

Friends of the Crown

Friends of the Crown is an informal network of people and organizations that promote and support the following Statement of Values and Principles.

Statement of Values and Principles for Friends of the Crown

Purpose

Numerous government agencies, non-government organizations, community-based partnerships, and individual citizens are shaping the future of the Crown of the Continent. These individuals and organizations operate at multiple spatial scales, share a common commitment to the landscape and communities of the region, and often work together through informal partnerships.

This Statement is designed to connect people who care about the Crown by articulating a set of common values and principles -- which collectively provide a vision for the future. It facilitates a regional network (Friends of the Crown) while sustaining the identity, integrity, and legitimacy of all the individuals and groups working to shape the future of the Crown. And it provides a foundation for shaping the future of the region through research, education, policy, management, and advocacy.

The Statement is a voluntary, non-binding "good faith" agreement; it does not replace or duplicate existing laws, agreements, policies, or community-based partnerships. It was prepared in consultation with several people (list on the web site) and discussed at the 2010 conference Remarkable Beyond Borders.

Any individual, organization, community, partnership, or agency that subscribes to the common values and shared principles is invited to be a signatory of the Statement and to become a Friend of the Crown. Signatories aspire to uphold the common values and shared principles in their activities and are invited to prepare a brief statement that describes their commitment to the Statement, including any actions taken in support of the common values and shared principles. These statements will be compiled as an addendum to the Statement and updated periodically to assess progress and guide future efforts.

The Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent serves as the coordinating body for this effort and will provide ongoing support in the distribution, use, and updating of the Statement. The Statement is a living document; it will be reviewed and revised periodically by the Roundtable Steering Committee to ensure that it reflects the values of people who care about the Crown of the Continent.

The Landscape

The Crown of the Continent is an 18 million acre ecosystem, which is over 7 million hectares (for a widely accepted map of the region go to www.crownroundtable.net). In 1932, the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament designated Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks, which define the core of the region, as the world's first International Peace Park. The Crown is also home to three biosphere reserves and several other special designations.

The landscape of the Crown contains a diverse, functioning, relatively intact ecosystem; a geographically unique natural area containing the headwaters of three major water systems; habitat for a diverse array and a significant number of native flora and fauna; home for charismatic mega fauna, especially the grizzly bear that is strongly identified with this area; and a natural landscape with breathtaking scenic vistas, wildness, quietude, and dark skies that inspire a connection between people and nature. The Crown is a rare and special place.

The Communities

Indigenous cultures have inhabited the Crown for thousands of years. The communities of the region have always been connected to the landscape.

Timber harvests on state, provincial, private, and federal public lands have long contributed to the region's economies and to forest health. As the timber industry transitions into specialty products and potential biomass production, long-term health and productivity of forested lands and watersheds is crucial to communities in the Crown. Production agriculture from beef to barley and "farm to market" enterprises represent core economic activities and depend on healthy grasslands and sufficient clean water. Local food production is tied to a sustainable landscape and the people who live there. One of the biggest economic opportunities for communities around the Crown is tourism, which depends on healthy, accessible lands for recreation and visitation.

Common Values

The following values are derived from existing laws, treaties, agreements, policies, community-based conservation efforts, and a 2008 meeting of the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent. The values are not listed in any order of priority.

- We value healthy landscapes, and will work to maintain their many attributes, including but not limited to water quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat and corridors.
- We appreciate and respect diverse cultures, beginning with First Nations and Native Americans, and including the ranching, mountain, conservation, motorized and non-motorized recreation, arts, and other cultures.
- We are committed to fostering livable communities, including rural lifestyles and emerging urban centers.
- We value local economies based on agriculture, small business, geo-tourism, natural resource management (e.g., timber and oil and gas), ranching, and outfitting, and will work to enhance such opportunities and protect private property rights.
- We value working lands, and will work to sustain the region's agricultural heritage, open lands, native plant communities, and habitat for fish and wildlife.
- We value public lands and resources for multiple uses, and will work to restore and protect these lands and resources.
- We value public access, and seek to protect and enhance access for hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation pursuits in wilderness areas and other public lands.
- We support community-based partnerships, and will work to enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- We value learning about the region's history, communities, and landscapes, and will promote opportunities for education and research about this special place.
- We appreciate the need to work across boundaries, and will facilitate communication, cooperation, and partnerships across international, jurisdictional, cultural, public and private sectors, and other borders.

Shared Principles

Individual Rights and Responsibilities – The citizens of the Crown hold a fundamental right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy landscape. This right implies a shared responsibility for the use, management, conservation, and protection of the region's water and related land and air resources. The ecological integrity of the Crown and the physical health, economic well-being, and quality of life of current and future generations should be maintained and enhanced.

Ecological Integrity – The Crown functions today as a relatively intact ecosystem with remarkable diversity of life and ecological resilience. As demonstrated by numerous community-based conservation initiatives in the region, ecological integrity should be sustained, and if necessary restored, through scientific inquiry, community participation, land acquisition, best management practices, and regulation. Every effort should be made to avoid compromising the ecological integrity of the Crown.

Sustainable Communities -- In a sustainable community, a fundamental and inextricable linkage exists between economic activity and the goods and services provided by the natural ecosystem. Sustainable economic activity meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It respects the limits imposed by the capacity of the landscape, and promotes long-term economic viability, protects environmental values, and seeks to provide economic opportunities and quality of life for all people in the Crown.

Institutional Relations -- The United States, Canada, State of Montana, Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, numerous regional agencies and local governments, and several Native American and First Nation governments all have some legal authority and responsibility for matters pertaining to the Crown of the Continent. Since 2001, the Crown Managers Partnership has provided a forum to facilitate communication and cooperation among these entities. To achieve and maintain the integrity of the Crown, cooperation among these jurisdictions, in partnership with community-based groups, business and industry, private landowners, non-government organizations, and individual citizens is imperative.

Public Information, Education, and Participation – Citizen participation is the cornerstone of developing and implementing public policies that promote a clean environment, strong economy, and high quality of life in the Crown of the Continent. Such participation ensures that the needs and concerns of interested individuals are heard, understood, and incorporated into policy and management plans. To participate effectively, citizens must be informed of political, ecological, social, and economic issues in the region. This requires timely, accurate, and accessible information; an inclusive forum in which to voice concerns; and a mechanism to become involved in formulating and implementing public policy.

Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent

The Roundtable is an ongoing forum to connect people that care about the Crown. It is not an official commission authorized by any government agency, nor is it any single group of people. Rather, it is place where Friends of the Crown and others can exchange ideas, build relationships, explore opportunities to work together, and jointly shape the future of this shared landscape.

The Roundtable is currently co-convened and staffed by the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and the Sonoran Institute. A broad-based Core Group provides input and advice on the activities of the Roundtable.