

# Chapter 24

## Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area



*Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services*

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# Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections:

### Section 1: Features Summary

This is a review of key features and processes that can be found in Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area. Visitor Services staff can use this section (plus Background Paper 2: Features Inventory: Big Picture Aspects) as a first stop for information for use in interpretation and information/orientation programming.

### Section 2: Program Statements and Implementation

This is a review and recommendations for Visitor Services Programming in ten areas of core competency:

1. Research
2. Information Orientation
3. Assisting Park Management
4. Interpretation
5. Education
6. Stewardship Involvement
7. Recreation Programming
8. Collaboration and Partnership
9. Tourism
10. Marketing

Visitor Services staff can use this section to make decisions on Visitor Services programming over the next five years.

## Key Constraint

Lack of staff at this site is the main constraining factor for developing the overall Visitor Services program. Staffing will limit what can be achieved over the next five years. In some cases core tasks can only be achieved with addition of highly skilled staff.

SAMPLE PAGES



## Section 1

### Features Summary



Figure 24.1  
Location of Fish Lake Provincial  
Recreation Area.

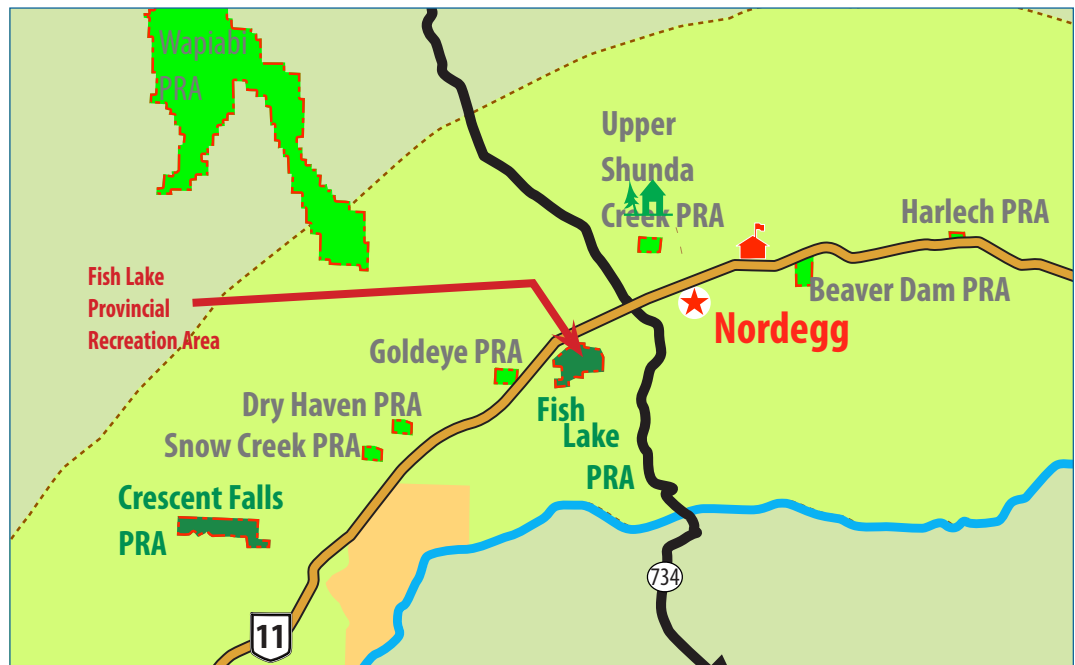
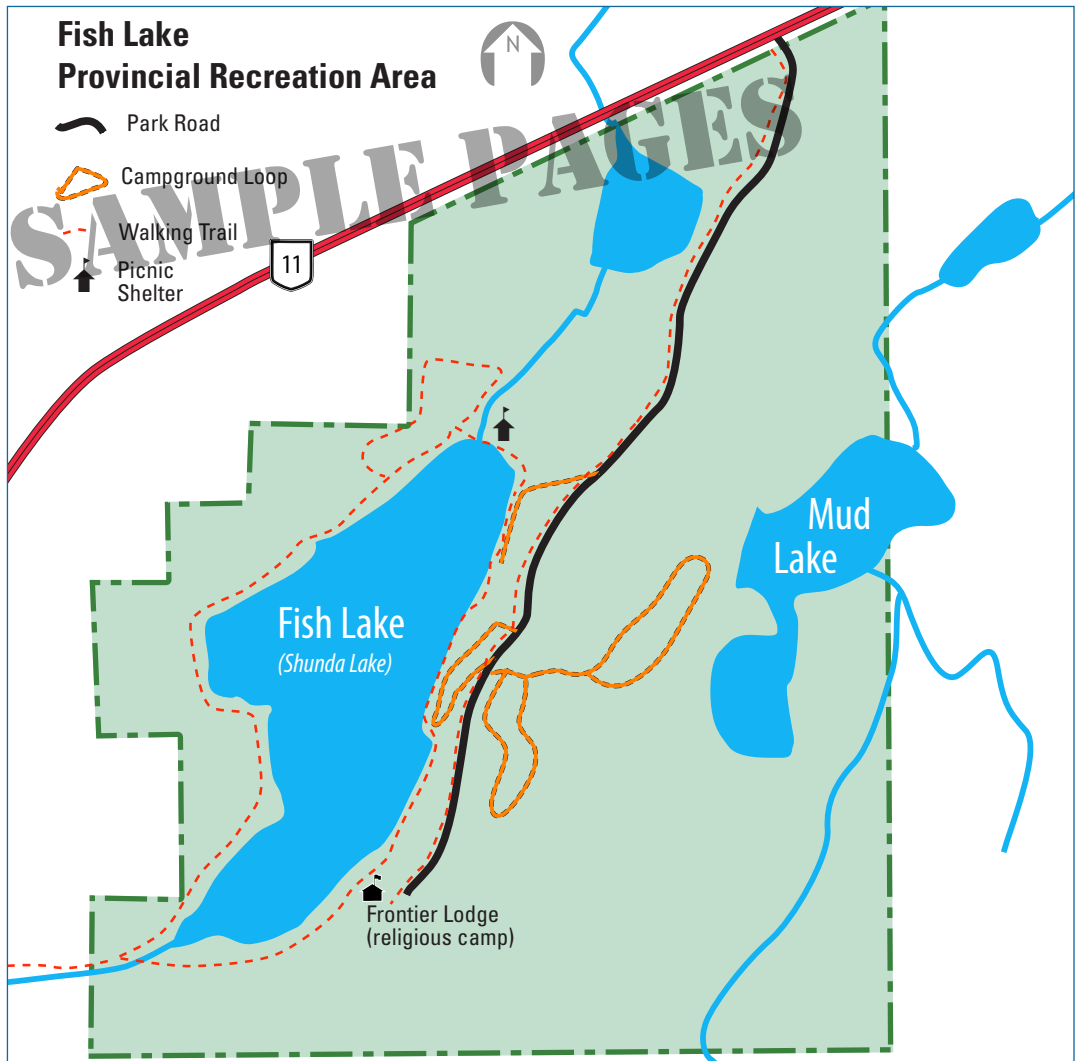


