



Waskesiu Prince Albert National Park

JOINT COMMUNITY SUBMISSION REGARDING
PARKS CANADA AGENCY'S

**"NATIONAL PLANNING PERMIT PROCESS"
CONSULTATION PROCESS**

by

Waskesiu Community Council | Waskesiu Seasonal Residents Association |
Waskesiu Chamber of Commerce

Introduction

This document represents a joint submission to Parks Canada Agency (“**Parks Canada**”) on behalf of the following major stakeholder groups representing the townsite of Waskesiu (“**Waskesiu**”), in Prince Albert National Park:

- The Waskesiu Community Council (the “**Community Council**”),
- The Waskesiu Seasonal Residents Association (the “**WSRA**”), and
- The Waskesiu Chamber of Commerce (the “**Waskesiu Chamber**”).

The Waskesiu community agrees with Parks Canada’s assessment that:

“The regulations concerning permitting for construction and renovation projects need to be updated to reflect current national standards and to ensure consistency with municipal and provincial/territorial approaches from across Canada.”

Parks Canada has undertaken a review and consultation process that will be used to help develop a new “national planning permit process”. As such, Parks Canada is now seeking public input to ensure that the current consultation process – and any updated Regulations, plans, policies, and operating procedures that are ultimately introduced following completion of this consultation process - are a success.

The Waskesiu community strongly supports Parks Canada’s decision to review, replace, and modernize the existing Regulations (and the supporting framework of plans, policies and operating procedures) governing development, building, and occupancy permits in our townsite – and in Canada’s 47 national parks, one national urban park, four marine conservation areas, and 171 national historic sites.

We agree with the goal of establishing a “*single modern effective planning framework that is consistent across Parks Canada townsites*”, thereby creating confidence and efficiencies for all parties. To be honest, however, we are unsure whether the same can extend to all “Parks Canada places” (e.g. canals, lighthouses, historic site, etc.). As such, we believe that the primary focus should be to ensure that townsites (which are markedly different than other “places” that Parks Canada administers) are dealt with in an efficient, modern and effective manner that is consistent with best practices in other municipalities. If the good work that is being done in relation to townsites can apply to other “places” Parks Canada administers, we clearly have no objection and would support Parks Canada’s efforts in that regard as well.

We also want to strongly urge Parks Canada to recognize that each National Park townsite has its own unique geography, history, and circumstances. Therefore, the new regulations and supporting “framework” (of plans, policies and procedures) should be drafted in a

manner that permits flexibility – and allows unique situations to be considered – within the confines of the framework.

The Waskesiu community looks forward to continuing to constructively collaborate with Parks Canada in relation to many important matters – including this “National Planning Permit Process”.

Background

Parks Canada’s current development, building, and occupancy permit system is divided among several statutes, regulations, and local policies. The current regulations are as follows:

- National Parks Building Regulations (the “**Building Regulations**”),
- National Parks of Canada Cottages Regulations (the “**Cottage Regulations**”),
- National Parks Signs Regulations (the “**Sign Regulations**”),
- Town of Jasper Zoning Regulations, and
- Historic Canals Regulations.

The three (3) federal regulations that currently affect all National Park townsites (including Waskesiu) are the Building Regulations, the Cottage Regulations, and the Sign Regulations. As such, our comments in this submission are therefore limited to those three (3) regulations (the “**Existing Regulations**”).

As noted above, Parks Canada has undertaken a review and consultation process that will be used to develop a new “National Planning Permit Process”. We understand that this will ultimately result in three (3) outcomes:

1. new regulations (tentatively called “**Land Use Management Regulations**”);
2. updated Parks Canada plans, policies, and operating procedures in support of the new Land Use Management Regulations; and
3. Parks Canada implementing new systems to assist with enforcement and compliance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Waskesiu community views this process as a wonderful opportunity for Parks Canada to increase trust and credibility, to assist its own employees in fulfilling what can often be a

difficult role, and to put in place a strong framework based on community buy-in (which we believe will, in turn, lead to a high degree of cooperation and self-enforcement).

Although we have a number of Waskesiu-specific items we will suggest should be addressed, we also believe that it is important to start by trying to agree upon the principles that should guide the development of the National Planning Permit Process. In that regard, we respectfully suggest the following “**Guiding Principles**”, namely:

Ecological Integrity

- Our community recognizes that the maintenance (or restoration) of ecological integrity is always the first priority in decision-making by Parks Canada and – in fact – that the concept is enshrined in federal legislation.
- We also recognize (and fully support) the fact that a modernized national planning permit process will, and should, continue to reflect this priority.

