

# The Paths to Realizing Reconciliation: Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park

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Article abstract

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# The Paths to Realizing Reconciliation: Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park

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# The Paths to Realizing Reconciliation: Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park

## Abstract

Diverse Indigenous nations have traditional territories inside Jasper National Park (JNP), but the park was established without consultation with local Indigenous communities. Parks were marketed as empty landscapes, which celebrated romantic ideas of European colonial expansion. The current representations of Indigenous Peoples in interpretive content still reflect this lack of consultation. This research was guided by Indigenous methodologies. Data was collected through interviews with Jasper Indigenous Forum (JIF) members and the JNP management team. Findings indicate that JIF members want increased representation and greater control over how their histories and cultures are presented. Park management needs to work in close consultation with the JIF if they want to improve Indigenous representations in the park and support processes of reconciliation.

## Keywords

Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Parks Canada, Jasper National Park, national parks, protected areas, consultation, representation, interpretation, cultural awareness

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## **The Paths to Realizing Reconciliation: Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park**

The establishment of Canada's first national parks, including Jasper National Park (JNP), were motivated by economic objectives. The Canadian Mountain National Parks were designed specifically to protect land, not for conservation, but for tourism development and resource-extraction activities (Mason, 2014; Zezulka-Mailloux, 2007). To access the newly formed national parks, early tourists relied primarily on the railway. Since railway companies, like the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), held a monopoly on tourists travelling to the parks until the 1920s, they were able to shape the majority of the marketing campaigns promoting the region. This led to the popular belief that places like Jasper were empty, untouched wildernesses (MacLaren, 2011). However, for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous Peoples lived and thrived in the Rocky Mountains.

In order for park management to promote the idea of pristine wilderness in the park and show tourists these untouched landscapes, Indigenous Peoples were forcibly removed from their traditional territories in the newly established park boundaries and their subsistence practices became unacceptable, and eventually illegal (Binnema & Niemi, 2006). Presenting parks as "natural" wilderness supported the idea that these are places that humans visited, but do not live, and ignored the fact that diverse groups of Indigenous Peoples had been living in these areas, in some cases for millennia (Snow, 2005). Indigenous Peoples are negatively impacted by these misrepresentations that disregard their historic and contemporary presences and gloss over the vast diversity of their languages and cultures (Mason, 2009). A lack of education about and acknowledgement of Indigenous histories in Jasper have perpetuated problematic stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples through the production of programming and signage from Eurocentric perspectives.

In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the government has a legal duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous Peoples where there are current or potential outstanding land title claims (Langdon et al., 2010; Turner & Bitonti, 2011). However, the ruling was built on the idea that the Canadian government holds the ultimate power to give or remove the rights of Indigenous Peoples (Thomlinson & Crouch, 2012; Youdelis, 2016). There are currently several active land claims inside the Rocky Mountain National Parks system as Indigenous communities continue to assert their rights in their traditional territories (Mason, 2014). Despite shifting colonial power dynamics, Indigenous Peoples continue to be represented in ways that support romanticized narratives of colonial expansion in Canadian history. Park management is long overdue to improve relationships and consultation processes with local Indigenous Peoples.

Park management in this article refers to the management staff of Jasper National Park who work directly with Indigenous communities, and those who produce and disseminate Indigenous interpretative content. Currently, JNP management and operations staff are working on a number of projects in collaboration with many Indigenous communities in the region in an effort to work towards increased Indigenous participation and representation in park planning. Guided by Indigenous methodologies (IM), we consulted with Jasper Indigenous Forum (JIF) members to determine what issues JIF communities in Jasper face and how they are being, or should be, addressed by park management. JIF participants from various First Nations and Métis communities explained the

limitations of park management to address their concerns and incorporate their cultures and histories into the park's programming and signage content. Our study examines the following key questions:

- a. What are the traditional ties that diverse Indigenous communities have with the lands redefined as Jasper National Park?
- b. Why are the current consultation processes problematic between park management and the JIF? and
- c. What are the barriers and opportunities to achieve respectful representations of Indigenous cultures, to improve consultation processes, and to support reconciliation efforts in Jasper?

We examine the constraints faced by park management that limit their ability to adequately address JIF concerns, consider possible solutions, and track their progress in addressing issues. At the centre of the constraints that park management encounter is bringing policy revision at a localized level into conversation with national contexts. For example, we argue that the Canada National Parks Act (2000) requires further revision to account for Indigenous management frameworks that are being applied in protected spaces in Canada and internationally.

### **Contextualizing Jasper National Park: Displacement and Indigenous Stewardship**

As the largest national park in the Canadian Rockies, Jasper National Park (11,228 km<sup>2</sup>) supports numerous unique species and ecosystems (see Figure 1). Humans were also a key component of these ecosystems for millennia. The mountains and valleys of what is now JNP were home to diverse nations of Indigenous Peoples. Their lives, cultures, languages, and traditions are deeply rooted in the Rocky Mountains, the foothills, and the surrounding landscapes. Consequently, Indigenous communities are intrinsically connected to these ecosystems. As explained by Raymond Cardinal, the JIF member representing both Sucker Creek and Paul First Nation, the rich histories of the diverse peoples who lived, traded, migrated through, and hunted in this place are all but ignored in the park when it comes to signage and programming (personal interview, November 14, 2017).

Established in 1907, JNP was named after a North West Company trading post clerk, Jasper Hawes. The park was established as Jasper Forest Park, which covered 13,000km<sup>2</sup>, and officially became a national park in 1930 (MacLaren, 2011). As indicated by Loretta Belcourt, a Métis JIF representative from Lac Ste. Anne, most early national parks in Canada were established without consultation with or consideration for the Indigenous Peoples who called these lands home. This was also the case with Jasper as Indigenous Peoples were forcibly removed from the park under the guise of conservation concerns by park wardens, deputized non-Indigenous locals, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (personal interview, November 27, 2017). In support of colonial processes of assimilation that were occurring across Canada, the forced removals of Indigenous Peoples onto reserves for First Nations, and onto Crown Lands for Métis people, allowed the government to take control of Indigenous Peoples' traditional lands, and the repression of their cultural practices ensued (Snow, 2005). These removals occurred as a direct result of the creation of the national park system (Sandlos, 2008). Park management claimed that Indigenous hunters were the cause of dwindling wildlife populations in the park, while not acknowledging the role of logging, mining, railways, and tourism on wildlife and key habitats (Binnema & Niemi, 2006). Indigenous Peoples were seen as "uncivilized," their lifestyles backwards, and their presence in the park as an unwelcome detail in the narrative of a pure and pristine landscape that park

management was trying to establish (Mason, 2014). Indigenous Peoples living in the park did not align with the colonial park managers' romanticized notion of an unspoiled wilderness.



Figure 1. Map of Jasper National Park (Canadian Rockies, 2015).

Since the acknowledgement in the 1970s by the Supreme Court that Aboriginal title exists, Indigenous Peoples have been asserting some measure of control over their traditional lands in Jasper and working to incorporate their cultures back into the landscapes from which they were forced out (Langdon et al., 2010). This has been a long and tedious process, with marginal progress, as governments are reluctant to give up total control of the lands they manage in national parks. The Canadian government's unwillingness to share control can be seen through the lack of representation of Indigenous Peoples in places like Jasper National Park (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017). As you travel through Jasper townsite and park, the only Indigenous content you are exposed to is the Haida Totem Pole in the center of town (Johnston & Mason, 2020). As pointed out by Stoney/Nakoda Elder John Wesley, this display does not have significance to any Indigenous Peoples that have traditional connections to the lands in Jasper (personal interview, October 11, 2017).