Figure 24.2  
Map of Fish Lake Provincial  
Recreation Area.





# Introduction

Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area is located approximately 5 km. west of Nordegg, and just west of the junction of Highway 11 and the Forestry Trunk Road (Rd. 734)—see Figure 24.1. It is a small 408 hectare parcel of land that encompasses Fish Lake (also known as Shunda Lake) and most of Mud Lake. Its campground consists of 92 sites contained in four loops (see Figure 24.2).

General information about natural and cultural features of Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area is very limited. It has no biophysical inventory or management plan. Some information on the area including Fish Lake is included in:

*Biophysical Inventory And Land Use Evaluations Of The Nordegg Corridor Study Area*, by W.S. Taylor, K. Timoney and L. J. Knapik (1991).

Since the release of this document, there appears to have been no further comprehensive surveys of this recreation area.

### What Are Provincial Recreation Areas

According to the Alberta Parks website ([www.albertaparks.ca/aboutparks.aspx](http://www.albertaparks.ca/aboutparks.aspx)), Provincial Recreation Areas are managed with facilitation of outdoor recreation as the primary objective.

Many play a significant role in management of adjacent Crown lands and waters by localizing the impact of overnight camping and serving as staging areas for recreation activities on crown land.

Some Provincial Recreation Areas are intensively developed, while others such as Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area remain largely in a more rustic state.

## Features Review

### Geology

#### Foothills

Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area is located in the Upper Foothills Subregion of the Rocky Mountain Foothills Region. The foothills are a band of parallel, northwest-southeast trending low ridges and valleys typical of southwestern Alberta. They form a 20 to 50 km. wide transition zone between the more rugged, higher elevation, Rocky Mountains and the rolling, lower elevation Southern Alberta Uplands (see Background Paper 2 for more details).

#### Bedrock

There is no exposed bedrock in this provincial recreation area. However, there are views of exposed bedrock ridges that can be seen from viewpoints beside Fish Lake (see Figures 24-3 and 24.4).

Bedrock in this site is made up of Paleozoic marine and non-marine Mesozoic sandstones, siltstones and shales.

#### Surface Features

The area surrounding Fish Lake was once covered in deep glacial ice—part of the North Saskatchewan Glacier that flowed down and enlarged the North Saskatchewan River Valley. Later, the retreating glacier left thick subglacial deposits including drumlins. None have been identified within the boundaries of the provincial recreation area.

#### Hydrology

The recreation area lies within the North Saskatchewan River drainage basin. Fish Lake is fed by a stream flowing from the southwest as well as many small streamlets along its margins. The outflow of the lake flows to the north east (see Figure 24.2).



Figure 24.3 View of the Brazeau Range from the west shore of Fish Lake.



Figure 24.4 View of a ridge of bedrock from the east shore of Fish Lake.

