banff National Park was driven by the confluence of politics and business. How did different interest groups interact with each other and how did their interpretations and debates shape the core meaning of national parks in Alberta and beyond? I will look closely at C.J. Taylor's contention that "an emerging sense of social activism and a

strong appreciation of environmental values" were caused by a more strident and rigorous bureaucratic control from the federal government.[28] I also investigate how rationalism among committed university researchers, conservation groups, citizens, and various politicians, spoke of an increasingly clear civil approach in dealing with park issues. Nonetheless, even though the nation-wide protest against Village Lake Louise was a democratic milestone in the advance to public participation in parks administration, the communication process actually created a political environment geared to diffuse public criticism. To what extent did park authorities heed public voices? How did park authorities determine the obscure legal language of parks policies? And what strategies were designed to perpetuate the capitalist business tradition in national parks? Rationalism burgeoned in parks administration and management through this period, and political strategies and management techniques used by governments justified capitalist investment in national parks.[29] I probe the intentions of parks policy makers by examining related legislation, policies and other documents.

Increasing provincialism emerged as Alberta was undergoing a dramatic economic transition under the leadership of Premier Lougheed that also challenged Ottawa's jurisdiction over national parks. The longstanding tensions in this feud stemmed from the 1920s, a period when the issue of natural resources transfers to Alberta and Saskatchewan rose in public

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[28] C. J. Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s: Divergent Views of the National Parks Ideal," in *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011,* ed. Claire E. Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 135.

[29] Paul Kopas, *Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 181.

importance. Tensions escalated again in disagreements between Ottawa and Alberta about the Village Lake Louise proposal culminating in Alberta's objections in 1972, so the Village Lake Louise controversy also delves into federal-provincial relations. What was the relationship between the federal and provincial governments over the right to natural resources in national parks within Alberta? Alberta's strategy to create a new energy-based economic development pattern and conflicts with Ottawa has a history related to broader land use and control.[30] The conservation movement in the 1920s revolving around the hydroelectric development in the Canadian Rockies contributes to a better understanding of Ottawa's later energy policy and parks management frameworks. I will also seek the reasons why Alberta announced opposition toward the Village Lake Louise proposal, and how Ottawa reacted in intergovernmental relations.

My work also touches on the development proposal from a political economy perspective. Since Banff National Park's early establishment, it has been mainly used to develop domestic and international tourism. Since then these mountain parks have been regarded as national symbols that represent Canadian pride. Canadian national parks, especially Banff, were long linked closely with nationalism, and serve a purpose fostering Canadian citizenship and Canada's international brand. Today as part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, Banff National Park is still a powerful engine to drive economic growth along with citizenship. But in the 1960s, the rapid expansion of American subsidiaries globally and Canada's over-dependence on

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[30] John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1979), 12.

American capital sparked a fear of political interference from the United States.[31] In particular, American dollars from Imperial Oil, provoked concerns among Canadian nationalists who questioned Village Lake Louise's potential erosion of Canada's political and economic independence. As a result, a strong desire for a powerful federal government was advocated by the Committee for an Independent Canada (CIC) as a representative group from the English-speaking left.[32] I seek to understand better how the tension between provincialism and nationalism influenced the evolution of park policy making and administration unfolding amid capitalist ventures in the Banff National Park market and international ski tourism.

In this study, I will trace the process of the Village Lake Louise proposal supported by interdisciplinary scholarship to elucidate historical processes from 1964 to 1979. I will look to the history of different interest groups that advocated for a more democratic way to deal with park issues. Changes in parks legislation and policy emerged, but, to some extent, they were designed by parks authorities as strategies to create a favorable policy environment to support economic interests, not simply to realize better environmental protection. The final analysis will involve exploration of relations between the federal Government of Canada and the provincial Government of Alberta against the backdrop of ongoing challenges arising from Alberta's provincialism to traditional notions of Canadian federal nationalism.

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[31] The Committee for An Independent Canada (CIC), *Independence: The Canadian Challenge,* eds. Abraham Rotstein and Gary Lax (Toronto: Web Offset Publications Limited, 1972), 16, originally quoted in The Watkins Task Force, *Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian Industry: Report of the Task Force on the Structure of Canadian Industry* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1968), 29.

[32] Richards and Pratt, 5.

1.1 Literature Review and Historiography: Canada's National Park and Conservation Movement

The following overview of historiography analyzes how key scholars and other writers interpreted the history of Canadian national parks protection and tourism development, particularly in Banff National Park. Historiographic literature review allows me to "relate a study to the larger ongoing dialogue in the literature about this topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies."[33] My review of secondary literature reframes the historiography of what Leslie Bella once termed "the Second Canadian National Park Conservation Movement." In contrast to the conservation movement concerned with national park protection from massive industrial hydroelectric dam projects in the 1920s and 1930s, the a new conservation movement surfacing in the late 1960s was concerned with ecology and mobilized the general public to protest against industrial tourism development in national parks. Strong national park advocacy arose among citizens, university researchers, conservation groups and various politicians. The rise of scientific and managerial rationalism in park administration, along with shifting intergovernmental relations, made it even more complex.

Origins of Canada's National Parks and American Conservation Movements

In November 1885, the Cave and Basin Hot Springs, an area approximately 26 km^2 on the northern slope of Sulphur Mountain, was set aside for public use. The hot springs were located

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[33] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 30.

in 1883 by three railway employees working on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and they claimed it as a discovery. Since it was perceived that the Hot Springs were of great therapeutic powers the *Rocky Mountains Park Act* passed in April 1887 provided "legislative sanctions for the Canadian Government to exercise its authority over the reserved land at Banff Springs and the surrounding area."[34] Thereafter, a park resort was carefully planned and operated by the Dominion Government in collaboration with CPR. The Banff Springs Hotel was built by the CPR between 1887 and 1888 to attract elite class tourists from both North America and Europe. In 1911, the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act* proposing to place all present forest reserves and park reservations under the same legislation, but to differentiate their definitions to serve different purposes was introduced in the House of Commons.

Since Canada was influenced by the United States in the area of parks and environmental protection, the work previous scholars have done on American conservation concepts and initiatives also contributes to understanding the history of Canadian conservation movement. Geographer J. G. Nelson wrote "the development of national parks and protected areas in Canada has more or less paralleled that in the US."[35] According to F. J. Thorpe, Canada's conservation movement was motivated more by a fear of future resource exhaustion than the

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[34] Brown, 49.

[35] J. G. Nelson, *Changing Parks: The History, Future and Cultural Context of Parks and Heritage Landscapes*, 281.

deterioration of natural environment.[36] More recently, Paul Kopas argued that the initial impetus for establishing earlier national parks in United States was to build national identity and pride rather than to protect the environment.[37] Richard West Sellars systematically reviewed the history of preserving nature in United States. Not unlike Canada, the first American national parks were established to advance the interests of the giant railway company, Northern Pacific Railroad Company, to exploit natural resources and grand mountain scenery.[38] Profit motives were deeply entrenched in America's park legislation, policies, and, most importantly, the philosophy of park administration under the leadership of the United States National Parks Service. According to Sellars, nature preservation history can be summed up as a struggle between utilitarian values and environmental values. Forestry and park examples in the United States stimulated the rational resource development concept in Canada as early as the late nineteenth century and its initiatives to create special institutions, do research, and enact policy and legislation left considerable influence on Canada's subsequent park conservation movements.[39]

As the first Parks Commissioner of Canada appointed in 1911, James B. Harkin contributed greatly to the development of Canadian national parks. Influenced by the American conservation

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[36] F. J. Thorpe, *"Historic Perspective on the 'Resources for Tomorrow' Conference"* (paper presented at the Resources for Tomorrow Conference, Montreal, July 1961).

[37] Kopas, 42.

[38] Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven& London: Yale University Press, 1997), 9.

[39] Thorpe, 11.

movement, especially John Muir, Harkin put the concept of conservation into practice: he created and expanded the park system, and introduced the *National Parks Act* (1930).[40] However, Harkin made big concessions to economic development in national parks upheld by bureaucracy, especially the large influx of tourists in the 1930s.[41] Harkin's compromise was seen as a strategy to rationalize industry in national parks and a way to bring attention and money to the parks. In a humanitarian sense national parks were also to benefit the people.[42] The 1930 Act enshrined the principle of inviolability in legislation.[43] But inviolability was a discourse with contradictions and would move forward as a contested concept. Taylor argued "something that was not foreseen by the Parks Branch in the 1920s was the threat to park values posed by recreational development."[44] Extensive programs were initiated to provide recreational uses, especially after the Second World War. The legislation and policy introduced by the National Parks Administration, on the contrary, encroached on Canada's national parks piece by piece. And the Department took advantage of the environmental language to justify commercial developments. J.I. Nicol argued, "The Act left considerable scope regarding policies

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[40] Kopas, 46-53.

[41] Alan A. MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 40.

[42] MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 44, 47.

[43] Taylor, "Legislating Nature," 135.

[44] Ibid.

and initiatives to successive ministries and governments."[45] In these ways, a complex of interests including both use and preservation were embedded in national parks legislation and resulted in the dual character of parks administration.[46] Likewise with American national parks being mainly viewed as pleasuring playgrounds, according to Richard Sellars, the concept of "development as a means of ensuring preservation" permeated into the organizational mandate of National Park Service and became an "enduring paradoxical theme in American national park history."[47]

Dam Construction Controversy in Canada's National Parks

Throughout the 1920s into the 1930s, the issue of proposing hydro dam construction in the Waterton Lakes National Park and the Rocky Mountains National Park stirred up an intensive debate on which should take precedence, economic development or wilderness protection. The Alpine Club of Canada, "a nation-wide organization dedicated to advocating for the Canadian mountain heritage," formed an alliance with the National Parks Branch and others to safeguard the integrity of Canada's national parks.[48] The principle of inviolability, which limited further developments and commercial ventures in national parks, was thereafter enshrined into

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[45] John Nicol, "The National Parks Movement in Canada," in *the Canadian Parks in Perspective,* eds. J.G. Nelson and R. C. Scace (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1968), 24.

[46] MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 42.

[47] Sellars, 16, 108.

[48] Reichwein, "Hands Off Our National Parks," 130.

Canadian parks public policy and 1930 legislation.[49] In the hydro development controversy throughout the 1920s, according to PearlAnn Reichwein, political lobbying tactics were used to prevent industrial encroachment in national parks in the sense that a national coalition was established between parks bureaucrats and environmental interest groups.[50] But ultimately compromises led to more development approvals, along with new parks legislation that introduced the principle of inviolability. Phasing out industrial activities from Banff National Park also came at the expense of sacrificing sizable tracts of park land.[51] Reichwein also argued that "mass tourism would eventually jeopardize park values and the inviolability of public domain" as certainly as mining and timbering did against the background of escalating urbanization, industrialization and modernization.[52] In addition, political factors shifting with time made the political climate unpredictable. But the battle against hydro development in the 1920s led by the strong lobby of the Canadian National Parks Association (CNPA), and its parent organization ACC, pushed forward the idea of public ownership of national parks as a public domain, and further influenced the minds of Canadians. In the conservation movement of the 1920s, seeking political alliance between private sector voluntary organizations and government departments with the same interests would be the major fulcrum of anti-hydro dam

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[49] Ibid., 130.

[50] PearlAnn Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906-1974* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014), 121.

[51] Reichwein, "Hands Off Our National Parks," 154.

[52] Ibid., 155.

campaigns; by contrast, mobilizing the general public against commercial downhill ski interests in national parks and federal administrative policies was seen in the later 1960s movement.

Recreational Development and Townsite Expansion in Canada's National Parks

Providing recreational service has always been one of the basic purposes of national parks. Mass outdoor recreation developed rapidly in North America after the Second World War, largely attributed to the universalization of automobiles and increasing incomes and social affluence among the middle and working classes during an era of postwar prosperity and state planning.[53] In the minds of many Canadians, national parks were usually defined as "scenic resorts, recreation areas and tourist attractions," according to John Nicol, the Director of Parks Canada from 1969 to 1978.[54] As early as 1968, he reflected that "the effort to meet two sets of objectives, those of tourism and national parks, laid the basis for many of our present problems."[55]

The Banff townsite suggests how commercial activities were planned and developed in national parks. It emerged as a Rocky Mountain railway spa town after hot springs were located

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[53] Marion Clawson, "The Development of Recreation in the United States and Canada and its Implications for the National Parks," in *the Canadian Parks in Perspective,* eds. J. G. Nelson and R. C.Scace (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1968), 37.

[54] Nicol, "The National Parks Movement in Canada," 25.

[55] Ibid.

by railway workers.[56] The willingness of Parliament to absolutely control land use introduced a form of land tenure that contained the clause to allow perpetual lease renewals with extremely low ground rents, which undoubtedly guaranteed the maintenance and quality of land use but, on the other hand, frustrated future land management for some stakeholders.[57] Also, the exclusive privilege granted to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to exploit the tourism revenue potential as much as possible paved the way for large-scale recreational facilities, such as the Banff Springs Hotel and the golf course. Robert C. Scace argued that "CPR was having a say in local developments to the point where the government no longer made independent decisions."[58] According to Scace, the focus of Banff shifted much farther toward recreation as a resort town between 1911 and 1945.[59] The complex land uses, including not only commercial activities to meet the need of visitors but also public services, such as schools, hospitals and churches, made the townsite into small urban community.[60] This situation exacerbated over time as Banff townsite visitation grew by the 1960s. It was the greater pressure from increasing visitors that forced Arthur Laing, minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to issue the National Parks Policy statement in September 1964. The policy intended to put a strict

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[56] Robert C. Scace, "Banff Townsite: An Historical-Geographical View of Urban Development in a Canadian National Park," in *the Canadian Parks in Perspective,* eds. J. G. Nelson and R. C.Scace (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1968), 188.

[57] Ibid., 192-193.

[58] Ibid., 200.

[59] Ibid., 201.

[60] Ibid., 198-199.

control over the townsite development and other concessions. The "perpetual lease renewal" clause was deleted, residence would only be granted to parks administration staff and business service providers, and zoning regulation was adopted to restructure existing land use patterns. The Banff townsite was subsequently more regulated by the Parks Branch as a residential community for permanent residence. It also set a pattern for future policies to plan, regulate and govern other places as Visitor Services Centres to provide only essential services for tourists.

Winter sport endures as an important form of recreation activities in many Canadian national parks. According to J. G. Nelson, affluence triggered by the Alberta oil boom after the Second World War stimulated increasing visits to mountain parks from nearby cities, especially Calgary, and the demand for skiing and other winter sports became more apparent.[61] Writer Rodney Touche reviewed the ups and downs of Lake Louise ski area development history from his perspective as an insider; he was general manager of the Lake Louise ski hill from 1972 to 1984. He emphasized Sir Norman Watson's expedition to the Canadian Rockies ignited his ambitious plans to invest in Lake Louise as a new commercial ski area as early as the 1950s; Watson was an English sportsman with a great fortune inherited from his father and keen on generating an atmosphere at Lake Louise like skiing in the European Alps.[62] In Touche's view, the later Village Lake Louise controversy in the 1960s killed the creation of a world-class ski

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[61] J. G. Nelson, "Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park: A National Park Problem in Perspective," in *the Canadian Parks in Perspective,* eds. J. G. Nelson and R. C.Scace (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1968), 80.

[62] Rodney Touche, *Brown Cows, Sacred Cows: A True Story of Lake Louise* (Hanna: Gorman, 1990), 46.

destination in national parks in its infancy. The dual mandate of making national parks accessible to Canadians for enjoyment and preserving what tourists come to see – a mandate passed down from Harkin – made the process even more complicated and laborious, which kept swaying the final outcome of Village Lake Louise. Ultimately, a combination of forces including park authorities, shortage of finances, federal-provincial relations, and lobbying from environmentalists, halted the proposed the ski village.[63]

In the early 1990s, Parks Canada historian William B. Yeo briefly reviewed the history of how Banff's downhill ski industry development moved from "an amateur pastime into a large-scale commercial enterprise even with a goal to become a world-class self-contained resort."[64] He maintained that park authorities held a conservative attitude toward commercial development in national parks but were willing to give support to downhill skiing development within the limit of park legislation and policies.[65] Overall, Canada's national parks administration dealt with various proposals submitted by different promoters, from English aristocrats to local-based corporations and multinational enterprises, but the deciding factor was often whether the proposal would generate stable and substantial revenue.

Public Consultation and Rising Environmentalism

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[63] Ibid.

[64] William B. Yeo, "Making Banff a Year-Round Park," in *Winter Sports in the West,* eds. E. A. Corbet and A. W. Rasporich (Calgary: The Historical Society of Alberta, 1990), 96-97.

[65] Ibid., 96.

Much literature exists regarding the tension between conservation and preservation in national parks and a rising public consciousness. R. C. Brown wrote that, given the important role played by natural resources in western Canada during the nation-building period, the original Canadian national parks policy was actually a continuation of Macdonald's National Policy.[66] The doctrine of usefulness was always the truism of park administration according to Brown's 1968 interpretation of national parks as an outgrowth of the National Policy.[67]

According to political scientist Paul Kopas, a huge amount of public participation through the 1960s and 1970s emerged in discussions about Canada's national parks even if "bureaucracy was still the principle actor."[68] A systematic interaction among nature lovers from various backgrounds manifested a sense of scientific rationalism in protests against economic development in national parks.[69] In the midst of Mulroney's park user-fee era of privatization with some steps toward greener national environmental policies, Rick Searle wrote that, "Since the early 1960s there has been a mounting public demand for greater protection of ecosystems and species found within the national parks."[70] However, Kopas argued that such public participation in national park lobbies and policy making was ill defined. The federal minister

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[66] Brown, 49.

[67] Ibid., 53.

[68] Kopas, 198.

[69] Ibid., 200.

[70] Rick Searle, *Phantom Parks: The Struggle to Save Canada's National Parks* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1997), 29.

responsible for national parks, as both head of an administrative department and a member of Parliament, bore significant influence on administrative decisions; constrained by this Canadian political reality, decisions about whether to include the public in parks policy making were made by parks authorities.[71] Even when a legislative framework to receive public comments and suggestions on parks management plans was solidified in the late 1960s, the public did not have the full right to make decisions but merely assumed active responsibility as citizens.

At the same time, university researchers in the United States and Canada made efforts to infuse science into park conservation. American national parks in the 1960s and 1970s also experienced massive post-war construction development under "Mission 66" and an unprecedented system expansion under "Parkscade USA" that came into conflict with a new era of environmentalism as well as ecological science.[72] American scientists, with support of conservation groups, struggled to make park management more scientifically informed and institutionalize the rationale of applying scientific knowledge to park management. But the status and strength of modern ecological science was erratic. It was, to a large extent, determined by a mix of factors such as rapid leadership changes within National Parks Service, disparate political motives, and a traditional perception of science in park management that was resistant toward research-based management regimes.[73] As well, the sixties battle was much

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[71] Kopas, 74-75.

[72] Sellars, 205.

[73] Ibid., 232.

more scientifically grounded with universities and colleges becoming the frontier of knowledge and debate, with researchers as activists on the front lines of environmental advocacy politics into the seventies.