As of 2019, there are 48 national parks and national park reserves in Canada. In most of these parks, even where there is a co-management agreement in place, Parks Canada retains final management-decision authority even for Indigenous concerns and ultimately, within the parks, rights are highlighted but not always incorporated or respected (Lemelin & Bennett, 2010). Jasper park management approaches Indigenous consultation through interest-based participation (Parks Canada, 2010), which means management will only engage with Indigenous groups who show an overt interest in a development proposal. This is highly problematic because it puts the onus on communities to connect with park management, as opposed to park management being obligated to do research to identify local Indigenous communities and work collectively to support their claims to traditional territory. An unofficial Indigenous advisory group, the Jasper Aboriginal Forum, was formed in 2006. This group was renamed the Jasper Indigenous Forum (JIF) in 2017 to better reflect changing terminology. Currently, the JIF still remains unofficial. The JIF was established to work with JNP management on various projects and consultations (Youdelis, 2016). The forum consists of representatives from 26 Indigenous communities that have traditional ties to the area redefined as Jasper. These include communities from the Beaver (Dane-zaa), Cree, Ojibway, Secwepemc, Stoney/Nakoda, Sioux, Aseniwuche Winewak, and Métis Nations. The formation of the JIF helped to form new relationships between Indigenous nations who have traditional connections to Jasper and the management team of JNP.

### **Methodological Approaches and Methods**

This research used Indigenous methodologies (IM), which focus on the research paradigm ideas of trust, respect, reciprocity, and inclusion (Kenny et al., 2004; Steinhauer, 2002). Critically, IM also help to highlight unequal power relationships (Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) between, for example, a powerful Euro-Canadian federal government agency like Parks Canada and local Indigenous communities that have been displaced from and denied access to the region. We worked in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people while privileging participants' perspectives and knowledge throughout the research (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Bishop, 2005). This led to qualitative data that provided a deeper understanding of the issues being explored.

Data collection for this project involved semi-structured, open-ended question interviews with representatives from several Indigenous nations and communities with traditional connections to the land in JNP. Gathering information through interviews respects Indigenous oral traditions (Kovach, 2010). A draft interview guide was originally developed by one co-author (Johnston) based on issues that he identified over 10 years while working in interpretive programming in several different national parks, including near his home reserve (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, Neyaashiinigiing, Anishinaubae) close to Bruce Peninsula National Park in Ontario. Due to the open conversational orientation of the guide, each participant informed the direction of questions and the issues that were most pertinent to discuss. This was the case for both JIF members and park management, including Indigenous staff members. The majority of interviews took place in person, but one occurred over the telephone. JIF research participants included band council members, Elders, community members, and researchers. In total, 12 JIF members were interviewed for this research (see Table 1). Each interview lasted between 25 minutes and 2 hours. The participants were asked to answer 12 questions that focused on traditional Indigenous connections to the lands in and around Jasper, their views on Indigenous consultation and representation in the park, and their relationships with park management. Six interviews were also conducted with JNP management staff (see Table 2). JNP

research participants were chosen based on their roles working directly with Indigenous communities on various projects in the park. Each participant worked either directly with Indigenous communities or on parts of the programming and signage that represented Indigenous cultures and histories. Three of the park management participants are also Indigenous. The JIF interviews are the foundation of the data presented in this article, while the JNP interviews are mostly included to add context.

**Table 1. Jasper Indigenous Forum Research Participants from the JIF**

Name	JIF Nation	Interview Date	Interview Format
Barry Wesley	Bighorn Chiniki Stoney/Nakoda	October 11, 2017	In person
John Wesley (Elder)	Bighorn Chiniki Stoney/Nakoda	October 11, 2017	In person
Seona Abraham	Bighorn Chiniki Stoney/Nakoda	October 17, 2017	In person
Charlie Abraham (Elder)	Bighorn Chiniki Stoney/Nakoda	October 17, 2017	In person
Raymond Cardinal	Sucker Creek and Paul First Nations	November 14, 2017	In person
Christopher Gall	Métis Nation of BC	November 15, 2017	In person
Laurian Gladue	Kelly Lake Cree Nation	November 16, 2017	In person
George Lampreau	Simpcw First Nation	November 18, 2017	In person
Christina Plante (Elder)	Métis and Cree	November 27, 2017	In person
Loretta Belcourt	Lac Ste. Anne Métis	November 27, 2017	In person
William Snow	Stoney/Nakoda Nation	December 1, 2017	Telephone
Rick Ouellet	Métis Descendant of John Moberly <sup>a</sup>	December 3, 2017	In person

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> John Moberly was the son of the fur trader Henry John Moberly, who was born in Ontario, and Suzanne Kwarakwante, who was Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). John Moberly was born in the 1860s. He was raised and lived in the Athabasca Valley in what became part of Jasper National Park in 1907. John Moberly and his family were one of seven Métis families that were impacted by the establishment of the national park. These Métis families were removed from the park areas as park officials did not want privately owned land in the park at that time. John Moberly and his descendants carried on their traditions of hunting, trapping, fishing, guiding, and outfitting in the areas in and around Jasper National Park.



**Table 2. Jasper National Park Research Participants from Parks Management**

Name	JNP Position	Interview Date	Interview Format
Greg Deagle (Métis)	Administrative Assistant, Indigenous Affairs Unit	August 24, 2017	In person
Mark Young (Swampy Cree)	Manager, Indigenous Affairs Unit	August 28, 2017	In person
Brian Catto	Interpretation Coordinator	August 29, 2017	In person
Joshua Ibelshausen (Algonquins of Great Golden Lake First Nation)	Information Center Coordinator (former Indigenous Interpreter)	August 30, 2017	In person
Alan Fehr	Jasper Field Unit Superintendent	September 22, 2017	In person

*Note.* Research participants were members of JNP's management team who worked directly with Indigenous communities and who produced and disseminated Indigenous interpretive content.

All of the interviews with JIF members were conducted between October 11 and December 3, 2017. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed with content categorized into the following key themes:

- a. Traditional connections to Jasper,
- b. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge into park decision-making,
- c. Barriers to successfully working with park management, and
- d. Recommendations on how to increase Indigenous representations and foster reconciliation efforts in Jasper.

Each participant agreed to include their names in this research and publication to support transparency. Through including their names, the participants reinforced their views on the various subjects that are discussed, adding validity to those ideas. Participants unanimously felt it was necessary to incorporate their voices into the project. In this respect, this project stemmed from concerns articulated by JIF members and several layers of consultation were put in place to ensure cultural knowledge was appropriately guarded. Each participant was also given the opportunity to edit their transcribed interviews and add, remove, or clarify any portion they felt was necessary prior to incorporation into our analysis. This is also a key process of IM, which puts into place a measure of protection for any sensitive cultural information. Participants shared information that tended to be widely known among other participants, allowing us to identify the themes discussed throughout our research.

The data were analyzed to denote commonalities and divergent patterns. The analysis of the data was guided by content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The authors both read through each transcript several times using open coding. The authors then jointly discussed the categories and coding to identify relevant themes. Trustworthiness of data was established with the collaborative nature of the data

analysis through content validation. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), direct quotations are critical to displaying trustworthiness. Although supported by the larger IM frameworks that we describe above, this project was also sensitive to OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) principles, which are a set of standards that establish how Indigenous data should be collected, protected, used, and shared. Tri-Council policies for ethical research with Indigenous communities also informed our approach on the standards for how to conduct research with Indigenous peoples and communities (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR] et al., 2014). This research was also approved by Thompson Rivers University Research Ethics for Human Subject Board (101601) on July 4, 2017.

## Results

### The Jasper Indigenous Forum (JIF)

The establishment of the JIF is understood by park management to have been spearheaded by Indigenous communities trying to increase meaningful connections to their traditional territories and gain more input into park decisions by improving communication with park management. JNP management presented itself to interested groups as having an open-door policy and when Indigenous communities came forward “the park inevitably . . . acquiesced to those [requests] to form a group that has since become the JIF,” according to Indigenous Affairs Manager for Jasper National Park Mark Young (personal interview, August 28, 2017).