Meaningful Community Involvement

- Meaningful community involvement will lead to a better outcome for all parties.

Devolution of Significant Authority to the “Local Level”

- We strongly encourage the devolution of as much decision-making authority to each Park, and to each townsite, as is reasonably possible – all while continuing to work within the requisite legislative, Regulatory, and policy framework.
- By way of example, in Waskesiu we proudly point to the success of our local “Cabin Development Guidelines” – a practical, collaborative approach to planning, development and permitting that governs the “cabin area” of the Waskesiu townsite (and which we believe to be unique in the National Park system).
- The “Cabin Development Guidelines” are an excellent example of what can be accomplished when local resident groups, and Parks Canada, work collaboratively for the long-term benefit of the community.

Clarity

- Although challenges have existed for some time, it has become increasingly apparent in recent years that significant portions of the Existing Regulations, as they apply to Prince Albert National Park, are, in many cases, outdated and, at times, even contradictory. As such, we recognize that it is sometimes impossible for Parks Canada employees to consistently interpret and/or enforce them – an outcome that is unfair to everyone involved.
- In turn, the problems created by the lack of clarity in the Existing Regulations tend to undermine public perception regarding the competence (and at times the

credibility) of Parks Canada in our community and sometimes causes unnecessary friction.

- Put succinctly, the new “Land Use Management Regulations” should be as simple - and above all as clear - as possible, thereby helping to ensure both certainty and fairness.

Timeliness

- Properly completed applications for permits/approvals should be handled by Parks Canada in a timely manner - hopefully tied to reasonable “service standards” as discussed in more detail below.

Consistent with Modern Municipal Planning Best Practices

- The new Land Use Management Regulations should be modernized to reflect modern planning principles, and should be consistent with best practices in municipalities from across the country (and even internationally). Doing so will ensure that the new Regulations meet the highest standards of scrutiny, reflective of the places that Parks Canada is mandated to protect.

Transparency

- The entire planning, development and permitting process should be open, and transparent, including in relation to Parks Canada’s administrative activities.

Flexibility

- We agree with the stated Parks Canada goal of establishing a “*single modern effective planning framework that is consistent across Parks Canada townsites*”, creating confidence and efficiencies for all parties.
- As noted above, are unsure whether the same can extend to all “Parks Canada places” (e.g. canals, lighthouses, etc.) – so, again, our focus is to ensure that townsites (which are markedly different than other “places” that Parks Canada administers) are dealt with in an efficient, modern and effective manner.
- A desire to overly centralize and/or homogenize all of the townsites, within all of Canada’s National Parks, is inconsistent with recognizing their distinctiveness.
- The new Land Use Management Regulations (and the related plans, policies, and operating procedures that will support the new Regulations) should, therefore, provide the flexibility to accommodate the individuality of each townsite - and each National Park - in which the townsite is situated.

Ethical & Professional Administration

- Ethical and professional behaviour on the part of Parks Canada as a regulator is critical.
- This expectation should, of course, apply to all parties involved.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

- One of the key questions for Waskesiu is how much “real authority” will be devolved down to Parks Canada (or to the Field Unit Superintendent) at the local level – versus how much must stay at the federal level (as is often the case now).
- As noted above, we support Parks Canada’s goal to have a consistent national framework in place, one that is also consistent with the way municipalities operate in Canada and elsewhere (based on “best practices”), but which has the flexibility to adapt to local situations.
- We also seek:
 - clarity and consistency of wording,
 - clarity and consistency of application and enforcement, and
 - a local alternative dispute resolution process.

MODERN MUNICIPAL PLANNING “BEST PRACTICES”

- We fully support having the new Regulations incorporate modern municipal “best practices” from across the country, and even internationally.
- We believe that some of those “best practices” should include the following:
 - Consideration being given to processes of public notification, consultation, and appeals.
 - An improved three-stage process involving development, building and occupancy permits, namely:
 - development review,
 - building review; and
 - occupancy authorization;
 - A “pre-application consultation process”, which would allow applicants to meet with qualified planning staff prior to submitting permit applications. (We believe that these pre-application programs expedite project review by

ensuring that the necessary application work has been completed, or will be completed, prior to the complete application submission. We also acknowledge that a fee may be requested by Parks Canada for that service, provided that the fee would then be credited to the applicant upon receipt of a complete development permit application.)

