

Chapter 8

District-wide Visitor Analysis



for the David Thompson Corridor

EcoLeaders Prepared by
Interpretation and Environmental Education
Box D82, Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G0
email: info@ecoleaders.ca phone: (604) 947-0483
www.ecoleaders.ca



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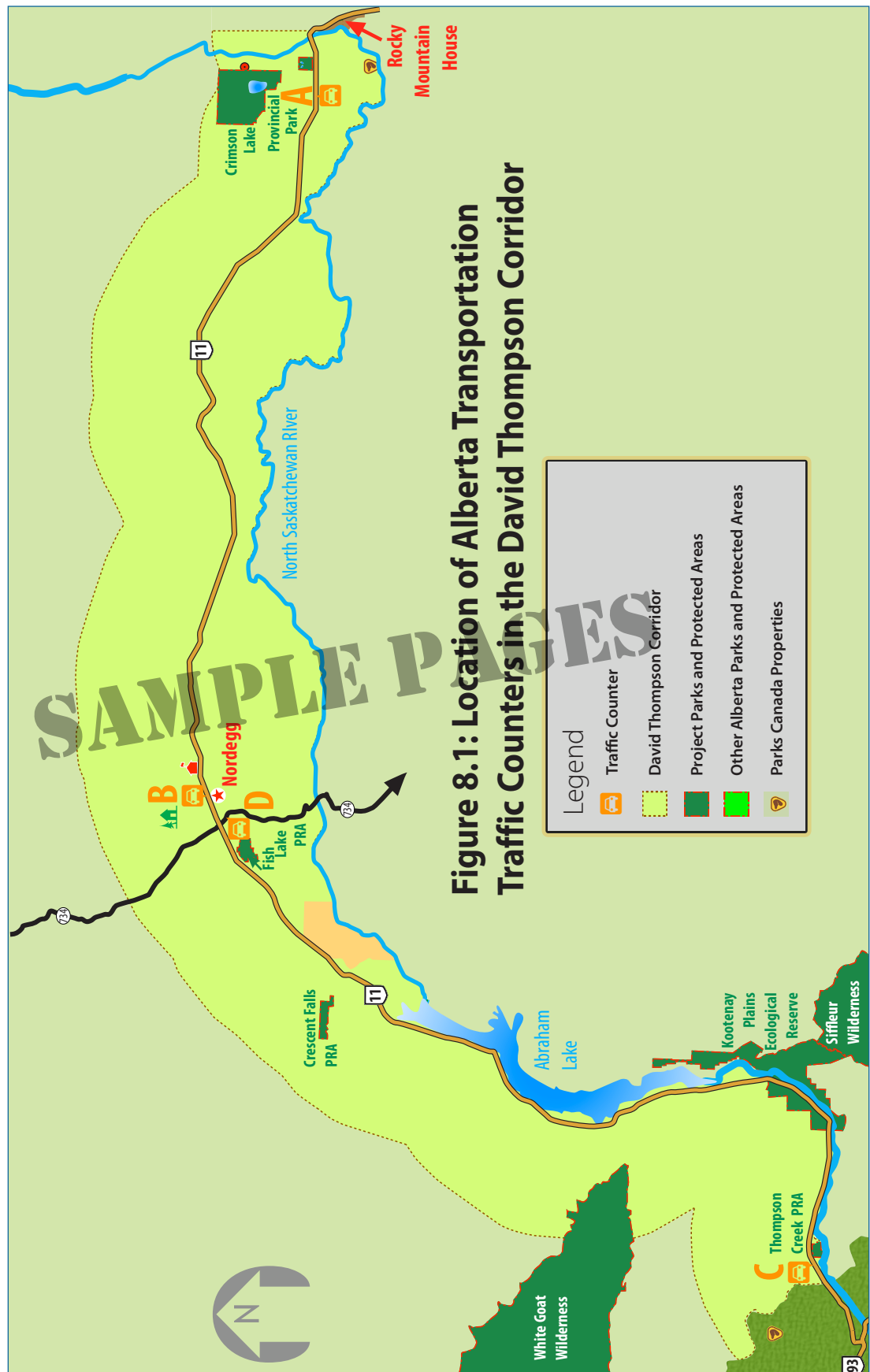
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Introduction

This chapter is a brief review of information about the use patterns of the David Thompson Corridor. Available statistics are summarized and recommendations for action are included when applicable.