The JIF is open to any Indigenous community that has ties to the JNP land through traditional occupancy and/or usage. As explained by the Jasper Field Unit Superintendent Alan Fehr, there is currently no vetting in place to gauge each group’s strength of claim to the land, and JNP management takes the word of each Indigenous community involved that they have a traditional connection to Jasper (personal interview, September 22, 2017). The JIF member representing the Métis Nation of BC, Christopher Gall, indicated that the open-door policy creates a great deal of potential for Indigenous nations to work towards re-establishing a connection between their people and the land they were forcibly removed from when the park was established (personal interview, November 15, 2017). However, an open-door policy also invites inconsistency in the JIF dynamics. Having Indigenous groups freely joining, leaving, and sending new representatives to the JIF meetings produces constant struggles to remain focused on one objective and see it through to the end. Every Indigenous community will have different objectives based on the priorities of their community members and leadership. Their objectives can change over time, which can lead to communities opting to either join or leave the JIF as they see fit. Capacity issues around both human and financial resources, which are a constant challenge particularly for rural Indigenous communities in this region, can also determine if their leadership deems it necessary to participate in the JIF or focus their efforts on other projects.

Several Indigenous communities have been forum members since the JIF formed and have strived to remain consistent in their participation and in who represents them at the meetings, while others have been less consistent, according to Laurian Gladue, the JIF representative from Kelly Lake Cree Nation (personal interview, November 16, 2017). This creates friction within the JIF and ultimately diminishes some of the power that a unified JIF would have towards accomplishing shared objectives. Friction may arise when a community joins, or rejoins after an absence, and wants to discuss an issue that the other JIF members have already agreed on and moved on from. George Lampreau, the JIF representative from

Simpcw First Nation, explained that in some cases, there is a member who is unwilling to accept a decision made by the JIF and insists on remaining on that issue until they are satisfied (personal interview, November 18, 2017). This can derail meetings and shift the focus from issues at hand. A constant theme when speaking with JNP management and JIF members was the amount of time that it takes to achieve some objectives (A. Fehr, personal interview, September 22, 2017; C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017).

The JIF is not alone in causing delays in decision-making and change-implementation. Jasper park management have their own objectives. Meetings between JNP and the JIF are scheduled to take place on a biannual basis, with additional meetings scheduled as needed, according to Greg Deagle, the administrative assistant for the Indigenous Affairs Unit in Jasper (personal interview, August 24, 2017). As discussed later in this article, slow progress towards addressing various issues has led to the establishment of working groups as offshoots from the larger JIF.

Aside from some ongoing issues, the relationship between the JIF and JNP management seems to be improving as progress is made towards increased Indigenous representation. Some JIF members see the work being done in JNP by management as trailblazing. According to Brian Catto, the interpretation coordinator for JNP, Jasper management seems to understand the requests from the JIF to some extent and has expressed a sincere desire to make the necessary changes to respectfully include Indigenous people and to tell their stories (personal interview, August 29, 2017). However, there is apprehension, says Rick Ouellet, a descendant of the Moberly Métis homesteaders from Jasper (personal interview, December 3, 2017). Some see the work being done as far behind other parks and believe that Jasper has a duty to do more to acknowledge Indigenous histories, cultures, cultural sites, traditional territories, and rights to the land, according to William Snow, a JIF member representing the Stoney/Nakoda First Nation at Morley (telephone interview, December 1, 2017). Intentions, as noble as they may be, are less important to JIF members than meaningful action. Seona Abraham, a JIF representative from the Big Horn Stoney/Nakoda Nation, pointed out that JIF members want their histories told, their cultures respected and cultural sites protected, their youth to find pride in the connection to their traditional lands, and to have control over how they are represented within the park (personal interview, October 17, 2017).

### **Traditional Connections: Indigenous Ties to the Lands in Jasper National Park**

The JIF has been a way for Indigenous Peoples to come together and express their connection to Jasper through their cultural or historic ties and spiritual practices (C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017). Each JIF community has a connection to Jasper. Stoney/Nakoda Elders John Wesley (personal interview, October 11, 2017) and Charlie Abraham (personal interview, October 17, 2017) both spoke to their deep connections to the land in Jasper, but also to the Canadian Rockies and foothills to the east. Charlie Abraham shared a story about how his grandfather would travel through the mountains to hunt and fish, and how they would live in the winter on dried meats and berries that were collected throughout the summer.

Barry Wesley, from the Bighorn Chiniki Stoney/Nakoda Nation, consults directly with Parks Canada as part of his work, and he pointed out that the Stoney/Nakoda peoples have a connection to all areas within Jasper's boundaries, with some significant ceremonial sites that they would like to have protected

from intrusion by the public (personal interview, October 11, 2017). There are many sacred places and burial sites in these areas. Wesley went on to say that there are other groups with historical ties to the area even if they did not sign treaties, such as the Métis (personal interview, October 11, 2017). Christopher Gall participates in the JIF on behalf of the Métis who have strong ties to Jasper due to their significant roles in early fur trade economies (personal interview, November 15, 2017). He believes that most Métis cultural routes are so strongly tied to fur trade routes, some of which passed through Jasper, that the region has historical significance for Métis peoples. Laurian Gladue stated that her people have been in this area since time immemorial—they were always a mountain people and this is their home (personal interview, November 16, 2017). She points out that there are a number of sacred sites for her people in Jasper. George Lampreau also made clear that Jasper was the start of the Simpcw traditional territory and that his people were living there prior to the establishment of the park (personal interview, November 18, 2017).

Forced removals after the establishment of the park had and continue to have tremendous impacts on Indigenous communities. According to Elder Charlie Abraham, “You can’t hunt. Everything had changed” (personal interview, October 17, 2017). During many forced removals, no consideration by park management was given to the material, cultural, and livelihood losses felt by Indigenous Peoples. No assistance was provided to find alternatives to the resources that were previously available from their traditional lands (Timko & Satterfield, 2008). Laurian Gladue asserts that the removals not only impacted the people who were removed, but also their descendants:

It was a huge impact and it is still. It’s a history that we don’t want to be lost. We don’t want it to be lost that we have this presence here. This is the home of my ancestors and I feel like we are respecting our ancestors by acknowledging . . . the biggest part of it is for our ancestors. And for our youth that are coming up. It’s our duty. We are stewards of this land and we’re never going to stop being knowledge holders. We have many knowledge holders of families that used this area. We don’t want it to be forgotten. (personal interview, November 16, 2017)

These histories must be remembered and acknowledged. Although certainly a dark chapter in Canadian history, these displacements are a part of Jasper. Christopher Gall asserts that JNP management must acknowledge the colonial mindset that shaped the creation of the park (personal interview, November 15, 2017). Loretta Belcourt (personal interview, November 27, 2017) and Rick Ouellet (personal interview, December 3, 2017) both shared stories of RCMP and police removing Indigenous people from their homes within the park boundary under the threat of force or by force. This history of forced removals is mostly understood by park management, but the impacts may not be. As William Snow indicates:

There are a wide range of impacts. I think the biggest impact was hunting and gathering. From what I recall, I believe, the restrictions around removing First Nations from [national] parks happened shortly after the parks were created . . . shortly after the parks were created there is some federal legislation under the Indian Act that identified that Indians could no longer reside or camp or hunt and fish within [national] parks, federal parks [Parks Canada] . . . that restricts your ability to exercise your Aboriginal and Treaty Rights . . . I’m not sure JNP management is aware of this repressive policy period. (telephone interview, December 1, 2017)

More cultural awareness of the history of Canadian colonialism and the establishment of Parks Canada through Indigenous led trainings is necessary for JNP staff and management to understand and appreciate the impacts that colonial government policies had and continue to have on Indigenous communities.