It is worth closer examination to assess whether or not the democratic approach to public consultation really worked in Canada's national parks in the 1960s and 1970s. Leslie Bella's work in 1987 argued "conservation groups, the bureaucrats, and some of the politicians responsible for the national parks have again tried to save the national parks from tourism industry."[74] But it turned out that "it only prevented the development of large monopolistic ski resorts controlled by resource-sector giants" as the interests of small business were maintained.[75] After the proposal for Village Lake Louise was turned down by Minister Jean Chretien, Imperial Oil lost interest and divested Lake Louise, which is now again controlled by local entrepreneur, Charles Locke. It is evident that the conservation groups faced a great deal of pressure while protecting nature parks from the encroachment of industrial and commercial interests at this time. According to Jeremy Wilson's later assessment in 1992, changes were more constrained and "the movement's gains have been proscribed by fundamental features of Canadian political-economic reality, most notably the continuing economic importance of resource extraction, and the continuing political strength of concatenations of public-private power

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[74] Bella, 127.

[75] Ibid., 161.

premised on 'business as usual' exploitation of natural resource wealth."[76] Ironically, preservation was still justified by its potential economic values not unlike earlier eras.

John Joseph O'Brien made a retrospective analysis on the planning and public consultation process of the Village Lake Louise proposal from the perspective of planning in his University of British Columbia MA thesis in 1973. He argued that public hearings played an important role and contributed to the rejection of the proposal; however, the public did not participate in the planning and decision making process, and, as a result, the planning problem of requesting more accommodation facilities in national parks was not resolved by the public consultation program.[77] O'Brien further asserted that the public hearing on Village Lake Louise was a "mere formality" due to restrained timing and location, less presentation time for conservation groups, and lack of order.[78] His primary focus was on the technical process of proposal plans and consultation from a functional planning perspective, rather than the long-standing complexities of power involving national parks legislation and policy, stakeholder positions, and intergovernmental relations between Ottawa and Alberta set in broader political context and terms.

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[76] Jeremy Wilson, "Green Lobbies: Pressure Groups and Environmental Policy," in *Canadian Environmental Policy: Ecosystem, Politics, and Process*, ed. Robert Boardman (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 110.

[77] John Joseph O' Brien, "Village Lake Louise: A Study of Public Participation in Planning" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1973), 5.

[78] Ibid., 121-124.

C. J. Taylor more recently analyzed the divergent park ideal in Banff National Park through the 1960s. During this period, a variety of interests ranging from the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta to local communities and conservation groups made the management of Banff National Park far more complicated than ever before.[79] As an important catalyst, the debate over the proposed Village Lake Louise proposal encouraged a shift in the philosophy of national parks from the "middle path" twinning tourism and protection, characteristic of Harkin, to a more determined stance to put limitations on development deemed inappropriate. In particular, the incorporation of public consultation promoted the democratization of parks management in the 1960s.[80] Taylor's role as a public historian for Parks Canada also shaped his insights and historiographical outlook.

Public participation consultations in Canadian park areas dates back to 1968, the year Ontario took the initiative to hold public hearings into its provincial parks management plans.[81] Ottawa followed with its announcement of the first national parks public hearing program in the same year.[82] The public hearings on the Four Mountain Parks Provisional Master Plans were the first hearings held in Western Canada, and three earlier hearings had already been held in the Atlantic Provinces. Kopas argued that public participation was seen as a political good by which

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[79] Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s," 135.

[80] Ibid., 150.

[81] Kopas, 75.

[82] Ibid., 76.

one government attempted to win more political support from the public.[83] In fact, the management plans for the four mountain parks were finalized internally before they were distributed to the public for inquiries and comments through a newly introduced consultation process. According to Rodney Touche, welcoming public suggestions and comments into planning parks management gave the Branch enough time to assess the public reaction and respond accordingly.[84] Feeling the pressure from strong conservation feedback, the Parks Branch promised to hold separate public hearings for Village Lake Louise in March 1972 and "the plans would be open to the full force of public debate, public dialogue, before decisions were taken."[85]

Barry Sadler insisted that public participation of the sixties underwent new directions and had gained adequate strength to be involved in government decisions with formal and authoritative opportunities.[86] But, in Canada, a sound legislative framework for public participation was not available and there was little legal resource to involvement, let alone in parks arena.[87] And it was at the complete discretion of administrative agencies that the privilege

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[83] Ibid., 75.

[84] Touche, 135.

[85] Ibid., 137.

[86] Barry Sadler, ed. *Involvement and Environment: Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Public Participation Volume 1*, Banff, Alberta, October 4-7, 1977 (Edmonton: the Environment Council of Alberta, 1978), 1.

[87] Kopas, 75.

of participating in government decision-making was granted.[88] These all contributed to a rather limited access for the Canadian public to real involvement. In addition, according to Sadler, the institutionalization of public participation, on the negative side, also "established the conditions under which participation took place and might provide rather rigid frameworks which ran counter to the nature of this activity."[89]

Related to the Village Lake Louise public participation program, a University of Calgary wildlife ecology specialist in grizzly habitats, Stephen Herrero, insisted that "the public input format chosen in each case allowed for poor opportunity to participate in the planning process and, even worse, did not inform people about how their input would be processed or what role it would have in either planning or decision making."[90] Limited access to information and decision-making processes restricted public involvement in planning.[91] The Village Lake Louise plan was released to the public two months prior to the hearing, but the background information in terms of planning and environmental research was not disclosed.[92] According to Herrero, the role played by public participation in Village Lake Louise was extremely limited.

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[88] A. R. Lucas "Legal Foundations for Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making," *Natural Resources Journal*, no. 16 (1976), 77-78.

[89] Sadler, 3.

[90] Barry Sadler, ed. *Involvement and Environment: Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Public Participation Volume 1*, Banff, Alberta, October 4-7, 1977 (Edmonton: the Environment Council of Alberta, 1978), 254.

[91] Ibid., 254.

[92] Ibid., 259.

The Parks Branch and Village Lake Louise Ltd. presided over the whole process from goal setting and development planning to decision-making exclusively. The Branch's articulation of favoring expansion and development had already set the tone up front. And the dearth of background information confined the scope of public input.

As a past President of Village Lake Louise Ltd., Rodney Touche examined the role of public participation in Village Lake Louise from the perspective of developers. He argued that adverse publicity convinced the Minister to turn down Village Lake Louise.[93] According to the statistical analysis of the public input in Village Lake Louise made by Parks Canada it was proven that the statement from proponents was not given the same weight as that of opponents in a statistical way.[94] Touche contended that "public opinion was distorted and misled by the media as a result of the drama-charged public hearings."[95] What was articulated generally in the media headlines about conservationists' opposition to adverse impacts on ecology and wildlife, real estate development, and expanding too big in scale, had nearly nothing to do with the actual expression of public opinion that was more concerned with Village Lake Louise's location in a national park, the foreign investment from Imperial Oil, and the equal access of average Canadians to skiing.[96] Touche insisted that public participation should be organized in a rational

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[93] Barry Sadler, ed. *Involvement and Environment: Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Public Participation Volume 1*, Banff, Alberta, October 4-7, 1977 (Edmonton: the Environment Council of Alberta, 1978), 274.

[94] Ibid., 278-279.

[95] Ibid., 277.

[96] Ibid., 277.

way, not for extreme emotions that could "polarize positions and distort the issues."[97] Public participation should be well organized to solicit constructive suggestions, not utilized as a tool in the guise of democracy to root out development.[98]

I understand that this period was characterized by a mix of interests from different stakeholders. Due to the continuously changing balance of powers within different historical contexts Paul Kopas has observed "the meanings of parks have been in nearly constant flux over the century."[99] The dynamics of power relations shaped the development of national parks, in other words, the interactions among different groups, especially their contradictory standpoints, resulted in the variable priorities of national parks during specific time periods.[100] During debates over the Village Lake Louise proposal, conservation groups used different political approaches to transform public consciousness.

Much existing research covers how interest groups made more scientific and systematic progress to push their preservation agenda in Canada's conservation movements, but the issue in terms of an increasing rationalism in park administration left open space for discussion. Rationalism aroused along with different strategies adopted by the national parks administration to solve the dual mandate problem. According to Touche, strategic political approaches were adopted by park authorities during the negotiation process of Village Lake Louise proposal. "A

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[97] Ibid., 279-280.

[98] Ibid., 280.

[99] Kopas, 178.

[100] Ibid., 178-192.

series of hearings featured with a large-scale public participation were to be held to come up with provisional master plans for Canadian national parks which could probe the grounds ahead."[101] However, it proved to be out of Parks Canada's hands as environmental interest groups and the public came to dominate the stage at the hearings.

Parks Policy Making

Park policy making is a complex world. On one hand, a sound legal system can contribute to national parks protection, but, on the other hand, legal loopholes can always be exploited. Robert Craig Brown's classic parks policy analysis of the period 1887 to 1914 insisted that "Canada's national parks policy was grounded on the belief that the parks were a natural resource themselves capable of exploitation under government regulation in a partnership of government and private enterprise."[102] The establishment and development of Canada's earlier national parks were closely correlated with nation building and economic expansion. Brown argued that the tenet of the National Policy under the Macdonald Government in the late 1880s was to enrich Canada by taking advantage of abundant natural resources in the West, especially the Banff Hot Springs and surrounding beautiful sceneries that could be advertised extensively to attract tourists.[103] According to Brown the real purpose of the *Rocky Mountains Park Act* introduced in 1887 was to bring the reservation into immediate usefulness according to this

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[101] Touche, 135.

[102] Brown, 59.

[103] Ibid., 46-47.

doctrine under Macdonald's policy.[104] In 1911, the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act* were enacted. Influenced by the efficient management concept introduced from the parallel American conservation movement during the progressive era, this legislation proposed to "introduce a more sophisticated administrative machinery guided by conservation techniques designed to ensure continuous utilization of natural resources."[105]

The anti-hydro-development movement in the 1920s triggered the fierce debate surrounding preservation and utilization as two opposing objectives. C. J. Taylor maintained that the reason why national parks had a hybrid of functions was that "they were perceived as big places to serve a number of constituencies and different objectives were emphasized at different times for national parks."[106] The principle of inviolability was no doubt the greatest achievement of the *National Parks Act of 1930*. The Act attempted to prevent rampant commercial exploitation at the expense of validating national parks protection and the standard of creating new national parks was fixed. Nonetheless, it left reconciliation of the two conflicting aims--use and preservation--unresolved and national parks subsequently deteriorated for neglecting to rein in out-of-hand tourism development.[107]

Paul Kopas' parks policy analysis covered the mid-1950s to 1990s, in particular, to demonstrate how environmental values gradually transcended the ones favoring economic

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[104] Ibid., 49.

[105] Ibid., 59.

[106] Taylor, "Legislating Nature," 126.

[107] Ibid., 135-136.

development and evolved to be the priority of national parks policy after the passage of the *Amendment of National Parks Act* in 1988. Kopas asserted that "the meanings of national parks were always changing, so did national parks policy since it had accumulated over a long time and contained a wide diversity of ideas."[108] The emphasis of parks policy often shifted from one focus to another, thus no universal generalizations could be applied to its fifty-year development, in other words, "it was only possible to specify it to certain periods of time."[109] The fact that direction of Canada's national park development was led by a variety of political actors representing different interests in different time periods caused the inconsistency of Canadian national parks policy.[110] Hence, Kopas maintained that it was significant to understand the changing context of policy environment and figure out which political factor was the most influential one in each time period and how it shaped policy-making outcomes.[111]

Ian Attridge used the theory of hegemony and power relations to demonstrate how legal language dominates the general public's commitment and understanding toward park concepts. It is the authority behind the language that controls the whole process.[112] In addition, dynamics

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[108] Kopas, 1, 10.

[109] Ibid., 11.

[110] Ibid., 18.

[111] Ibid., 18-23.

[112] Ian Attridge, "Canadian Parks Legislation: Past, Present and Prospects," in the *Changing Parks: The History, Future and Cultural Context of Parks and Heritage Landscapes,* ed. John S. Marsh and Bruce W. Hodgins (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1998), 224.

among different actors reconfigure the ongoing policy environment and legal framework.[113] Alan MacEachern stressed, "Policy making was actually a tactic, a language used to defend what were still quite human positions."[114] There is always enough space left in it to provide suitable justifications for whatever contributes to human interests. Here, corporate-government alliances made the obstacles faced by conservation groups formidable.[115] MacEachern also insisted the protection ethic of government and investors was a strategy to reinforce commercial sustainability even as it consoled park enthusiasts and pacified criticism. Rick Searle, as a former Parks Canada employee, more recently described the politics and policy struggles in terms of protecting ecological integrity in national parks, and what problems Parks Canada was facing from the 1980s to the 1990s. He stressed that Parks Canada always said the right thing but never carried out its promises, and the way it acted was inconsistent.[116] It was in part attributed to the power of office politics outside Parks Canada, such as the integration of Parks Canada with other departments and drastic budget cuts, and in part because of the organization itself, characterized by a split personality and prejudice toward science-based park management during this period.[117]

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[113] Attridge, 228.

[114] Alan A. MacEachern, *"Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy"* (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, Calgary, 12 June 1994), 199.

[115] Wilson, 124.

[116] Searle, 60.

[117] Ibid., 119-128.

Since the establishment of the first Canada's national park, policy making has been used strategically as a tactic to provide legislative sanctions for the bureaucracy to keep profiting from commercial developments in parks, as well as avoid being criticized for a lack of environment ethics.

Federalism and Provincialism

In the midst of the Cold War climate, Americanization and hegemony was reinforced through economic penetration around the world by establishing American subsidiaries to accelerate political control. The American investment in Village Lake Louise proposal triggered serious concern related to Canada's economic and political independence. As Arn Keeling insists, nationalism was a catalyst promoting environmentalism in Canada.[118] It was advocated that a strong federal government was greatly need to counteract regionalism.[119] However, the action taken by Ottawa to guide development at Lake Louise was alleged to threaten the interests of Alberta and restrict the development of the tourism industry in the Rocky Mountain national parks. According to John Richards and Larry Pratt, "Albeit American capital and culture do play an excessive role in Canada and do currently threaten the integrity of the nation, the left-nationalist version of dependency theory was, we concluded, curiously incomplete and

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[118] Arn Keeling in Jenny Clayton, "Human Beings Need Places Unchanged by Themselves: Defining and Debating Wilderness in the West Kootenays, 1969-1974," *BC Studies,* no. 170 (Summer 2011), 113. *America: History and Life with Full Text,* EBSCO*host* (accessed March 24, 2013).

[119] CIC, 163, originally quoted in Kari Levitt, *Silent Surrender* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), 165.

flawed."[120] The new entrepreneurial development strategy adopted by Premier Lougheed's government through the 1970s hastened rising provincialism and strengthened Alberta's capacity to decrease its dependence on external capital and fight against control from Central Canada.[121] Also, resentment towards the federal government's way of running parks in Alberta dated back to the time of Senator James Lougheed, Peter Lougheed's grandfather, and seemed like a family tradition that made this new Premier more inclined to object to Ottawa's mastery of national parks.[122] Following Lougheed, Premier Don Getty complained about a lack of upfront communication between Ottawa and Alberta in the 1970s.[123] Writing to Jean Chretien, Getty claimed that support was forthcoming only if more provincial control of national parks was given to Alberta.[124]

Furthermore, Cheryl Williams studied the failed bid for 1972 Winter Olympics at Lake Louise, in which three meanings of Banff National Park were constructed as discourse, namely a sport resort, a world-class tourism destination, and a nature reserve preserved for future generations. The debate between the proponents and opponents around the bid was set in the

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[120] Richards and Pratt, preface, viii.

[121] Ibid., 11.

[122] Ibid., 144-145.

[123] Touche, 142.

[124] Ibid., 143.

context of conflicts between boosterism and environmentalism.[125] Grounded in hegemony theory, Williams analyzed how a dominant "common sense" regarding the benefits generated by Winter Olympics was communicated to the general public through media.

It is evident that three major stakeholders, namely the park bureaucracy, corporate sector, and public advocacy groups were actively involved in the Village Lake Louise planning controversy. However, it is still not clear how these three driving forces interacted with each other. I am particularly intrigued by the roles of public participation.

In my MA thesis work, I propose to fill a literature gap by investigating not only the stakeholder politics and interest groups that participated in the ensuing Village Lake Louise planning and development controversy, but also the extent to which they shaped the response of park authorities. What role did public participation play in the termination of the Village Lake Louise proposal in 1972? It was evident that public participation was never external to parks administration and policy making. But was the public really influential in the policy-making process? Did the public gain real power to make decisions? Or were decisions still made at the complete discretion of the minister and bureaucracy?

This controversy's role in public policy making and foreign investment related to the politics of environmental conservation and economic nationalism is another focus of my research. I will investigate how the dual mandate of the Parks Branch entrenched inconsistency in parks legislation and policy. Central questions focus on how the Village Lake Louise proposal

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[125] Cheryl Williams, "The Banff Winter Olympics: Sport, Tourism, and Banff National Park" (Master diss., University of Alberta, 2011), 1-7.

contradicted them and how park authorities designed different strategies to maintain commercial interests in national parks. This pivotal event pushed Parks Canada to launch long-term planning programs for ski areas in national parks beginning in the 1980s. Significantly, jurisdictional contention between the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta over Banff National Park has long been a controversial issue. The degree to which the federal-provincial relationship and other factors in civil society influenced the direction for Village Lake Louise and parks development warrants deeper investigation.

The examination of the history of Village Lake Louise controversy will help us better understand today's lack of public input in Canada's national parks planning and Parks Canada's aspiration to expand the scale of tourism development by strategically amending management plans. We follow the battle of Village Lake Louise beginning at the level of federal parks policy making, followed by intergovernmental relations between Ottawa and Alberta, and finally public consultation to assess an unusual episode that led to the rejection of the Village Lake Louise proposal and an apparent win for environmentalists in 1972.

1.2 Methodology

This research project analyzes the history of how the Village Lake Louise proposal in Banff shifted the way in which the national park was planned and exploited in the 1960s and 1970s. I conducted historical research based on an archival research methodology with some use of existing quantitative archival data sources.

Historical research can shed a new light on the present by exploring and interpreting the past. And as a broad research method, it can be used in different ways when combined with different disciplines. But the most fundamental three principles to adhere to are recognizing the difference between past and present, interpreting historic events in unique historical context, and connecting the events with a sense of integrity and progress.[126]

"Archives are collections of records—both paper and electronic records—that are generated by, and reflect the efforts of, an individual, organization, or institution."[127] First of all, it is significant to realize the distinction of different categories of archival documents. There are two major categories, one is primary source and the other is secondary source. According to Finnegan's definition:

> Primary sources... form the basic and original material for providing the researcher's raw evidence. Secondary sources, by contrast, are those that discuss the period studies but are brought into being at some time after it, or otherwise somewhat removed from the actual events. Secondary sources copy, interpret or judge material to be found in primary sources.[128]

Since this study is mostly focused on analyzing the social and political process behind the ski area development itself, working through relevant archival records allows me to uncover retrospectively what happened and who was pulling the strings behind the scenes.[129] The use of

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[126] Scott A. Frisch, Douglas B. Harris, Sean Q. Kelly, and David C.W. Parker, *Doing Archival Research in Political Science* (New York: Cambria Press, 2012), 9-12.

[127] Frisch, Harris, Kelly, and Parker, 2.

[128] R. Finnegan, 'Using Documents', in R. Sapsford and V. Jupp (eds), *Data Collection and Analysis* (London: Sage, 1996), 141, quoted in Lisa Harrison, *Political Research: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 125.