This general information will be useful to Alberta Parks staff, partners and contractors when planning Visitor Services offerings at any Alberta Parks site in the David Thompson Corridor.

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Traffic on Major Roads in the David Thompson Corridor

Automobile traffic can be a good indicator of year-round use of an area. Alberta Transportation has four traffic counters located within the David Thompson Corridor. Three are located on the David Thompson Highway (Hwy 11) and one is on the Forestry Trunk Road (Hwy 734) just south of Highway 11 (see the map on the facing page for their locations). These recorders provide data such as the average daily two-way traffic each month. Note that Alberta Transportation has given each traffic counting station a unique eight digit ATR number. However, for easy communication these stations are referred to as Counter A, B, C and D. See the four charts on this page to see how the letter designations correspond with the sites' ATR numbers

The following is a review of these data for the year 2008 at each of the four recording stations.

Observed Trends

Equal Amounts of Traffic Moving East and West

Data collected from all four counters showed that volume of traffic flowing in each direction on Highway 11 and Highway 734 were very close to equal, that is there was no net flow of traffic in any one direction at any time of year.

Highway 11 has Diminishing Use from East to West

When comparing the use of Highway 11 from Traffic Counter A, B and C, it is clear that traffic volumes decrease as you move westward through the corridor. This confirms that Highway 11 is not a major connecting passageway between central Alberta and eastern British Columbia.

This implies that:

- a significant amount of traffic is local
 - especially near Rocky Mountain House
- a significant amount of traffic is stopping at destinations in the corridor
 - at campsites and recreation sites

Seasonal Use

Summer has the highest traffic use at all sites (see the charts on this page). Over 50% of traffic volume takes place in the months May through September:

Highway 11

- Counter A: Rocky Mountain House: 53%
- Counter B: Nordegg: 65%
- Counter C: Banff Park Gate: 74%

Highway 734

- Counter D: Nordegg: 68%

Figure 8.2 Average Daily Two-way Traffic (vehicles/day) at Traffic Counter A: 2008
ATR Number: 50110850: Rocky Mountain House—1.9 km west of the junction of Highways 11 and 734

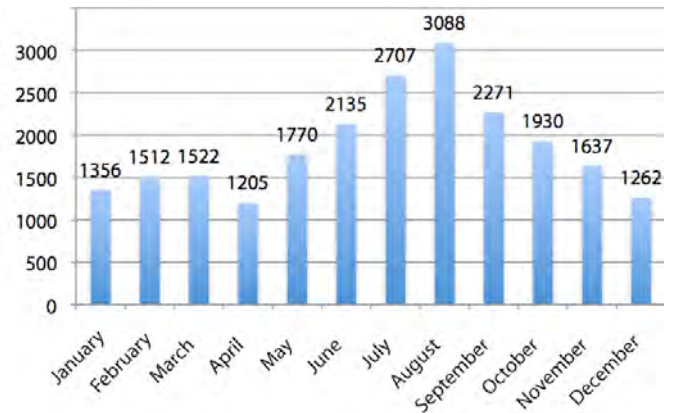


Figure 8.3 Average Daily Two-way Traffic (vehicles/day) at Traffic Counter B: 2008
ATR Number: 50110410: Nordegg—3.3 km east of the junction of Highways 11 and 734