According to Brian Catto, under the memorandum of understanding with JNP management, JIF community members are now officially permitted to harvest plants in the park for ceremonial, spiritual, or traditional purposes (personal interview, August 29, 2017). As Raymond Cardinal reveals, despite being forcibly removed from Jasper and having their cultural practices banned, many Indigenous groups continued to utilize their traditional lands in secret:

I'll tell you right up front, that connection was not lost, it just went underground. Those practices . . . have continued. It's just that people are very cautious and careful in terms of them because we do have a connection that we respect and recognize. And the fact that [non-Indigenous] people tell us we cannot do it is not grounds enough for us to stop that activity . . . But these kinds of practices have happened, and they continue to happen, and now the park has allowed some limited gathering of plants in the community, we do not expect it to stop. It is just something that should be recognized in your paper, that this continued use of the park has happened and it did not stop because the Parks said "no" . . . If you look at our history as a people in this country, where a lot of us have had our ceremonies go underground . . . the same thing with Jasper. (personal interview, November 14, 2017)

Rick Ouellet reiterated this point by indicating that while management may claim control over the park, in reality, local peoples always hunted in and accessed the park. This was sometimes a demonstration of resistance, but it was mostly a strategy employed to maintain a connection to their traditional territories (personal interview, December 3, 2017).

### **Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Histories in Jasper**

Throughout JNP there are numerous signs directing visitors to sites of interest. However, there is a lack of Indigenous content and limited understanding of Indigenous histories. Most of this content is presented from a Eurocentric perspective (M. Young, personal interview, August 28, 2017). While not all JIF members are familiar with the interpretive programming in the park, those who are dislike seeing their cultures presented through Eurocentric perspectives. The lack of Indigenous representation in programs and signs in JNP has contributed to misinformed ideas about Indigenous histories, especially for non-Indigenous visitors and JNP staff. Tourists visiting national parks often want to learn about Canada, and Indigenous histories are certainly a key part of Canada (S. Abraham, personal interview, October 17, 2017). Of the nine million people that travelled to the Canadian Rocky Mountain National Parks in 2018, over two million visited Jasper National Park alone (Parks Canada, 2019). Many of those tourists know little about Indigenous cultures, and many likely view Indigenous Peoples as being all one people and speaking one language (S. Abraham, personal interview, October 17, 2017). It is a struggle to address, even on a small scale, such as representation in a park, the many misconceptions and stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples that are circulating in Canadian society. Christopher Gall explains:

I really think it's tackling sheer ignorance by the visitors from abroad and especially Canadians here at home that just don't have a clue. So, trying to pick some piece of the story, how do we slowly change that national dialogue on some of these things? Never mind even nationally, how do we address people living in Jasper talking on Facebook and their ignorance? . . . We don't have to win over the world, let's win over people living right here who care about this place and are passionate about it. (personal interview, November 15, 2017)

Many representations of Indigenous histories and cultures in the parks are temporalized, or presented as something from the distant past, without recognizing contemporary Indigenous lives (Mason, 2009). Indigenous cultures and traditions are often viewed as artifacts that are frozen in time, something that should be left in the past or in an apolitical present (Shultis & Heffner, 2016). Neither of these juxtapositions are acceptable. Barry Wesley believes that there are people who do want to hear the histories from Indigenous Peoples even though some of their stories will conflict with Western science and colonial narratives of progress (personal interview, October 11, 2017). As Rick Ouellet describes:

I think the Canadian public is slowly understanding the depth of the colonial project, and I think the truth of this story, although ending harshly, is repairable, and it's an interesting aspect of westward expansion. And I think the Canadian public would eat it up as there is a huge appetite for this. (personal interview, December 3, 2017)

It is time people began to consult Indigenous Peoples and value their knowledge (B. Wesley, personal interview, October 11, 2017). The idea of reconciliation, a central term used by the Canadian government and across the country, including within the Parks Canada Agency, must acknowledge and accept Indigenous histories and cultures. Parks Canada's definition of reconciliation has three key components:

- a. Strengthening Indigenous connections with traditionally used lands and waters,
- b. Expanding and ensuring presentation and commemoration of Indigenous histories and cultures, and
- c. Increasing economic opportunities related to Indigenous tourism. (Parks Canada, 2020, para. 4)

According to Christopher Gall, JNP management have a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate to visitors the uniqueness of Jasper's Indigenous histories and cultures. He believes it is critically important to recognize how long Indigenous Peoples have been on this land. It is a part of Canadian history and presenting it this way will help support wider public learning around Indigenous histories (personal interview, November 15, 2017). General statements about Indigenous use of the lands will not suffice; it is necessary to have specific acknowledgements of the Indigenous communities who lived on these lands before they were forcibly removed.

Some JIF members feel that incorporating these histories is not seen as a priority by park management. Consequently, Indigenous communities have not had the opportunity to educate park management about the Indigenous histories of Jasper (L. Belcourt, personal interview, November 27, 2017). William Snow believes JNP management should be presenting the park's Indigenous histories regardless of how these histories portray the government's treatment of Indigenous Peoples (telephone interview,

December 1, 2017). Indeed, incorporating some Indigenous content can be met with resistance by JNP management and some JIF members see this as a reluctance to learn about and share colonial histories. This resistance stems from Indigenous perspectives not matching the romanticized ideas of what Jasper was and is today. For example, histories of colonial policies that facilitated cultural repression or loss for Indigenous Peoples in this region are not part of this tidy narrative. Rick Ouellet elaborates further:

They [JNP management] listen to and incorporate the things that they want to and ignore the things that they don't want to incorporate. (personal interview, December 3, 2017)

Eurocentric ideas about the park and its histories shape what is presented and how it is presented. Mark Young (personal interview, August 28, 2017) and Josh Ibelshouser (personal interview, August 30, 2017), the Information Centre Coordinator, agree that JNP management needs to rethink the park's representations of Indigenous Peoples and acknowledge that the current methods may not fit with Indigenous ways of sharing knowledge. George Lampreau believes that Indigenous histories should be presented even if they do not align with the commonly accepted and often romanticized narratives of a place:

That is history. That is the truth. Those are facts. It would be different if it was embellished . . . but when it is strictly facts, you have to present them as is, no matter what it makes people feel or think. (personal interview, November 18, 2017).

Park management faces many challenges in adding Indigenous content to programs and signage. The inclusion of many different Indigenous communities wanting their histories shared is one of these barriers. This stems from past government policies that partitioned Indigenous Peoples into smaller groups. The history of Jasper is complex because there is no pan-Indigenous Jasper experience from which to base all Indigenous content. Although having many different Indigenous groups in the JIF makes incorporating their histories and cultures more complicated, this should not be used as an excuse to limit progress on this objective (C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017). While Christopher Gall believes that park management is working in the right direction in regard to adding Indigenous content, he also thinks there is room for improvement in the working relationship between JNP management and the JIF.