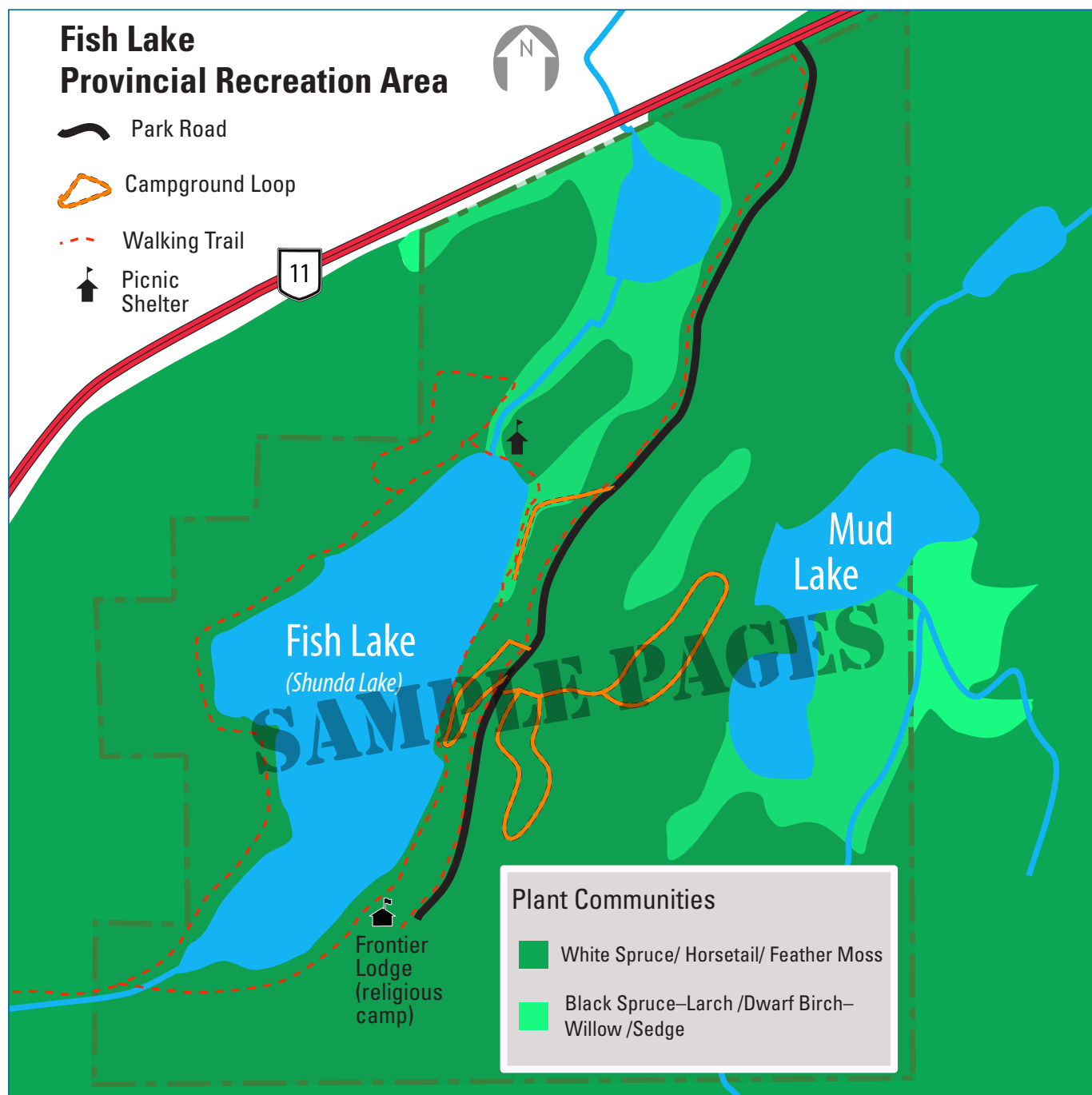


Figure 24.2 5  
General location of major vegetative communities in Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area.

## Lakes



Figure 24.6 A panorama view of Fish Lake from its north shore.



Figure 24.7 The Fish Lake water level control weir is located at the north end of the lake and is part of the trail that accesses the Resource Management Trail.

### Fishing

The stocked rainbow trout attract anglers year-round.

Spring, summer and fall fishing takes place from the shore, from the fishing dock located at the dayuse area and from on the water in self-propelled floater suits and from boats.



The recreation area contains two lakes, Fish Lake (also known as Shunda Lake) and Mud Lake. Unfortunately neither has been surveyed for the Atlas of Alberta Lakes.

Fish Lake is the largest and deepest of the two. Mud Lake is in advanced stages of biological succession to a wetland.

### Fish Lake

This lake is probably the site's main recreation attraction. The lake has clear cool water and appears to be oligotrophic or mesomorphic. According to the Junior Forest Wardens who developed a trail guide for the site, Alberta Environment installed a water level control weir (Figure 24.7) in 1975 at the opening of the lake's outflow stream. This structure attempts to maintain high water levels in the lake as part of a fish management program.

Each May, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development stocks the lake with approximately 20,000 7cm-long rainbow trout. In the same month, an additional 75 large (> 50 cm) rainbow trout are also released in the lake. The cool water and abundant aquatic insect and minnow population support these fish until they are caught by the many avid anglers who come to the recreation area to fish.

## Historical and Culture Features

There is currently no information about historical or cultural features in the recreation area.



