



June 29, 2020

News Release

Horseshoe Canyon Improvements

At the June 23, 2020, Council Meeting, Kneehill County Council directed Administration to move towards the construction of a day-use washroom facility with a café and retail space at Horseshoe Canyon. Prior to construction, Administration will present options and costs to Council for approval. Kneehill County's 2020 approved Capital Budget included \$1.35 Million for this project. The project is slated to be funded from Reserves established for this purpose, and from provincial grants.

Council also approved the addition of charge parking in the Horseshoe Canyon parking lot, to be implemented in 2021. This will be modeled on a similar project successfully introduced last year by the Town of Drumheller at some of the Town's tourism sites. The implementation of paid parking would seek to generate revenue from visitors of Horseshoe Canyon, which could then be used to support maintenance operations and development of additional amenities at the site.

"Given the current economy, it's important that we look for new ways to bring revenue into the County," said Kneehill County Reeve, Jerry Wittstock. "When Council purchased Horseshoe Canyon in 2016, they recognized the potential to develop the park as a tourist attraction. Horseshoe Canyon consistently sees hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. With the construction of this new space, we can accommodate these visitors with proper, functioning bathroom facilities and potentially provide some basic retail services as well."

The approved expansion was one of many options included in the Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan, which aligns with Council's Strategic priority to Improve Fiscal Sustainability and move Horseshoe Canyon towards revenue generation. In addition to direct revenues being developed, the County will be looking for ways to leverage the large number of annual visitors to the site to so that economic spin-offs for local businesses and our community can occur.

"We've heard from many ratepayers over the last few years. The County owns the land—why aren't we doing anything with it?" said Wittstock. Council is aware that opinion on Horseshoe Canyon is diverse. "Following this expansion and before we develop the area any further, we also want to hear more from our residents. What do they think we should eventually develop at the Canyon?" Wittstock continued. "We'll be assembling a task force made up of County residents in the near future, so they can have their say, and bring recommendations to the table for Council to consider."

"This year especially, we realize how important recreation is—how necessary it is for people to get outside and enjoy nature. Horseshoe Canyon is an asset to the area and we look forward to our guests experiencing the Canyon at its full potential. It really is a sight to behold."

