

# Chapter 9

## Market Analysis



for Visitor Services in Alberta Parks Properties  
in the David Thompson Corridor

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SAMPLE PAGES

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# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

## Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide:

- a review of general market information
- a review and analysis of tourism research that can be applied to the David Thompson Corridor
- a brief overview of the school market for sites in the David Thompson Corridor
- a listing of implications for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- recommendations for action when applicable

### The Market for Visitor Services

This chapter is similar to visitor information and analysis (Chapter 8) but is larger in scope—looking at a larger area and broader information sources. Here the focus is on statistics and other information about the people that live within a reasonable travelling distance from the David Thompson Corridor, tourists passing through, outdoor adventurers coming to hike in the wilderness areas, and motor vehicle enthusiasts using the area's trails, logging roads and cut lines. The market research section looks at trends in economics, society and the environment that will or may have direct impact on who will visit the district.

Information sources include census reports, tourism studies, predictions on immigration, climate and economics. Information on social, demographic and activity trends from tourism research can often be directly applied to local park users.

### Current and Future Tourism Trends

Although there have not yet been any studies focusing on current and future tourism trends in the David Thompson Corridor, there are extensive data regarding the leisure, recreation and life-long learning trends in Alberta, Canada and North America. Reports from many sources including Travel Alberta and the Canadian Tourism Commission have been reviewed in this chapter. Using this information we have compiled a series of profiles on the types of people who can or do visit the David Thompson Corridor. These profiles are analyzed in terms of how Visitor Services programming can serve their needs and interests and recommendation are made for programming and additional research.

#### Note:

To date, no specific market studies have been conducted for individual Alberta Parks properties in the David Thompson Corridor. Therefore, until such site-specific studies are conducted, Visitor Services staff should use the information in this chapter for insight into current and future markets.

## The Major Market Areas For The David Thompson Corridor

The David Thompson Corridor is located entirely in Census Division in Clearwater County. Its market segments (the people that are currently visiting the David Thompson Corridor and those that could potentially use the district are described below:

### Major Market Segments

These regions are either close to the David Thompson Corridor or contain large populations.

- People Living Nearby
  - Census Division 9 (Clearwater County)
    - population 11,825
    - Rocky Mountain House
  - Census Division 8
    - population 175,335
    - Red Deer County
    - Lacombe County
    - Ponoka County
- Major Population Centres
  - Census Division 11 (Edmonton)
    - population 1,160,936
    - Brazeau County
    - City of Edmonton
    - Leduc County
    - Parkland County
    - Strathcona County
    - Sturgeon County
    - Wetaskiwin County
  - Census Division 6 (Calgary)
    - population 1,076,103
    - City of Calgary
    - Mountain View County
    - towns of Sundre, Olds and Didsbury

### Minor Market Segments

These regions further distant from the David Thompson corridor and account for less than ten percent of the potential local market. These include:

- smaller population areas further to the east
  - Census Division 10
    - population 86,796
    - Beaver County
    - Camrose County
    - Lamont County
    - Minburn County
    - Two Hills County
    - Vermillion County
  - Census Division 7
    - population 39,909
    - Flagstaff County
    - Paintearth County
    - Provost County
    - Wainwright County

The data used was from the 2006 federal census available through Statistics Canada at: [www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/search-recherche/1st/Page.cfm?Lang=E&GeoCode=48&Letter=C](http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/search-recherche/1st/Page.cfm?Lang=E&GeoCode=48&Letter=C).

Figure 9.1

The location of the David Thompson Corridor in Clearwater County.

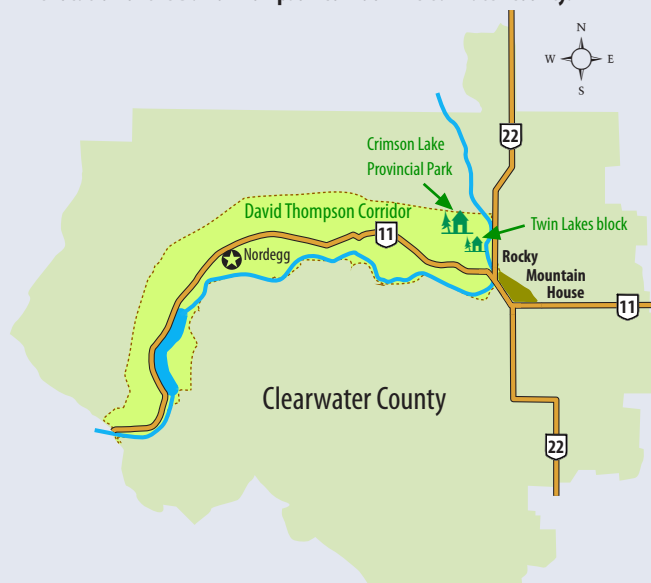


Figure 9.2

Major market regions for the David Thompson Corridor.

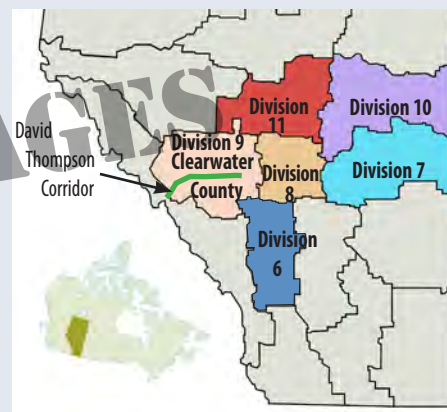
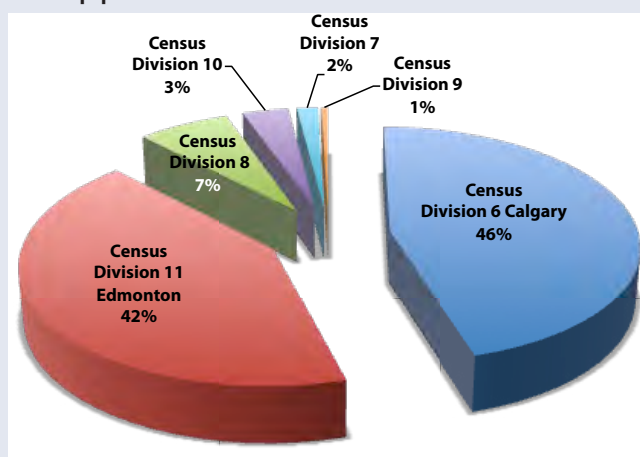


Figure 9.3

Relative population size of the market areas.





