

The Partnership

The Crown Managers Partnership (CMP) is a diverse group of resource management agencies who agree to work together to provide leadership in addressing environmental management issues across the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. Since 2001, representatives from over twenty land and resource management agencies have gathered to explore ecosystem-based ways of collaborating on transboundary issues in the Crown of the Continent.

Our focus is a broad international region that includes, but also extends beyond parks, protected and areas and reflects federal, state, provincial, tribes and First Nations jurisdiction (Figure 1). We are striving to apply today the foundational ideas articulated in the early part of the last century when Wateron-Glacier International Peace Park was established:

- The environment doesn't recognize jurisdictional boundaries;
- There is a need for cooperation and stewardship in a world of shared resources; and
- It is in the individual and collective interest of Canadians and Americans to work together cooperatively.

The CMP seeks to demonstrate a common, collective institutional capacity across borders to effectively manage the cumulative effects of human activities and land use practices on this entire interconnected landscape. Our strength is in our capacity to act as integrators through a strong, established network of international managers.



The Region

The Crown of the Continent is one of North America's most ecologically diverse and jurisdictionally fragmented ecosystems. Encompassing the shared Rocky Mountain region and immediately adjacent landscapes of Montana, British Columbia and Alberta, this 28,000 square mile / 72,000 square kilometer region straddles two nations, one state and two provinces. It includes numerous aboriginal lands, municipal authorities, public land blocks, and private properties, working and protected landscapes.

The Crown is internationally recognized for its biodiversity and landscape form. In relatively short distances and small areas, landscapes range from flat grasslands to soaring peaks; from rock and ice to lush forests; from uninhabited wilderness to densely populated settlements. This landscape variety and the area's relative intactness are reflected in a very wide range of wildlife species and vegetation communities. A full complement of large carnivores and ungulates can still be found here.

The Pressures

In the last century the outstanding natural attributes of the region were reflected by the designation of numerous parks, wilderness and other protected areas in both Canada and the United States. At the same time, intensification in all areas of human activity is presenting challenges to the long-term ecological integrity of the region. The effectiveness of responding to these issues is complicated by jurisdictional fragmentation. All jurisdictions face challenges in responding to continuing and conflicting demands for more human use of the region's natural resources and more protection of environmental quality.

In order to maintain essential ecological processes and manage human presence within this landscape, a need exists for transboundary collaborative approaches to ecosystem

management at a regional scale. Political, financial and technical barriers impede this type of management. These barriers are magnified when numerous political borders divide a landscape. No single agency has the mandate or the resources to focus upon the entire region. The establishment of the agency-based CMP is an attempt to address these pressures and issues directly.

The Annual Forum

A central activity undertaken by the CMP, the Annual Forum facilitates information-sharing and the exploration of opportunities for improved interagency cooperation. Venues for the forum rotate among the two Canadian provinces and the state of Montana. The annual forum is a time when partners identify and discuss those issues that need to be addressed at regional or ecosystem scales.

Each annual forum focuses on a challenging regional theme or topic; international experts are invited to speak at the forum and participants discuss how they might work well together across agencies to manage that particular issue. Past themes include climate change, aquatic invasive species, watershed management, wildfire management and biodiversity. The forums conclude with an agency business meeting, but all speaker and workshop sessions are open to the public.