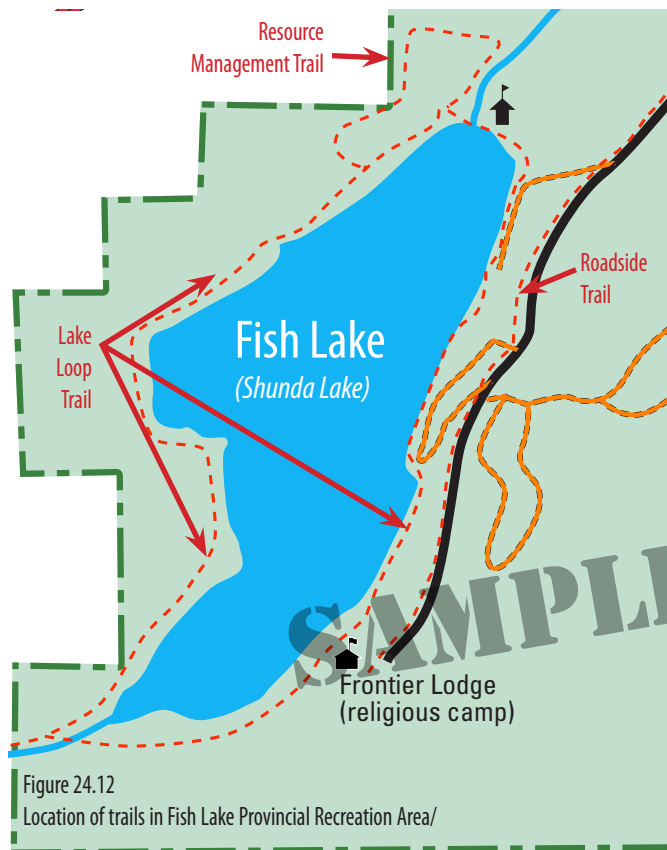
## Chapter 24: Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations

### Trails within the Recreation Area

Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area has three trail systems:

- the Resource Management Trail
- a trail that circles Fish Lake
- a trail that runs along the west side of the main park road

See Figure 24.12.



### Resource Management Trail

This is a short 1.8 km. trail built in 1984-85 by inmates of the Nordegg Minimum Security prison camp. It loops through a mature forest hillside on the northwestern edge of the recreation area (see Figure 23.12). It has a 2 page information brochure put together by the Rocky Rams Junior Forest Wardens that is dispensed from a brochure rack attached to a kiosk at the trailhead of this trail. The club also is part of the provincial adopt-a-trail program—they maintain it year-round. Key components of the trail are described below.

#### Access

Access to this trail is limited by a narrow causeway along the top of the weir that regulates flow out of Fish Lake. Baby strollers and wheelchairs can not pass through this narrow passageway.



#### Trailhead

The trailhead consists of a kiosk that includes a trail guide brochure dispenser, a freestanding introductory trail sign, a numbered post and a bench.



Three of these components (kiosk, sign, and bench) are aged and the sign kiosk no longer meets Alberta Parks Sign Program standards.

Much of the trail is in good condition with a wide gravel base. However some sections are flooded and more difficult to navigate.

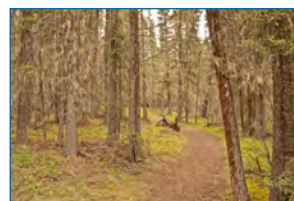


Figure 24.14  
Typical section of trail.



Figure 24.15  
A wet section of trail at post #13.



## Section 2

### Program Statements and Implementation





### Introduction

Fish Lake is one of the most important minor Alberta Parks Properties in the David Thompson Corridor. It has a popular campground that is often full on summer weekends. The annual stocking of rainbow trout attract anglers from many parts of central Alberta. Its proximity to numerous trails for ATVs, snowmobiles, hikers and mountain bikers on nearby public land attract many soft and hard outdoor recreationists from across the province. Alberta Parks staff also indicate that in the fall, hunters often use the park campsites as base camps for hunting on nearby public land.

As with other program statements in this plan, program statements are based on the ANZECC Best Practice Model in Park Interpretation and Education ([www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/best-practice/pubs/interp-and-edu.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/best-practice/pubs/interp-and-edu.pdf)).

This section addresses ten areas of core competency for Visitor Services staff:

- Research
- Information Orientation
- Assisting Park Management
- Interpretation
- Education
- Stewardship Involvement
- Recreation Programming
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Tourism
- Marketing

### Constraints on Visitor Services

The major constraint on developing, delivering and evaluating Visitor Services programming and/or coordinating and monitoring programs delivered by contractors, partners and volunteers at this site is lack of staff.

Because limits on staff and resources, this section is brief.

### The Future

This site has potential to become much more important over the next ten to twenty years. Nearby Nordegg has been designated as one of several development nodes along the David Thompson Corridor. Clearwater County is encouraging and enabling residential and resort development in this node. Many summer and retirement residences are being built or will be built. Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area along with other nearby Alberta Parks sites may become important dayuse destinations for the growing community of Nordegg.

As well, Alberta Parks staff indicate that Fish Lake Recreation Area may be extensively expanded and be designate as a provincial park. Both the expansion of Nordegg's population and the expansion of Fish Lake PRA will very likely increase demand for Visitor Services programs and the need for year-round Visitor Services staff.