Underrepresentation or misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in Jasper can be partly addressed through allowing Indigenous communities to share their own histories and cultures in the park in a meaningful way. This could include, but is not limited to, consulting directly with Indigenous Peoples during the development of Indigenous-based content, incorporating Indigenous languages into signage, and developing cultural awareness training for all JNP staff. Raymond Cardinal wants park management and visitors to recognize traditional place names, cultures, and histories. As he explains, he believes those should be part of the experience for visitors:

This is something where our communities have always struggled over the last 50 to 100 years . . . we are always told we don't have value, that we lack value. You see that in the substance abuse in our communities, the drugs and alcohol in our communities. In our missing and murdered women. There are a lot of people that can use some positive reaffirmation, like those places were connected to us and they are still connected to us. We have names for them. Our identities and

our values matter, and they are not ignored or swept under the rug. Because that is really how it feels when we go to Jasper, you don't see Indigenous anything in the park . . . except on National Aboriginal Day where all the Indians in feathers come out. (personal interview, November 14, 2017)

Raymond Cardinal stresses that what he is asking for is not unreasonable. There was a request made of JNP management by many JIF members to place a sign at the entrances of JNP acknowledging that it is the traditional territory of several Indigenous groups and list the group names. Nothing has been done to address the request says Christina Plante, a Métis and Cree Elder representative on the JIF (personal interview, November 27, 2017). Due to the lack of Indigenous content in signage and programming, this type of acknowledgement would be the only indication that most visitors to Jasper have to understand that these are Indigenous lands and that the park's history is more than the stories of European fur traders, railway workers, and local wildlife. However, according to George Lampreau, JNP management appears unwilling to include this type of acknowledgement:

Our Chief put up a sign, "You are entering the traditional territory of the Simpcw First Nation." Parks took it down and put it away. They don't do anything with signage. This sign, that we want at either end of the park, would probably be just as easy if we went out and designed one, had it made, agreed upon with the parks, then just told them we are putting this up. To me, that is what is going to have to happen. No matter what they say they are going to drag their feet. (personal interview, November 18, 2017)

Christopher Gall points out that adding an acknowledgment sign is not "a huge ask . . . not a huge expense but . . . a simple gesture" (personal interview, November 15, 2017). JNP management may be apprehensive to erect acknowledgement signs at the entrances of the park because that would admit that Indigenous Peoples have an inherent right to the land and should have a voice in its management. To achieve more inclusive and respectful Indigenous representation in Jasper, management should erect signs at the entrances to the park that acknowledge the traditional territories that the park is on. This action would demonstrate that park management is not afraid to embrace these histories of repression and the colonial past that robbed Indigenous Peoples of their lands, resources, and cultures. This recognition may seem simple, but it would strengthen the relationship between the JIF and park management by exhibiting a commitment to own the past, including aspects of colonial violence, as well as a willingness to work with Indigenous communities towards a shared future through reconciliation.

The addition of their traditional languages on JNP signage is also important for many JIF members. Having language as part of the stories and histories that are told is crucial for the preservation of culture for future generations: "If I lose my language . . . then my stories won't be very effective" (J. Wesley, personal interview, October 11, 2017). According to Raymond Cardinal, the inclusion of place names in different Indigenous languages has also been requested (personal interview, November 14, 2017). Adding Indigenous names alongside the English names will show visitors that Indigenous Peoples are connected to those places. In order to incorporate Indigenous languages and histories, it must be stressed that park management needs to work directly with Indigenous communities to collect and record that information while following established protocol.



To address some of these concerns and barriers in incorporating Indigenous content and histories into the park, JNP management and the JIF have established several working groups to focus on specific areas of interest: environmental monitoring, cultural awareness training, Indigenous interpretation, the Cultural Use Area, and the Indigenous exhibit (A. Fehr, personal interview, September 22, 2017). These small working groups consist of representatives from several JIF communities who meet with the appropriate park management teams to concentrate on their specific projects and issues. Some members of the JIF view the creation of the working groups as a positive and strategic move on behalf of park management (G. Lampreau, personal interview, November 18, 2017). Having only bi-annual JIF meetings makes progress incredibly slow, as there is so little time to discuss issues and solutions (L. Gladue, personal interview, November 16, 2017). Consequently, the working groups have potential to move more quickly towards viable solutions. The smaller groups with fewer individuals involved can easily centre on specific tasks instead of being distracted by issues that are not directly related to the projects (G. Lampreau, personal interview, November 18, 2017).

The focus of one working group is developing an Indigenous exhibit in the Jasper townsite. An outdoor structure is planned that will be located across the street from the Haida totem pole in Jasper townsite. It will include interpretive panels designed to allow Indigenous nations on the JIF to share their cultures and histories from their own perspectives. Construction of the Indigenous exhibit was scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2018 (G. Deagle, personal interview, August 24, 2017), but as of winter 2019 construction has not begun.

While the exhibit is supported by some local Indigenous groups, it is not without controversy. The concept for the exhibit stemmed from the desire of JIF members to increase representation and offset some of the misrepresentation issues highlighted above. However, there are some who perceive it as an attempt to fit Indigenous Peoples and communities into a mold set by park management. Barry Wesley felt as though he was unable to present his knowledge on his own terms. He expressed that he was forced to make a decision about the creation of the exhibit, but the decision about what the exhibit would look like structurally was already made before he was asked for his input (personal interview, October 11, 2017). Raymond Cardinal is also apprehensive about the eventual outcome of the exhibit:

This is something where I always try to take a cautious approach because what often happens is people will do something slightly different and then you'll see a lot of press releases that come out telling you how great this new thing is that will radically change the relationships with First Nations peoples. Then you watch it be implemented and you are like "oh, that didn't actually do anything." (personal interview, November 14, 2017)

Some JIF members are frustrated with the length of time it has taken to plan the production of the Indigenous exhibit: "Take, take, take, but they're slow at giving. Then when they do, they make a big deal out of it" (G. Lampreau, personal interview, November 18, 2017). Other JIF members view the production of the Indigenous exhibit as a starting point on the long road towards accurate representation of local Indigenous Peoples in Jasper (L. Gladue, personal interview, November 16, 2017). It is important to acknowledge the time and resources that have been put into the JIF and the Indigenous exhibit by park management. Christopher Gall thinks park management has done well considering the complexity and the resources required to work with many different Indigenous groups to create an exhibit through which they can all share their cultures (personal interview, November 15,

2017). This exhibit is an example of a situation in which park management desired to make changes and significant efforts have been made. We feel that this effort needs to be acknowledged. However, it must also be recognized that broader power structures place heavy constraints on JNP management and the amount of progress that can be pursued on certain issues. There are not necessarily the policies, tools, or resources in place to make progress quick enough for many JIF members. In these circumstances, the focus remains on improving access and smaller incremental changes to programming as opposed to addressing wider colonial decision-making processes that lack significant methods of consultation. The production of the exhibit is exemplary of these systemic issues. It will take some time to determine what impacts this exhibit will have on the awareness of Indigenous issues in Jasper and the relationship between park management and the JIF. Once the exhibit is erected, further research will be needed to determine the impacts of this exhibit on Indigenous representation in the park.

### **Barriers to Success: Finding a Balance Between JNP Management and JIF Objectives**

In order to successfully integrate Indigenous voices into Jasper National Park's interpretative representations and management decisions, it must be clear what both the JIF and JNP management want to accomplish. JNP management have mandates to work with Indigenous communities towards reconciliation and to develop stronger, more effective relationships. The 2010 JNP Management Plan relied on consultations with "Aboriginal people, stakeholders, community residents, park visitors and the general public" (Parks Canada, 2010, p. 9). Together, the JIF and JNP management identified six main areas of "common interest" in the management plan: (a) opportunities to influence park management and decision making, (b) traditional knowledge, (c) access to and reconnection with the park, (d) cultural programs, (e) resource and conservation activities, and (f) economic and employment opportunities.

With the establishment of the JIF, the working groups, and the Cultural Use Area, JNP management has demonstrated an increasing willingness to incorporate Indigenous voices in the park; however, many JIF members question whether this is enough. While the JIF recognizes that progress is being made, certainly more work is required on many of the issues identified in the park's management plans. An example of progress on access issues is the 2011 Cultural Use Area that was established in Jasper. It was considered by JNP management and JIF members to be a milestone achievement of the JIF (G. Deagle, personal interview, August 24, 2017). The establishment of the Cultural Use Area was a reconciliation initiative. Local Indigenous communities were welcomed back to the park for ceremonial purposes and to gather traditional plants, and no permits are required (B. Catto, personal interview, August 28, 2017). The Cultural Use Area, located eight kilometers north of the Jasper townsite, is open to all Indigenous communities with traditional connections to JNP. It is utilized for Indigenous ceremonies and gatherings. The public and JNP staff have been invited to visit this site and to participate in some selective ceremonies that community members have conducted.