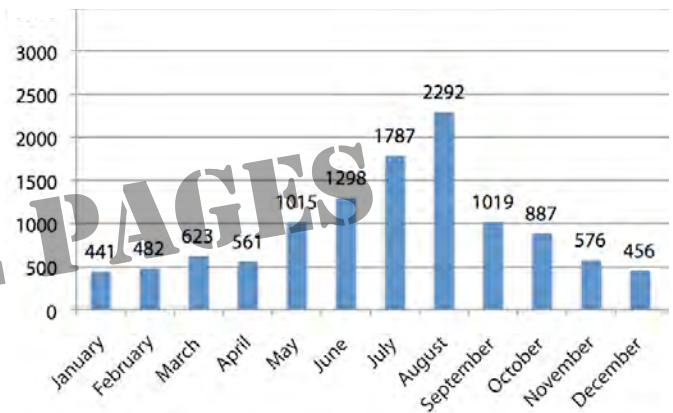


Figure 8.4 Average Daily Two-way Traffic (vehicles/day) at Traffic Counter C: 2008
ATR Number: 50110250: Banff Park Gate—2.3 km east of the Banff Park Gates

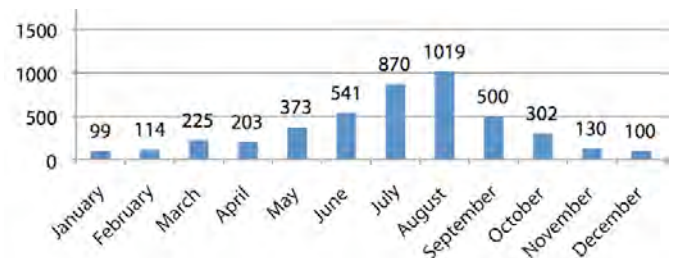
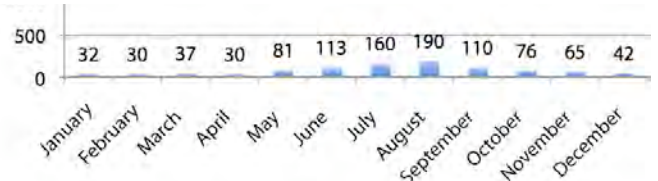


Figure 8.5 Average Daily Two-way Traffic (vehicles/day) at Traffic Counter D: 2008
ATR Number: 00402050: Nordegg—0.2 km south of the junction of Highways 11 and 734



Major Gateway

When comparing the volume of traffic entering the corridor from the east vs the volume entering from the west, it is clear the Rocky Mountain House is the major gateway to the David Thompson Corridor. The Banff Park Gate handles only 20% of the traffic volume compared to volumes on Highway 11 just west of Rocky Mountain House.

Highway 734 Has Relatively Little Use

As would be expected from a small unpaved road, Highway 734 is used by only a small percentage of people entering and leaving the David Thompson Corridor.

Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and the VS Program

1. The data from traffic counters indicates that the David Thompson Corridor is much more a destination where people likely stay for at least a few days than a transportation corridor where people simply pass through on the way to somewhere else.

This implies that the majority of users of park and protected areas in the corridor are multiple repeat visitors—potential Visitor Services program participants:

- have been to the area often
- often know a lot about the area
- have special places and activities that they come to enjoy

VS staff must develop and deliver services and programs that best fit the needs and interests of multiple repeat visitors. This can best be achieved through developing detailed visitor profiles for the sites in this plan (see site specific Visitor Analysis and Program Statement/Implementation chapters for more details on current knowledge of site visitors and recommended policies and procedures for developing and using accurate visitor profiles).

2. The main portal of entry into the David Thompson Corridor is the eastern end of the Corridor

- this is supported by long-term Alberta Parks and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development staff who indicate that most summer and winter visitors come from Edmonton and other central Alberta communities

This strongly suggests that VS staff must concentrate a majority of its “you are entering the David Thompson Corridor” greeting and information/orientation efforts in the eastern edge of the corridor.

- entry into the corridor from the west via Hwy 11 and from the north and south via Hwy 734 is not as significant
 - the level of greeting and information/orientation effort should correspond to the levels of traffic



Recommendations

To increasing understanding and awareness of visitation trends in the David Thompson Corridor, VS staff should :

- regularly review Highway 11 traffic counter statistics in the area
- assess locations annually
- work with Alberta Ministry of Transportation staff to move or add traffic counters to provincial roads where there are information gaps

Park User Statistics

The Data

Alberta Parks has campground use statistics for all of the Provincial Parks (Crimson Lake) and most of the Provincial Recreation Areas in the David Thompson Corridor. Campground use information is also reviewed in general below and in detail in following chapters.