### Visitor Analysis

No detailed surveys of daysue and campers has been conducted by Alberta Parks. However Alberta Parks staff have provided anecdotal information that suggests most visitors are from Central Alberta. Most prefer rustic campsites like those found in this recreation area to more crowded sites with more amenities such as Crimson Lake Provincial Park. A significant number are multiple repeat visitors that come to fish regularly and know the site's trails.

Fishing is an important activity at this site. This author's experience with anglers is that there is a broad spectrum of interest, and engagement lake ecology and aquatic biology. Some fly fishers are extremely knowledgeable about aquatic invertebrates and tie their own dry and wet fly lures that match local hatches of aquatic life in the lakes and rivers they fish. Others are less interested in this aspect and tend to use one or two favourite lures year-round.

### Market Analysis

The market analysis chapter of this plan includes a summary of Soft Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts. This most likely represents the major group of visitors to the recreation area. Visitor Services staff should use this summary when developing approaches to programming at these sites.

## 1. Research

### Introduction

#### Current Conditions

##### Biophysical Research

There does not appear to be a specific biophysical study of this recreation area. Some general information is available for the Nordegg Corridor Area—including Fish Lake (Taylor et. al., 1991. *Biophysical Inventory And Land Use Evaluations Of The Nordegg Corridor Study Area*). However, very little site specific data for the recreation area is included there.

##### Archeological/Anthropological Research

As stated earlier, there appears to be no studies of the historical and cultural features of the recreation area. The site is small. It is possible that there are no significant features.

##### Visitor Research

Apart from general campground statistics there do not appear to be any studies of recreation area visitors that provide information needed to develop user profiles.

### Implementation Recommendations

#### Natural History Research

Focus research on the following :

##### Lake Ecology

1. Work with Alberta Government agencies such as Sustainable Resource Development and the Alberta Conservation Information Management System, the Alberta Lake Management Society and Alberta academics specializing in research on lake ecology to develop and deploy regular research on the health and ecology of Fish Lake
  - work with Alberta government agencies and academic researchers to identify areas of research that can take place at Fish Lake
  - work with Alberta Lake Management Society to develop a citizen science program for gathering and recording data on the ecological health of Fish Lake

##### Forest and Wetland Ecology/Botany/Wildlife biology

1. Encourage and enable academic researchers to include Fish Lake in any studies being conducted in the Nordegg area.
2. Develop partnerships with local and regional nature clubs to conduct plant and wildlife surveys in recreation area's forests and wetlands.

##### Anthropology/Human History

1. Encourage and enable academic researchers to include Fish Lake in any studies being conducted in the Nordegg area.

# Chapter 24: Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations

## Research on Visitor Use

Focus research on the following areas (see Chapter 3: Best Practice in Visitor Analysis).

### Visitor Monitoring

1. Continue to gather information on visitation numbers and seasonality of use:
  - continue to record campground statistics
  - begin to record dayuse statistics year round
    - vehicle counts in the dayuse area
    - trail counter on trail accessing the Resource Management Trail trailhead
  - install trail counters on all trails in the recreation area
    - data collection year-round (winter will show cross-country skiing use)

### Visitor Profiling

1. Develop profiles of all major user groups of this recreation area:
  - develop relationship with social science researchers
    - look for experts who understand Alberta Parks as and agency and nature-focused park users (see Preliminary List of Social Science Research Experts, in Chapter 20)

- work with social science experts to develop and deploy effective techniques for developing accurate profiles of visitors
  - determine the percentage of multiple repeat visitors
- use data gathered determine media and approaches for engaging these types of visitors

Each year, analyze these data to identify:

- trends in uses
- level of use
- seasonality of use
- changes in visitor profiles

## Research Local Recreation Opportunities

1. Work with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Travel Alberta and Tourism Nordegg to develop and maintain an up-to-date catalogue of trails, and recreation sites in the Nordegg area.
  - this information will be formatted and made available to users of visitors to Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area

## 2. Information/ Orientation

### Introduction

Accurate, up-to-date information/orientation is important for first time visitors and for multiple repeat visitors. As well, consistent design and look and feel of signs, brochures and other Alberta Parks materials ensure that visitors recognize that they are visiting an Alberta Parks property.

The recreation area's information/orientation materials need to be upgraded and updated.

### Implementation Recommendations

As soon as time and budget allow Visitor Services staff will:

1. Each year recruit a summer campground host to distribute information/orientation materials and self-guided interpretive packages.
2. Update all existing recreation area maps. This will include
  - Alberta Sign Program standards including use of Alberta Parks colours, font families, wordmarks and layouts
  - location of recreation area boundaries
  - location and names of all trails plus length, degree of difficulty and estimated time to travel

These maps will be located at all information kiosks in the park and on all information/orientation brochures.

3. All recreation area boundaries will be signed using designs outlined in the Alberta Parks Sign Program manual.
4. All information/orientation signs will be planned and monitored following the system set out in the Alberta Parks Sign Program manual.
5. Gather information and map locations of nearby trails and recreation opportunities in the Nordegg area
  - to be made available to visitors via a range of media that can include: Alberta Parks website and Facebook pages, brochures, posters etc.