[129] Frisch, Harris, Kelly, and Parker, 11.

administrative records greatly contribute to analyzing organizational policy and decision-making processes. It must be noticed that the information might be incomplete or a gulf may exist due to intentional sanitization and manipulation.[130] "So it is important to question the sense of social context of production and to whom the document is intentionally addressed."[131] Based on what written documentation still exists, I recognize not everything is documented in writing and some written documentation has been lost or is not available. In addition, archival research can be expensive and time-consuming, and researchers have to take the risk of failing to find anything contributable to their studies.[132] Comprehensive research requires thorough persistence for methodical rigor. It may also involve repeated archival document reviews as research proceeds for cross-reference and renewed searches. I investigated different sources and perspectives to cross reference and reconstruct various subject positions. I delved into various archival records seeking to reveal different stakeholder discourses and discern the subject positions of stakeholder groups and how each one represented its own and other stakeholder positions.

Documents were collected from various record groups at archives and libraries. I conducted preliminary online research in July and August 2013 before making research visits to the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton and Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Email correspondence with the archivist at Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives was undertaken and the research scope was narrowed down with her assistance. The intention was to

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[130] Frisch, Harris, Kelly, and Parker, 16-22.

[131] Harrison, 125.

[132] Frisch, Harris, Kelly, and Parker, 6-7.

locate and explore what documentary sources might contribute to my MA research on Village Lake Louise to expose government and non-government positions in the debate.

A research visit was conducted at the Provincial Archives of Alberta on July 22 to 24, 2014. I pulled out selected materials from the Peter Lougheed fonds and Don Getty fonds to reveal the rhetoric of Alberta politicians and provincial government departments, such as Department of Environment, as well as Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, and that of notable elected officials during the time period in question, such as Peter Lougheed, Don Getty and Joe Clark. Some files were photocopied but picture taking was not allowed for research. Also useful to this study were newspaper microfilm records of *The Banff Crag and Canyon* from the early twentieth century to the present.

An initial trip to Library and Archives Canada was conducted in late September 2014 to assess the scope of collections and review several record groups to support my MA proposal and thesis research. Federal government department files in RG19 Finance, RG22 Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and RG108 Environment were examined. They included memorandums and correspondences of relevant federal departments, namely Finance, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Environment, and documents regarding the development of Lake Louise ski area in the 1960s and 1970s. I had also planned in advance to review the files of Parks Canada in RG84 pertinent to Village Lake Louise, but the records I had ordered in summer 2014 had been unexpectedly transferred to Parks Canada's regional office in Winnipeg, Manitoba as I learned on arrival at LAC in September. An Access to Information and Privacy

request was submitted on October 3, 2014. It was approved and a total of 119 pages were examined and released to me on October 30, 2014, in their entirety.

Furthermore, the Whyte Archives maintains a wealth of textual, photographic and sound records regarding the history of Banff National Park in particular and the Canadian Rockies in general. Apart from such important national park publications as parks polices, plans, documents and government-initiated studies, several relevant fonds were located for non-government stakeholders: Alpine Club of Canada fonds, Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce fonds, the Bow Valley Naturalists fonds, Four Mountain Parks Program fonds, National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada fonds, and Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds. Archival research at Whyte Museum Archives was conducted with the assistance of Reference Archivist, Lena Goon from July 27 to August 1, 2014 to investigate the primary source documents dealing with Village Lake Louise, such as correspondence and memorandums written by government officials and park employees, brief and petition letters from conservation groups, government reports, minutes of meetings, newspaper articles as well as speeches made by various groups. Selected files were photocopied (61 pages) and photographs were also taken.

Based on archival sources identified for research, my work proceeded to analyze how stakeholders represented various subject positions with particular outlooks on Village Lake Louise proposals and national parks policy as contested terrain. As research proceeded, multiple readings involved repeated archival document reviews for cross-references and renewed searches to trace, reconstruct, and analyze various subject positions and rhetorical strategies.

Chapter Two

From Resources to Recreation:

Management Policy and the Inviolability of Canada's National Parks

2.1 Introduction

In July 1972, the proposed Village Lake Louise project in Banff National Park was turned down by Minister Jean Chretien responsible for National Parks in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This decision came after half a decade of recreation planning, protests from environmental groups, and extensive public hearings in 1972. This decision, and the positions of the various stakeholders and governments, can only be understood in the context of the evolving management policy of National Parks.

The *National Parks Act (1930)* was a cornerstone in the history of Canada's national parks policy making. The opposition argument toward Village Lake Louise was primarily focused on the interpretation of the Section 4 of the Act. The Section stated that "the parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to the provisions of this Act and the regulations, and such parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[133] But the

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[133] Canada Dominion Parks Branch, *National Parks Act, 1930* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1930), Section 4, Parks Canada History Collection.
http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/national-parks-act-1930.htm

interpretation of Section 4 was left open for future debates, and a paradox of use and protection passed into parks administration and policy making.

The Village Lake Louise project proposed in 1971 was based on financial realities yet the permission given to large-scale commercial development within the boundaries of national parks posed a risk of destroying the natural beauties that attracted the tourists in the first place. Tolerance toward the mountain ski resort village might open the flood gates of commercial development, which would overrun the intrinsic values of national parks protected for all Canadians.

The ideals of national parks were constantly changing. According to historian Richard Craig Brown, early Canadian national parks were closely associated with the economy and territorial expansion, not environmental values.[134] C. J. Taylor, writing two decades later, noted that before the First World War, in the very era of nation building, natural resource exploitation was taken for granted and even a good thing.[135] This position evolved again as the conservation movement became a moving force in government policy making in the early twentieth century. As George Altmeyer has noted, the idea of inexhaustible resources was under greater scrutiny, and the method of using natural resources scientifically and efficiently was proposed to maintain its permanence.[136] By the 1960s, the number of tourists visiting mountain parks grew rapidly

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[134] Brown, "The Doctrine of Usefulness," 49.

[135] Taylor, "Legislating Nature," 127.

[136] George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11, no. 3 (1976): 28.

because of "the post-war boom, growing young families, and the increasing mobility."[137] This boom produced increased demand for recreation infrastructure and proposals for a number of large-scale developments, especially downhill ski resorts. Demands in turn triggered new debates on what roles national parks should play. This new debate focused on balancing tourism development and environmental protection took place in the 1960s and 1970s, and resulted in the rejection of the Village Lake Louise project. Still rejection did not end the debate between profitability and protection and Village Lake Louise will not be the last large-scale proposal for the development of national parks, but the decision was significant as a major turning point in policy transformation and public process.

In order to understand the context in which the public hearings on Village Lake Louise took place, and why this confrontation will not be the last, it is necessary to understand the longer and dual mandate of National Parks administration from 1887 to 1972. In this chapter, I examine and explain the various management policies and legislative landmarks to explain this development and almost contradictory policy making.

Resource development and debate was not new to Banff National Park. Throughout the 1910s to the 1930s, contention over national parks was mainly about the legitimacy of natural resource exploitation since timbering, mining and hydroelectric development were all deemed legal within the boundaries of Canadian national parks. Coal excavation was growing vigorously in Canmore and Exshaw and hydroelectric dams were built at Lake Minnewanka and

[137] Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s," 134.

Kananaskis Falls by Calgary Power Company.[138] However, the post-First World War period witnessed a sharp reorientation of park administration. The newly-created Parks Branch in 1911 led by James B. Harkin was strongly opposed to commercial intrusion into Banff National Park with tourism as an exception and the splitting of national parks from forest reserves in both legislation and administration arenas was put on the top of new Parks Branch's agenda.[139]

R.C. Brown's classic parks policy analysis of the period 1887 to 1914 insisted that "Canada's national parks policy was grounded on the belief that the parks were a natural resource themselves capable of exploitation under government regulation in a partnership of government and private enterprise."[140] The establishment and development of Canada's earlier national parks were closely associated with nation building and economic expansion. Brown argued that the tenet of the National Policy adopted by Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's Government in the late 1880s was to help Canada prosper by taking full advantage of abundant natural resources in the West, especially the hot springs and surrounding beautiful scenery that could be advertised extensively to attract tourists.[141] The real purpose of the *Rocky Mountains Park Act* introduced in 1887 was to bring the reservation into immediate usefulness according to

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[138] Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles, *Wilderness and Waterpower: How Banff National Park Became A Hydroelectric Storage Reservoir* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013).

[139] Ibid., 128-129.

[140] Brown, 59.

[141] Ibid., 46-47.

this doctrine under Macdonald's policy.[142] In 1911, the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act* was enacted. The Act rationalized the status of national parks as recreational areas to serve the public enjoyment of Canadians. Scenery was considered the same as other natural resources. "The only restriction governing the exploitation of these resources was that it should be planned and controlled so that the resources could be available in perpetuity."[143]

2.2 National Parks Policy and Legislation

After the First World War, burgeoning population in Alberta and subsequent increasing demands for electricity to meet the needs of urban expansion and economic development in the 1920s intensified the conflict between industrial development and wilderness preservation in Canada's mountain parks, which was a major impetus for the national parks conservation movement during this time.[144] Central to these renewed debates over conservation and development was the dispute between William Pearce and Arthur Wheeler, representing water resource development interests and wilderness preservation values respectively.[145] Debates were triggered by the application from Calgary Power Company to build a hydroelectric dam at Spray Lakes in Banff National Park. The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC), established by Arthur Wheeler, became the main national parks advocacy group in the battle against hydro development in the

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[142] Ibid., 49.

[143] Taylor, "Legislating Nature," 127.

[144] Reichwein, "Hands Off Our National Parks," 131.

[145] Bella, *Parks for Profit*, 39.

Canadian Rockies. An alliance formed between ACC and the Parks Branch aided rejection of the proposal to build hydro dams in Waterton Lakes National Park. Support from the United States National Parks Service and American conservation groups also contributed toward terminating the proposed dam construction. The Spray Lakes controversy ended with Calgary Power gaining the eventual approval of the Minister of the Department of Interior; however, on the pro-environment side, the *National Parks Act* (1930) was enacted enshrining the principle of inviolability.[146]

The *National Parks Act* (1930) was a key legacy left by Commissioner of the Dominion Parks Branch James B. Harkin and it imposed an important influence on the future direction of Canadian national parks development. Even though Harkin had environmental conservation mentality and was committed to wilderness protection, being deeply influenced by conservation concepts introduced from the American conservation movement and John Muir for example, heavy political pressure compelled him to choose a middle route that combined tourism development and nature preservation. According to Paul Kopas, the federal government did not want to "instill a preservationist ethos into park policy" thus attempted to make him a puppet by decentralizing his power.[147] For political reasons, it was not until 1930 that the new park legislation, which had been drafted in 1919, was enacted.[148] Since the early decades of the

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[146] Reichwein, "Hands Off Our National Parks," 131.

[147] Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 30.

[148] Ibid.

twentieth century was an era of nation building, economic interest were the only reason to "justify the maintenance and expansion of parks."[149] Resource exploitation was phased out from national parks according to the *National Parks Act*; however, the dual mandate of park policy and administration was left unsettled. And the problem of the extent to which development could be tolerated within park boundaries was unresolved. In other words, the impairment referred to in the law was not clarified.

The purpose of national parks described in the dedication clause of the *National Parks Act* (1930) was very general. As an overarching legislation for parks, it only provided an outline for the park system as a whole rather than for the specific demands of each individual park. However, the principle of inviolability was no doubt the greatest achievement of the *National Parks Act* (1930). Commercial and industrial exploitation were largely excluded from national parks and the standard of creating new national parks and retaining existing ones was fixed in law, not at the discretion of Order in Council. Nonetheless, large tracts of land on the eastern slopes of Rocky Mountains, including Canmore and Spray Lakes, were excluded from Banff National Park to maintain the operation of mining activities and pursue construction of hydroelectric dam systems. Sacrificing parks land was the only strategy Harkin could use to both take advantage of the resources that had commercial value and strictly adhere faithfully to the principle of inviolability. And it was this trade-off that was frequently used by the parks bureaucracy in park policy making and administration. Undoubtedly, it left the reconciliation of two conflicted values – utilization and preservation – unresolved. According to Taylor, it became

[149] Ibid., 31.

evident later that "something that was not foreseen by the Parks Branch in the 1920s was the threat to park values posed by recreational development."[150] Extensive programs were initiated to provide recreational uses, especially after the Second World War. Former Parks Canada Director John I. Nicol argued, "The Act left considerable scope regarding policies and initiatives to successive ministries and governments."[151] The extensive mass tourism industry development that accelerated in the 1960s, which was neglected by the Act, eventually encroached upon intrinsic park values and the inviolability of public domain as certainly as mining and timbering did against the background of escalating urbanization, industrialization and modernization.[152]

With the post-Second World War economic boom and a widespread use of automobiles in the late 1950s, more middle-class city dwellers began to drive to parks for leisure and recreation. To facilitate the use of national parks, more recreational facilities were built to meet the demands from tourists, which intensified the existing conflict between development and protection. The increasing pressure produced by intensified visitor use in national parks resulted into public conservation groups advocating for wilderness and protection, and more input to park policy making and administration.[153] The adverse effects of tourism development emerged in mountain parks and continuous lobbying from conservation groups exposed the Parks Branch

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[150] Taylor, "Legislating Nature," 135.

[151] Nicol, "The National Parks Movement in Canada," 24.

[152] Reichwein, "Hands Off Our National Parks," 155.

[153] Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise*, 258.

to new management challenges and forced the organization to be more environmentally minded.[154]

After the Second World War, the dynamics of political actors kept changing and there was a growing interest in public participation in government. Particularly in the 1960s, more organizations committed to wilderness protection emerged in the United States.[155] They stepped to front stage with advocacy for more positive public participation in legislative and administrative decision-making activities.[156] Media campaigns were initiated to arouse the public and a connection between legislators and technical experts, such as scientists and professionals, was established with the assistance from public conservation groups to counter the dominant views of economic groups in political activities.[157] A number of federal legislative acts reflecting environmental values were introduced in this era, such as the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. In addition, there was also an expanding role of the public conservation groups in the administrative scene.[158] The proposal planning and formulation process was open for public scrutiny. Undoubtedly, Canada's environmental politics were heavily influenced by

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[154] Ibid., 260

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[155] Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 53.

[156] Ibid., 458-459.

[157] Ibid., 459, 462.

[158] Ibid., 473.

the advancement of American environmental movements.

By the early 1960s, Canada's National and Historic Parks Branch sought a clean definition of the purpose of national parks. "The lack of agreement on a clearly defined purpose for National Parks and the failure to establish a well-defined purpose in the public mind has resulted, over the years, in the acceptance of a wide variety of facilities for recreation, entertainment and service of park visitors."[159] In 1964, even Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources Arthur Laing noted,

> This legislation [*National Parks Act*], while durable and capable of being applied to most park administrative situations that will arise, was not designed as a full statement of policy...The statement of a unified, coherent and comprehensible national park policy became imperative with the greatly increased public use of the parks over the past several years. This volume of public use has attracted the attention of private enterprise and resulted in pressure for the development of recreation and entertainment facilities that...are unsuitable for national parks and, if allowed to expand unchecked, would destroy the parks' ability to contribute to the public benefit in the way they were intended.[160]

To clarify the general purpose of national parks in the *National Parks Act*, the first *National Parks Policy* (1964) was enacted to guarantee park administration was on the right track.[161] Nonetheless, the middle path between use and protection was not changed in spite of a growing awareness of environmentalism among the general public and continuous lobbying from conservation groups in the 1960s. On the contrary, further recreation development was allowed to proceed in the guise of scientific management. According to the new national parks policy, the

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[159] Natural and Historic Resources Branch, *National Parks Policy, 1964* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1964), 21, University of Alberta Library.

[160] Arthur Laing, A Statement on National Park Policy Made in the House of Commons, September 18, 1964, 1, 13.111/ L142/ Pam, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[161] Hildebrandt, 15.

purpose of national parks was interpreted to recognize recreation:

> National Park purpose is associated with the recognition of recreation as a major resource use. Each unit of the National Park System was established because, defining recreation in the broadest possible terms, it represented a major recreation resource worthy of preservation by the nation for public enjoyment. Thus the National Parks are a special kind of resource. It is recognized that the best and highest resource use for these areas lies in recreation and they are set apart and preserved for this purpose...The popular interpretation of the general purposes section of the National Parks Act has been to permit, in fact to encourage, artificial recreations and to develop parks to quite an extent along summer resort lines.[162]

And the reason why national parks deserved preservation was that good protection assured continued recreational use depending primarily on high-quality nature scenery. With the growth in population and increasing urbanization the Parks Branch came to realize that it was imperative to reconcile the "twin objectives of meeting the recreational needs of the people and preserving the natural beauty and character of the environment" though it was difficult.[163] As the policy stated, "With increased visitation and visitor demands, the impact of numbers will become more critical and planning must be focused on providing the opportunities for park enjoyment while preserving the areas from impairment by mass visitation."[164] Laing said that "the objective of national park policy must be to help Canadians gain the greatest long term recreational benefits and at the same time provide safeguards against excessive or unsuitable types of development and use."[165]

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[162] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 3.

[163] Laing, 1.

[164] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 5.

[165] Laing, 2.

The concept of nature preservation was for the first time incorporated explicitly into the new policy statement: "Objects of nature in National Parks are important parts of the national heritage and should be preserved unimpaired for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations."[166] A sound management system under scientific direction would be established to better preserve "all components of the natural ecological communities in National Parks."[167]

Providing recreational service has always been one of the basic purposes of national parks. In the mind of many Canadians, national parks were usually defined as "scenic resorts, recreation areas and tourist attractions," according to John Nicol, the Director of Parks Canada from 1969 to 1978.[168] He argued that "the effort to meet two sets of objectives, those of tourism and national parks, laid the basis for many of our present problems."[169] One of the policy's intentions was to impose a limitation on recreational development in national parks. It stated that:

> Artificial recreation is only one of many uses and is secondary to the basic function of the system...Artificial or urban type recreational developments will not be permitted in National Parks if their presence is not in harmony with park purposes, or causes impairment of significant natural or scenic values, or lessens the opportunity for others to enjoy the park.[170]

Only those developments considered for mass participation of all Canadians would be permitted

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[166] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 5.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Nicol, "The National Parks Movement in Canada," 25.

[169] Ibid.

[170] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 19, 21.

and constructed.[171]

In addition, the urban type facilities in park townsites attracted a significant percentage of park visitors, which would inevitably result in the creation of more similar developments to attract more visitors.[172] Also, it was apparent that "the cost of construction, operation and maintenance of townsite utilities and facilities represented a high proportion of the annual budget for the park system."[173] The policy also placed strict controls on the growth of park townsites with regard to leases, design and construction. Alternative Visitor Services Centers would be established to regulate the haphazard development of commercial interests in national parks. According to the new policy, it was stated:

> A townsite is an intrusion and should be permitted to develop in a park only if, by reason of the services it provides, the visitors is better able to enjoy the park for what it is...It should not provide the extra entertainments and services common to urban living throughout Canada...Only persons engaged in the administration of the park or the supply of necessary visitor services and their dependents should be permitted permanent residence in a park and then only if residence outside the park is not practicable.[174]

The clause of quasi-perpetual leasehold introduced with the early Acts under which the parks was abolished. Also, the free transfer of private dwelling leaseholds was prohibited and the property could be claimed as Crown Land in certain circumstances if necessary. Besides, park townsite residents were going to lose their privilege to enjoy free or subsidized municipal services since it was unfair to residents or businessmen receiving similar but unsubsidized

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[171] Ibid., 24.