Day use statistics were not available for any of the sites.

Vehicle counts were available for five sites:

- Crescent Falls PRA
- Crimson Lake Provincial Park
- Twin Lakes (part of Crimson Lake Provincial Park)
- Fish Lake PRA
- Siffleur Falls Parking Lot

Unfortunately, vehicle counts at these sites were inconsistent, none covered the same time periods. As a result meaningful comparative statistics and graphs have not been made.

Only limited statistics were available for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve. No user statistics were available for the White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas.

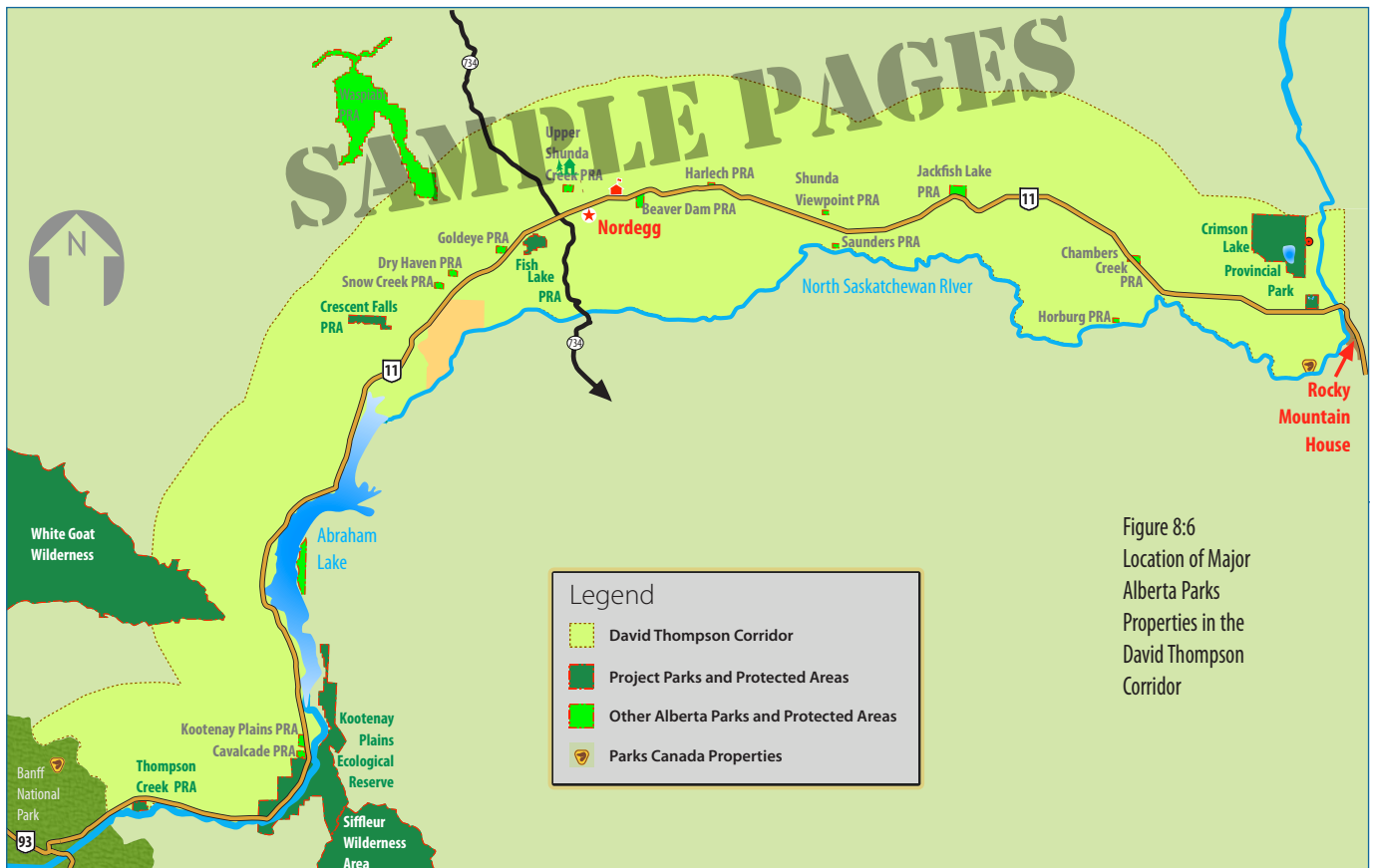


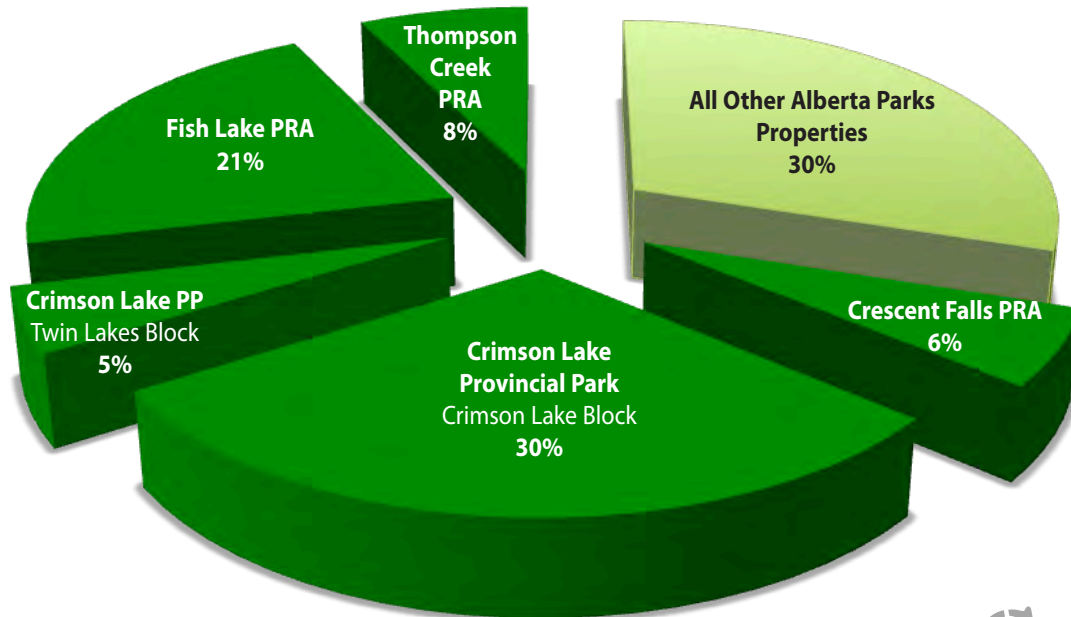
Figure 8. 7:

Percentage of overnight camping in Alberta Parks properties (in the David Thompson Corridor) 2000–2019

Major Properties (covered in this VS Plan)

Other Alberta Parks properties not covered in this plan

Note that data for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve and White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas was not available.



Site	Crimson Lake Provincial Park		Fish Lake PRA	Thompson Creek PRA	Crescent Falls PRA	All Other Alberta Parks Properties
	Crimson Lake Block	Twin Lakes Block				
Percent of Visitors	30 %	5 %	21%	8%	6%	30%
	35% total		70%			

The Big Picture

Figures 8.7 and 8.8 (see facing page) show the relative proportion of camper nights per year averaged over ten years (2000–2009) in the Alberta Parks properties in the David Thompson Corridor. (Note: Random camping data for the White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas was not available).

The data show the order of use as follows:

Crimson Lake Provincial Park <i>Crimson Lake Block</i> <i>Twin Lakes Block</i>	36 % 31 % 5 %
Fish Lake PRA	18 %
Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve <i>Cavalcade Campground</i> <i>Two O'Clock Creek Campground</i>	13 % 7 % 6 %
Thompson Creek PRA	8 %
Crescent Falls PRA	5 %

Alberta Parks Properties Not Covered in this Plan

Note that properties not covered in this Visitor Services plan account for one third of the annual camping activity in the David Thompson Corridor (Figure 8.8).