## 3. Assisting Recreation Area Management Team

### Introduction

A role of Visitor Services is to assist the district management team though supporting the Three-E management model which has three parts:

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement

In most cases, Visitor Services staff will be involved with the education component of this model.

### Implementation Recommendations

1. District Visitor Services staff will meet annually with the Alberta Parks management team in charge of Fish Lake PRA and the management contractor to identify key visitor and resource management issues that need to be addressed in the coming year. Visitor Services staff will develop appropriate information/education materials and media to assist these initiatives.

Interpretive Themes For Fish Lake Provincial recreation Area		Priority
<b>Theme A</b>	<b>Fish Lake is a healthy, clean, cool lake typical of the upper foothills natural subregion. It supports an abundant population of stocked rainbow trout.</b>	
Subtheme A1	Each May, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development releases many hatchery-reared rainbow trout into the lake. These game fish feast on the natural bounty of the lake's food web.	High
Subtheme A2	You can discover the amazing, changing world of lake life using simple tools every time you visit.	High
Subtheme A3	By studying the aquatic life in the lake, you can choose appropriate lures that mimic the trout's current food and improve your angling success.	High
Subtheme A4	You can share your lake life discoveries and fishing knowledge with Alberta Parks staff and other visitors.	High
Subtheme A5	Healthy lakes require healthy forests. The complex of forests and wetlands surrounding this lake hold, filter and cool water making it an ideal habitat for trout.	High
<b>Theme B</b>	<b>By walking or cycling through the recreation area you can discover the forest and wetlands that are typical of the Upper Foothills Natural Region of Alberta.</b>	
Subtheme B1	Each season you walk one of the recreation area's trails you can discover new plants and fungi and observe changes in their flowering, fruiting and growth.	High
Subtheme B2	Each time you visit the recreation area you can observe wildlife going about their busy lives.	High
Subtheme B2	You can share your forest and wetland discoveries with Alberta Parks staff and other visitors.	High
Subtheme B4	Protect wildlife and native plants, walk lightly on the land.	High
<b>Theme C</b>	<b>You can get involved with the care of this recreation area.</b>	
Subtheme C1	You can learn about lake stewardship and take part in the study and care of Fish Lake through the Lake Watch volunteer program.	Moderate
Subtheme C2	You can learn about the recreation area's forests and wetlands and take part in their stewardship through programs sponsored by Alberta Parks and its partners.	Moderate
<b>Theme D</b>	<b>There are many recreation opportunities for visitors to this site.</b>	
Subtheme D1	The recreation area is a great place for family camping, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, hiking and cycling. Use of ATVs and snowmobiles are not permitted on this recreation area.	High
Subtheme D2	Nearby public lands offer opportunities for a wide variety of self-propelled and motorized recreation activities.	High
<b>Theme E</b>	<b>Make sure that you have a safe visit.</b>	
Subtheme E1	Keep safe on the water. Fish Lake is a cold water lake where sudden storms can flash in from the mountains. Watch the weather and follow Alberta boat safety regulations.	Moderate
Subtheme E2	You are in Alberta wilderness, home of large carnivores such as cougars and bears. Never approach large wildlife. Make sure that you do not leave food and garbage out to attract wildlife. Report all sightings of bears and cougars.	High

### 4. Interpretation

#### Introduction

At current low staff levels, and the presence of several other highly used sites in the David Thompson Corridor that require visitor services makes it likely that Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area will have very limited interpretation services. And that those that are provided will be non-personal. A further option for delivery of interpretation programming may include partnerships with groups located in the Nordegg area to develop and

deliver of some interpretation programming on-site. See Section 8. Collaboration and Partnerships below for more information.

The latter option is likely to be limited. Alberta Parks staff have indicated that many of these potential partners do not have the capacity to deliver programming that meets Alberta Parks standards.

#### Interpretive Themes for Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area

Themes and subthemes provide focus and structure and help to identify major areas of Visitor Services effort. Interpretive themes and subthemes for Visitor Services in this recreation area are listed on the following pages.

Themes guide the development of both personal and non-personal services.

Each theme is broken down into several subthemes which are usually stated as simple sentences. Subthemes guide Visitor Services staff in developing accurate, relevant and timely Visitor Services offerings. They provide more focus. Most Visitor Services offerings will include several subthemes from one or two themes (see the recreation area's interpretive themes and subthemes on the facing page).

#### Using Themes and Subthemes in Planning and Evaluating Visitor Services

All Visitor Services offerings must fit into the matrix of themes and subthemes. When developing a new program, Visitor Services staff will choose between one to three themes as the guidelines for developing the focus of a Visitor Services offering. For adding further structure, several subthemes can be used to develop the Visitor Services offering.

Another way of thinking is that themes and subthemes are the main learning objectives for the target audiences/participants. Visitor Services staff will then use information from the features inventory and develop activities to support these learning goals.

#### Plan

##### Target Audiences

##### Lack of information

There have been no direct studies on visitors to this recreation area. Information gathered here is anecdotal from Alberta Parks staff.