- A system to ensure appropriate “grandfathering” of previously approved developments, again consistent with modern municipal “best practices”.

SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERMIT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

- We support the concept of Parks Canada adopting “service standards” – i.e. commercially reasonable timelines to get the permitting process completed.
- We think it would be practical to have those service standards tied to a system of “Permit Classification” based on the scope of the project. This would be a way for National Park townsites to categorize the scale and scope of permit applications (e.g. “Complex Applications”, “Routine Applications”, and “Quick Applications”).
- We recognize that Parks Canada would need to consider a number of factors in relation to setting “service standards” - including available resources. As such, this may mean different service standards in different parts of the country (and, above all, according to the scope of a project) that would be set out in policy. We would expect, however, that service standards in National Park townsites could be in line with service standards in smaller to mid-sized municipalities.

DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE PERMIT

- We support the concept of a “development variance permit” which would allow applicants to vary the height and setback requirements listed in community plans or land use policies (without requiring an amendment to those plans/policies), but the concept would not apply to changes in the use of land or building density.
- Development variance permits would, therefore, allow the Field Unit Superintendent to authorize limited variances, under unique circumstances, on a case-by-case basis, in townsites like Waskesiu.

FAST TRACK BUILDING PERMIT PROGRAM (LIMITED SITUATIONS)

- We support a “fast track permitting program” that would, for an additional fee, allow for an expedited building permit review process.
- For clarity, this “fast tracking” would only be available for permits relating to minor additions or alterations (such as, for example, secondary suites or decks).

DIGITAL SOFTWARE FOR PERMITTING APPLICATIONS

- We fully support a move by Parks Canada towards “self-serve” digital software for the permitting application review process, in order to standardize/centralize the application processes, save time, and increase convenience for applicants and the transparency of the system.
- Applicants would complete the required applications online (and the online program would tell applicants if they need to supply additional information before the applications are reviewed by Parks Canada staff).
- We also believe that Parks Canada should consider an e-permitting process (or an online registry) to collect, manage, and then publicly display an inventory of permit applications and approvals – again increasing transparency in the system.

APPEAL PROCESS & APPEAL BOARD

- We believe that having an effective and independent appeal process in place is essential to ensure fair judgements on applications, grant all interested parties the opportunity to have a say on decisions, and protect land that is being managed in the public interest.
- We support the concept of an initial appeal board that is “local”, and believe that the majority of members should (in our view) be individuals who are not employees of Parks Canada. (Any further appeals, if needed, could be referred to the Federal Court.)
- One suggestion would be for the appeal board (in relation to the Waskesiu townsite) to include one member appointed by Parks Canada, one member appointed by the Community Council, and a third member jointly appointed by Parks Canada and the Community Council, to act as the chair of the appeal board.
- If a permit application is denied, applicants would be given 30 days to appeal a decision. They would do so by completing and submitting an appeal form, paying a fee and, if there are grounds for appeal, attend an appeal board hearing.
- Those opposed to an approved application may also appeal an approval decision, if they will be negatively affected by the project.
- If an appeal board is not acceptable then, at a minimum, we would like to see an “independent review officer” in the first instance of “appeal” - instead of relying on the Federal Court to resolve disputes, which is far too lengthy (and far too costly) for all parties involved.

ALTERNATIVE (NON-BINDING) DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

- Prior to having to launch a formal appeal board process, we would like to suggest that, for townsites, Parks Canada would consider having a non-binding alternative dispute resolution process based on community stakeholder involvement. In the context of Waskesiu, we would see that process involving the Waskesiu Community Council which, by agreement with Parks Canada, is the “recognized voice of the Waskesiu community”.

EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT PROCESS

- We agree that, in order to ensure compliance with the new Land Use Management Regulations, it is essential for Parks Canada to have a robust inspection, compliance, and enforcement process in place.
- In that regard, we would support:
 - as is the case in municipalities, the authority of Parks Canada to levy or issue fines, penalties and/or stop orders for contraventions during the course of construction,
 - Parks Canada continuing with property standards and design guidelines in townsites,
 - in cases where there continues to be a contravention, whether during or following construction, and after the initial fine or penalty is imposed, the application of a “multiplier” that is applied to the initial fine and increases until the offence is fixed or the fine paid.
- In summary, we would like to ensure that – in addition to Parks Canada continuing to have the ultimate right to “pull” a business licence, or actually canceling a lease or licence of occupation, Parks Canada should (in our words) have “*all the enforcement tools in its toolbox that it needs*”, and that a modern municipality would have, to ensure initial and ongoing compliance.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- We support Parks Canada continuing to have the flexibility to use methods of environmental assessment appropriate to the level of the risk of the proposed project, thereby ensuring the environment is protected in an efficient and effective manner.
- We agree that the larger the scale or risk of a project, the greater the requirements for public notification on the impact assessment, public consultation, and analysis and documentation.