One of the functions of national parks is to present histories for the world to see, and Indigenous Peoples are a part of that history (G. Lampreau, personal interview, November 18, 2017). Indigenous Peoples have significantly contributed to Canada and their histories predate Canada, but those histories are often unrecognized and at times devalued (R. Ouellet, personal interview, December 3, 2017). Officially acknowledging Indigenous historical and cultural connections to JNP could lead to a greater influence

over the management decisions in their traditional territories. As Cardinal alludes to, this could facilitate less control by park management, which is something they may not be willing to do:

Part of the challenge is that Jasper operates under a specific mindset. They [JNP management] have a specific ideology when it comes to planning the park, and everything gets all muddled up if you recognized that First Nations have been there for thousands of years. They don't want to recognize it because that might limit them in terms of what they are able to do, with respect to certain sites, for locations. They don't like . . . especially when you compare them to other parks, they don't like that idea, because a lot of other parks are pushing towards co-management with First Nations communities, or Indigenous communities. (personal interview, November 14, 2017)

There are JIF members that believe JNP management is not willing to address some of their concerns because management is worried that they will lose some of their authority (C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017). As in other protected areas across Canada, Jasper's Indigenous histories are intertwined with Indigenous rights. If park management acknowledges those histories, they must also recognize Indigenous rights (R. Ouellet, personal interview, December 3, 2017). Not being open to acknowledging certain aspects of Indigenous histories within the JNP's territory allows park management to keep authority over management decisions with the government (L. Gladue, personal interview, November 16, 2017). As George Lampreau stated:

Maybe they don't want the First Nations people having more of a say than we are getting now. It is like this reconciliation seems to only go so far . . . That was brought up a few times [at JIF meetings]. It always seemed to fall on deaf ears. (personal interview, November 18, 2017)

Raymond Cardinal, who has diverse experiences working with other Rocky Mountain National Parks, views the mountain national parks, particularly Jasper, as being the most reluctant to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and voices into its management:

Losing power . . . particularly the Mountain Parks, have been the most resistant to include First Nations, for involving First Nations. They have had an authority over everything in the Park since their creation, and they don't want now to have to change that to work with our communities. That is probably the biggest challenge that we have seen . . . Jasper is reluctant to deal with any of these issues at all. (personal interview, November 14, 2017)

Some feel park management decisions are often self-serving:

They [JNP management] are still not at a point where it is a friendly and open place for Indigenous people, even though they want to have an Indigenous story told, but the reason they want to have an Indigenous story told is because visitors are demanding it. So, the whole thing that is built off of this . . . how does this serve us? (R. Ouellet, personal interview, December 3, 2017)

Some are of the opinion that park management chooses which communities to work with depending on how it will serve them. Based on his own experience with JNP management and the JIF, Rick Ouellet

views the JIF membership as being comprised of Indigenous communities that park management has chosen to work with and that progress, while minimal, made on different projects is something that park management would be working towards regardless of Indigenous involvement. He believes park management only wants to work with communities that are accommodating and approve potential project development that the park may be pursuing at any given moment, rather than communities with experience and knowledge of the policies in the park (personal interview, December 3, 2017). The JIF is comprised of numerous Indigenous communities, each with their own experiences working with JNP management. As within any organization, there can often be different perspectives among members. There are members that see positive results between the JIF and JNP management, while there are others who view that relationship as self-serving on the part of JNP management.

Some Indigenous communities still do not have representation on the JIF. William Snow points out that park management only makes space for two representatives from each JIF member community (telephone interview, December 1, 2017). This means that the Stoney/Nakoda representatives at the meetings do not represent all Stoney/Nakoda communities because they are from three separate bands who live in three communities in the region. He would like to see two representatives from each of his people's bands, but at the moment this is not an option. This issue is directly related to colonial government policies and treaty agreements that led to the formation of reserves that separated Indigenous communities, and sometimes collective families, into many smaller divisions.

Incorporating Indigenous histories into park programming and signage may be a challenge for management due in part to a lack of research to draw on. Research in the park is incredibly expensive and time consuming. Greg Deagle points out that Jasper has only funded two Traditional Land Use Studies due to the expense. JNP is currently working on an Indigenous territories map, which extends beyond the borders of the park, to include adjacent areas in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia (personal interview, August 24, 2017). Some Indigenous oral histories have been recorded and local geographic information system (GIS) technicians will produce a map which will identify First Nation reserves, Métis settlements, and treaty areas (G. Deagle, personal interview, August 24, 2017). This map, however, does not seem to touch on other culturally significant sites. Cultural mapping has been an important subject for some JIF communities, but there are no processes or resources to support it in federal parks (W. Snow, telephone interview, December 1, 2017). The desire for this type of cultural mapping research in Jasper is not only to gain more control over how their traditional lands are managed, but also to stop the destruction of cultural, sacred, and ceremonial places within the park (R. Cardinal personal interview, November 14, 2017).

Some JIF members question JNP management's interest in Indigenous research in the park and believe park management would prefer to make decisions based on the information they already have (L. Gladue, personal interview, November 16, 2017). William Snow, who has worked extensively with provincial governments, parks, and on Crown (federal) land doing cultural mapping, thinks another factor that limits research is a lack of resources available to support these projects in federal parks (W. Snow, telephone interview, December 1, 2017). Despite these critiques, Barry Wesley feels that his community has a good working relationship with JNP management (personal interview, October 11, 2017). There is some acknowledgement by park management of Indigenous connections and input by JIF communities, such as a traditional land acknowledgement at the beginning of presentations in the park. There are JIF members who feel that there is respect from park management as well as genuine

attempts to build stronger relationships (L. Gladue personal interview, November 16, 2017). While progress may come very slowly, the lack of progress is not always intentional as government employees can be bound by policies and resources that limit what they can accomplish. Christopher Gall explains:

Jasper has put a lot of financial resources and staff time into building the forum and the relationships with the communities. I think that's an important acknowledgement. I don't for a minute want to say that [Parks Canada] is perfect and they've done everything right. I think that there are staff trying to do the best they can with limited resources and within the bureaucracy of [Parks Canada]. (personal interview, November 15, 2017)

Gathering information from many different Indigenous groups is a difficult undertaking for park management. The establishment of the JIF facilitated a more organized method for park management and JIF communities to meet, work together, and to share ideas and information. Barry Wesley appreciates that since the establishment of the JIF, Indigenous communities are able to communicate more directly with park management on various issues (personal interview, October 11, 2017). There are JIF members who believe park management support the inclusion of many Indigenous communities into the JIF, despite the many challenges this brings. There must be inclusive approaches to park management decisions in order to build respectful working relationships between JNP management and JIF members (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017).

In addition to recognizing historical relations and contemporary protocol such as territorial acknowledgments alluded to above, another issue in the collaboration between JNP management and Indigenous communities is timelines. In Jasper, timelines for interpretive content, programs, and signage are often determined by when the tourism season begins or deadlines for funding applications. If timelines are missed by JIF members, then they will lose the opportunity to weigh in on certain projects. Barry Wesley does not believe that this should be the case, as some Indigenous cultures do not view timelines and decision-making in the same way as Euro-Canadian governments. In order for park management to respect Indigenous cultures, they must understand cultural differences, which can include how timelines can be perceived by JIF members. He feels that park management dictates how they want JIF members to make decisions, although they are slowly changing that style of thinking (personal interview, October 11, 2017).