## General Market Information

### Market Segments

According to Alberta Parks staff working in the David Thompson Corridor most of the users of the corridor are:

- local from Rocky Mountain House and the Red Deer Area
- people from Edmonton and central Alberta
- people from communities to the south such as Sundre, Olds and Didsbury
- smaller numbers of people from Calgary and communities to the east of Red Deer

The general or precise levels of use by people from these regions was not available at the time of writing. This section provides a preliminary assessment of market segments and looks at current population information about the major market areas for the David Thompson Corridor. The sidebar on the facing page summarizes the market segments for the David Thompson Corridor based on the province's census divisions.

#### Assessing the Importance of the Market Segments

The major market areas can be analyzed using criteria such as:

- population size
- nearness to the David Thompson Corridor
- competition with other nearby parks and historic sites

Table 9.1 summarizes these criteria for each market segment and rates each segment's current and potential importance as markets for visiting the David Thompson Corridor.

#### Implications When Marketing the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

1. Currently the major market using the David Thompson Corridor are local communities especially in Clearwater County and Census Division 8 (Red Deer). This market is likely that these two market segments will remain an important source of visitors well into the future.

Visitor Services staff should:

- concentrate on developing profiles of visitors from these areas
- focus on community groups and individuals in these census as potential partners for delivery of interpretive and stewardship programs because they can easily travel to and from the David Thompson Corridor

2. Currently, Census Divisions 6 (Calgary) and 11 (Edmonton) are moderately important markets. But because of their large populations they have potential for becoming major sources of visitors.

In order to increase visitation from these areas Visitor Services staff will need to:

- increase Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor aimed at urban audiences
- promote both the hard and soft outdoor adventure opportunities in the corridor

**Table 9.1 Alberta Market Segments**

Census Division	Importance to Alberta Parks		Proportion of Total Market	Nearness to David Thompson Corridor	Competition from Other Parks
	Current	Potential			
<b>Census Division 8</b> (Red Deer)	High	High	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approx. 80 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 170 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>Moderate</b> Kerry Wood Nature Centre
<b>Census Division 9</b> (Clearwater County/ Rocky Mountain House)	High	High	1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 90 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Census Division 6</b> (Calgary)	Moderate	High	46%	Metropolitan Calgary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approx. 200 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 290 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Kananaskis Country, Fish Creek PP, Glenbow Ranch PP, Banff NP
	High	High		Olds, Didsbury, Sundry in Mountainview County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approx. 100 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 190 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Census Division 11</b> (Edmonton)	Moderate	High	42%	Metropolitan Edmonton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approx. 220 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 310 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> Beaver Hills, Lois Hole PP, Jasper NP
<b>Census Division 10</b>	Low	Moderate	3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approx. 300 km to Rocky Mountain House</li> <li>• approx. 390 km to Nordegg</li> </ul>	<b>Moderate</b> Beaver Hills
<b>Census Division 7</b>	Low	Moderate	2%		<b>Low</b> The Narrows PRA, Rochon Sands PP, Big Knife PP

- perhaps partner with outdoor recreation associations and clubs in Calgary and Edmonton to sponsor outings and events in the David Thompson Corridor
- use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Blogs) to feature upcoming events aimed
- consider developing outreach program aimed at involving city dwellers in virtual tours of the David Thompson Corridor and specific sites that may eventually entice them to visit and even participate in stewardship projects

3. The towns of Olds, Didsbury and Sundre in the Mountainview County in Census Divisions 6 are and will likely remain will remain an important source of visitors well into the future.

Visitor Services staff should:

- concentrate on developing profiles of visitors from these areas
- focus on community groups and individuals in these census as potential partners for delivery of interpretive and stewardship programs because they can easily travel to and from the David Thompson Corridor

4. Anecdotal information available from park staff suggest that currently of lower importance, providing only a small number of visitors. However, these areas have the potential with increased promotion of becoming source of more visitors.

Visitor Services staff should:

- use conventional and new media to promote the David Thompson Corridor to people living in these areas



### Recommendations

Visitor Services should test these four hypotheses to determine if the above conclusions are correct by:

1. Initially target marketing effort of Alberta Parks properties and Visitor Services in roughly the order of importance described above.
2. Encouraging and enabling direct research on the local market for the David Thompson Corridor including:
  - the home locations of visitors to the David Thompson Corridor, particularly visitors to Alberta Parks properties but also to adjacent crown lands
  - frequency of visits (how many times of year, what seasons
  - activities that they participate in
  - length of stay

This research could be conducted by:

- intra-agency partners e.g., Travel Alberta
- extra-agency partners e.g., university researchers such as Dr. Paul Eagles, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, who has conducted several important studies of parks in Alberta
- contracted professional researchers
- Alberta Parks staff

3. Regularly analyzing data gathered from Recommendation 2 to test these hypotheses and to look for changes and new trends in use:



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## Population Structure

Population profiles describe how the population of a region, province or country is divided into age groups. Understanding this structure gives Visitor Services staff a better insight into the potential program participants and users of visitor services and programs. For example, seniors are generally interested in longer, slower-paced programs and activities than families with small children. When they know the size of your potential audience groups, Visitor Services staff can make strategic decisions about the amount of effort they will put into development, promotion and delivery of targeted services.

A population profile is a graph showing each age group from newborn to senior citizen as a percentage of the total population. The factors that contribute to the shape of a profile are:

### Growth Factors

- birth rate
- immigration

### Decline Factors

- death
- emigration

Figure 9.5 provides examples of population profile graphs for the David Thompson Corridor's three main market areas; a major City (Edmonton), Census Division 8 and Census Division 9 (Clearwater County). A profile for the province of Alberta is included for reference.