[172] Ibid., 22.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid., 22.

services in towns outside the parks.[175] Laing stated that "they should be subject to the same financial responsibilities as those who live or carry on business elsewhere."[176]

However, even though the parks policy statement advocated preservation more firmly, the paradoxical theme still persisted. The policy maintained the role of national parks in meeting increasing visitor demand, but, at the same time, it tried to ensure that the natural features which represented the intrinsic values and characteristics of national parks in characteristic would not be encroached.[177] Park authorities were given a great deal of leeway in deciding what was in accordance with park purposes and what was acceptable in parks. For instance, "Artificial developments are detrimental to natural history values in National Parks, but, if essential, should be developed so as to have the least possible impact on nature and natural features."[178] However, the criteria defining what was essential were not clearly indicated in the policy and the decision would be at the discretion of the park bureaucracy. To strictly adhere to the principle of inviolability enshrined in the *National Parks Act* the trade-off technique frequently used by park policy makers was imprinted on the criteria for establishing new parks in the first national park policy statement.

> There is no formula that can be used to compare National Park values with commercial resource values. New parks should be chosen so as to avoid, as far as possible, serious conflict of interest with resource development. Once a park is established, its value to the

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[175] Ibid., 30.

[176] Laing, 3.

[177] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 11.

[178] Ibid., 6.

> nation as a heritage and its potential to supply healthful enjoyment to the Canadian people should ensure its preservation, subject only to considerations of overriding national importance.[179]

Not unlike the boundary of Rocky Mountains Park (renamed Banff in 1930) that was redrawn to exclude Canmore and Spray Lakes to proceed with natural resource exploitation and to ensure preservation, natural resources with commercial values could not be included in potential national parks. Managerial rationalism was implicitly reflected in the National Parks Policy on the selection of new parks, which purposely avoided the areas of resource development potential though they might be places with representative nature and history features. Moreover promoting tourism development was still one of the most desirable purposes when considering where to establish new national parks.

Ironically, the Village Lake Louise proposal introduced in 1971 was contrary to the policy per se. According to the policy statement, artificial recreations were to serve the enjoyment of average Canadian families not a small group of privileged visitors, and the development must not create an amusement park atmosphere which was incompatible with the natural environment.[180] The 1964 Policy stated clearly stated that "skiing should be permitted and encouraged in parks having those characteristics, but the emphasis should be on mass participation and skiing for the average skier or family groups."[181] Minister Laing also indicated that national parks were dedicated to providing opportunity for "the average Canadian family to

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[179] Ibid., 31.

[180] Ibid., 21.

[181] Ibid., 24.

enjoy a relaxing and restorative holiday amid natural surroundings."[182] In fact, the proposed mountain ski resort at Lake Louise did not meet the various needs of the general public since a considerable majority of Canadian families could not afford a multiple-day skiing vacation at a luxury ski resort complex. It was evident that the project was designed to meet the specific tastes of an international ski market: certain existing European and American ski villages were used as templates to learn the best practices of downhill skiing planning and operation. "Canadians will not or cannot support Whitehorn-Temple as it stands — let alone the proposal."[183] Critics observed a proposal based on economic interests and foreign demands was completely against the basic purpose of national parks dedicated to facilitating the outdoor activities of ordinary Canadians. In addition, even though skiing was acceptable to parks, the 1964 Policy stated that "the effect of the development on the park and the availability of equally favorable conditions for the development elsewhere should be considered before making the decision for an individual park."[184] However, only one economic study to evaluate the project's financial feasibility and possible economic returns in the future was completed during the planning process by Village Lake Louise Ltd. rather than a comprehensive environmental study. Furthermore, conservation groups suggested that it was imperative to consider an alternative site for the project outside parks; however, no such studies were conducted.

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[182] Laing, 4.

[183] Graduate Students of the Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, A Brief for the National Parks Branch Public Hearings on the Proposed Development for the Village Lake Louise Planning Area, March 1972, University of Alberta Library.

[184] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 20.

Even though the *National Parks Policy* introduced by Laing in 1964 was intended to slow the speedy growth of commercial interest in national parks, in particular, limit the development of park townsites, this Minister showed unprecedented enthusiasm in promoting and expanding winter activities in national parks. According to the *National Parks Policy* (1964), had the following override provisions:

> The development of facilities in a Park to accommodate the Olympics or other major sports events is not in accordance with National Park purposes. If however a park area is particularly suitable or has necessary characteristics which are not available elsewhere, the development required by, for example, the Winter Olympics should be permitted in the national interest.[185]

In 1959, the Lake Louise-Banff area had been put forward as a potential site to hold the 1964 Winter Olympics. After the first bid from Canada to host the 1964 Winter Olympics lost to Innsbruck, Austria, the Calgary Olympic Development Association submitted its second bid in 1964 for the 1968 Winter Olympics to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Two ski runs were cut during 1962 and 1963 on Mt. Whitehorn to enhance the chance of winning; however, this second Canadian bid lost to Grenoble, France, by only two votes. And the third and hotly contested bid for the 1972 Olympics in Banff National Park was also unsuccessful and eventually awarded to Sapporo, Japan.

By 1964, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's government was strong on national sport and fitness under the 1961 Amateur Sport and Fitness Act, which symbolized a commitment of the Government of Canada in state involvement with sport, leisure and recreation.[186] In September

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[185] Ibid.

[186] Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2013), 207-208.

1964, Laing told the House of Commons the value of natural resources lay in public use so acceptable developments should be encouraged for better appreciation of parks, and he also proclaimed that 1967 would be the year for opening the Lake Louise Visitor Service Centre.[187] Massive chairlift constructions were also proposed for the Lake Louise ski area.

Also, a policy statement regarding winter recreation that encouraged "the winter use of park lands as much as possible without detriment to the prime scenic and environmental values," particularly ski industry development, to extend the service season of national parks in winter was introduced by Arthur Laing in March 1965.[188] Justified by the *Winter Recreation and the National Parks: A Management Policy and Development Program*, ski hills would be considered compatible with national park values if intensive ski resort development was confined in certain areas with limited scenic values.[189] According to the winter policy statement, the objective for the Lake Louise ski area would be:

> Development for the purpose of the primary vacation ski center for Banff, with an ultimate capacity of 3,500 skiers, overnight accommodations in the vicinity of 2,000 serving a summer and winter use, and a satellite alpine vacation ski center with a secondary summer-use function in the Temple area.[190]

Nonetheless, the winter policy did not fit in the overarching guidelines set up by the *National Parks Policy*. In contrast to the philosophy of the parks policy to restrict the development of park townsites, the winter policy proposed to implement an Urban Development

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[187] Touche, *Brown Cows, Sacred Cows*, 110.

[188] *Winter Recreation Policy*, 4.

[189] Ibid., 2.

[190] Ibid., 19.

Plan for Banff Townsite to provide high-quality supplementary infrastructure services for the potential winter facilities and activities, which included an all-season pedestrian mall and an information center on Banff Avenue.[191] A consultant study was conducted by the Canadian Resort Services in 1964 to provide statistical data support to advance long-term winter development in Banff National Park.[192] It is interesting to note that the planning process of the 1965 winter policy and Village Lake Louise, more or less, followed the same logic in which they were both based on economic interests rather than environmental studies. Undoubtedly, the winter policy favored ski center development in national parks and, importantly, created a more tolerant policy environment for advancing the progress of Village Lake Louise. It was clear that the postwar development expansion management approach prevalent in the 1950s and early 1960s was still evident in the 1965 Winter Recreation Policy. The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada said that "we reviewed the Winter Policy (1965) and felt it was outdated and grossly inadequate [because] it is geared primarily to the commercial use of the parks."[193]

The new minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chretien, was more aggressive advancing the preservation of natural values and expand the national park system under the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The *National Parks Policy (1969)* stated that the basic purpose of the National Park System was to "preserve for all time areas

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[191] Ibid., 12.

[192] Ibid., 3.

[193] NPPAC Problem Solving Conference--Summary of Discussions, RG 22, Volume 982, File 302-75, Part 2, Library and Archives Canada.

which contain significant geographical, geological, biological or historic features as a national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people of Canada."[194] Following the same philosophy of the 1964 policy statement, the 1969 policy was also highly committed to limiting urban recreational development and townsite development in national parks. According to it:

> The provision of urban type recreational facilities is not part of the basic purpose of National Parks...and this kind of development will not be permitted in National Parks if their presence is not in harmony with park purposes, or causes impairment of significant natural or scenic values, or lessens the opportunity for others to enjoy the park.[195]

A townsite was considered as an intrusion in national parks and stringent controls were set out to regulate its development to a point where "only necessary visitor services and recreations in accordance with the purpose of the park would be provided."[196] Also, townsite residents faced the potential risk of being driven out of their homes in national parks and new residents were limited by a need to reside since "only persons engaged in parks administration or the supply of necessary visitor services and their dependents should be permitted permanent residence in a park."[197] However, Chretien also showed strong enthusiasm for winter development and successfully facilitated the collaboration between Parks Canada and Village Lake Louise Ltd. to build Lake Louise ski area as a world-class ski resort in a joint effort. The Village Lake Louise

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[194] National and Historic Parks Branch, *National Parks Policy, 1969* (Ottawa: Ontario, 1969), 5, University of Alberta Library.

[195] Ibid., 5, 14.

[196] Ibid., 15.

[197] Ibid., 16.

Ltd. was permitted a forty-two year lease and free renewals.

2.3 Zoning Plan

To achieve a balance between use and preservation, the park administration has designed some management strategies to justify commercial interests while avoiding harmful changes to the environment, which Kopas called "rationalism in government."[198] For example, the *National Parks Act (1930)* passed in Parliament enshrined the principle of inviolability. As a result, no more new lumbering, mining and hydro construction was to be permitted within Banff National Park, but the boundary was redrawn to exclude large tracts of land on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains with commercial values including Canmore, Exshaw, and Spray Lakes. On the one hand, Canada could keep profiting from the natural resources in the mountains; on the other hand, the promise of preservation was not compromised. Such were the trade offs of managerial rationalism and national politics.

To reconcile the increasing conflict between visitor use and wilderness preservation, the concept of zoning was, for the first time, introduced and institutionalized in the *National Parks Policy (1964)* for land use planning. It was to divide a park into individual units thus one park could be used in different ways according to the specific characteristics each area might have.[199] According to the policy statement of 1964, a zoning plan "would detail not only type and extent of acceptable use and development, but also acceptable means of access to each of the zoned

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[198] Kopas, 181.

[199] *National Parks Policy (1964)*, 25.

areas."[200] And the level of use would range from the lowest as wilderness area to the highest in park townsites, which ensured that visitor use and wilderness preservation could exist in harmony.[201] It was evident that the *Winter Recreation Policy* was formulated on the zoning plan introduced by the *National Parks Policy*. According to it, "a middle course...was to define certain areas of high potential for ski development but of limited scenic value, and...Zone these for intensive development of skiing facilities."[202] Here again was government rationalism based on land use zoning for scenic uses but without ecological science imperatives for environmental protection.

In the spring of 1968, the provisional master development plans for Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay were approved by the National Parks Branch. It proposed five categories of zones in the parks, namely Class I-special preservation, Class II-wilderness, Class III-natural environment, Class IV-general outdoor recreation and Class V-intensive use. However, it was criticized by the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) as too general since "it did not outline in detail what activities and facilities could be permitted in the zones."[203] With an increasing demand for recreation in the future, there would be heavy pressure on changing the boundary lines of each zone and asking for more land for recreational uses given

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[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid.

[202] *Winter Recreation Policy*, 2.

[203] J. G. Nelson, R. C. Scace and S. Herrero for NPPAC, A Statement on the Proposed Master Plans for the Four Mountain Parks, January, 1971, 2, M36/ 1400, 13.111/ N21v, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

the fact that there were not enough lands in the higher preservation classes. Besides, critics maintained it was risky to make a reckless planning decision without comprehensive research because the intrusion of certain facilities might result into irresistible loses of unique natural features.[204] Parks Canada also admitted that "available research was inadequate, particularly in view of the pilot nature of these zoning maps."[205] Ecological research was particularly underdeveloped at a time when land use zoning concepts prevailed among Parks Canada planners and the department lacked biologists and environmental scientists. PearlAnn Reichwein wrote that "the plan reflected an optimistic internal outlook on the strength of technocratic management and rational planning to design for and accommodate intensifying demands on the mountain parks."[206]

Another two sub-classes, namely "Class IV as a linear zone identifying narrow corridors for park circulation roads and Class V identifying similar corridors used for national transportation requirements," had been introduced by the time of the Village Lake Louise hearings in March, 1972.[207] However, some actions were taken related to zoning according to the public responses generated at the Lake Louise hearings and earlier ones as well. A series of research studies and programs were undertaken to more clearly define the boundaries and uses of each zoning area

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[204] Nelson, "Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park," 90-91.

[205] Parks Canada, *Final Report of the Public Hearings on the Provisional Master Plans for Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks and on Planning Proposals for the Lake Louise Area of Banff National Park* (Ottawa: Ontario, 1974): 9, University of Alberta Library.

[206] Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise*, 258.

[207] Parks Canada, *Public Hearing Report*, 9.

and contradicting uses would be under strict control or removed eventually.[208] Furthermore, the Parks Branch indicated public opinion would be solicited and represented in any changes of the boundaries.[209]

2.4 Conclusion

From the *National Parks Act (1930)* to the *National Parks Policy (1969)*, parks policy making became increasingly concerned about environmental issues and the purpose of national parks shifted more sympathetically toward protection. Industrial resource extraction was phased out of national parks, inappropriate recreational activities were under more managerial regulation, and there was a great expansion of the national parks system after Chretien took over the administration of national parks. In 1979, four ski areas were defined in Canada's mountain parks—Lake Louise, Sunshine, and Mount Norquay in Banff, and Marmot Basin in Jasper—and no more new ski areas would be permitted. Furthermore, the concept of ecological integrity began to take shape in the *Parks Canada Policy (1979)*. However, even if relevant park legislation and policy were introduced, the park administration still had a great deal of leeway to interpret and implement the policies in the way that was in favor of their benefits. It is interesting to note that two consecutive Ministers both intended to better preserve the natural values of national parks and restrict recreational development, however, that seemed to be at odds with their support toward winter recreation development. Faced with the pressure from

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[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid., 10.

tourism and its accompanying development, the park bureaucracy seemed uncertain over what to do. Because the tourism industry in Canadian parks could generate lots of revenue, legislation and policy gave a green light to developments that it set the criteria against which the projects should be scrutinized while to minimize the impairment that would be brought to the environment. Canada's National Parks administration made ongoing compromises between public benefits and economic interests, nevertheless, that balance ultimately factored out to less and less for environmental protection. As we will see next, national parks were a point of tension not only for the politics of the environment and tourism, but also for federalism.

Chapter Three

Park Governance and Conflicted Relations between Ottawa and Alberta

3.1 Introduction

Under the leadership of Premier Peter Lougheed, Alberta exercised a growing provincialism that challenged Ottawa's jurisdiction over national parks and further complicated the politics of tourism development in the Lake Louise ski area. The Government of Alberta announced its opposition to the proposed Village Lake Louise project in a letter from Don Getty, Alberta minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, to Jean Chretien, federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on May 24, 1972. In July, Chretien made a public speech in Calgary to announce he would respect Alberta's position, stating he would not approve the Village Lake Louise proposal. Both governments had initially shown great enthusiasm to develop the Lake Louise ski area more systematically, however, given the existing haphazard development in that area and earlier efforts by the Parks Branch to invite developers. I examine why the Alberta government opposed the Village Lake Louise project, why the federal government did not approve the proposal, and how the federal-provincial relationship shaped the outcome of the Village Lake Louise redevelopment controversy.

The contentious history between Ottawa and the prairie provinces over the ownership of natural resources played an important role in influencing how national parks were managed. In

1930, the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan signed a series of agreements with the Dominion Government of Canada to transfer control over crown lands and natural resources within these provinces from the federal government to the provincial governments. The prairie provinces specifically had not been given control over their natural resources when they entered Confederation.[210] National parks, however, were still under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Consequently, the Government of Alberta did not have the right to develop, extract, or exploit natural resources within national parks in Alberta.

In Banff National Park, the first national parks policy statement was introduced by the National and Historic Parks Branch in 1964 under the returning Liberal government in Ottawa. The rationale underpinning the policy was that "preservation of significant natural features was the most important obligation of the parks."[211] The new federal policy proposed to place extensive restrictions on urban recreational development in national parks. As a result, the Government of Alberta perceived it to infringe on the property rights of Albertans and to be detrimental to its tourism industry, so the new Lougheed Progressive Conservative government, rolled out aggressive strategies to fight against Ottawa's national park control under the federal government. Village Lake Louise was supposed to generate large tourism revenues, and Alberta contended the money would go into the pockets of the federal government since Lake Louise was in a national park under Ottawa's federal jurisdiction. According to John Richards and Larry

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[210] "Natural Resources Transfer Act 1930," The Canadian Encyclopedia, accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/natural-resources-transfer-acts-1930/

[211] Hildebrandt, *A Historical Analysis of Parks Canada and Banff National Park*, 15.

Pratt, the new entrepreneurial development strategy adopted by Lougheed's government through the 1970s hastened rising provincialism and strengthened Alberta's capacity to decrease its dependence on external capital and fight against control from central Canada.[212]

In addition, a parallel autonomy movement emerged in Alberta national parks townsites with park residents crying out for the provincial government to take over municipal affairs administration for Banff and Jasper townsites. This movement further intensified the tension between Ottawa and Alberta. Overall, Alberta planned to take authority over the national parks within its provincial boundaries, which comprised a significant seventy percent of the total area of national parks across Canada, or at least to form a joint-management mechanism with the federal government. It was a significant discord in federal-provincial affairs that fundamentally questioned the legal definition and purpose of national parks. And so, with emerging provincial outcries, Village Lake Louise proposal became a point of contention in federal and provincial relations. I argue that the Government of Alberta greatly challenged Ottawa's jurisdiction in Alberta's national parks and the political tensions between these two governments contributed more to the rejection of Village Lake Louise proposal. To begin my argument, I investigate Alberta's position on Village Lake Louise and consultation processes, followed by an examination of parks policy and the emergent autonomy movement in national park townsites.

3.2 The Voice of Alberta

Participation in public hearings on Village Lake Louise held in Calgary in early 1972 far

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[212] John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism*, preface, viii.

exceeded the expectation of the National Parks Branch. Over 2,500 briefs letters were received with almost sixty percent opposed to the proposal. With a federal general election forecast for June 1972, Minister Jean Chretien was very cautious with the decision to be made on this political hot potato.[213] In a letter to Don Getty, Minister of Alberta Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, immediately after the hearings, Chretien wrote that:

> In view of the importance of the mountain parks to the Government and people of Alberta, I am anxious to understand fully your Province's commitment and position, particularly with regard to the Lake Louise proposal, before we proceed further in our analysis of the public submissions….The major decisions relating to the Lake Louise proposal remain to be taken and in this connection I would sincerely appreciate it if you could arrange to let me have the views of the Government of Alberta as soon as may be convenient for you.[214]

In his reply Getty suggested that the Government of Alberta had an assessment of the project underway and Ottawa would be advised immediately when the analysis was completed. He also pointed out that "it is very necessary for our two governments to discuss this matter before any final decisions are taken."[215]

After the hearings, seventeen members from the provincial Department of Environment were consulted to comment on the Village Lake Louise proposal. Even though it was a small sampling and only a few of them had studied the proposal, the poll's result suggests the overall internal view of Alberta public servants in the Department of Environment towards the project

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[213] National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, "Alberta: A Post-Election Decision on Village Lake Louise?," *Parks for Tomorrow* 1, no. 6 (1972), PR 1985.401, Box 73, File 848, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[214] Jean Chretien to Don Getty, April 7, 1972, PR 1985.401, Box 73, File 848, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[215] Don Getty to Jean Chretien, April 11, 1972, PR 1985.401, Box 73, File 848, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

from an environmental perspective. Among the staff who participated in the poll, 75 percent agreed that the urban recreational facilities proposed by the project were not compatible with the National Parks Policy committed to preserve the essential natural features of parks, and 88 percent stated that it would open the flood gates for large scale developments and the economic motive of private enterprises would further pressure the government to expand developments.[216] In addition, a unanimous response from this provincial department was that the plan itself was excellent given that it could generate great revenues and solve unemployment problems; however, potential locations outside the national park should be considered first.[217] Here provincial environment officials were advocates for national park conservation and environmental protection in Alberta.