The Strategic Plan

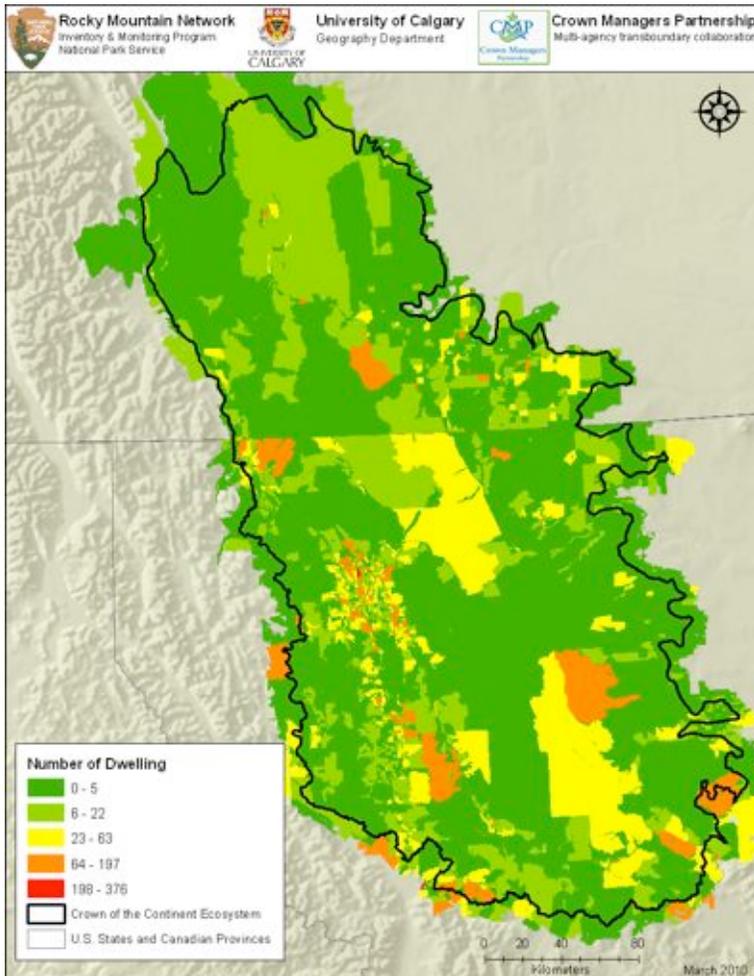
The CMP has adopted a Strategic Plan whereby the vision of an ecologically healthy Crown of the Continent ecosystem is achieved by the management actions of multiple agencies each exercising their own jurisdiction with common goals in mind. The CMP's mission is to improve understanding, raise awareness and promote collaboration. The CMP's strategic priority is the "Managing for Ecological Health project."

Managing for Ecological Health

The project entails the following: 1) Select **indicators of ecological integrity**; 2) Establish a **baseline** state by which to measure change over time (**trend**); 3) Identify with the broader community the **desired state** for the CCE; and 4) **Direct collaborative management** across jurisdictions to achieve the desired state.

The Ecological Health Project (EHP) project is distinguished by its regional transboundary scope, our focus on delivering useable knowledge to assist managers in responding more directly to climate change and shifting human footprint, and our capacity to collaborate at a regional, landscape scale.

The EHP needs to focus on three key supporting components: the analysis, integration and choice of outcomes amongst indicators of ecological health; connecting communities and stakeholders with our work to ensure awareness and build comfort; and testing and aligning EH outcomes with the mandates, legislation, interests, policy and priorities of agencies.



Indicators of Ecological Health

The CMP has identified six broad indicators to assess transboundary ecological health: landscapes, biodiversity, water quantity and quality, air quality, climate change and invasive species. The partnership is currently exploring the extent to which changes in environmental quality related to the six indicators is reflected in regional-scale landscape analysis. Toward this end, the CMP is partnering with Universities and agencies to conduct a landscape-scale assessment of habitat connectivity and human-use footprint at the scale of the CCE. The project involves transboundary data synthesis for a regional connectivity analysis to assist managers with developing strategies for adaptation and increasing resiliency in the face of climate change.

CMP Strategies:

1. Document Ecological Health and associated trends in the CCE.
2. Identify desired outcomes related to ecological health across the CCE using standards, thresholds and triggers.
3. Facilitate and promote actions by agencies and stakeholders to maintain and/or restore ecological health in the CCE.
4. Manage for uncertainty around climate change and its implications for ecological health.
5. Promote agency and public understanding of the significance of the CCE and the strategic priorities of the CMP.
6. Establish effective administrative and financial mechanisms and encourage shared commitment amongst Agencies in the CMP.



CMP Steering Committee:

- Glacier National Park, MT
- Alberta Environment, AB
- University of Montana, MT
- University of Calgary, AB
- Flathead Basin Commission, MT
- Flathead National Forest, MT
- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, AB
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, MT
- Flathead Lake Biological Station, MT
- Waterton Lakes National Park, AB
- Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, AB
- Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, BC