## Discussion

### Alberta

The population profile for Alberta (see Figure 9.5 a) shows two bulges where certain age groups in the population are larger than the rest of the population.

The upper bulge represents the end of the baby boom generation. Baby boomers will be discussed in more detail in the MegaTrends section of this chapter that follows.

The lower bulge represents a large portion of young men and women in their twenties and thirties. A large portion of this group consists of immigrants to the province from the rest of Canada and the world who came to the province during the most recent oil boom.

### Census Divisions 6, 8 and 11

The shape of the population profiles for these regions that contain cities (see examples in Figure 9.5 b and c) are very similar to that of the Province. This suggests that these two regions have a normal large component of baby boomers and that each is home to a significant number of new immigrants to the province in their twenties and thirties. Interestingly, Statistics Canada indicated that the number of men is significantly larger than women. They suggest that the reason for this is the higher demand for men working in the province's oil fields.

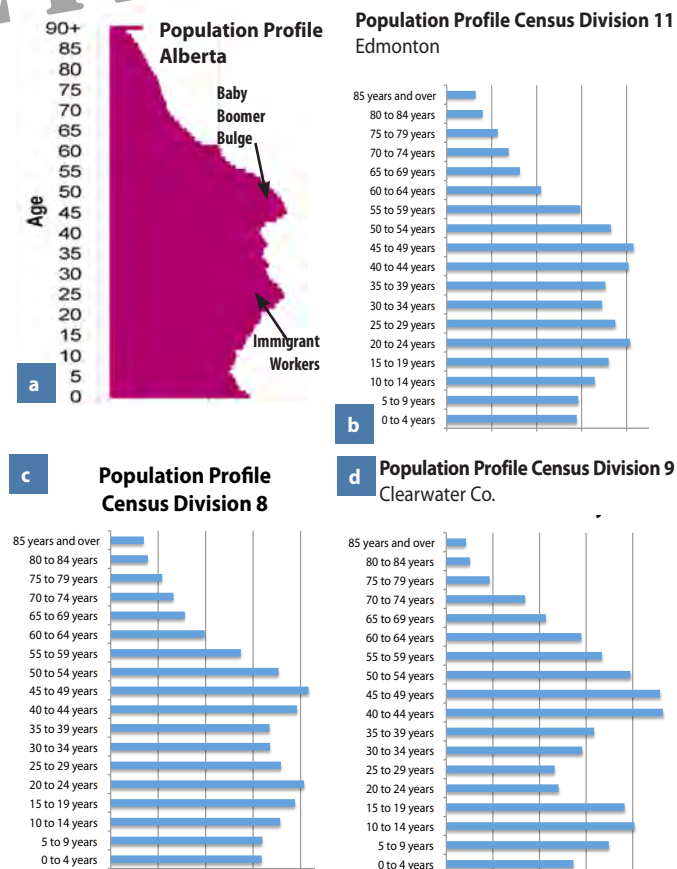
### Census Division 9 (Clearwater County)

The shape of the population profile of Clearwater County (see Figure 9.4 d) is significantly different than those of the province and the other two regions.

Although there is an upper bulge representing a significant proportion of baby boomers, there is no second bulge in the population of young adults (ages in their twenties and thirties). Instead, there is a constriction that indicates there are fewer young adults in this region than is average for the province. One explanation for this could be that in addition to some leaving to go to college and university, a significant number of people in these age groups have migrated to other parts of the province to take part in the tar sands oil boom in the north of the province.

**Figure 9.4**  
Population profiles for Alberta and the three major market areas for the David Thompson Corridor.

Data is from Statistics Canada: 2006 Census.



### Implications for the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

- Boomers and people in their twenties and thirties are potentially big target groups for Visitor Services programs.
  - Baby boomers will be investigated in greater depth later in this chapter.
  - People from Clearwater County will be different in that it appears that people in their twenties and thirties will be a much smaller group.



### Recommendations

It seems strange that the number of young men and women is lower in Clearwater County than in the rest of the province because Clearwater County has an active oil extraction industry.

- Visitor Services staff should develop a significant number of programs aimed at baby boomers and people in their 20s. Because of the wide age discrepancy and differences in experience and interests, it will be difficult to develop single programs that serve these two groups.

Table 9.2 Education levels for major market areas Ages 15-65	Census Division 11 (Edmonton Region)	Census Division 6 (Calgary)	Census Division 8 (Red Deer Region)	Census Division 10	Census Division 7	Census Division 8 (Clearwater County)
No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	22%	18%	27%	32%	33%	35%
High School Certificate or Equivalent	26%	26%	28%	25%	29%	27%
Apprenticeship, Trades Certificate or Diploma	11%	9%	13%	13%	13%	14%
College, CEGEP or other Non-university Certificate or Diploma	19%	18%	19%	17%	16%	17%
University Certificate or Diploma Below Bachelor Level	4%	5%	3%	3%	2%	2%
University Certificate, Diploma or Degree	18%	25%	10%	9%	7%	5%

Information from Statistics Canada's 2006 census data.

Table 9.3 Education levels for major market areas Ages 15-24	Census Division 11 (Edmonton Region)	Census Division 6 (Calgary)	Census Division 8 (Red Deer Region)	Census Division 10	Census Division 7	Census Division 8 (Clearwater County)
No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	38%	50%	44%	51%	50%	52%
High School Certificate or Equivalent	39%	33%	37%	31%	33%	31%
Apprenticeship, Trades Certificate or Diploma	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%	3%
College, CEGEP or other Non-university Certificate or Diploma	5%	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%
University Certificate or Diploma Below Bachelor Level	2%	<1%	2%	1%	<1%	3%
University Certificate, Diploma or Degree	7%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%

Information from Statistics Canada's 2006 census data.

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## Education

### Education Profiles: Whole Population

Statistics Canada provides data on the education of people in each of the major market areas. Table 9.2 shows the education levels for working people of all ages (15–65 years).