The Scientific Advisory Committee for the Alberta Environment Conservation Authority also gave its comments on how the Village Lake Louise project might influence Alberta. The committee made an analysis of the economic and social costs and benefits that would be generated:

> Alberta will incur certain direct economic costs such as access road construction and maintenance, medical and policing services, telephone linkages, etc. regardless of whether the development is located at Lake Louise or similar development is located within the province, outside the park…. However, the probability of paying for these costs via taxation and licensing is greatly enhanced if the development is located outside of an area under

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[216] Opinions on the Village Lake Louise: A Poll Conducted Amongst Some Members of the Department of the Environment, PR 1985.401, Box 73, File 848, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[217] Ibid.

federal government control.[218]

The assumption was that were the ski development located outside the Park, the benefits incurred would have been directly applied to Alberta in different forms, such as increased tourism-related revenue and more job opportunities.[219] The committee recommended two locations as alternative sites for a similar ski development, Canmore and Nordegg, since they had the same geographical qualities as Lake Louise and would not interfere with the National Parks Policy.[220] The committee asserted that "such opportunity would be lost to the province for many years if the development takes place at Lake Louise. This is a loss of major economic opportunity and of an important instrument for provincial development policy."[221] Arguably Lake Louise outshone Canmore or Nordegg for scenery, but it was clear that Alberta called for a ski hill development outside Banff National Park.

Furthermore, the Committee claimed such a gigantic project would bring extensive potential social costs to Banff National Park, primarily as a nature preservation area, given the fact that so far no ecological studies had been conducted.[222] The major concern was that "it might cause a further retreat of the grizzly bear and lessen chances of re-introducing wolves in this and

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[218] Scientific Advisory Committee, Some Economic and Social Influences of the Proposed Lake Louise Development on the Province of Alberta, 1, PR 1985.401, Box 72, File 844, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[219] Ibid., 1-2.

[220] Ibid.,. 2.

[221] Ibid., 2.

[222] Ibid., 3.

adjacent areas."[223] Other environmental costs associated with sewage disposal, gravel extraction, and excessive trampling would cause damage to the natural scenery of the park.[224] Also, such Lake Louise development would restrict the access of average Canadians to the park since few of them could afford the luxury trip.[225] However, the committee kept emphasizing that had the development been located in the province outside the national park, the situation would have been reversed. Without limitations from the National Parks Policy, the services provided to tourists would be further diversified and the environmental impacts would be as little as possible.[226] It was obvious that opinions and comments from inside the province rested on the assumption that Alberta should be given the priority to develop its own tourism industry and such a ski development project should be under the provincial jurisdiction out of the control from the federal government in Ottawa.[227]

On May 24, 1972, Don Getty, Minister of Alberta Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, declared Alberta's opposition against the Village Lake Louise proposal in the letter to Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, blaming the federal government for its lack of consultation with the province during the developmental stages of the project. The timing of the public hearing held on March 9 and 10, 1972, was termed "unsatisfactory" by

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[223] Ibid., 3.

[224] Ibid., 3.

[225] Ibid., 3.

[226] Ibid., 4.

[227] Ibid., 4.

Getty, as the Alberta Government was highly pressured by its own legislative programs with the anticipated First Session on March 2 with no time to have adequate consideration of a matter of such significance.[228]

Getty pointed out the dilemma in which the Alberta Government was situated when assessing the Village Lake Louise project, since it was hard to balance the increasing demand for recreational areas and facilities in national parks and the high potential environmental costs that might be generated. Getty first outlined the advantages of the Village Lake Louise proposal, including providing more recreation and accommodation facilities, renovating existing haphazard development, promoting tourism industry, and stimulating employment.[229] He also said that there were obvious deficiencies overshadowing its merit and summarized the five reasons why the Alberta Government did not support the proposal:

> Such a project could only be authorized after adequate environmental studies have been undertaken—and such is not now the case with the Village Lake Louise proposal; specific major development projects such as this should occur only after the Park areas have been properly zoned to assure protection of the original objectives of the National Parks; this specific project appears to be too large in scope and could tend to create an undue concentration of visitors and employees in one part of the Park; this specific project fails to assure recreation and accommodation facilities for Canadian and Alberta families at all income levels; problems facing Banff and Jasper residents remain unsolved and creating another large townsite will only add to these problems.[230]

It seems that the Alberta Government was irritated by Ottawa's lack of foresight, since no

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[228] Don Getty to Jean Chretien, May 24, 1972, page 2, PR 1985. 401, Box 71, File 841, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[229] Ibid., 2-3.

[230] Ibid., 4-5.

opinions were solicited from the Province at all even in the developmental stages of the project and their provincial support was taken for granted to justify the legitimacy of the proposal. In Getty's letter, even though a zoning concept for national parks was put forward in the National Parks Policy and a detailed plan was already in place as well, the Alberta Government outlined its own zoning plan. Getty asserted that the existing plan should be further elaborated before any alternatives to Village Lake Louise were proposed.[231] Compared to the five categories of zoning areas outlined by the National Parks Branch, the Alberta Government decreased the number to three, namely "non-development zones, partial development zones, and development or recreation zones."[232] The provincial government specifically indicated that the developments in the recreation zones "would include appropriate sports such as skiing in the winter and golf in the summer with the facilities capable of meeting the requirements of average income earners."[233] The letter also suggested a number of alternatives that the federal government should consider in determining the overall parks policy:

> Removal from National Park status of the existing highway transportation corridor perhaps in exchange for some other part of our province; federal financial assistance in the development of adjacent Provincial Park areas to reduce the anticipated pressure on National Parks within Alberta in the future; aggressive encouragement and assistance for recreational developments in such attractive areas as Hinton, Grande Cache and Canmore.[234]

Contrary to the ambiguous wording of the National Parks Policy in developing recreation

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[231] Ibid., 4.

[232] Ibid., 3-4.

[233] Ibid., 4.

[234] Ibid., 5.

facilities, the Alberta Government made it clear that they intended to place a priority on tourism industry expansion and that the recreation needs of Albertans could not be compromised to meet the demands of the majority of Canadian citizens to enjoy nature.[235] Simultaneously, it was keen to assert provincial influence on national park lands.

Getty's letter made it clear that should Alberta's conditions be met, the province would consider its support for the project sometime in the future. Reported by the newspaper the *Albertan*, provincial Leader of the Opposition Harry Strom, a Social Credit MLA and former Alberta Premier said:

> It took the Lougheed government a long time to make a statement on VLL and that the net result was not a concrete decision, only a decision of postponement…The province has provided no alternative to the VLL plan and voiced the hope that the province would give consideration to actively promoting development outside the national parks where the province would have full control over the facilities.[236]

This area has a tremendous tourist potential and it is important that the province administer it either on its own or jointly with the federal government."[237] The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) asserted in its organization's publication that "the Province's position on Village Lake Louise was motivated not so much by concern to minimize commercial development in the National Parks as with improving its bargaining position with Ottawa on the

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[235] Ibid., 5.

[236] Rick Kennedy, "Tories Sink Lake Louise Resort Plan," *Albertan*, May 30, 1972, 2, M36/ 1447, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[237] Ibid., 3.

much larger question of who owns the parks."[238] The rhetoric from the Alberta Government to refuse Village Lake Louise hinged on two points: the project was too large in scale and therefore an intrusion to national parks and no environmental studies were initiated to assess the impact of the project on the environment.[239] However, the reality seemed to be that the province was urging Ottawa to relinquish control over the Bow Valley floor in Banff National Park in exchange for Alberta's support to proceed with Village Lake Louise.[240] Otherwise, the development should be located in the area outside national parks. In that case, Alberta would be the one to profit most.

In response to the Alberta Government's information, Minister Chretien announced one month later on July 12, 1972, that the Canadian Government would not approve the Village Lake Louise proposal. He said the main reason for the refusal was that the project was too large in scope and resulting excessive human-use might bring unpredictable impacts on environment, which would interfere with the essential purpose of park protection.[241] Also, the plan proposed by Village Lake Louise Ltd. was not financially feasible to generate a sustainable return.[242]

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[238] National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, "Village Lake Louise Postscript," *Park News* 8, no.4 (1972): 4, University of Alberta Library.

[239] Kennedy, 1.

[240] NPPAC, "Village Lake Louise Postscript," 4.

[241] Speech Notes for the Honorable Jean Chretien Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Concerning the Village Lake Louise Proposal," July 12, 1972, 1, PR 1985.401, Box 72, File 847, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[242] Ibid., 2.

However, as reported by the NPPAC, the June federal election had made this issue a timely political hot potato and so it was assumed that no decision would be made until after the election was decided.[243] Minister Chretien revealed Alberta's intention to develop adjacent provincial parks near the national parks, but emphasized that the National Parks Branch was the only authority in parks policy making and administration.[244] He also promised that the termination of the Village Lake Louise project would not be a hindrance to the long-time development of the Lake Louise area and it would be accessible to all Canadian families and social-economic levels.[245]

Chretien wrote back to Getty one day before the release of his public announcement on Village Lake Louise. The federal Minister maintained that the disapproval of Village Lake Louise could be largely attributed to the Alberta Government's opposition to the project.[246] Chretien asserted that Ottawa did provide adequate information in terms of the development of the Lake Louise area to the province in various ways and that the conceptual plan from Village Lake Louise Ltd. was provided to the Alberta Government upon its availability.[247] Chretien also noted his personal input to keep the province informed and engaged and that his effort should be

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[243] NPPAC, "Alberta: A Post-Election Decision on Village Lake Louise?," *Parks for Tomorrow* 1, no. 6 (1972).

[244] Jean Chretien, Speech Notes on VLL, 3-4.

[245] Ibid., 4.

[246] Jean Chretien to Don Getty, July 11, 1972, 2, PR 1985. 401, Box 72, File 847, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[247] Ibid., 2.

appreciated.[248] He criticized the Alberta Government's ignorance of the zoning plans already presented by the National Parks Branch in both the Four Mountain Parks and Village Lake Louise public hearings, as well as reiterated the superiority of park protection even over the interests of park entrepreneurs and residents.[249] Chretien admitted, however, that the project might exclude ordinary Canadian families, who had been promised equal access to park enjoyment.[250] The Minister concluded the letter by emphasizing the difficult situation for the Parks Branch to balance preservation and use; however, the federal government would not make any compromises to trade off the central control of national parks to please Alberta.[251]

It was evident that the National Parks Branch was irritated by the dual tactics used by the Alberta Government. In the memorandum submitted by Jean Chretien to the cabinet in June, the Minister described the Alberta Government's opposition as "carefully constructed to appeal to the broadest possible spectrum of public opinion" and "it adds substantial support to the 60% of the briefs opposed to the project but at the same time holds out hope that something could be done in the future for the 40% in favor of the project."[252] To some extent, Getty's claim in his letter to Chretien that there was no communication in the developmental stages of Village Lake Louise was not incorrect. In fact, the province was not proactively approached by Ottawa in deliberating over the planning of the Lake Louise area as a Visitor Services Centre, which is

[248] Ibid., 2.

[249] Ibid., 2.

[251] Ibid., 3.

[252] Jean Chretien to Cabinet on Visitor Services Centre, Village Lake Louise, June 23, 1972, 7, RG 19, Volume 5259, File 9747-04, Part 1, Library and Archives Canada.

evidenced by the internal correspondence letters exchanged internally between the federal government officials and its regional office staff.

Technically, the Alberta Government was most concerned with the opportunity to reject a federal proposal and still obtain federal support for their nearly identical provincial undertaking that would remain under provincial auspices. In actual fact, the Alberta government was not concerned with who the developer was, how large the project was, or what environmental damages might result at Lake Louise. The fact was the strong opposition against Village Lake Louise from many Albertans provided the Alberta Government an appropriate excuse and a conveniently timed opportunity to reject a proposal that would not greatly benefit the province and its citizens, whereas a similar development outside the national park in the province was understood to bring more profits to Alberta. To secure the support from the Province, Ottawa was pressured to make certain sacrifices referred to as the alternatives proposed by Getty in his declaration letter to Minister Chretien. Alberta could negotiate strategically with the federal government from a position of strength to gain control over the national parks within its own provincial boundaries without being condemned by the larger Canadian public for aggressive assertion of provincial ambitions. In this way, Village Lake Louise and national parks became strategic points in Alberta's agenda to transform its relations with the central government and its position within Canadian federalism.

3.3 National Parks Policy and the Autonomy Movement in Mountain Parks

With the postwar economic boom in the late 1950s, middle-class autotourism and vacations

looked to parks for leisure and recreation. To facilitate the use of national parks, more recreational facilities were built to meet the demands from tourists, intensifying the existing conflict between development and protection. The increasing impacts produced by intensified visitor use pressures in national parks catalyzed more input to park policy making and administration from public conservation groups and citizens at large advocating for wilderness and wilderness protection.[253] The emerging adverse effects of tourism development on mountain parks and continuous lobbying from the conservation groups and the public exposed the National Parks Branch to new management challenges and ultimately forced the administrative organization to be more environmentally minded.[254] Meanwhile, townsite management also occupied significant attention, especially Banff and Jasper townsites in Alberta.

In 1958, to control the growing townsites in national parks, the federal government deleted the perpetual renewal clause from the new lease policy.[255] Six years later, the first national parks policy statement was introduced by Arthur Laing, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Embracing a wilderness concept as the rationale, the policy intended to restrict commercial development while preserving the essential natural features of parks. What further irritated leaseholders in the parks was that the federal government fixed the lease term as 42

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[253] Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise*, 258.

[254] Ibid., 260.

[255] W. F. Lothian, *A History of Canada's National Parks Volume II* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1976-1987). http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/history/lothian/eng/vol2/chap5.htm

years with control on lease transfers and would not compensate commercial lease holders upon the lease expiry.[256]

The Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce submitted a brief in 1965 to Arthur Laing claiming that the National Parks Branch failed to take the benefits of park residents into consideration when establishing park policies.[257] This brief further argued that private entrepreneurs played an essential role in creating a vibrant business climate and the inconsistent policies discouraged business operators from providing quality service to park tourists.[258] The Chamber of Commerce even labeled the federal government an "autocrat" who always abused its power to infringe the rights of the minority group of park residents.[259] In the brief, the Chamber asked for security of tenure with 42-year leases with guaranteed renewals and unconditional transfer right, more recreation areas zoned for commercial development, equal treatment to all leaseholders, and a town manager elected to deal with park affairs without appealing to Ottawa.[260]

In its campaign against federal control of provincial park undertakings, Government of Alberta also published a brief prepared by private counseling and advertising agencies in 1966

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[256] Bella, *Parks for Profit*, 115.

[257] Submission of the Banff-Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce to the Honorable Arthur Laing, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, May 1965, 1, M132/ 179, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[258] Ibid., 1.

[259] Ibid., 2.

[260] Ibid., 3.

suggesting the detrimental effects of the national parks policy on the tourist industry of the province. The brief complained about the overcrowding in three park towns, few evening recreation facilities for visitors after dark, lack of residential accommodation, and the location of accommodation facilities far from the proximity of commercial downhill ski slopes.[261] The brief condemned the new parks policy as a "step backward," alleging that the Parks Branch wanted to "sterilize" national parks.[262] This brief also claimed that the federal government was misinterpreting the National Parks Act, rather than comprehending that the real intention of the Act was to "make the parks more accessible and provide more recreation facilities to help visitors enjoy their mountain holiday."[263] Furthermore, the brief stated that the wilderness concept adopted by Ottawa caused a great profit loss for Alberta in the tourism industry, especially with the overseas market, due to poor tourist facilities.[264]

The wide circulation of the brief prompted Minister Laing to give a federal response immediately. He claimed that all Canadian tax-payers contributed one million dollars each year to create the national parks into what they were today, but that it was Alberta that financially

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[261] The Detrimental Effect of the National Parks Policy on the Tourist Industry of Alberta, January 1966, 3-4, M132/ 180, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[262] Ibid., 5.

[263] Ibid., 17.

[264] Ibid., 17.

benefitted from national parks attracting tourists.[265] Laing responded to the Alberta Government criticism that there were no adequate accommodation facilities to meet the increasing visitation demand by stressing that motel construction was underway in the Lower Lake Louise that was planned as a Visitor Services Centre to reduce the pressure on park townsites. As well, Laing pointed out that lot leases for accommodation had been granted in both Banff and Jasper National Park.[266] As for the newly introduced controversial lease policy, the Minister asserted the lease term was sufficient to pay back the investment and it was also an incentive mechanism to stimulate modernization within a short time.[267] In addition, Laing's determined stance on the issue of provincial self-government made it clear that the federal government would not make any concessions to the control over national parks.

In April 1965, Arthur Laing proposed to establish a Crown Corporation to be in charge of the administration of public lands in national parks since the large expenditures spent by the federal government in developing national parks did not pay off due to the existing park land administration struggling under the weight of an outdated leases and licenses fee structure.[268] Meanwhile, according to the proposal:

A revised policy relating to residential leases, effective from 1970, would provide for a

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[265] Comments by the Honorable Arthur Laing on A Brief Entitled "The Detrimental Effect of the National Parks Policy on the Tourist Industry of Alberta, Part I," 1967, 2, University of Alberta Library.

[266] Ibid., 3.

[267] Part II, 9-10.

[268] Lothian, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/history/lothian/eng/vol2/chap5.htm

> rental related to the current market value of the leasehold interest. Concurrently, each leasehold involving the use of public land for commercial purposes would be handled as an individual transaction on commercial principles, which would take into account the economic worth of the site and the nature of the proposed commercial operation.[269]

It was clear that there would be substantial rental increases to the lessees in national parks compared to the fixed rental that had been implemented for almost a century.

In early 1968, the Chamber of Commerce in Banff, Jasper and Waterton National Parks published a study paper on how the national parks policies infringed the property rights of park residents. They complained that not all the leaseholders were treated in the same way as the commercial leaseholders and would not be compensated when the lease expired. The chief concern in this paper is that it would be at Ottawa's discretion to decide whether to compensate residential leaseholders upon expiry.[270] Nearly half a month later, the Banff Park Citizen's Association submitted a brief addressing the transfer of Banff Townsite to the Province of Alberta and then to the Alberta Government. The 1968 brief expressed the outrage of park residents against the retrograde and hostile parks policy and the desire to be incorporated as a municipality under the jurisdiction of the Province of Alberta.[271] The brief assumed that the province would agree to trade off an equal-size area of provincial land contiguous to the Banff National Park's boundaries in the province in exchange for the townsite.[272]

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[269] Ibid.

[270] National Parks Policies Study Papers, No. 2, December 1, 1967 and No. 3, January 1, 1968, M132/ 179, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[271] Banff Park Citizens' Association, Banff Park Town, 1968, 1-2, M132/ 179, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[272] Ibid., 1.