- On the other hand, for smaller “routine” projects, a standard best management practice that must be adhered to may be all that is needed to minimize impacts on the natural environment and on cultural resources.
- As noted above, we also support a development permit classification process and public permit registry – and see those working hand in hand with the environmental assessment process to provide the status and opportunities for public consultation.
- All of the foregoing should be considered keeping in mind that townsites are just that – townsites. As mentioned earlier, they are by definition (and in reality) markedly different “places” than the other “places” that Parks Canada administers, including the balance of the respective National Parks they are located in. As such, environmental impact assessment considerations in **townsites** need to reflect that reality, so they can be dealt with in an efficient, modern and effective manner.

WASKESIU-SPECIFIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES COTTAGE AREAS

Cottage Size Restrictions

- The Cottage Regulations currently (and somewhat inexplicably) provide as follows in Section 5.1(a):
 - 5.1(a) the floor area shall not exceed one hundred and eleven (111) square metres, **except** in:*
 - (i) *the visitor centre of Waterton Lakes Park and Lake Edith Resort Subdivision, where the maximum floor area shall be one hundred and fifty (150) square metres, and*
 - (ii) *the visitor centre of Wasagaming and Clear Lake Resort Subdivision, where the maximum floor area shall, if no accessory building is used to accommodate guests overnight, be one hundred and thirty (130) square metres;*
- The current limitation of 111 square metres (approximately 1200 square feet) is puzzling. It does not seem to have any clear reasoning underlying why this size restriction exists in Waskesiu versus other National Park townsites, nor any basis in relation to the size of the underlying lot sizes themselves, nor does it reflect the reality of cottage sizes in the “modern” world.
- As such, we would like to see the “floor area” limitation amended, or replaced, so that either:

- the maximum permitted cottage size would be increased to match the maximum cottage size permitted for Waterton Lakes Park and the Lake Edith Resort Subdivision (150 square meters); **or**
- have all cottage sizes permitted as the **greater** of:
 - one hundred and fifty (150) square meters; and
 - a permitted size that is governed by a “floor area ratio” tied to the actual size of the underlying cottage lot (i.e. as a percentage of the footprint of the lot size). We believe that this “floor area ratio” approach is consistent with most municipalities, and has the added advantage of being quite simple – Parks Canada would only be required to undertake one measurement, first on plans submitted, and secondly after project completion at the time of approval. To be clear, the current height restrictions would be maintained.
- We should also note that older cottages in the Waskesiu townsite that are larger than 111 square meters are currently “grandfathered”, but they cannot undergo any material renovations without being forced to reduce their square footage to 111 square meters (or less) – the only exceptions being if the “grandfathered” cottage is “damaged or destroyed by a natural or accidental cause”. We suggest more flexibility in relation to those larger cottages to allow more significant renovations while allowing the existing size (footprint) to remain.

Calculation of Cottage Height Restrictions/Crawl Space Height Restrictions

- While we continue to support the current height restrictions on cottages (6 meters), cottage owners have at times been advised (we believe incorrectly) that the 6-meter height allowance should be measured from the down-slope point on the cottage - although that approach has not always been consistent in Waskesiu.
- We would suggest that it be made clear that the 6-meter height allowance is calculated from the "front" (street) point - which we believe is the construction/architectural standard in most municipalities. This is particularly important, however, in relation to cottages built on substantial slopes, which is often the case on the front row of cottages on Prospect Point in Waskesiu.
- We also don't understand why the height of a basement (crawl space) must be restricted to 6 feet (previously 5 feet), failing which that area will be counted against the available floor area of the cottage - nor can we find the source or the purpose of that basement/crawl space height restriction.
- Again, some cottages in our townsite are built on substantial slopes – so the method used to calculate basement/crawl space heights can at times also be challenging.