#### Similarities

All regions have similar:

- percentages of high school graduates (ranging between 26–28%)
- percentages of people with trade certificates (ranging between 11–14%)
- percentages of people with university certificates below the bachelor level (ranging between 17–19%)
- percentages of people with college and non-university diplomas (ranging between 2–4%)

#### Differences

- university education
  - the major cities of Edmonton and Calgary (Census Divisions 6 and 11) have significantly higher percentage (18%)
  - the Red Deer Region is lower at 10%
  - Clearwater County is much lower at 5%
- number of certificates, diplomas or degrees
  - Clearwater County is the highest at 35%
  - the Edmonton and Red Deer regions are lower at 22% and 27% respectively

Statistics Canada divided the above regional populations into three age classifications:

- ages 15–24
- ages 25–34
- ages 35–64

An examination of the three regions in each age grouping provides additional information about potential users of visitor services in the David Thompson Corridor.

### Education Profiles: Ages 15–24

#### Similarities

In this age group all three regions have similar percentages of people with high school certificates, university degrees, trade certificates and college degrees (see Table 9.3).

#### Differences

The main difference is that Clearwater county has a significantly higher percentage of people who have no certificates, diplomas or degrees.

- over half (53%)
  - this could likely at least partly be explained by a significant number of 15-24 year olds leaving the community to go to schools outside the county

### Education Profiles: Ages 25–34

This group is a traditionally important target group for visitor services in parks because this is an age when many couples start having children. Family programming will likely remain an important part of the Visitor Services program.

For a comparison of statistics for the three main target regions, see Table 9.4

#### Similarities

All regions have similar:

- percentage of people with high school certificates (ranging between 31% [Clearwater County] to 24% [Edmonton Region])
- percentages of people with college and non-university diplomas (ranging between 20–27%)
  - however, Clearwater County is the lowest at 20%
- percentage of people with university certificates below the bachelors level (ranging between 2% and 4%)

Table 9.4 Education levels for major market areas Ages 25-34	Census Division 11 (Edmonton Region)	Census Division 6 (Calgary)	Census Division 8 (Red Deer Region)	Census Division 10	Census Division 7	Census Division 8 (Clearwater County)
No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	12%	10%	17%	18%	19%	24%
High School Certificate or Equivalent	24%	23%	29%	26%	32%	31%
Apprenticeship, Trades Certificate or Diploma	10%	8%	15%	14%	15%	15%
College, CEGEP or other Non-university Certificate or Diploma	23%	21%	20%	25%	23%	20%
University Certificate or Diploma Below Bachelor Level	4%	5%	2%	3%	2%	2%
University Certificate, Diploma or Degree	27%	34%	8%	14%	10%	8%
Information from Statistics Canada's 2006 census data.						

# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

## Differences

### *Edmonton and Calgary Regions (Census Divisions 6 and 11)*

Have highest percentage of population with:

- university degrees (21%)

Has lowest percentage of its population with:

- no certificate, diploma or degree (15%)

### *Clearwater County*

Has highest percentage of its population with:

- trade certificates and diplomas (15%)

Has lowest percentage of its population with:

- university diploma (8%)

### *Red Deer Region (Census Division 8)*

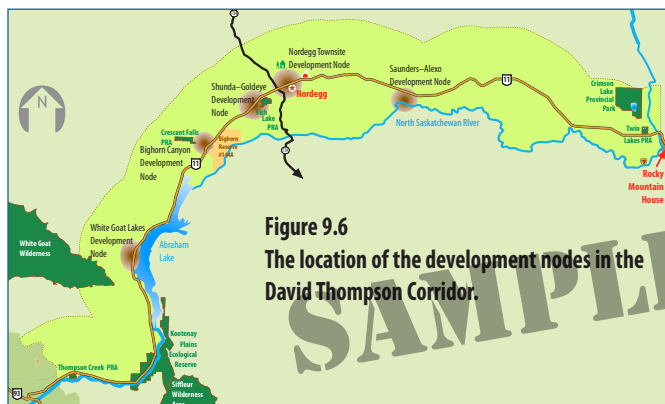
In almost every category, this region lies midway between the other two.

## Implications for the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

It is important for Visitor Services staff to know about the geographical origin of target participants when planning and delivering interpretive programs. There are significant differences in the levels of education within the three main market segments. In general, the regions containing the big cities (Edmonton and Calgary) have greater levels of higher education (e.g., more people with university degrees) than the other two regions. Clearwater County has the lowest level of education of the three regions except for trade certificates in the 24-35 year age category (Clearwater has the highest at 15%). The Red Deer Region's levels of education tends to rest midway between the other two.

Educational background has little to do with the intelligence of participants or their interest in visitor services programs. Level of education does have significant importance to the prior knowledge of participants (e.g., where does the visitor services programmer begin? At the basics, at a high level, or somewhere in between). It may also influence the complexity of language used in visitor services offerings. It is vital for visitor service providers to understand their audience's educational background when developing effective Visitor Services activities and products.

The *David Thompson Corridor Integrated Resource Plan* (1992) identified five development nodes in the David Thompson Corridor (see Figure 9.9). At least one node (Nordegg) is currently undergoing some rapid development of high-end residential lots which will probably attract rich, highly educated residents to Clearwater County. These changes along with others resulting from the regional Land-Use Framework currently underway for the North Saskatchewan Region will likely significantly affect the population structure of Clearwater County in the future. Future recreation development encouraged by these two plans are likely to increase that number of visitors to the David Thompson Corridor from its main market areas.



## Recommendations

Visitor Services should:

1. Watch closely developments of the Regional Land Use Framework. Monitor its effects on:
  - the use and users of the David Thompson Corridor
  - how these changes will impact demand for and the types of visitor services required to serve changing volumes and types of users
2. Encouraging and enabling direct research on developments in the use of the David Thompson Corridor.

## Family Structure

Statistics Canada provides data on family structure in the three target regions— see Table 9.6 which divides the households into four groups:

- couples (married and common law) with children
- couples (married and common law) with no children
- one-person households
- other (includes lone parent with children, multiple family households with or without children)

### Key Findings

In all target regions:

- well over 50 percent of households do not have children
- the percentage of couples without children equal or exceed the percentage of couples with children
- one person households are a significant group representing between  $\frac{1}{5}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the population

### Implications for the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

1. While family-focused programs have been an important component of Visitor Services offerings in Alberta Parks, the statistical data indicate that there are important opportunities for Visitor Services programs targeting couples without children and single people.