The plea from Banff was consistent with aspirations of Peter Lougheed's incoming government to claim the control over the national parks within the Province of Alberta. In March 1972, the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs submitted "The Banff-Jasper Autonomy Report" to the federal Standing Committee of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.[273] The Alberta Government considered that Banff and Jasper townsites were financially and administratively capable of dealing with their own municipal affairs as other towns in Alberta and advocated for a petition circulated within the townsites to collect support before any public elections were arranged.[274]

The Alberta Government further stated its position toward the administration of national parks and the Village Lake Louise proposal by publishing a statement on national parks policy on May 15, 1972. Notably, it was issued following the Village Lake Louise public hearings in March that same year. The Alberta Government claimed that the federal government ignored the "ecological, social and economic interdependencies" between the parks and the province in national parks policy making.[275] In spite of increased demand for recreation facilities in national parks, Alberta claimed the focus of national parks policy making and proposal planning had conversely shifted to more preservation, which did not take into consideration the interests of the

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[273] The Banff-Jasper Autonomy Report, March 1972, 02.4C16anr, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[274] Ibid., 6.

[275] Alberta Department of the Environment Interdepartmental Planning Division, *the Government of Alberta Position Statement on National Parks Policy* (Edmonton, 1972), 1, University of Alberta Library.

province that would highly depend on the tourist industry for future development.[276] It was evident that the finite ecological capacity could not accommodate the construction of large-scale visitor service centers to meet the needs of growing visitation. However, the federal government did not consider any alternatives to situate such intensive land uses as were inconsistent with the purpose of national parks in the Canmore Corridor, the Crowsnest Pass or on the Bighorn Dam Reservoir.[277] Therefore, the Alberta Government proposed the establishment of a "legally sanctioned, joint Federal-Provincial management structure responsible for all planning, management and administration of the National Parks in Alberta."[278]

As for the Village Lake Louise proposal, the Alberta Government thought it was a premature moment to proceed with such a project because no cooperation mechanism was in place between the province and Ottawa, no comprehensive ecological studies were conducted to assess potential environmental impacts, the proposal was not consistent with national parks policy, and no alternative locations were explicitly identified in the proposal.[279] It wanted Ottawa to slow down. In the June 1972 letter from Horst A. Schmid, Minister of Alberta Culture, Youth and Recreation, to W. J. Yurko, Minister of Environment, Mr. Schmid wrote that "The strategy which you have adopted in this [provincial] position statement in stating what Alberta's position might be, assuming the establishment of a joint management structure, is in my view

[276] Ibid., 5.

[277] Ibid., 5-6.

[278] Ibid., 1.

[279] Ibid., 18-19.

most appropriate and sound."[280] The Alberta Government would not approve a proposal which could not generate adequate benefits to its own province and citizens.

To legitimize the proposed creation of Banff and Jasper as regular municipalities within the Province of Alberta, Alberta Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Tourism R. W. Dowling outlined the strategies recommended by Carl H. Rolf, Senior Provincial Judge, who had worked with the province before in terms of the agreements between Alberta and the federal government for the national parks. Dowling outlined it in a memorandum to Alberta Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs Don Getty.[281] Mr. Rolf asserted that it would be impossible for the Alberta Government to introduce such legislation in the court since the federal government had the privilege to deal with all the matters concerning national parks in spite of the fact that particular provincial laws not in violation with federal legislation could be applied as well.[282] The judge suggested developing a comprehensive provincial parks policy and administration structure in line with the national parks policy.[283] However, provided that the proposal was rejected by the federal government, Alberta should request the transfer of the transportation corridors into its territory.[284] Clearly, it was a complex legal and administrative situation that

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[280] Horst A. Schmid W. J. Yurko, June 6, 1972, PR 1979.60, Box 13, File 130, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[281] R. W. Rowling to Don Getty, July 21, 1972, PR 1979.60, Box 13, File 30, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[282] Ibid.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Ibid.

required careful consideration and due diligence as well as intricate intergovernmental politics of federalism.

On August 8, 1972, the provincial ministers responsible for Tourism, Lands and Forests, and Environment met Minister Chretien and the federal parks representatives in Edmonton to confer about the Lake Louise project and the prospective cooperation between the two governments.[285] In the meeting, Minister Chretien said "they recognized that the development concept [of Village Lake Louise] was too large and the developers were told this. However, developers insisted that they could sell the large concept to the people."[286] It was clear that Ottawa wanted more development but was uncertain about strategy, while Alberta reiterated that the development should take place in its province.[287] The possibility of creating an expert committee to explore cooperation on developing recreation facilities in inter-related areas was discussed, but no recognition was given to the establishment of a joint administration structure in the meeting. According to Mr. Yurko,

> However, the general tenure of discussion suggests that as a government we should pursue the cooperative approach, but we should not champion specifics such as 'Banff-Jasper Autonomy'. The citizens of the two townsites should push this type of venture. We could be quite successful on overall approaches if we don't sandpaper sore spots.[288]

It seems that the Alberta Government planned to adopt a roundabout approach in future

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[285] W. J. Yurko to Don Getty, August 9, 1972, PR 1979.60, Box 13, File 130, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid.

negotiations to advance the autonomy movement since change needed to be gradual to be accepted. Combative and conflictual words would be avoided to appease the fragile sensibilities of Ottawa.

In spite of the reluctance of Ottawa to jointly plan the national parks with Alberta, Minister Chretien had to present a favoring attitude toward the coordinating mechanism proposed by the Alberta Government to proceed with park development. In his letter to Don Getty on July 23, 1973, Chretien expressed his wish to "fully involve the Province of Alberta in the evolution of plans and policies involving the National Parks in that Province and would like to outline briefly those items to which we might jointly address ourselves at this time."[289] Chretien emphasized that "he would not wish to act without the closest co-operation with the Alberta Government [in the issue concerning…Banff and Jasper]."[290] He was also looking forward to a consultation with the Alberta Government on the proposed relocation of the Canadian National Railway divisional point from Jasper and the Trans-Canada Highway construction through Banff and Yoho National Parks.[291] Chretien concluded the letter by insisting that "I would like you to know that I have instructed my Parks Canada officers that federal interests in these and other similar programs are to be resolved following full discussions with the various provincial

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[289] Jean Chretien to Don Getty, July 23, 1973, PR 1979.60, Box 16, File 151, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Ibid.

agencies."[292]

The Alberta Government was highly satisfied with the positive response from Ottawa. Don Getty sent a copy of Chretien's letter to the Ministers in relevant portfolios and expected to organize a Ministerial meeting to prepare a strategy.[293] As reported by the *Calgary Herald*, Mr. Getty said "it used to be the residents and ourselves that talked about consultation and cooperation…. Now that is the language that Mr. Chretien is using."[294] He also planned to discuss the development issue of Canmore in the upcoming meeting with Chretien and hoped to restore the previous leasing policy on rental rate.[295]

Meanwhile the young Alberta politician Joe Clark, newly elected Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament for Rocky Mountains, was alert to Ottawa's duplicity since the federal government was in a private negotiation with the Banff Advisory Council on the autonomy issue with the exclusion of Jasper and the Provincial Government of Alberta.[296] It was evident that Banff townsite was considered a hostage and a breakthrough by the federal government. As long as absolute control on Banff could be guaranteed, the Alberta Government's aggressive actions to advance the alienation of National Parks in its province from federal crown land would be to

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[292] Ibid.

[293] Don Getty to R. W. Dowling, A. A. Warrack, D. J. Russell, W. J. Yurko and C. Copithorne, August 7, 1973, PR 1979.60, Box 16, File 151, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[294] "Hopes Run High for Banff Autonomy," *Calgary Herald*, September 6, 1973, University of Alberta Library.

[295] Ibid.

[296] Joe Clark to Don Getty, July 24, 1973, PR 1979.60, Box 16, File 151, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

some extent restrained.

3.4 Conclusion

In the debate over the Village Lake Louise project, the federal government attempted to leverage the political force of Alberta to legitimate extensive developments in national parks. Nevertheless, given the fact that the control over national parks from Ottawa had lasted nearly a century, the Alberta Government intended to take advantage of the opportunity to increase its control over a federal jurisdiction within its provincial boundaries. Apart from the strong opposition from both the Province of Alberta and the public, the forthcoming federal election in 1972 made Ottawa hesitant to make a decision. Ultimately, Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, turned down the project. However, facing drastically growing visitation to national parks and consequent increasing demands for recreation facilities, the federal government held development was necessary. Here Ottawa purposefully approached the Alberta Government under Lougheed in a non-hostile and low-profile position to win its trust.

Alberta attempted to achieve a position equal to Ottawa in dealing with emerging political, social and economic affairs in the early 1970s. The history of western Canadian protest is fraught with resistance from the federal government to place the West outside and above the Canadian mainstream.[297] However, Ottawa had to face the reality that the economic power of Alberta challenged Ottawa in its position as the political centre. But Village Lake Louise

[297] Roger Gibbins and Loleen Berdahl, *Western Visions, Western Futures: Perspectives on the West in Canada* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2003), introduction.

exposed national parks not only as places for the politics of the environment and tourism, but also as a contested site for the production of Canadian federalism. In this controversy, Ottawa held its hand well even as Alberta played for high stakes as an emergent provincial power broker in the West with aspirations to extract economic benefits from the Rockies both inside and outside of national park boundaries. Here Lougheed's prerogative was not much different than the doctrine of usefulness that influenced the origins of national parks in Ottawa. Lake Louise and other park townsites were valuable chess pieces in larger strategies of federal-provincial relations and power. Apart from the political tensions between Ottawa and Alberta, strong public advocacy for national parks emerged in the Village Lake Louise planning controversy which pushed the federal government to introduce public consultation programs in national parks policy.

Chapter Four

Voices that Cannot Be Dismissed:

An Era of Rising Social Activism and Environmentalism

4.1 Introduction

What was the lead up to the Village Lake Louise development proposal? The Parks Branch's first policy statement in 1964 clarified its mandate that national parks should be left with minimum impairment and preserved for future generations, however tensions between use and preservation continued to trouble the Branch as was the case with proposals to expand Lake Louise as a visitor centre. Into the early 1960s, many facilities and businesses in parks typically closed in late fall due to a lack of winter facilities and services. Parks authorities aimed to make Banff National Park into a year-round tourism destination by extending winter use even as the private sector sought to capitalize more on potential commercial values. Tourism and soaring visitation escalating in the sixties led to more demands for services but how would the Parks Branch pay for more service centre development? And how would the public react to it?

A plan to develop Lower Lake Louise as a Visitor Services Centre was put forward by the Parks Branch in 1961 to relieve visitor pressure for more recreation facilities in Banff townsite, and a meeting was held between the Branch and executives from Lake Louise Chamber of

Commerce. John Nicol, Ottawa director of the Parks Branch, observed how it was unfolded by the department:

> In 1963, the Department retained consultants to prepare an overall development plan for a visitor services centre [at] Lake Louise. The consultants' plan was subsequently made public. Efforts were also made to arouse interest amongst individuals who would provide the necessary commercial facilities. The plan envisioned further development of day-use facilities in the immediate vicinity of Lake Louise itself, but with the major emphasis being placed on construction of motels, restaurants, departmental offices, a campground and other facilities at Lower Lake Louise. The announced development was also designed to tie in with the adjacent ski areas.[298]

"In 1966, the federal government issued a call for tenders on 1,000 units of tourist accommodation as the first phase of a plan calling for a total of 3,000 units."[299] Confinement on the lower valley floor and an unstable leasing policy that ended quasi perpetual leaseholds in the parks made the proposed development less attractive so "no tenders were submitted and the government was left with about $1 million in serviced land with no buildings."[300] Such promotional rhetoric notwithstanding, the near bankruptcy of Lake Louise Visitors' Service Centre initiative steered the Parks Branch toward bigger investors.

A new document emerged in 1968 as the Branch wanted to attract investment from big corporations with solid financing through an open bidding process. It called for "Proposals for Development in Visitors' Service Centre, Lake Louise." At this point, an ambitious development

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[298] John Nicol, Memorandum on Public Hearings on Provisional Master Plans for Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks, April 8, 1971, 13.112 P23m, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[299] "Conservationists See Major Effect on Banff's Future: Sketchy Plans for Lake Louise Resort May Overshadow Mountain Parks Hearings," *Globe and Mail*, April 5, 1971, University of Alberta Library.

[300] Ibid.

plan worth $30 million was put forward by Village Lake Louise Ltd. in 1971 that aimed at building a "year round centre encompassing a full range of visitors' services in an aesthetic mountain village atmosphere, including accommodation for 3000 visitors."[301] A Memorandum of Intent was signed between the Parks Branch and Village Lake Louise Ltd. later that year. The Branch's departmental statement regarding Lake Louise planning area in Banff National parks indicated:

> The Memorandum of Intent provided the framework within which the Company agreed to proceed with the planning for the development of an all-season visitor services complex, to be known as Village Lake Louise. The development and operation of the accommodation and services in the complex were to be carried out by the Company according to a master plan subject to approval by the Minister, and under the authority of a lease to be issued by the Minister for the lands prescribed.[302]

In the correspondence letter to J. H. Gordon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, J. I. Nicol, Director of the National Parks Branch explained the reason why the proposal submitted by Imperil Oil and Lake Louise Lifts Ltd. was accepted:

> We have not received any other proposals as the result of this offering of the development opportunity. The previous submissions resulting from earlier offerings, both public and invited, were rejected, partially because their viability was in doubt due to lack of sufficient market research and analysis on the part of the prospective developers. The cost of the necessary studies and research has been beyond the capability of all but the largest firms, such as Imperial Oil Limited, therefore, there is little or no comparison between Village Lake Louise Limited development proposal for the complete package and the previous piece-meal proposals from several small shopping centre developers.[303]

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[301] Touche, *Brown Cows, Sacred Cows*, 137.

[302] National and Historic Parks Branch, Departmental Statement: Lake Louise Planning Area Banff National Park, 1972, 5-6, RG 19, Volume 5259, File 9747-04, Part 1, Library and Archives Canada.

[303] J. I. Nicol to J. H. Gordon, September 9, 1969, RG 22, Volume 1375, File 302-72, Part 4, Library and Archives Canada.

An unanticipated outcome of Village Lake Louise development plans was a strong public pushback with "an emerging sense of social activism and a strong appreciation of environmental values" that led ultimately to evoke tighter bureaucratic control on public goods from the federal government.[304]

4.2 Organizing Park Advocacy and Public Consultation

In the early 1960s, bureaucracy drove initiatives in parks policy development. The public still lacked of the full right to determine the substance of policy, but environmental groups did play an advisory role and lent substantial political support to park authorities. Their role was significant because it was impossible to get the minister's approval and formalize draft policy with the strength of the Parks Branch alone in the face of pro-development commercial interests that were often resistant to changes advanced by the department.[305] For this reason, park authorities began to seek partnerships with environmental groups to leverage the federal cabinet. At the "Resources for Tomorrow" conference held in Montreal in 1961, the Parks Branch expressed great enthusiasm and made efforts to encourage the formation of a national conservation organization to replace the earlier Canadian National Parks Association that had folded in 1951. In fact, the department was trying to find a watchdog and authoritative ally to communicate the idea of preservation. Two years after the conference, the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) was established in 1963 and received strong

[304] Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s," 135.

[305] Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 48-49.

financial support from the Parks Branch.[306] This national parks advocacy organization played a key leadership role in pursuing the conservationist ethic in the battle against Village Lake Louise. Even though the creation of NPPAC was prompted more by the Branch's tactics to advance its own political interest than public anxiety toward impaired wilderness, it became an effective advocate for environmental interests.

In the spring of 1968, the first Banff National Park provisional master development plan was approved. It proposed massive road, outdoor recreation facilities, and winter use construction. It became a major turning point according to Mike McIvor with the Bow Valley Naturalist Society:

> Certainly the major nationwide struggle over the provisional master plans mid-1969 to 1970, I think, was a turning point because what Parks [Canada] was proposing was so outrageous in many respects, that it really mobilized public opinion and certainly gave strength to groups such as the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada which is now the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.[307]

These events would unfold based on a new process for public consultation that emerged in the late 1960s.

Non-government groups had already mobilized to pressure Ottawa for public consultations. In response to the approval of the provisional master plans, the first "Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" conference had been held in October 1968 with support from NPPAC and the University of Calgary. The central purpose of the conference was to criticize the plan. The conference attracted about 200 delegates from nine countries and showed NPPAC's

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[306] Bella, *Parks for Profit*, 113.

[307] Hildebrandt, *A Historical Analysis of Parks Canada and Banff National Park*, 65.

commitment to safeguarding national parks for all Canadians.[308] At the conference, Dr. Gordon Nelson, the associate dean of Arts and Science and professor of geography at the University of Calgary, vigorously criticized the plan for Banff. In his conference paper, Nelson concluded that "recreational erosion is gaining momentum...many people are beginning to look on facilities-oriented recreation as the same kind of threat to the landscape of Banff and other national parks as lumbering, mining and similar enterprises were in the past."[309] In NPPAC's statement on the proposed provisional master plans for the four mountain parks, the legislation and policy ground on which the plans were judged was challenged by the announcement that "use for benefit, education and enjoyment was impossible to be reconciled with the requirement that the Parks should be left unimpaired for future generations."[310] Nelson also criticized national parks' planning procedures while advocating for a citizen-participation approach in which pertinent suggestions should be taken into consideration at public hearings before the plan was finalized within a departmentalized framework.[311] NPPAC held that "while we welcome the provisional plans, we are concerned that they were not available to the public sooner and that a number of postponements of public hearings have occurred in the last few years."[312]

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[308] Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s," 144.

[309] Nelson, "Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park," 77-78.

[310] J. G. Nelson, R. C. Scace and S. Herrero for NPPAC, A Statement on the Proposed Master Plans for the Four Mountain Parks, 1971, 1, M36/ 1400, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[311] Nelson, "Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park," 93-94.

[312] Nelson, Scace and Herrero, 2.

Denounced by NPPAC for the lack of public process involved in the provisional master plans the national parks administration announced that it was going to hold public hearings on the Four Mountain Parks Provisional Master Plans in April, 1971.

Public consultation was not formally incorporated into Canada's national parks arena until 1968 when the federal government completed a preliminary legislative framework for public participation in planning national parks development. The change was influenced by intergovernmental discussions and emergent wilderness advocacy pressures in various regions. Ontario had taken the first initiative to incorporate public participation into parks planning and administration. In 1968, Abbott Conway, an Ontario citizen, appeared before an Ontario legislative committee to express concerns toward logging activity in Algonquin Provincial Park.[313] But continued resource extraction activity stimulated Conway and several others to form the Algonquin Wildlands League and fought back in public; therefore, public opinion was mobilized substantially, which pushed the Government of Ontario to hold public hearings into provincial park master plans.[314] Ontario's public hearing program for a provincial park set a new standard that outpaced Ottawa in this regard even though the National Parks Branch considered itself a leader in concepts and programs for park planning. The Eighth Federal-Provincial Parks Conference held in Jasper National Park in September 1969 responded to the recent Ontario experience and "public hearings were discussed as a means of developing a

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[313] Gerald Killan, *Protected Places: A History of Ontario's Provincial Park System* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 170.

