

# Summary – Draft Community Vegetation Management Strategy

## Introduction

The townsite of Waskesiu is a national park community located in Prince Albert National Park (PANP), a protected area that features southern boreal plains and plateaux natural region vegetation.

Vegetation in the Waskesiu townsite is a mature mixed forest with increasing mortality, as a result of old age, soil compaction, mechanical damage, and insect infestations. As well, high fire hazard areas exist within the community which requires continued wildfire risk reduction efforts that support the Waskesiu Community Fuel Break (CFB) achievement.

The 2018 Community Vegetation Management Strategy identifies areas for positive change within the Waskesiu townsite, as well as goals, objectives, and actions to propel and guide this change over the next 10 years. The strategy focuses on the following priorities:

1. **Protection from Wildfires:** Support the CFB by planning a future vegetation structure and composition and managing/maintaining the vegetation and infrastructure in the townsite that further reduces fire hazard.
2. **Aesthetics and Representation:** Ensure the vegetation within Waskesiu townsite will be managed such that its species composition remains representative of the natural landscape.



## **National Park Communities**

Vegetation management in national park communities such as Waskesiu presents a unique set of challenges. Prince Albert National Park was established to protect the representative natural area for public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment, while being maintained in an unimpaired state for future generations. In accordance with the Canada National Parks Act, national park community plans must be compatible with park management plans and consistent with the following principles:

1. No negative environmental impact principles
2. Responsible environmental stewardship and heritage conservation

The Waskesiu Community Plan (2010) identifies four main areas of concern: conflict between people and wildlife, wildfires, water quality, vegetation management. In developing the community vegetation management strategy for Waskesiu, the community plan provided specific direction, of which two areas, wildfires and vegetation management, directly relate to the 2018 draft strategy.

The Waskesiu Community Council's Waskesiu Vision 2020 & Beyond Community Action Plan is consistent with and a supplement to the 2010 Waskesiu Community Plan, and was designed to inform, coordinate, and help guide the future planning process in Waskesiu. The Vision 2020 implementation strategy includes considerations for natural environment and addresses the community's role within the Waskesiu townsite.

### **Key Highlights**

- The safety of people and protection of infrastructure in the Waskesiu townsite is Parks Canada's first priority.
- Park managers work closely with the Waskesiu community and park stakeholders to develop and implement vegetation management strategies.
- Manage vegetation in the Waskesiu townsite so its representative of the surrounding southern boreal forest and aspen parkland.
- Parks Canada works with Canadians to reduce the risk from wildfire while maintaining a healthy, aesthetically pleasing forest in Waskesiu.
- Facilitate information sharing and promote educational opportunities.
- Projects in the townsite are subject to review under the Environmental Assessment Process and the No Net Negative Environmental Impacts framework.

## **Strategy Priorities - Detailed**

### **I. Representative Vegetation**

The vegetation in Waskesiu remains representative of the surrounding southern boreal forest and aspen parkland. Native vegetation comprised of diverse tree species and age classes as well as understory vegetation (shrubs, herbs, grasses) evolve with minimal interference; except where invasive species are colonising. Leaseholders are encouraged to reintroduce native boreal vegetation in appropriate habitats, and Parks Canada leads this initiative. The community and Parks Canada work together to implement this goal.

- a. Diversify the townsite forest structure so that species and age classes are present in a composition more suited to withstand current and future environmental stressors.
- b. The presence of non-native vegetation within the townsite is minimized.

### **II. Aesthetics**

Management of viewsapes together with light, open green spaces increase the community aesthetic and provide high quality recreational opportunities, which lead to memorable experiences for visitors and residents. Maximizing plant species, shape, height and size diversity, as well as continuing to provide shade, shelter, wind protection and recreational opportunities is the main direction for future vegetation management. Time transitions between forest age structures is gradual to minimize the effects of visual changes in the townsite.

- a. Ensure a slow transition from an even-aged, mature spruce dominated canopy to a mixed age/mixed species forest canopy.
- b. A vegetation structure in the townsite that is rich in species and age diversity, while retaining the aesthetic appeal of the community.

### **III. Protection from Wildfires**

Significant effort in reducing the wildfire hazard in Waskesiu has been initiated with the development of the Community Fuel Break. The Community Vegetation Management Strategy, supports this achievement by planning a future vegetation structure and composition in the townsite that further reduces fire hazard. Implementing specific recommendations from the multi-jurisdictional FireSmart program helps reduce the risk of forest fire in Waskesiu.

- a. The vegetation of the townsite is managed to ensure public safety is not compromised.
- b. Inform and promote FireSmart program to park residents.
- c. Implement FireSmart program strategies around park infrastructure.

Feedback on the draft 2018 Waskesiu Vegetation Management Strategy may be provided until September 30, 2018 and will be taken into account in finalizing the strategy.

## **To provide feedback on the draft strategy:**

Send your comments in writing to  
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Waskesiu Lake, SK S0J 2Y0  
Attn: Vegetation Management Strategy

Call or email Prince Albert National Park.  
Telephone: 306-663-4522  
Email: [panp.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:panp.info@pc.gc.ca) (include “Vegetation Strategy” in the subject line)