Different approaches to information sharing can cause conflict between JIF communities and JNP management. JIF communities are varied and unique and have different protocols for sharing information with those outside their cultures. There can be an unwillingness to share information, for example about sacred sites, with park management because it may be used in the future to assert Indigenous rights with the government. Due to the colonial legacy of Indigenous displacement, which often occurred during the establishment of protected areas, there is a deep mistrust by Indigenous Peoples towards sharing information with government agencies to be used in protected areas, such as national parks (Redford & Fearn, 2007). This has also led to Indigenous groups not sharing information with one another:

All of a sudden, the group that's got more information has a stronger position and so they don't want other groups sort of knowing their hand . . . I think in some ways the nature of the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples has pitted Indigenous Peoples against

Canada, which [Parks Canada] is representing as part of the Crown, but also then Indigenous Peoples against other Indigenous Peoples in close proximity. (C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017)

JIF participation can also depend on the priorities articulated at the Indigenous community level and the interest of community political leadership, including Chief and Council, to involve parks despite active or potential land claims (A. Fehr, personal interview, September 22, 2017). For these reasons alone, gathering a variety of information from various Indigenous nations makes incorporating it into programming and signage content very difficult in Jasper.

One of the biggest issues with having so many members is that no group is able to fully raise their comments or concerns at the bi-annual JIF meetings because there are so many who wish to have their voices heard in the short amount of time available (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017). According to Christopher Gall, there is never enough time to fully discuss all the issues that need to be raised (personal interview, November 15, 2017). To rectify the issue of time for JIF meetings, park management must increase the number of JIF meetings each year. As he points out, more meetings would allow the large number of communities to have their voices heard and would lead to greater feedback from JIF communities (C. Gall, personal interview, November 15, 2017). In addition to more meetings, park management should meet with each Indigenous community or treaty group separately:

[M]aybe we will bring in all of Treaty 7 to Jasper, and they have a meeting with Jasper on a whole range of issues. And maybe then it is Treaty 6 that comes in the next week, and Treaty 8 the next week, and the week after the Métis Nation, and maybe the non-Status groups all get together with Jasper. Have separate meetings for everybody. (W. Snow, telephone interview, December 1, 2017)

Meeting with each group separately would allow park management to achieve a deeper understanding of the concerns of the individual JIF communities. Raymond Cardinal sees the need for a change in the levels of engagement between park management and Indigenous communities. The current process is not viewed as very productive by some JIF members:

All that has happened so far is that First Nations raise concerns, the [JNP management] will write it down and then we'll go back in six months or a year and say the same things all over again, and parks will write it down again . . . so on and so on . . . I'm not seeing a lot of resolve on the part of [JNP management] in Jasper to address them. (Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017)

Based on his consultation experience with other parks, he suggests JNP management should engage with Indigenous communities in a different way than they currently do. He describes the levels of engagement in terms of three tiers: Tier 1 is when Indigenous communities meet among themselves; Tier 2 is when Indigenous communities meet with the federal government; and, Tier 3 is when Indigenous communities meet with the federal government and industry (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017). This tiered process would give the communities more time to discuss the topics together to build a consensus and it could lead to more successful and productive meetings.

Addressing the gaps in knowledge between Indigenous Peoples and JNP management will require cultural awareness training developed by Indigenous communities. All JNP staff, should learn about the Indigenous histories in the park (S. Abraham, personal interview, October 17). Having this understanding will allow JNP staff to better appreciate the Indigenous connections to Jasper. Frontline staff should have extensive knowledge of this connection to pass it on to park visitors. Loretta Belcourt stated that if staff do not have that knowledge, they cannot also use it to inform their decisions (personal interview, November 27, 2017). In the spring of 2018, Mark Young presented Indigenous awareness training for Jasper's interpretation staff, giving more detailed histories of Indigenous Peoples, including their forced removals from the park and contemporary relationship with park management. Laurian Gladue views cultural awareness training for all staff as incredibly important but explained that park management has said it is too difficult to train all staff, as many of them are seasonal employees (personal interview, November 16, 2017). During its peak season, JNP employs approximately 350 to 400 staff, making it hard to provide all the necessary training (A. Fehr, personal interview, September 22, 2017). Although providing training for all staff can be challenging, cultural awareness training for staff falls within the federal parks' definition of reconciliation, and thus should be made a training priority.

The Cultural Awareness Working Group was established by the JIF and JNP management to create the cultural awareness training program. One challenge is determining who will develop the program, although it is understood that the training needs to be produced and presented by the Indigenous communities themselves (W. Snow, telephone interview, December 1, 2017). Rick Ouellet discussed solutions for this challenge:

Although our cultures are different, there is a huge lesson for Indigenous cultures to teach Canadians. But Canada is reluctant, not everyone, and it's getting better, but reluctant to incorporate that into what is Canadian culture. And I think we can do that in Jasper. (personal interview, December 3, 2017)

Educating JNP staff and management about the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples from Indigenous perspectives will lead to an increased understanding of the issues raised by JIF members. Being able to see the concerns of the Indigenous nations from Indigenous perspectives while understanding the histories that led to those concerns will enable JNP management to appreciate what is at stake for those nations. Addressing those concerns in a respectful and meaningful way will benefit Indigenous communities and their relationships with park management.

Making positive, lasting changes to Indigenous representation and the relationship between Indigenous communities and park management in JNP is a complex undertaking. While there is a desire from park management to address issues and concerns of Indigenous communities within the park, there also appears to be a lack of resolve to make the necessary changes. Since the establishment of the JIF, 14 years have passed and there have only been minor incremental changes made in the park to address issues regarding Indigenous representation or the development of better working relationships. These changes have come primarily through the creation of the Cultural Use Area, JIF working groups, and traditional gatherings in the park. Gathering together in the JIF, Indigenous communities are sharing their voices, which has allowed some communities to strengthen their relationship to one another while simultaneously reconnecting with their traditional territories (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017). While these changes have been comparatively small in regard to the overall

Indigenous representation issues in Jasper, they provide a glimpse of what is possible and how these positive changes can impact the working relationship between JNP management and the JIF.

### **Misrepresentations of Indigenous Cultures and Bridging the Knowledge Gaps**

Eurocentric perspectives serve to trivialize many significant aspects of Indigenous histories and continue to perpetuate damaging stereotypes of Indigenous people. These perspectives often do not acknowledge the vast diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada but seek instead to homogenize their histories into one easy to disseminate pan-Indigenous experience (Mason, 2009; Snow 2005). This has further reaching impacts than JNP management may realize. These Eurocentric perspectives send the message to Indigenous Peoples that their cultures and histories are not important enough to share. This in turn impacts the working relationships between park management and local Indigenous communities. It indicates that park management is more interested in catering to park visitor expectations and desires than sharing Indigenous histories from Indigenous perspectives. This focus on catering to visitor expectations “ignores the ways in which First Nations continue to be dispossessed from their lands in the name of colonial-capitalist growth” (Youdelis, 2016, p. 7). This undervaluing and misrepresenting of their cultures negatively impact how some Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous youth, view themselves (S. Abraham, personal interview, October 17, 2017). It also perpetuates the idea that Europeans established parks to manage lands that Indigenous Peoples could not. Early government Indigenous policies were firmly rooted in the nineteenth-century European assumption that their civilization was superior to local Indigenous Peoples (Snow, 2005).

Park management must balance meeting the park’s mandate to work with Indigenous Peoples while retaining authority over park lands and catering to visitor expectations. Erecting traditional territory acknowledgement signs at the entrances of the park or making the JIF an official advisory or partner group could potentially lead to Indigenous nations being able to legally challenge park management’s authority over park lands (Youledis, 2016). To date, these challenges to park management’s authority have occurred as a result of the active land claims in the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks’ system. If the JIF remains unofficial and open, potential legitimacy of claims discussions would be avoided. In addition, park management must deal with the complexities of working with numerous Indigenous nations and diverse priorities while making their way through the bureaucracy of a government agency. Steps forward in their working relationship with local Indigenous nations, such as the establishment of the Cultural Use Area, the formation of the JIF, and JNP’s Open-Door Policy are touted by management as achievements. These tentative steps on the path to reconciliation are only small pieces to the larger puzzle. What remains is a lack of any notable, visible acknowledgement of Jasper’s rich Indigenous histories. This absence highlights a lack of understanding on the part of park management of how Eurocentric representations negatively impact Indigenous communities and how not addressing them continues to marginalize and alienate Indigenous Peoples. A deeper appreciation for the issues encountered by Indigenous Peoples due to stereotypes and misrepresentation is necessary before park management is able to address the concerns of the Indigenous nations with traditional ties to the lands in Jasper. As a federal government agency, JNP management must develop concrete measures to ensure that the Indigenous Peoples with traditional connections to the lands in and around JNP are treated with dignity. Working with JIF communities to enact meaningful change and respectfully address their concerns could make that possible.