### Recommendations

Visitor Services should:

1. Regularly monitor types of visitors to parks and protected areas in the David Thompson Corridor to determine what proportion of site users belong to the following groups:
  - couples with children
  - couples without children
  - people from single-person households
  - lone parent families
2. Ensure that Visitor Services Programs are tailored to:
  - be inclusive for a wide spectrum of target groups and/or
  - target the specific groups identified above

As well, the number of programs, the amount of effort and resources put into programs aimed at these groups should be proportional to the size of each of the above user groups.

Table 9.6 Family Structure in the three major market areas	Census Division 11 (Edmonton Region)	Census Division 6 (Calgary)	Census Division 8 (Red Deer Region)	Census Division 10	Census Division 7	Census Division 8 (Clearwater County)
Households Containing a Couple with Children	29%	31 %	30%	29 %	31 %	33%
Households Containing a Couple without Children	28%	27 %	31%	33 %	34 %	33%
One Person Households	26%	24 %	22%	26 %	25 %	21%
Other	17%	17 %	17%	11 %	10 %	13%
Information from Statistics Canada's 2006 census data.						



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## Immigration

Over the past forty years, Canada's birth rate has declined and much of the nation's population growth has resulted from immigration. During this time, a significant and growing proportion of immigration has been from countries outside Europe and has been focused on cities. Some parks such as Fish Creek Provincial Park in Calgary are looking into ways of attracting new Canadians from different ethnic backgrounds who often have very different views about nature and history than most multi-generational Albertans. It is increasingly important for visitor services staff to know the backgrounds of current and future park users so that they can develop programs that are both inclusive and attractive to new Canadians.

Figure 9.7 shows the relative percentage of immigrants within the key target regions.

### Key Findings

- the big cities of Alberta have the largest proportion of new Canadians
  - Edmonton: 23% of its population are immigrant (2006 Census)
  - Calgary: 20% of its population are immigrant (2001 Census)
- Census Divisions 8 and 9 have very small immigrant populations of 6% and 7%

### Implications for the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

In many jurisdictions across Canada, it is clear that new Canadians are not getting involved in camping and visiting natural areas- remain in cities. With the immigrant population of Alberta is growing, it will be increasingly important for Visitor Services staff to understand cultural norms of new Canadians in order to develop effective and inclusive visitor services offerings to entice and involve this growing segment of Alberta's population.

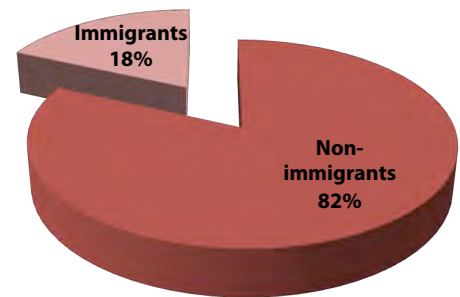
Visitor Services staff should expect that there is not likely to be a large proportion of new Canadians visiting the David Thompson Corridor in the near future. Therefore, they should not plan to develop many traditional personal programs aimed specifically at new Canadians.

That said, there are increasing numbers of new Canadians in the province's major cities. Visitor Services staff should consider developing:

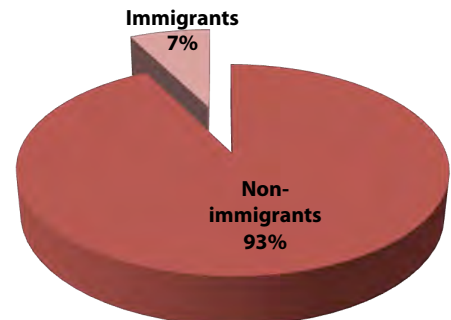
- outreach programming aimed at introducing new Canadians to the David Thompson Corridor and its natural and cultural features and Alberta Parks in general
  - use standard and new media
    - Standard Media
      - articles in newspapers and newsletters focusing on the immigrant communities of Edmonton and Calgary
    - New Media
      - the park web page, Facebook, blogs
      - mobile device applications, eBooks
- special personal programming aimed at new Canadians

Figure 9.7 Proportion of immigrants in target region's population. Information from Statistics Canada's 2006 census data.

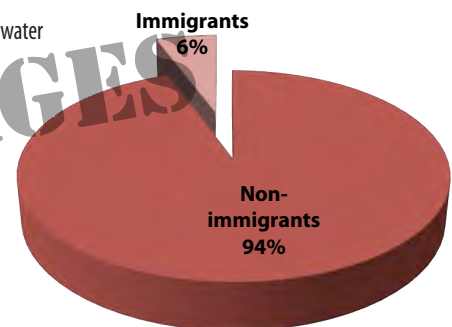
Census Division 11  
(Edmonton Region)  
Immigration



Census Division 8  
(Red Deer Region)  
Immigration



Census Division 9 (Clearwater  
County) Immigration



- consider contacting Calgary and Edmonton based English as a Second Language (ESL) organizations to investigate the possibility of developing a field-trip package whereby ESL groups visit Alberta Parks sites in the David Thompson Corridor for nature and English programs delivered by Visitor Services staff and stay at one of the regions lodges or campgrounds

### ➡ Recommendations

Visitor Services should:

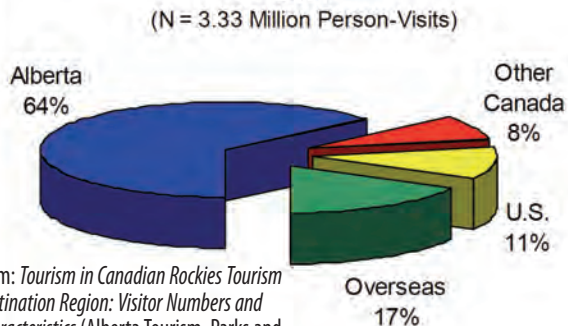
1. Regularly review and analyze the origin and background of potential market areas and current users to identify gaps in its user base that may include missing groups of new Canadians.
2. If new Canadians are not represented in park user statistics in the David Thompson Corridor in proportions to their presence in the general population, Visitor Services Staff should encourage and enable studies that will look into why and how they are excluded or self-selecting not to participate.
3. Use the information gathered above to develop Visitor Services offerings (perhaps similar to the *Nature as a Second Language* program offered in Kananaskis Country) in that are engaging and attractive to New Canadians and other groups such as First Nations.