Regulation of Cottage Deck Sizes

- Decks have been controversial in our townsite for a number of years (and for a number of reasons) - in part because the current Cottage Regulations have no definition of “decks”.
- This regulatory gap left cottage owners and Parks Canada staff unable to determine whether decks formed part of the “cottage”, were stand-alone features, were “unregulated”, or were somehow to form part of the “accessory building” provisions. Parks Canada staff was, again, left “filling in the holes” – often resulting in disputes or very serious disagreements, and – at times – even protracted litigation.
- A fairly recent Federal Court of Appeal decision (directly relating to the Waskesiu townsite and the Cottage Regulations) appeared to resolve one aspect of this issue, but may have actually created numerous new issues as a result.
- In any event, we would strongly suggest that the new Regulations (and/or underlying policies) directly address the issue of “decks”.
- Given that Park Canada’s most common comment about a side yard requirement is the need to facilitate the movement of animals, a logical regulatory clause responding to this Park’s distinctiveness might be to allow cottage owners to build their decks to the property line on one side of the lot, but not on any other side. That both maximizes outdoor living space (presumably on the side in the sunshine) but also provides adequate space to facilitate the movement of animals.

Regulations Regarding the Appearance of Cottages

- We continue to support the concept found in the existing Cottage Regulations to the effect that *“the appearance of the cottage shall be compatible with the natural characteristics of the park in which it is located”*.

Parking Issues (including Boats)

- Most lake resorts in the country accommodate docks in front of the cottage or cabin, where available.
- The approach in Prince Albert National Park does not allow for any individual docks. Rather, it calls for a single marina, which was recently upgraded and expanded (including additional vehicle parking, and additional boat and trailer storage and related parking).
- A lack of such parking capacity in the townsite led to parking issues in the cabin areas and, at times, in parts of the cottage areas. It has also meant the cluttering of streets in some portions of the community, with the related safety risks that go with that (especially for small children).

- While these issues clearly need to be addressed, we believe the same are best dealt with locally, given our unique circumstances.

Location of Accessory Buildings

- Section 6 of the current Cottage Regulations indicates that no “... *accessory building shall be located in a front yard...*”
- The current definition of “**front yard**” means that area of a lot that “*fronts on the public road right-of-way on which the majority of cottages have vehicular access and is usually the narrowest portion of the lot fronting on the road...*”
- There are a number of locations in the Waskesiu townsite (particularly in Subdivisions 1 and 2) where the accessory buildings have, in fact, been placed in the “front yard” – a correct outcome for the townsite (but one that is not in keeping with the current Cottage Regulations and shows why local flexibility and knowledge is important).
- The new Land Use Management Regulations should, therefore, recognize the need for local decision-making authority in relation to the location of Accessory Buildings in certain areas of the Waskesiu townsite.

WASKESIU-SPECIFIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES CABIN AREAS

Maintaining the “Cabin Development Guidelines” in the Cabin Area

- We want to ensure that the “Cabin Development Guidelines”, as amended from time to time by agreement among Parks Canada, the WSRA and the Community Council, continue to be the framework that governs planning and development in the cabin area of Waskesiu.
- As such, the new Land Use Management Regulations need to formally “exempt” the Waskesiu townsite “cabin area” from their operation and application.

Parking (including Boats)

- As noted above, a lack of storage and parking capacity has led to parking issues in both the cottage and cabin areas - and the cluttering of streets (particularly so in the ‘30 foot’ cabin area of the townsite).
- Again, we believe that these issues are best dealt with locally, given our unique circumstances, and the new Land Use Management Regulations should permit and support that local decision making.

WASKESIU-SPECIFIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES COMMERCIAL AREAS

At the outset, it should again be noted that the townsite of Waskesiu is “unique”. We are a specific destination resort that is “well off the beaten path”. We are not situated on a drive through highway, nor do we have a local airport, train station, or even bus transit to bring visitors to our area. Therefore, the Waskesiu business community – working in conjunction with Parks Canada when possible – is responsible for a large marketing investment. This significant marketing cost proves to be a heavy burden for all commercial operators, and especially our small retail stores, and does contribute (over time) to the loss of unique and locally orientated business.