##### Visitor Focus

The focus of interpretation services will be on people who visit the recreation area. Until year-round data collection is in place the following can be assumed:

- most visitors are campers
- well over 50% are multiple repeat visitors who have camped here over many years, many come several times in a year
- there may be significant number of day users staying at other nearby campgrounds resorts or random camping on public land
- a large portion of all visitors are anglers

##### Remote Visitors

Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area is small and has no special features that set it apart or make it an area of special interest. This site will not attract a following of remote visitors (people who find the site interesting but are unable to visit the recreation area in person so are interested in virtual visits).

##### The Planning Process

All new interpretation programs must follow the standard planning process identified in Chapter:11: Visitor Services Program Implementation. A Program Planning Form must be used by Alberta Parks staff or by partners and contractors who develop interpretive programs.



### Evaluate

Evaluation of all interpretation programming should be done annually by a team of Alberta Parks staff. Best practice in evaluation goes well beyond collecting information about participant satisfaction. It requires assessment of success in reaching planning objectives concerning cognitive (learning information and developing skills) behavioral and attitudinal objectives identified in the program plan.

Alberta Parks is developing a new program evaluation system. This should be used as soon as it is available.

### Support

All interpretation initiatives in this recreation area are dependant on Alberta Parks staff being available either to develop, deploy and evaluate programming directly or to coordinate, assist and mentor partners contracted to develop programs. Also, Visitor Services staff with competency in interpretation will also be required to evaluate programming delivered by partners.

The budget for this site should have a line item identifying funds available for development, deployment, maintenance and evaluation of interpretive programming.

As with staff at other sites in the David Thompson Corridor, Visitor Services staff involved with programming at Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area will require regular professional development and training to keep up-to-date with current technology, techniques and learning theory.

## Implementation Recommendations

### Increase Information About Fish Lake PRA

#### Research

1. Encourage and enable research on natural history and cultural history of Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area (see Section 1 Research of this chapter).
2. Encourage and enable research on visitors and remote program audiences with partners such as Travel Alberta and/or through contracts with social science research experts (see sidebar on this page). Focus on campers and dayuse visitors
  - current numbers
  - duration of stay
  - percentage of multiple repeat visitors
  - place of origin
  - activities they take part in
    - in the recreation area
    - outside the recreation area

#### Process

1. Visitor Services staff, partners and contractors must use a program planning form for all new interpretive programs.
2. Develop an effective evaluation system for each area of interpretation (non-personal, personal, outreach to remote audiences).
  - use the current Alberta Parks evaluation form as a start

#### Staffing

1. When budget allows, hire a full-time Visitor Services officer in charge of developing programs for the western half of the David Thompson Corridor (concentrating on Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve, White Goat Wilderness Area and Siffleur Wilderness Area but including Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area).

#### Staff Professional Development

Developing interpretation programs requires knowledge and skills in the fast-changing fields of hand-held devices (smartphone and tablet computer applications) and web-based technology (social media, websites, streaming video, blogs, etc.) and informal learning.

1. Visitor Services staff in the David Thompson Corridor will need to attend workshops and conferences in the field of heritage interpretation and be members of national and regional professional associations.

## Options for Redevelopment of the Trail Guide for the Fish Lake Resource Development Trail

### Option 1:

#### Work with the Local Junior Forest Warden Group as a Guide and Mentor

1. Introduce the group to the Alberta Parks Planning process
  - use either the existing planning form used by some Alberta Parks or the planning form at the end of Chapter 11 of this plan
2. Review target program participants (emphasize that many will be knowledgeable multiple repeat visit families)
  - have group think what discovery activities that they would like to take part in if they visited this trail often in several seasons of the year
3. Choose some appropriate discovery activities
  - walk the trail with the group and brainstorm and choose a number of activities that are doable along the trail
  - choose locations where activities can take place
  - brainstorm and choose some ways that trail users can share their discoveries (from these activities) with their group, Park staff and other trail users
4. Use the program planning form to:
  - choose two or a maximum of three Fish Lake PRA interpretive themes and/or subthemes from the table on page 24.22 (these will guide the content developed for the program and will inform the development of a program interpretive theme)
  - make a program interpretive theme (the main idea that the group wants participants to leave with) (e.g., *The forest is a world of constant change and activity that you can observe every time you walk-through it*)
5. Revisit the list of activities and locations developed in step 3 and choose the activities that best fit your program interpretive theme.
6. Thinking about what you know about the target participants, the site, the program's interpretive theme and the proposed activities work with the group to decide on method or medium for delivering this program You will likely need to go over Chapter 6: Presentation Options with the group—stress the strengths and weaknesses of popular options.
7. Complete the planning form and work with the group to develop the activities and trail guide.
  - throughout the project involve the group in formative evaluation activities of the activities that you develop
    - e.g., get members of the group to take their families and friends out on the trail to try out some of the activities make sure that the Junior Forest Wardens identify and record what worked and what did not. Meet with the group to work out ways to fix the problems.
8. Depending on the presentation methods and media chosen, you may have to work with the group to find funding and/or sponsorship for this project.

### Option 2:

#### Visitor Services staff redevelop the trail guide.

## On-site Interpretation Opportunities

### Personal Interpretation

Current low Alberta Parks staffing precludes on-site personal interpretation in the foreseeable future.