# Review and Analysis of Tourism Research that can be Applied to the David Thompson Corridor



Figure 9.8: Origin of Visitors in the Canadian Rockies  
Tourism Destination 2007



From: *Tourism in Canadian Rockies Tourism Destination Region: Visitor Numbers and Characteristics* (Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, November 2009)

## Tourism Activity in the David Thompson Corridor

According to Kristy Hubscher, Tourism Research Analyst, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, the Ministry has conducted no studies that focus on the David Thompson Corridor (personal communication, January, 2010).

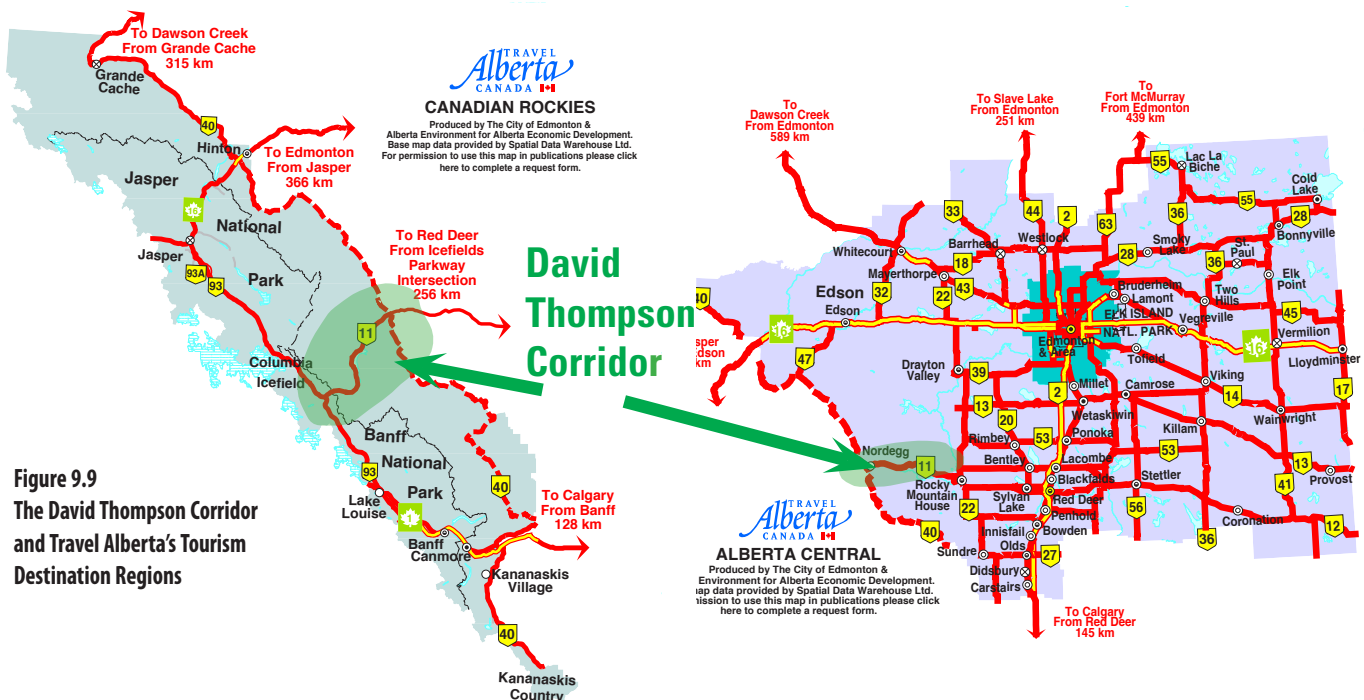
However, there is information of a more general nature available relating to Alberta's Tourism Destination Regions (TDRs).

The David Thompson Corridor lies at the junction of two TDRs:

- the Canadian Rockies TDR
- Alberta Central TDR

To view the placement of the David Thompson Corridor, see the maps at the bottom of this page.

Each year, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation publishes summaries of visitor information for each of the province's Tourism Destination Regions. The following section is a summary of information for 2007 from *Tourism in Canadian Rockies Tourism Destination Region: A Summary of 2007 Visitor Numbers and Characteristics* (November 2009, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation) and *Tourism in Alberta Central Tourism Destination Region: A Summary of 2007 Visitor Numbers and Characteristics* (November 2009, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation).



# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

## Market Trends

In 2003, Western Management Consultants delivered a report: *Market Assessment And Visitor Projections: Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park*. The report included an discussion of the major tourism trends that will affect Alberta up to 2020. Much of their information is relevant to the Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor.

## Trends Influencing Alberta's Parks

### Introduction

Western Management Consultants (2003) forecasted major tourism trends in Alberta for the future up to 2020. In developing these forecasts for the next 20 years they looked at:

- megatrends relevant to parks
- demographic trends that will influence park visitation
- growth expectations in major target market segments in the near term ... from 2002 to 2005
- recreation and tourism trends and markets relevant to parks
- the heritage interest market, best matched to parks
- the camping market
- societal trends influencing parks

### North American MegaTrends Shifting Age Structure

Key findings include:

- median age of Canadians will increase from 35 years of age to:
  - almost 39 years by 2011
  - 43.6 years by 2026

### Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are a demographic wave that is influencing park visitation and interpretation. According to Western Management Consultants (2003) the baby boom generation is becoming a group of empty nesters. Their children will be grown up and will have left home. Boomers "are educated, sophisticated, experienced travelers who are used to a lifetime of getting what they want."