Bearing in mind the unique nature of our townsite, we have the following comments and suggestions to make in terms of Waskesiu-specific commercial issues:

- Parks Canada’s newly imposed 21-year commercial lease term (reduced from the previous 42-year lease term) is of material concern to the Waskesiu business community. In recent months, Parks Canada’s apparently inconsistent position (regarding the length of new commercial leases tied to financing terms) has been noted. That approach (and the resulting inconsistency) is not acceptable to the Waskesiu Chamber. As such, a return to standardized 42-year commercial lease terms is requested - bearing in mind that if proper remedies and enforcement tools are put in place for Parks Canada to use in the event of non-compliance (which we fully support), then one of the primary concerns that drove the decision to move to shorter lease terms will have been addressed.
- As noted above (and also earlier in this Waskesiu community submission), we agree with arriving at a clear and concise process for planning, development and permitting in the Waskesiu townsite – something that we view as being essential for the long-term success of our business community.
- The updated regulations, rules, and policies arising out of the new Land Use Management Regulations must then be enforced to ensure consistency. To that end, we support the concept that Parks Canada must also have the necessary tools/remedies available to it, so as to ensure enforcement is both effective, and timely in the event of any material non-compliance.
- The new Land Use Management Regulations (and supporting policies) should be crafted keeping in mind the need for a return on capital for investors in commercial enterprises located in townsites that are like Waskesiu. This includes addressing specific issues relating to, for example, floor area ratios, the amount and system of

rent being charged (including the percentage of gross revenues), and appropriate zoning.

- We believe that having meaningful local level authority is essential, and that the same will aid in terms of planning, development, code reviews, and permitting in our small (and unique) townsite.
- Local level Parks Canada representatives also need to have the proper training, education, and tools to work with developers. If they don't, and an outside consultant is retained by Parks Canada to review codes, permits and/or planning, Parks Canada needs to utilize the services of a firm (or of an individual) that has worked with Parks Canada in Waskesiu (and, to the extent possible, is familiar with our community and its distinctive character).
- The permitting process should be clearly defined, and then adhered to by both Parks Canada and the permittee. It is imperative that this is done in a timely fashion to ensure that projects stay on time, and on budget.
- Given the evolution of the Waskesiu townsite we believe that a "fresh look" at the current division of the business community by zoning is required.
- In terms of new commercial developments in our community, particularly but not limited to commercial accommodation developments, we believe that a better "balance" is required going forward – one that considers the visitation needs of Parks Canada, Canadians, and the tourism industry generally, on the one hand, and the needs of business owners and investors, on the other. As such, one approach might be to consider very specific "outlines of use" of accommodation properties that (A) will ensure real access is available to Canadians to visit and stay in Waskesiu during the "high season" summer months, and (B) at the same time provides for investment opportunities and, in particular, allows for use by owners/investors during the spring, fall, and the (very quiet) winter seasons.
- Specifically speaking to "fractional ownership" – we believe that the same should be expressly considered by Parks Canada - provided a proper balance is struck in our four-season resort. That balance needs to reflect the reality of very busy summer months (June, July, August) - when demand for rental accommodation often significantly exceeds the supply - versus the shoulder seasons (April, May, September, and October) and the entire winter season (November through March) – when the supply of rental accommodation significantly exceeds the demand. That is our reality in Waskesiu.

- We would encourage Parks Canada to promote a new planning, development, and permitting process that – in our community - supports four (4) season operations, including accepting changes to the *status quo* that will help to facilitate year-round offerings and related four (4) season commercial developments.
- Commercial development in our community needs to consider staff housing needs because doing so is essential to a healthy business community. Staff housing areas, specifically on Elk Street and Montreal Drive, need to be redeveloped. To accomplish that, the business community wants to see the leases relating to staff housing sites tied to the head (commercial) lease of the business. This is, in the opinion of the Waskesiu Chamber, the only way to see appropriate investments made by business owners into staff housing in Waskesiu. (Currently, staff housing is either arranged on a year to year agreement for fixed roof and yearly pad rentals – and both arrangements are non-secure (with no long-term commitment), therefore no significant investments in staff housing are ever likely to be made by commercial operators under the current regime.)
- While admittedly not a “planning, development and permitting” issue, we want to commend Parks Canada for the Otentik program which, in our view, has been very successful, and is important to the business community. As such, we would encourage its continuation (and, hopefully, its expansion) because the number of rental accommodation beds in Waskesiu has been consistently declining for over a decade. As such, we support additional growth in relation to the Otentik program.
- On a separate but related note, we would also encourage a potential expansion of the Beaver Glen campground and the Red Deer campground as well (all of which offerings, along with the Otentik program, contribute to the long-term sustainability of the business community).