Of these properties, one account for over five percent of annual camping visits (Goldeye Lake PRA—6 percent).

Figure 8.8

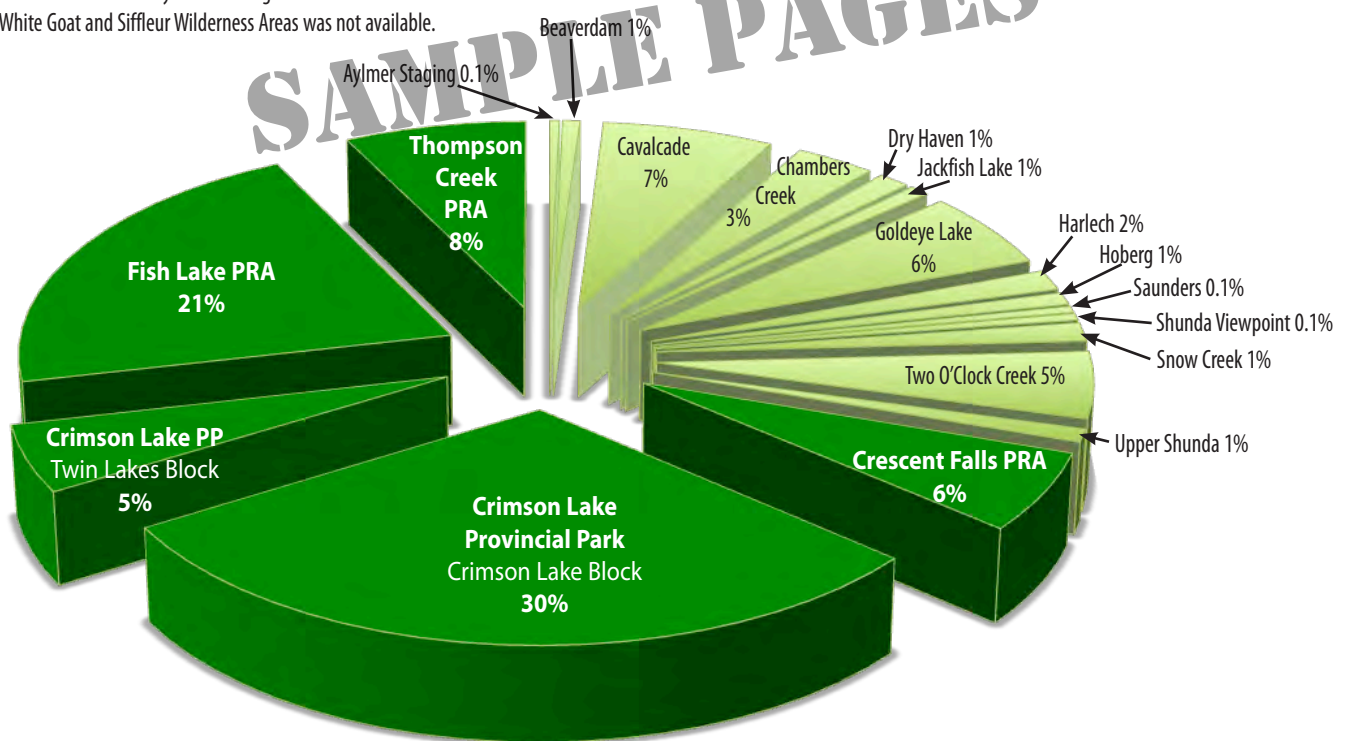
A more detailed break down of overnight camping in Alberta Parks properties (in the David Thompson Corridor) 2000–2019

■ Major Properties (covered in this VS Plan)

■ Other Alberta Parks properties not covered in this plan

Note that data for Kootenay Plains Ecological reserve

and White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas was not available.



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