### Boomer Facts

- $\frac{1}{3}$  of Canada's population are baby boomers
- boomers between 45–54 and 55–64 years are the most likely to travel outside of North America
  - competition for their interest will be significant
- by 2011 the boomers will number 10.2 million in Canada
- 2000–2011 the early boomer generation (55–64 year olds) will expand by 77%

**Table 9.8:**  
**Baby Boom Cohort And Alberta Population, 2010-2020,  
Selected Years**  
from Western Management Consultants (2003)

	2010	2015	2020
Age of Boomers	45-65 yrs	50-70 yrs	55-75 yrs
Baby Boomers (born in 1947-1966) at Medium Projection	952,520	930,180	906,060
Total Alberta Population at Medium Projection	3,465,230	3,630,050	3,775,252
Growth in Alberta Population at Medium Projection	190,875	164,820	145,202
Percentage Growth in Alberta Population at Medium Projection	5.83%	4.76%	4.0%
Percentage Boomer Cohort of Total Alberta Population at Medium Projection	27.5%	25.6%	24.0%
Baby Boomers (born 1947-1966) at High Projection	953,650	931,540	900,391
Total Alberta Population at High Projection	3,481,045	3,650,925	3,815,217
Growth in Alberta Population at High Projection	196,795	169,880	164,292
Percentage Growth in Alberta Population at High Projection	5.99%	4.88%	4.5%
Percentage Boomer Cohort is of Total Alberta Population at High Projection	27.4%	25.5%	23.6%

- 2026—the 65 + segment of the population will be 21 % of Canada's population
- 2016 marks the time when the trailing edge of the baby boom reaches age 65
  - will represent 34 % of family households
  - boomers will move from the young-family part of their lives to becoming empty nesters
  - mortgage-free, and kid-free, this group will be looking for travel and adventure opportunities

Projected population growth, and the baby boom cohort of Alberta's population is represented in Table 9.3 on the facing page.

Boomers will be interested in:

- longer term stays in areas
- soft adventure—active outdoor adventure with comfortable accommodation
- learning adventures with deeper content—experiential travel
- traveling with grandchildren

### Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and its Visitor Services Program

1. Boomers will be interested in comfort before and after Visitor Services activities
  - the current scarcity of restaurants, hotels and other facilities makes much of the David Thompson Corridor a less attractive location for boomers interested in soft recreation activities
2. Boomers will demand high quality Visitor Services activities.
3. There will be increasing demand for deeper, more meaningful Visitor Services programs.
4. An increase in demand for personal Visitor Services programs will also require high skills and knowledge from Visitor Services staff. There will be little place for quickly-trained summer/seasonal staff.
5. Some tourists and local park visitors will be willing to pay for deeper, more significant experiences.
6. There will be more people demanding and willing to pay for highly-tailored experiences.

SAMPLE PAGES

**Table 9.9: Statistics Canada Projections of Alberta Population 2020 and 2030**

from: *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*, Statistics Canada ([www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-520-x/00105/4095247-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-520-x/00105/4095247-eng.htm))

Population Growth Scenario	Fertility	Life expectancy	Immigration	Interprovincial Migration	Alberta Population 2020 in Millions	Alberta Population 2030 in Millions
1. Low growth	Low	Low	Low	Medium	3.7	3.9
2. Medium growth, recent migration trends	Medium	Medium	Medium	Recent	3.9	4.4
3. Medium growth, medium migration trends	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	3.8	4.1
4. Medium growth, west coast migration trends	Medium	Medium	Medium	West coast	3.6	3.9
5. Medium growth, central-west migration trends	Medium	Medium	Medium	Central-west	4.0	4.5
6. High growth	High	High	High	Medium	3.9	4.4



# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

## Technology

Internet technology is changing the way people learn and interact.

- many travellers research their destinations over the internet before they go
- high-speed internet, sophisticated web technology and wide-spread use of home computers and smart phones make it possible for high quality content to be made available to vicarious visitors
- on-line courses are becoming increasingly sophisticated and user-friendly

Western Management Consultants (2003) indicate that though technology is an important enabling tool, human contact is still critical.

## Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and its Visitor Services Program

1. Internet technology will become increasingly important as a tool for:
  - publicity and marketing; pre-visit information and planning and detailed information on the site and its main stories
  - outreach to people who can not visit the David Thompson Corridor's parks
    - detailed information on the site and its main stories via virtual tours
    - access to sensitive landscapes and wildlife-viewing via remote, real-time web cameras
  - enrichment
    - follow up information and instruction for visitors
    - specialized on-line courses
  - evaluation on-line questionnaires and public bulletin boards for discussion of David Thompson Corridor's parks services
    - continuous monitoring of customer satisfaction
  - booking
    - reserving spaces in Visitor Services activities and services
    - on-line pre-payment of fees for Visitor Services programs
  - user surveys
    - on-line questionnaires aimed at developing visitor profiles
  - site conditions
    - up-to-the-minute reports on road, trail and snow conditions
2. Experiences such as those potentially offered by David Thompson Corridor's parks are of growing interest. Experiential, learning activities that are personally meaningful are sought by a growing segment of the population.

## Recreation

According to Western Management Consultants, recreation trends point to an increase in active, outdoor recreation and also to strong growth in activities of the type offered in parks, such as walking, hiking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, bicycling, and similar activities.

There is an abundance of recreational activities taking place in the David Thompson Corridor. These range from front and backcountry hiking, horse trail riding, ice and rock climbing, dog sledding, back country skiing and snowshoeing, to motorized activities using snowmobiles, ATVs and four-wheel drive trucks. Unfortunately, Alberta Parks does not yet have an up-to-date reliable inventory of trails, and recreation activities and locations where these take place in the David Thompson Corridor.

The David Thompson Corridor is an important location for outdoor recreation in the province. It is well known within many outdoor enthusiast communities but is not as well known by the general public as many other mountain/foothill regions of the province. Visitor Services staff would benefit greatly from up-to-date, detailed information and analysis of current and future recreational activities in the corridor. At present there have been no studies that pinpoint the locations of recreation activities and the number of people taking part. Park staff and local staff of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development indicate that commercial publications on this topic are highly unreliable and inaccurate.

## Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and its Visitor Services Program

Visitor Services staff have a large opportunity to encourage and enable appropriate recreational activities on Alberta Parks properties and UN adjacent public lands. Working with partners (e.g., local outfitters and adventure companies) they could work to incorporate interpretation into recreational skills training and back country trips.