Ongoing research should compare Indigenous consultation and representation in JNP to other national parks and protected areas in Canada to determine how JNP differs from other parks working with Indigenous nations. Researchers could be supported by Indigenous communities to develop metrics for measuring successful working relationships through consultation. Greater involvement from the JIF in future research in JNP would provide researchers with a wider array of insights into the issues faced by Indigenous communities. A higher level of consideration for Parks Canada policies and bureaucratic systems by JIF members would be beneficial to determine how representation issues should be handled by management (R. Cardinal, personal interview, November 14, 2017). The Parks Canada Agency, which includes JNP, is a national bureaucratic system, and subsequently changes occur at a slow pace. Increasing awareness of Parks Canada policies and decision-making systems would be beneficial for JIF members. However, park management must increase their own understanding of Indigenous issues and ways of gathering and sharing knowledge in order to successfully work with the JIF to address their concerns in a meaningful way (M. Young, personal interview, August 28, 2017).

Much of the progress with regards to Indigenous representation in Jasper was a direct result of the pressure put on park management by Indigenous Peoples themselves. Local Indigenous nations have been tireless in their pursuit to reconnect with their traditional territories in the park and achieve representations of their histories and cultures—stories told by their own peoples with their own voices. As demonstrated in this article, JIF members are motivated to change the Eurocentric perspectives that continue to shape how park visitors view Indigenous Peoples. While an objective of park management is to increase Indigenous representation and work towards reconciliation in Jasper National Park, until that has been achieved to the satisfaction of the local Indigenous communities, reconciliation will simply remain an unfulfilled goal.

### Conclusion

Our findings indicate that JIF members want increased representation and greater control over how their cultures are presented and park management must build stronger relations with the JIF if they want to improve Indigenous representations in the park, develop productive consultation processes, and support reconciliation efforts. Major changes to the way Indigenous knowledge is gathered and presented in JNP are necessary. Through working more closely with local Indigenous Peoples, JNP management will be able to address some of the issues that arise from the misrepresentation of Indigenous histories. A key aspect of this is taking responsibility for the role park management has played in marginalizing Indigenous Peoples and perpetuating stereotypes of their cultures. Incorporating diverse Indigenous voices into park consultation processes and management decisions is essential to acknowledge the historical land rights and contemporary presences of local Indigenous communities as well as to build the necessary bridges that make policy revision and reconciliation possible.

In examining current consultation processes with local Indigenous communities in JNP, researcher Megan Youdelis (2016) advocated for an antipolitical approach to be employed by local JIF members and the communities they represent. She asserts that if communities engage in consultation processes like the JIF, they are in fact reifying inequitable colonial power structures, which tacitly endorse the federal government as the just decision maker in contested territories. Unfortunately, this stance relies on a number of problematic assumptions. Firstly, it supports a false dichotomy between engagement and disengagement that positions community members in a simplistic way and devalues their past and

present efforts that simultaneously pursue multiple objectives in their relationships with various levels of government. Both in a historical context and in the consideration of contemporary realities, Indigenous leadership has sought to best serve their communities and strategically assert their collective rights. For example, Nakoda communities who have actively engaged in tourism economies in both Banff and Jasper throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be criticized for further entrenching colonial-capitalist power dynamics through their participation (Mason, 2015). However, this could not be further from the experiences of Nakoda community members who consistently used their role in developing tourism economies to regain access to park spaces, to build key socio-economic and political relations, and assert their presence in their traditional territories (Mason, 2014). Although not without heavy constraints, all this was achieved while strategizing about how to return to their lands and the submission of multiple land claims in federal park jurisdictions (Snow, 2005).

In addition, the antipolitical approach, which we consider defeatist, does not account for communities' urgent desire to return to their traditional territories currently defined as parks. To gain access to sacred sites is paramount for displaced communities. As time is now being measured in generations as opposed to decades, it is an understatement to define the return of community members as pressing. It is of critical importance. If one considers the destructive disruptions in Indigenous education, food, and overall well-being that displacement and dispossession have facilitated, the sense of urgency is palpable. While many communities remain resilient in the barriers they encounter, and are hopeful for a return, time is certainly of the essence. How these complexities are accounted for in antipolitical approaches is lost on us and not supported by the research findings presented in this article.

JIF members clearly want better representation in Jasper, although there is a deep lack of understanding by park management of the negative impacts that misrepresentation continues to have on Indigenous communities. Acknowledging Indigenous histories and rights tied to JNP would help to address those negative impacts. Government policies, including in national parks, have led to the loss of Indigenous lands, rights, lives, languages, and cultures. These losses have had, and continue to have, devastating impacts on Indigenous Peoples. This contributes to the lack of connection to traditional lands, knowledge, histories, and cultural practices. While Indigenous representation in Jasper is only one aspect of addressing those impacts, it is significant. As part of a government agency that is responsible for forcibly removing Indigenous Peoples from their traditional territories, park management has a responsibility to work with Indigenous communities to address and resolve their concerns in an appropriate time frame that must be agreed upon by all parties involved.

Through Indigenous Peoples presenting their own histories and cultures with their own voices, park management will increase their own knowledge and that of park visitors. While park management sees their progress as on par or above that of other parks in Canada, not all JIF members agree. The problem with comparing to past relations between park management and local Indigenous communities is that there was little representation for the first century of JNP so, by comparison, any progress can be viewed favourably. Success must not be continually defined by such troubling standards. We think that JNP should aspire to higher benchmarks in their consultation and collaboration with JIF members. They should consider the practices and policies currently being enacted through Indigenous park management frameworks in new protected area designations such as the Indigenous Protected Conserved Areas (The Indigenous Circle of Experts & Parks Canada, 2018). It is also pertinent to look further afield at international case studies of Indigenous park management frameworks to understand

what policies could be applied in Canada based on productive examples from other settler colonial states (Langton et al., 2014; Ruru, 2014; Te Urewera Act, 2014).

JIF members know what they want and need. They have a deep understanding of the issues that have stemmed from the forced removals from their traditional territories and the continual misrepresentation of their cultures. Park management are working with the JIF and are willing to listen to the concerns brought forward, but they are hesitant to make changes that could lessen their comprehensive authority over park management decisions. The JIF is seeking to reconcile the cultural loss facilitated by policies that the federal government and its agencies, including Parks Canada, enacted and enforced. They want access to the resources on the land that were taken from them, as well as the support to present their own histories in their own voices.

Through not sharing Indigenous histories, park management is also denying visitors the opportunity to gain knowledge that could challenge stereotypes and simultaneously assert Indigenous connections to local lands. The incorporation of Indigenous content in other parks and protected areas across Canada stems partially from increasing demands for Indigenous tourism, paired with pressure from local Indigenous peoples (Mason 2014; Shultis & Heffner, 2016). However, tourism demands should not be the determining factor for whether Indigenous content is incorporated in JNP. Only through acknowledging the rights of Indigenous Peoples to present their cultures in Jasper, access traditional territories, and shape policy can park management claim to be working towards reconciliation. There must be greater emphasis on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and expertise into park programming and signage, employee training, and ultimately all decision-making processes.

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