### Non-Personal Interpretation

1. As soon as possible, update and upgrade current Fish Lake Resource Management Trail trail guide. There are several important issues with the current trail and trail guide discussed in the sidebar on the facing page.

Choose option 1, 2 (see sidebar on this page) or another option developed by Alberta Parks staff.

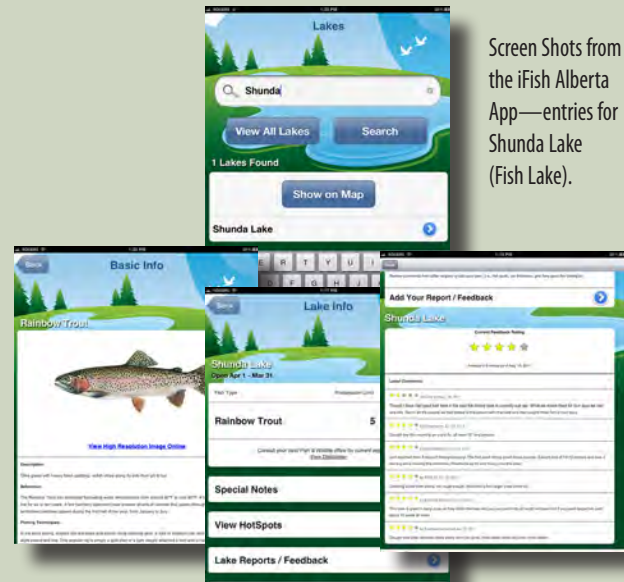
2. When staffing and budget permit, look into the market size and feasibility of developing
  - a section of the recreation area's website and facebook page for anglers to exchange information and photos on topics such as; about fish caught, successful lures and flies, ice conditions for ice fishers, lake health and stewardship initiatives or encourage anglers to make entries on the iFish Alberta iPad/iPhone app (see sidebar on the facing page)
  - family activity packs featuring guides and equipment for nature discovery activities
    - areas of activity could include aquatic life study and wildlife-watching
    - packs could be loaned out through the park contractor's store and/or by campground hosts
  - citizen science projects such as LakeWatch, IceWatch and PlantWatch
  - interpretive guides for other trails in the park
    - would likely require upgrading of major sections of the Lake Loop Trail

## Chapter 24: Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations

### The iFish Alberta iPad and iPhone App

This is a \$5 application for iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad that will soon be available for Android devices. It is designed for Alberta Anglers who want to have information about fishing opportunities in Alberta and to be able to share information and their experience with like-minded fishers. Features of the app include:

- information on 700 Alberta lakes, ponds and reservoirs
- interactive directions to access each lake
- opportunities for anglers to:
  - share their experiences and information about successful lures
  - mark their personal hot spots at any lake; keep them to private, or share
- summary of catch and possession limits
- species reference including photos and, information
- a when-to-fish calendar
- real-time weather conditions and 4-day forecasts
- boat launch locations
- how tos and tips
- boating and fishing license requirements



Screen Shots from the iFish Alberta App—entries for Shunda Lake (Fish Lake).

## 5. Education

Alberta Parks staff indicate that a small number of school groups camp in Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area's group camp. These numbers are not recorded.

### Implementation Recommendations

Current staffing and the presence of other groups in the Nordegg Area that deliver school programming does not make it feasible for Alberta Parks to deliver school programming at this site. Also, Alberta Parks staff suggest that they may work with the Goldeye Centre and offer on-site programs at Fish Lake to compliment and enhance existing outdoor education programs.

## 6. Stewardship Involvement

It is likely that many of the visitors to Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area are multiple repeat visitors with a strong attachment to Fish Lake and its surrounding forest. Many within this group are likely to be interested in better understand and protecting Fish Lake.

Key stewardship projects for anglers include; LakeWatch and IceWatch. Families interested in forest stewardship could become involved with PlantWatch.

See Section 7 Collaboration and Partnerships for details on the groups that sponsor these programs.

### Implementation Recommendations

Beyond challenging and inspiring visitors to practice stewardship behaviours (e.g., reduce the amount of used fishing line and rubbish left around the shores of Fish Lake), limited Alberta Parks staffing will make it difficult for Visitor Services staff to lead stewardship programs. Instead, Alberta Parks may look to working with partners with long-established stewardship initiatives. However, these partnerships will require Alberta Parks staff time for establishing relationships and forming and maintaining partnerships with these groups, and for managing and evaluating these partnerships.

Key areas of Visitor Services activity will include:

1. Inform, encourage and enable stewardship behaviors by all visitors.
  2. Encourage, enable Stewardship/Citizen Science activities:
    - identify suitable partners and initiate stewardship projects with:
      - other agencies (see Section 8. Research in this chapter and Chapter 4: Partnership Analysis)
      - researchers who are willing to include Citizen Science components of their research
    - develop, lead, publicize and champion key stewardship projects that result from findings of professional and Citizen Science research
- This could include:
- trail maintenance and rehabilitation
  - habitat enhancement for rare species
  - further monitoring, censusing and behavioural studies of key species and habitats