[314] Ibid., 170.

useful dialogue and understanding between the public and parks administrators and to secure public participation in planning and setting objectives."[315] The federal government announced at the conference that "it was preparing for presentation to the public provisional master plans for all the National Parks and the public hearings were to be held in major centers across Canada."[316] The first public meeting of the Public Hearings Program was held in April 1970, with the presentation of the provisional development plan for Kejimkujik National Park. This was followed by similar public meetings for Cape Breton Highlands National Park and Fundy National Park. In 1971 public hearings were launched in western Canada on the Four Mountain Parks Provisional Development Master Plans for a much larger area of national park lands in the Rockies. In this way, the stage was set for public consultation and further contestation in Alberta and British Columbia.

4.3 Public Interrogation of Village Lake Louise

Even if little information about Village Lake Louise was released publicly it was detected by NPPAC. As an alert watchdog for parks advocacy, NPPAC expressed its concern as to Village Lake Louise development. In a statement on the Four Mountain Parks Master Plans, it indicated that the planning process for Village Lake Louise did not conduct any known environmental impact studies and the project only served high-income tourists and was consequently in

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[315] National and Historic Parks Branch, *Where Do We Stand?: Proceedings of the Eighth Federal-Provincial Parks Conference,* Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada, September 22-26, 1969 (Ottawa: National and Historic Parks Branch, 1969), 79, University of Alberta Library.

[316] Ibid., 48.

violation with the existing National Parks Policy Statement.[317] Actions were taken immediately. At NPPAC's press conference held in April 1971 prior to the master plan hearings, Nelson expressed concerns as to the development of Village Lake Louise:

> No doubt, though, these other matters will receive their due at the Hearings whereas the VLL project may not because there is little available information upon which to base discussion...The actual development is controlled by an organization known as Village Lake Louise Ltd., of which Imperial Oil Ltd. is a 50% partner with Lake Louise Lifts Ltd....The Association has been attempting for some months to obtain concrete information on this project from the Federal Government but to no avail.[318]

He also requested to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to hold the same public hearings process for Village Lake Louise as the one for the four mountain parks.[319] On the first day of the hearings, John Gordon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, confirmed this decision and promised that "the plans would be open to the full force of public debate, public dialogue, before decisions were taken."[320] Undoubtedly, this action put new pressures on Village Lake Louise Ltd. since the Company had assumed that its collaboration was built on the premise that the project was approved completely subject to the authority of the Minister. Being fully exposed under the public spotlight was not part of its original agreement with the Parks Branch.[321]

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[317] Ibid., 4, 9.

[318] J. G. Nelson, Statement re. Village Lake Louise at a Press Conference in Calgary, 3, April 13, 1971, RG 22, Volume 979, File 302-3, Part 1, Library and Archives Canada.

[319] Ibid., 5.

[320] Touche, 137.

[321] E. J. Hart, *The Battle for Banff: Exploring the Heritage of the Banff-Bow Valley Part II 1930-1985* (Altona, Manitoba: EJH Literary Enterprises Ltd., 2003): 239.

Significant public outcry toward the plan of Visitor Services Centre in Lake Louise area outlined in the provisional master plans was aroused by different conservation groups, especially with respect to the Village Lake Louise project going on behind the scenes. Along with NPPAC, the Calgary Section of the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) publicly criticized the approval procedure for Village Lake Louise. In its brief to the Four Mountain Parks hearings, it stated its concerns that the Village Lake Louise process was completely upside down as it had little public notice and debate. The ACC Section claimed that "The entire project is shrouded in secrecy--plans for this development are not completed and have therefore not been released. Yet, the public is being asked to comment on the planned development at these hearings."[322] It went on to contend that the size of the planning project was gigantic and the privately owned condominium accommodation providing exclusive rights to skiers was unacceptable in national parks since it violated the general purpose of national parks to be enjoyed by all citizens.[323] Inevitably, Lake Louise would be transformed into another Banff lamented the club.[324] Since the whole plan had not been released, all of these speculations were based on the only available information disclosed by national park officials and the private company. Likewise, the Lethbridge Natural Society calculated the approximate number of visitors that proposed motels and hotels at Lower Lake Louise could accommodate, based on the enclosure, to be about 2788

[322] Calgary Section of the Alpine Club of Canada, A Brief for the Four Mountain Parks Provisional Master Plans, 1971, 14, 13.112 P23m, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[323] Ibid., 16-17.

[324] Ibid., 17.

persons, which would exceed the 2000-person capability set by the National Parks own Winter Recreation policy.[325] It concluded that social access was a concern in that "skiing is an expensive sport... opportunity for skiing was beyond the financial capability of the great bulk of the population."[326]

An extensive campaign to amplify the voices opposing Village Lake Louise was launched by environmental groups prior to the Village Lake Louise hearings scheduled on March 9 and 10 in 1972. In early February 1972, a meeting to probe public reaction was held at the Banff Fire Hall by the Bow Valley Naturalists (BNV), an Banff-based nature and environmental organization mainly comprised of Bow Valley residents who were interested in "conservation, natural history and recreation," in response to the conceptual plan released a week earlier by the Parks Branch and Village Lake Louise Ltd..[327] According to E. J. Hart, it "set the tone for those to follow."[328] The meeting was reported in the local *Banff Crag and Canyon* newspaper by local naturalist Brian Patton. Dr. James Thorsell, an environmental consultant for Village Lake Louise, spoke for the project claiming that the Bow Valley areas were no longer wilderness and the new

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[325] Lethbridge Natural Society, A Brief for Village Lake Louise Submitted to the National and Historic Parks Branch, November 24, 1969, M186/ 29, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[326] Ibid.

[327] Hart, 239.

[328] Ibid.

visitor centre would ease pressure off Banff Townsite.[329] Dr. Stephen Herrero, President of the Calgary Branch of NPPAC, fought against the proposal by arguing that it would open the floodgate for more commercial development in national parks and an unpredictable potential expansion fueled by a soaring number of visitors in the next decade would put the whole park under greater pressure.[330] He further contended that locating recreation development outside national parks would be an alternative to more development at Lake Louise.[331] Dr. Doug Pimlott, a wildlife biologist, "expressed the hope that local opposition might win an important battle in the struggle for the quality of life in Canada," which was in line with the outlook of Dr. Louis Lemieux, Director of the National Museum of Canada.[332] Although some support was articulated by local skiers "most of those present at the meeting shared Dr. Herrero's misgivings about the project, continually attacking Dr. Thorsell on many points throughout the evening."[333]

Village Lake Louise Ltd. did not sit still or capitulate. It mounted an active public relations campaign. Brochures were distributed to the public, particularly intended to strike a chord with skiers, who were encouraged to speak for the project by writing brief letters or showing up at the public hearings to justify its legitimacy. These brochures answered several questions concerning

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[329] Brian Patton, "Village Lake Louise Concept Attacked," *Banff Crag and Canyon*, February 9, 1972, sec. 10c, page 1, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[330] Patton, page 2.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Ibid.

[333] Ibid.

the ski resort plan. From the company's perspective, constructing a ski village was absolutely not in violation with existing national and international standards concerning national parks since the *1969 National Parks Policy* gave a green light to ski development in parks and certain facilities to promote tourism in parks were deemed as appropriate and necessary by the United Nations.[334] The company tried to reassure local Alberta skiers who were concerned that international tourists would take over their rights of usage. It promised that a high quality skiing experience would be enjoyed by weekend skiers with the benefit of new accommodation spaces and varying time patterns between ski vacationers and weekend skiers.[335] The company kept reiterating that it placed the skier in front of profit, explaining that only if substantial returns were made could it invest in upgrading old and constructing new skiing facilities to better serve its clients.[336]

NPPAC's Calgary-Banff Chapter fought back and raised alternative answers to the same questions posed by the company. The conservationists argued that a population density (33, 000 per square mile) even greater than downtown Tokyo caused by an influx of ten to fifteen thousand visitors at peak times would destroy the tranquility of Lake Louise.[337] It was evident that the condominium type accommodation of which even the smallest studio units cost $15,000

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[334] Village Lake Louise Ltd. to Skiers, February 15, 1972, 1-2. M186/ 29, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[335] Ibid., 2.

[336] Ibid., 3-4.

[337] Calgary/Banff Chapter of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada to Skiers, February 15, 1972, 1, M186/ 29, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

would exclude average Canadian families.[338] Also, a rapid growing international market generated by the attraction would detract from the benefits to local skiers. In addition, an alternative site outside the eastern boundary of Banff – with better snow situations and a shorter distance to Calgary – was more appropriate for such development.[339] What NPPAC really cared about was not whether the project itself was legitimate or not, but if it ought to take place in a national park. No opposing voices were to be raised should ski developments be located outside the national parks.

Since Village Lake Louise Ltd. had purchased 1,500 copies of the Master Plans for wide public distribution to help its proposed ski development, NPPAC also made active efforts to create more grass-roots interest in the development and rally support to stop it. Booklets were distributed to encourage more members of the public to submit briefs and sign petition letters. Posters and cards were circulated and public opinions were presented in newspapers as well as on radio and television. The park organization also organized an Esso credit-card mail-in campaign aimed directly at Imperial Oil in order to boycott corporate designs for Village Lake Louise. Strategies and lobby pressure tactics moved in polarized directions as debate escalated.

Ultimately, 2,532 briefs and letters were received by the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from across Canada and even from foreign countries. Approximately sixty percent of the submissions were against the project

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[338] Ibid., 2.

[339] Ibid.

and forty percent in favor.[340] According to a statistical computer analysis of the briefs letters carried out by the Public Hearing Office, 9.9 percent of the briefs were submitted by doctors, lawyers, teachers and other professions; 1.2 percent of the briefs were from other countries.[341]

A variety of interest groups committed to protecting national parks from commercial interests grew gradually and snowballed. Academic knowledge contributed from university researchers and professionals in diverse disciplines as well as a shared consensus among individuals and interest groups from home and abroad constructed a cornerstone for the refusal of the ambitious Village project. A unified common voice emerged among citizens, university researchers, and environmental groups that the government heard as strong consensus against the Village Lake Louise proposal.

With an "atmosphere that resembled, at times, high drama in the House of Commons," public hearings were attended by more than 500 persons with divergent opinions on the proposed project on March 9, 1972, the first day of the hearing.[342] Representatives from the Alberta Wilderness Association, Alpine Club of Canada, Bow Valley Naturalists, NPPAC, and many other groups and organizations concerned with environmental protection were strongly against the construction of such a large-scale and luxury ski resort in Banff National Park. It was

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[340] "Lake Louise is not for Sale," *The Gateway*, February 8, 1972, University of Alberta Library. http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/GAT/1972/02/08/6/Ar00600.html?query=newspapers%7Clake+louise%7C%7Cscore

[341] Parks Canada, Quantitative Analysis of the Village Lake Louise Public Hearing, 2, RG 19, Volume 5259, File 9747-04, Part 1, Library and Archives Canada.

[342] Peter Walls, "Hundreds Argue Merits of Park Plan," *The Calgary Herald,* March 9, 1972, page 2, University of Alberta Library.

in violation with the existing parks legislation and policy, and criticized for only serving a wealthy elite that could afford expensive ski trips and condos even as it sacrificed the opportunity of average Canadians to benefit from public land dedicated for the enjoyment of all Canadians.

However, various individuals and representatives from corporations and governments also attended the hearing to speak in favour of the proposed Village Lake Louise. The central idea presented by these stakeholders was that the project was economically very promising, showed off the natural beauty of Canada, and enhanced the opportunity of Canadians to appreciate environment instead of destroying it.[343] The Calgary Chamber of Commerce stated that "the proposal falls squarely within our policy concerning the use and development of National Parks."[344] The project would not only stimulate tourism development but also create more jobs in the difficult period.[345] What was seen as even better was that no public dollars would be spent due to the investment of private capital and nobody had to take the risk of operating losses but Village Lake Louise Company itself.[346] According to Peter Walls, "because so many persons indicated a desire to address hearings special evening sessions from 8 to 10 p.m. had

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[343] Ibid., 1-2.

[344] Calgary Chamber of Commerce, The President's Letter, M 132/ 179, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Ibid.

been slated for Thursday and Friday night and a special Saturday day session was also planned."[347]

A project conducted by graduate students of the Faculty of Environmental Design at University of Calgary (U of C) to point out the proposal's inadequacy was presented at the public hearing in Calgary on March 9, 1972.[348] It made an interdisciplinary analysis of the proposed development plan for Lake Louise ski area. The students and faculty members drew on research from architecture, urban studies, and environmental science. Professor J.G. Nelson was a key park advocacy voice among the University of Calgary academic specialists and mobilized graduate students to study and interrogate the park proposals scientifically as well as critique it in practical political terms.

The U of C students addressed multiple concerns in their study. First of all, from a historical perspective, the resemblance of Village Lake Louise and the earlier development legacy left by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) indicated the risk of achieving private economic interests at the expense of sacrificing public benefit.[349] The profit motive of private corporations determined the fact that CPR and Imperial Oil were different from the Parks Branch as the civil service in that private companies "were not in the business of maintaining unimpaired

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[347] Walls, "Hundreds Argue Merits of Park Plan," 1.

[348] Graduate Students of the Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, A Brief for the National Parks Branch Public Hearings on the Proposed Development for the Village Lake Louise Planning Area, 1972, University of Alberta Library.

[349] Ibid.

wilderness for future generations"[350] Advancing their own economic interests was their first foremost priority. Also, similar to Banff townsite, the planning idea of Village Lake Louise was inspired by the existing ski resorts in Europe and North America.[351] It was evident that the project was targeted at an international market, which had potential side effects to deprive Canadians of the right to access and use their public playground. In addition, it was unrealistic to imagine that, with an increasing demand from more visitors as a result of extensive advertising campaign, the Parks Branch would keep its promise to restrict the development within its current site according to the initial plan.[352] Moreover, based on the earlier experience of Banff Townsite development, the ambiguity of the Branch's role and the inconsistency in parks policy made it clear that "the government could not control large developers."[353]

Since skiing was commonly considered a family sport, an income/expenditure model was used to examine the downhill ski market in Calgary. By calculating the average discretionary income of Calgarian families, the result showed that only the two groups of families with an average income of $ 10,000 to $14,000, and $15,000 and over, per year, could afford downhill skiing; however, these two groups comprised only ten percent of families in Calgary.[354] So a conclusion was drawn that it was unrealistic for most of families to have access to such an

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[350] Ibid.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Ibid.

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid.

expensive downhill ski resort in Banff National Park, which was at odds with the objective of National Parks Policy that "emphasis should be on mass participation and skiing for the average skier or family groups."[355] According to this report, "a clear definition of policy goals and strategies to reach these" were not in place to guarantee that Village Lake Louise could be under full regulation.[356] Even though the Winter Recreation policy statement used to justify Village Lake Louise proposal was announced in advance, its information base depended on foreign demand instead of the reality of the average Canadian.[357]

Furthermore, ecological studies and research were lacking to evaluate the development's effect on the regional ecosystem.[358] It was feared that the intensive construction and subsequent recreational activities and accommodation would cause irreversible adverse effects on environment, such as vegetation degradation, soil compaction, and water contamination.[359] The report submitted by the University of Calgary graduate students contributed greatly to turning down the proposal. Coming out of the 1968 conference, key academics at the University continued to play a pioneering role to catalyze research and advocacy efforts to safeguard habitats and landscapes in national parks.

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[355] *National Parks Policy (1969)*, 17.

[356] Graduate Students of the Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Ibid.

[359] Ibid.

The Environmental Law Association, a Toronto-based coalition of scientists, lawyers and citizens, requested reference of the Village Lake Louise Proposal to the Federal Court of Canada in 1972. On behalf of various environmental groups, it demonstrated its discord with the "general principles of law, the agreement between Alberta and the Government of Canada, and section four of the *1930 National Parks Act.*"[360]

More professional and research expertise in different disciplines, ranging from natural sciences to social sciences, was informing the new park protection movement and NGOs. By contrast, C. J. Taylor notes "there were no scientists officially working within Parks Branch until the first university-trained ecologist was hired by the western regional office in 1972."[361] However, in the late 1950s, parks management had already indicated an increasing inclination towards professional expertise in engineering, architecture, and planning, which was in striking contrast with the marginalization of biologists.[362]

Sierra Club criticized the lack of research in the proposal planning process and wrote in its bulletin that "for all of the flossy promotional printing produced in the name of Lake Louise development, it remains a fact that solid economic and environmental impact studies have not

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[360] Canadian Environmental Law Association, *Village Lake Louise; the Legality of the Development; Request for Reference of Scheme to Federal Court of Canada. Submission to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Public Hearing, Calgary, March 1972* (Toronto, 1972), 3-7, University of Alberta Library.

[361] Taylor, "Banff in the 1960s," 149-150.

[362] Ibid., 135.

been done."[363] More critique followed that Canada, as a member country of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources was still naive in implementing national parks policy. "If Standard Oil of New Jersey can pull this primitive deal on you, think what someone can do next time around with a more sophisticated plan."[364]

International pressure was also brought to bear from the International Commission on National Parks (ICNP). Dr. Kai Curry-Lindahl of Sweden, Vice-Chairman of the ICNP wrote directly to John Nicol, director of the National and Historic Parks Branch:

> As I understand from the documents I have received from Canada, the planned exploitation of the Lake Louise area of the Banff National Park obviously signifies an artificial intervention on such a large scale that it is against the international consensus on national parks and, indeed, against the whole meaning of the national park idea as accepted internationally. Moreover, the exploitation plan includes a large part of recreational and commercial activities which undoubtedly are out of place in a national park. From international points of view the project will discredit not only the Banff National Park and your Branch but also the international reputation of Canada in the field of conservation and national parks particularly since the Banff National Park is so well-known abroad and that your Government has twice resisted the pressure of having the Olympic Winter Games organized in this national park.[365]

This strongly worded admonishment humiliated the Government of Canada and doubted the progress made so far in parks protection by the National Parks Branch. The weight of opinion in the international community was running heavily against Canada in terms of the approval of the Village Lake Louise proposal much as it had during earlier Olympic bids.

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[363] Sierra Club, Sierra Club Bulletin, April 1972, 25, 13.112 P23m, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Kai Curry –Lindahl to John I. Nicol, February 28, 1972, 3, M36/ 1449, Whyte Museum of Canadian Rockies Archives.

Ray Huene, in the Alberta Department of Industry and Commerce, wrote a summary of the Village Lake Louise hearing in March 1972. His arguments in support of the proposal positioned the Province to articulate that:

> Vacation skiers travelling on weekdays will not affect the weekend skier...Most of the skiers from eastern Canada go to Europe and United States instead of Lake Louise due to a lack of accommodation and facilities...The proposed area is not a wilderness area anymore. Skiing is a big portion of the increasingly developing tourism industry...It will create a significant number of jobs in the Lake Louise area...Lake Louise has the best snow condition and best slopes in Canada...It is within the limit of the carrying capacity...The interest of conservationists is in line with that of developers because what the environmentalists are trying to protect are the same things which commercial enterprises depend upon for their economic existence.[366]

Nonetheless what dominated media headlines were the negative impacts of the proposed project. The pro-expansion side for Village Lake Louise was submerged by the huge wave of criticism from the environmental side.

Pressure was mounting and soon politics also shifted in Ottawa. Having weighed the public hearings reaction, Jean Chretien, Minister Northern Development responsible for national parks, turned down the proposal on July 12, 1972. He reasoned that "a project of this nature was not consistent with an acceptable level of environmental impairment."[367] In addition, the Government of Alberta insisted in 1972 that the assessment of the proposal was not complete

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[366] F. H. Peacock to R. W. Dowling, March 28, 1972, PR 1979.60, Box 1, File 10, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[367] "Bulldozers at Lake Louise," *The Globe and Mail*, August 1, 1979, University of Alberta Library. http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/386961963?accountid=14474

and noted of particular importance that the interests of the province were not considered.[368] However, Stephen Callahan, a consultant for Village Lake Louise, argued that "the Minister's response was a pre-election response to pressure from environmental groups."[369] Indeed a federal election on October 30, 1972, returned the Liberals to power in Ottawa with a minority government in a narrow victory led by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau as the NDP led by David Lewis held the balance of power. The monopoly of large energy companies was replaced by a "low growth option" plan for the Lake Louise ski area in Banff National Park.

4.4 Conclusion

Interestingly, the Parks Canada quantitative analysis of the Village Lake Louise public hearings showed that the opposing arguments advanced by the media did not typically represent what was expressed by the public in their brief letters. According to the data analysis, 70 percent of the briefs did not mention commercialization or urbanization at all; however, the issue that the proposed Village Lake Louise would create an urban-like environment in a nature park was frequently discussed by the media.[370] In addition, an average of 87 percent of the briefs had not stated an opinion regarding research, ecology and wildlife, but that was nonetheless the most

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[368] Alberta Department of Environment, *The Government of Alberta Position Statement on National Parks Policy, 1972* (Edmonton, Alberta: 1972), 19, University of Alberta Library.

[369] Stephen Callahan, "Lake Louise: 16 years in Doldrums Proposal for Village Lake Louise Ltd." *Globe and Mail*, July 31, 1979, University of Alberta Library. http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/386920129?accountid=14474

[370] Parks Canada, Quantitative Analysis of the Village Lake Louise Public Hearing, 3.

convincing testimony considered by the media to justify why the project should not happen in Banff National Park.[371] Even though 33 percent of the briefs stated a full-support position toward the proposed project and the Parks Branch received form letters with 1, 544 signatures which fully supported proposal, the victory did not belong to the pro-development side.[372] It appeared to the Department that "those opposed [to] the development were better organized perhaps due to a broader motivation on the part of the NPPAC movement."[373]

The ensuing Village Lake Louise controversy was put on stage and public hearings were held subsequently in March 1972. According to Peter Lesaux, then Assistant Director of the National and Historic Parks Branch, "the Village Lake Louise hearing in Calgary had sparked more participation than hearings held on park master plans in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver last spring."[374] It was unclear what degree of public participation was practicable in either program and it was questionable if there was a necessary positive correlation between the degree of citizen power and the degree of its influence on decision-making. In addition, lack of support from the Government of Alberta was a significant factor pushing Jean Chretien to turn down the proposed project. The NPPAC asserted that "with a federal general election forecast for June [1972], it may well be that no decision will be made in this political hot potato until after that

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[371] Ibid., 3.

[372] Ibid., 3-4.

[373] Ibid., 4.

[374] Peter Walls, "Hearing Can Sway Result: Ottawa Listening to Resort Briefs," *The Calgary Herald,* March 11, 1972, page 1, University of Alberta Library.

event."[375] Kopas also wrote that "since it was an election year for the federal Liberals, and the early signs were that the government had lost a substantial level of support among the public, it seems likely that Chretien was not willing to take sole responsibility for approving Village Lake Louise in the face of strong opposition and lack of support from the Alberta government."[376] Therefore, there was uncertainty about whether the public input was best utilized by park authorities to reassess and refuse the proposed Village Lake Louise project.

The nation-wide protest against Village Lake Louise expansion was a milestone in the long haul to pursue public participation in park administration. But even the introduction of a public hearing served to create an ostensibly democratic political environment to pacify criticism from the public. It created a formalistic communication channel but, even though the proposal attracted widespread criticism, the public hearing was held only in Calgary. A resident in Edmonton expressed resentment toward the public participation program in his brief on the issue of the Lake Louise ski area redevelopment plan sent to the Parks Branch:

> The Public Hearings of a year ago are a mockery. As early as 1970 a plan for Lake Louise was announced, but even now, ministers of tourism must see the detailed plan before it is made public. It seems evident that meetings are manipulated in favor of corporations and the Federal and Provincial governments in their desire for money. The intelligence of the public is both affronted and underestimated.[377]

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[375] National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, "Alberta: A Post-Election Decision on Village Lake Louise?," *Parks for Tomorrow* 1, no. 6, April, 1972, PR 1985.401, Box 73, File 848, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

[376] Kopas, 79.

[377] Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Briefs on the Lake Louise master plan/ submitted to Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch, 1972* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1972), No. 15, LL1-199, University of Alberta Library.

The hearings were described as a window dressing because the government had never thought of terminating the plan. Professor J. G. Nelson with NPPAC argued that public comments were usually received after the master plans were finalized.[378] Critics commented it was impossible for the public to take part in the actual planning process.

Nonetheless, the directors of Village Lake Louise Ltd. were dismayed as such public hearings were not part of their original agreement with the Parks Branch. Ottawa senior civil servants also sought to reposition Parks Canada. In the memorandum on the public hearings on the Four Mountain Parks, administrator J. I. Nicol wrote that "In particular, should the Department freeze all development in each park until the public hearing on the provisional master plan for that park has been held? It will take several years to cover all parks and it will be impossible to maintain even the present level of service to the public if all planned projects are stopped."[379] After the master plan hearings, having detected the changing climate, Nicol wrote a memo to Minister Chretien suggesting that "you withhold your approval until after the public hearings and the opportunity they will provide to judge the public reaction."[380] In the discussion with Ronald Ritchie, executive of Imperial Oil Company, J. H. Gordon said:

> While this danger can be and has been overdrawn and exaggerated, it is, nevertheless, the government's responsibility to be quite precise on the limits of the ski development and the consequential limits to be placed on the accommodation…In this context, the Company should not expect the Minister to approve a plan which would irrevocably commit his

[378] Nelson, "Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park," 89.

[379] Nicol, Memorandum on Public Hearings on Provisional Master Plans for Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks.

[380] Touche, 139.

> successors in office many years ahead…Moreover, if this were to be done it would confirm the suspicions of our critics that the seeds of expansion have been planted and a commitment made to the full development in the future.[381]

It was a keeping-out-of-trouble strategy adopted by Ottawa in the first place after the Four Mountain Parks hearings when the Parks Branch encountered huge amount of critics to more developments in national parks.

A report on the public hearings held for the Four Mountain Parks and Village Lake Louise was published by Parks Canada in 1974. The basic concerns of individuals and organizations in favor and opposed to the Village Lake Louise proposal were summarized based on Parks Canada's analysis of the submitted briefs. The strong lobby by environmentalists in a dominant position steered the public hearing to what "nature lovers" expected it to be. It noted the plan was misunderstood by the public in several aspects; for example, the proposed Lower Village and Upper Village were actually several miles away from the lakeshore.[382] The proposed project was rejected but it could be detected in the *Final Report*'s wording that losing the opportunity to redevelop the Lake Louise area was regrettable. Parks Canada maintained that "it is a strategic location for a visitor services centre; that visitor services have been provided there for many years; and that the area is in urgent need for redevelopment."[383]

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[381] Memorandum to File Covering J. H. Gordon's Discussions with Mr. Ron Ritchie of Imperil Oil on Village Lake Louise, August 4, 1971, RG 22, Volume 1375, File 302-72, Part 6, Library and Archives Canada.

[382] Touche, 139.

[383] Parks Canada, *Final Report of the Public Hearings on the Provisional Master Plans for Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks and on Planning Proposals for the Lake Louise Area of Banff National Park* (Ottawa: Ontario, 1974): 16, University of Alberta Library.

As a result of the expanding environmental movements in Canada more broadly and valuable input from environmentalists, the *1979 Parks Canada Policy* – better known as the "Beaver Book" – was introduced. The policy provided a break-down interpretation of the broad principles to provide consistent guidance in the application of the general provisions.[384] It made a commitment to citizen participation, consultations, and public hearings.[385] Public participation was, for the first time, integrated into a legislative framework. One of its basic premises was public ownership of a national trust:

> Even in…early years federal policy affirmed that these outstanding resources should be publicly owned…Since then the federal government has administered historic and natural parks as a single program emphasizing the common themes of national inheritance and public ownership.[386]

The policy asserted that "all interested Canadians, therefore, will be invited to state their views on such major issues as national policies, new park establishment, park management plans and large new development proposals...."[387] Certainly, the policy provided legislative grounding for the overseeing role played by the public. In this way, from polity to new public policy, Village Lake Louise served as Canada's townhall for national parks.

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[384] Parks Canada, *Parks Canada Policy, 1979* (Ottawa, Ontario, 1979), University of Alberta Library.

[385] Bella, 119.

[386] *Parks Canada Policy 1979*, 13.

[387] Ibid.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Faced with extensive public criticism from various interest groups, the National and Historic Parks Branch made a concession to hold public hearings on the Village Lake Louise proposal in March 1972. In spite of the department's original purpose to please the public, it turned out that the outcome was unexpected and the process was out of control. The proposal to expand Lake Louise ski area facilitated by the National Parks Administration was turned down by its Minister Jean Chretien in July 1972.

The two decades after 1960 involved an increasing role played by public consultation in national parks planning and administration. The bureaucracy was no longer the sole policy maker for national parks in Canada. Public participation was incorporated into the parks policy frameworks and a limitation was imposed on commercial development within Canadian mountain parks. In contrast with the national park conservation movement in the 1920s, the park movement saw a growing rationalism in both park administration and public protest in the 1960s and 1970s. On one hand, the zoning system paradigm replaced the earlier hodgepodge development pattern and was introduced into the *National Parks Policy* in 1964. On the other hand, public consultation was for the first time formalized in the *1979 Parks Canada Policy*. The conservation movement in the 1960s and 1970s also created a strong coalition uniting different interest groups including conservation associations, researchers, politicians, and the

general public. It featured highly organized communication and cooperation among these anti-development actors who articulated a determined voice to preserve the natural beauty of the Canadian Rockies for future generations. NPPAC emerged as an independent environmental non-government organization not affiliated with the Parks Branch and coordinated the efforts from various interest groups to fight against the proposal. It was evident that the academic knowledge from professionals and researchers, who were experts in various fields such as biology, ecology, geography, planning, law, and recreation, informed the new environmental movement advocating for Canadian national parks. However, the public was not given full right to participate in core activities in terms of parks planning and policy making at the hearings. No doubt, public opinion was solicited but there was no guarantee to promise its implementation.

Apart from the public outcry for protection, other factors including an upcoming federal election and political tension between Ottawa and Alberta decidedly contributed to Minister Chretien's rejection of the proposal to a large extent. The Minster would not take risks to deal with a political hot potato in the months leading up to a critical election as the public had explicitly stated its position against Village Lake Louise. Meanwhile, Ottawa's decision might have been different if the Government of Alberta had approved the proposal but it was rejected under Lougheed. Furthermore, the private industry sectors involved were greatly disappointed by the Parks Branch as it had reneged on its signed agreement with Village Lake Louise Ltd.. After the Four Mountain Parks hearings in 1971, John Nicol, Director of the National and Historic Parks Branch, recommended to Minister Chretien that he play a waiting game until public reaction towards the proposal was probed ahead of time. In spite of Ottawa's desire to

redevelop Lake Louise ski area, the public's strong opposition towards the proposal made the federal government hesitate to make a decision.

The ideals of national parks have evolved constantly since early establishment. Even though there was a transition in the park's emphasis from economic exploitation to nature protection, it was impossible to reconcile the conflict between visitor uses and environmental protection. However, profitability seems to be an important driving force for better protection. As well, development justifies the legitimacy of protection since national parks are better conserved for the enjoyment of all Canadians. The ambiguity was also passed down to parks policy making. Though the principle of inviolability was enshrined in the *National Parks Act* (1930), the middle path has existed for almost a century. The trade-off technique strategically designed and used by parks policy makers sacrificed the intrinsic bio-centric values of national parks for more commercial developments. In addition, large-scale development was closely associated with the trend of global neoliberalism beginning in the 1970s when hundreds of subsidiaries facilitated the flow of private investment into almost every corner of the world.[388] Situated next to the United States, Canada's lack of capital became a target for its global expansion strategy since Canada has abundant natural resources. Seeking economic prosperity fueled by private capitals became one of the Parks Branch's strategies to develop recreational facilities in national parks.

With increasingly aggressive provincialism exercised by the Government of Alberta under the leadership of the new Progressive Conservative Premier Peter Lougheed at the start of his

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[388] Deborah Johnston and Alfredo Saad-Filho, *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2005): 10-11.

term, the tension between Ottawa and Alberta escalated and national parks became one of the battlefields where Alberta challenged federalism and resisted central control of the territory within its provincial boundaries. The federal government attempted to leverage the Alberta Government's political force to proceed with the Village Lake Louise proposal. Conversely, it was taken advantage of by Alberta to force Ottawa make concessions and in exchange for the Alberta Government's support.

A public turn toward environmentalism sweeping Canada in the 1960s and 1970s influenced government decisions pertaining to national parks. The Village Lake Louise planning controversy was a significant turning point in Canadian national parks planning and administration under the context of growing environmentalism, increasing ecological knowledge, and complex governmental relations in dynamics. The conservation movement in the 1960s and 1970s transformed parks governance. The exclusive power of bureaucracy in decision making was displaced by a new mechanism featuring a balance between government decision and public consultation. However, at the hearings on the Village Lake Louise proposal, the public was not given the full right to be actively involved in substantial decision making activities. The hearing was held in Calgary only, compared to hearings conducted in three cities and a town for the Four Mountain Parks Provisional Master Plans Hearings. Little information was provided since it was largely designed as a postponement to pacify the political sensitivities of well-organized conservationists and other objectors. But the long-term benefits of Village Lake Louise controversy were that public ownership of a national trust was forged and public opinion was legally recognized by the government.

The National Parks Administration struggled to balance protection and development but it was clear that the department continued to champion the value of utilization. Even though parks policy was grounded on a stricter conservation rationale in the 1960s, pressure came in continuously for more facilities and areas to accommodate increasing recreation demands. Then managerial rationalism emerged to legitimate development. Concepts of zoning were introduced to classify different land uses. Development can exist in national parks but will only be limited to certain areas; nevertheless, there is no question that it will bring direct or indirect influences to the whole environment since each part is dynamic and interconnected. Parks management plans are constantly amended to reflect on current needs that attract visitors and to engage them in parks appreciation. The National Parks Administration of Canada made ongoing compromises between public benefits and economic interests. Nevertheless, that balance ultimately factored out to less and less for environmental protection.

Political tensions contributed even more in the interplay of various stakeholders. The Government of Alberta did not approve Village Lake Louise proposal because it held that similar developments outside the national parks and within provincial jurisdictions would be more profitable with more control. The position of Ottawa as the national political centre was challenged by a strong voice emerging from western Canada. The Banff townsite was considered by both Ottawa and Alberta as an important chessman in the political game to gain control of the national parks in Alberta. Provided that Banff townsite was incorporated as a town under the Province of Alberta and declared as an autonomous municipality as a community, the Alberta Government stood to gain closer and easier access to the development of the whole Bow

Valley floor.

National parks are big places to act various purposes with changing priorities in different contexts.[389] In the 1960s, more emphasis was given to environmental protection in national parks policy making. However, with the push back from development proponents, compromises were made by the National Parks Administration to keep small businesses within intensified use area classified by the zoning plan.[390] Even though the monopoly from government authorities in parks policy making was broken in the Village Lake Louise public hearings, the public was not given the full right to take apart in parks planning and decision making activities. The hearing was merely a platform for public opinion expression without guaranteed implementation. But the long-term benefit of this planning controversy is that public consultation program is formalized in national parks policy and the consciousness of public ownership begins to take shape. My research will contribute to further investigating the politics of national parks policy development, national parks' importance in Alberta's confrontation with Ottawa and the political interactions of stakeholders involved.

As to who won the battle in Village Lake Louise controversy, there were no absolute winners or losers. Conservation groups united closely to terminate the Village Lake Louise proposal and the general public represented at the hearings expressed much the same view of parks as a public domain for protection; however, commercial developments have never ceased in Canadian national parks. The Parks Branch lost its reputation as an authoritative park

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[389] Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 1, 10.

[390] Bella, Parks for Profit, 161.

guardian in the public and became a corporate-like government organization attempting to generate more dollars from parks. Imperil Oil was let down by federal parks officials and withdrew its investment from the Lake Louise area, but future development was taken over by private entrepreneur Charlie Locke who built up a close partnership with fuel companies to maintain the operation of Lake Louise ski resort. Banff was not given autonomy as an independent Alberta community and was still under the control of Ottawa until 1999; however, the Government of Alberta did go forward to develop the Canmore corridor as a tourist attraction. Its transformation from a small mining town to a well-known tourist destination was catalyzed by the Calgary 1988 Winter Olympic Games and construction of the Nordic ski event facility as well as the downhill ski facilities at Nakiska in Kananaskis Country, both on public land controlled by the Government of Alberta.

Canada's national parks have continued to struggle with the balance of tourism development and environmental protection. Recently, with less federal funding allocated to Parks Canada and huge expenses for the maintenance and management of national parks, the organization has loosened its control over commercial development and permits more projects to generate revenues to survive in a climate of neo-liberal commerce. The Glacier Skywalk, a wildlife-devastating construction project inconsistent with national parks policy, was given the green light by Parks Canada to proceed in Jasper National Park and opened for tourists in 2013, even facing strong opposition from various green lobbying organizations. Alberta and Ottawa are also currently considering a luxury hotel proposal at Maligne Lake in Jasper. "We're most worried about the growing trend by governments to prioritize industrial and commercial

interests over the long-term ecological, social and economic benefits of establishing and protecting Canada's parks. Decisions are being made in many instances that ignore scientific evidence and public opinion," stated Alison Woodley, the parks program director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS).[391] These and other contemporary park advocacy battles underscore the importance of a better historical understanding of the politics of Canadian national parks and underlying power struggles illustrated in the early battle for Village Lake Louise.

More broadly, reflected on the Village Lake Louise controversy, Canada's history can also help to understand contested mountain ski resort development in other places internationally. Changbai Mountain International Tourism Resort is an all-season tourist attraction developed in joint by local governments and private enterprises; it is located in the Changbai Mountain area of Jilin Province in China. The 18.34m^2 European alpine-style resort encompasses a ski resort, shopping street, theatre, recreation centre, spa centre, schools, luxury hotel accommodations and private condos. Specially, the ski resort has forty-three ski runs in which there are nine advanced ski runs meeting Olympic competition standards, fourteen intermediate ski runs and twenty primary ski runs.[392] Similar to the Village Lake Louise proposal, the Changbai Mountain Resort is expected to stimulate local economic and social developments by creating more job opportunities. However, under the background of global neoliberalism and China's economic

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[391] Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.
http://cpaws.org/news/canadas-parks-faring-worse-than-last-year-cpaws

[392] White Mountain Resort.
http://www.china-cbs.com/resortArea/resortArea.html

transformation shifting to a market economy, more emphasis is placed by local governments on boosting an economic boom than on environmental protection. In the planning process of the development, no public hearings were held to seek public opinions and no environmental studies were released to the public to assess ecological impacts the construction might cause to surrounding natural areas. Unlike Canada, in current-day China and other developing countries, with a money-making mentality orientation on the part of local governments, no public supervision, and a lack of well implemented environmental legislation, there is no effective control and regulation of government actions, especially introducing investment attraction projects. Canada's experience in promoting public engagement in overseeing governments has relevance as an international model and the Village Lake Louise battle demonstrates the importance of public oversight and vocal advocacy in such complex interactions emanating from a Canadian federalist state.

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