## ➡ Recommendations

1. Visitor Services staff should work with park management to encourage and enable formal research on the recreation activities and opportunities (including current and potential points of activity, numbers of participants and seasonality of use) and the estimate carrying capacity of sites (numbers of users that are sustainable over a long period). Partners in these activities could include: Travel Alberta and/or university researchers (e.g., Paul eagles at the University of Waterloo).
2. Visitor Services must focus on development and maintenance of interconnected trail systems in the David Thompson Corridor and delivering appropriate Visitor Services programs and services that encourage and enable proper use and development of appropriate front-country and backcountry knowledge and skills for trail users.

# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

physical challenges when they travel

- are among the most frequent users of the Internet to plan (75.1 percent) and book (49.9 percent) travel
- are above-average consumers of tourism media
  - can be effectively targeted through science and nature media (e.g., science and geography magazines) and electronic product media (e.g., photography and video magazines; computers, electronics and technology)

## Recommendations

1. Although this information is not directly focused on visitors to the David Thompson Corridor, it provides some interesting insights into the types of people likely to visit the park both as local neighbourhood residents and as tourists from farther away.
  - until park-specific, site-specific and corridor-specific information is gathered, this information can be used as at least a guide for thinking about park users backgrounds, interests and motivations
2. Many of the people in this study were well educated and well to-do. To be attractive and effective, Visitor Services programs aimed at this market (both local and tourists from further afield) must be sophisticated, accurate and well packaged and presented.
3. Websites can be an effective medium to assist people to:
  - check-out the park as a place to visit
    - provide visual and short verbal hooks to get attention
    - read reviews and accounts written by park visitors with similar backgrounds and interests
4. Social Networking Web Tools
  - learn about activities that can take place in adjacent or near-by public land
  - learn about activities sponsored or delivered by partner groups
  - a chance to read and view detailed information on the park's natural and cultural history
    - designed in a way that allows them to surf headings and topics and dig deeper into those that interest them
  - plan their trip to the park
    - downloadable maps
    - information on key places and times to visit
    - listing of the year's or season's Visitor Services offerings that they can take part in
  - learn more after their visit
    - sources of more detailed information to read and view after their park visit and participation in Visitor Services programs
  - communicate with park staff and other visitors about their visit and learning experience
    - ask park staff and Alberta Parks partners about the things they observed and experienced
    - share photos and experiences with fellow visitors

## Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts

The Canadian Tourism Commission (*Canadian Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts: A Special Analysis of the Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS)*) by: Research Resolutions and Consulting Ltd. Prepared for: The Canadian Tourism Commission [no date]) defines Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts as people who have particular interests in:

- **ice climbing**
- **rock climbing**
- **mountain biking**
- **dog sledding**
- **heli-skiing**
- white water rafting
- scuba diving
- hang gliding
- bungee jumping

Note that the activities listed above in bold type take place in the David Thompson Corridor.

In 2000, the Canadian Tourism Commission estimated that 7 percent of Canadians (1.6 million people) engage in outdoor enthusiast activities in the following order:

- **Mountain biking (58%)**
- **Rock climbing (34%)**
- Scuba diving (25%)
- White water rafting (21%)

- **Ice climbing (6%)**
- **Dog sledding (6%)**
- Bungee jumping (3%)
- Hang gliding (1%)
- **Heli skiing (less than 0.5%)**

Note that the activities listed above in bold type take place in the David Thompson Corridor.

This study also found that residents of Alberta are twice as likely to be Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts than residents from other parts of Canada.

## Demographics of Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts

Research Resolutions and Consulting Ltd. (no date) provided the following descriptions of typical Hard Adventure Enthusiasts:

- more men than women take part
  - 67 percent are men
  - 33 percent are women
- are heavily concentrated at the younger end of the adult age spectrum
  - nearly 60 percent are 18–34 year
  - 30 percent are between 35–44 years
  - 14 percent are over 45 years
- 69 percent live in adult-only households
- only 31% have children under 12 years
- have generally high average incomes (\$59,900/year—1998 dollars)



# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

## Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and its Visitor Services Program

1. In the absence of corridor-specific user information Visitor Services staff and their partners should use this information when targeting services for this group. Key points to consider are:
  - this group is highly motivated
    - e.g., ice climbers will be interested in hiking to climb sites, climbing and returning to marshalling areas within short winter daylight periods
    - visitor services programs should not interfere with or delay participants' on-the ground activities and schedules
    - personal programs may best take place at campsites, hostels and hotels where climbers relax before and after their outdoor activities
    - ideally all personal and non-personal Visitor Services programs and services should be open ended so that participants can choose the times and durations that suit their schedules
  - this group is generally highly skilled
    - Visitor Services staff must have high levels of knowledge and at least basic or intermediate technical skill levels in order to intelligently converse with program participants about their activities
  - this group is generally highly educated
    - Visitor Services programs must be appropriate to the target participant's knowledge and interest
    - Visitor Services staff must have high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor and natural history topics
  - this group takes part in many other outdoor and cultural activities and many people have broad interests
    - Visitor Services programs should include information/orientation with respect to other outdoor and cultural activities available in the David Thompson Corridor

Although Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts are a relatively small group, Alberta Parks and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development staff have pointed out parts of the western section of the David Thompson Corridor are destination hot-spots for activities such as ice climbing and rock climbing and there are also areas that have significant amounts of dog sledding.

- this makes the corridor an important destination for specialty activities such as ice climbing which may need special regulation as the corridor becomes even more popular for these activities
- the visitor services program can assist regulation and management initiatives by providing and distributing appropriate information orientation services as well as working with local partners and businesses to ensure that accurate information is conveyed to Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts interested in using the David Thompson Corridor



## Recommendations

1. Currently there is no corridor-specific information about:
  - numbers of users at specific locations and timing of activities
  - user profiles
  - Specific sites:
    - who visits the site?
    - ages
    - gender breakdown
    - what kinds of groups
    - what is their cultural background?
    - new Canadians ?
    - this can give insight into their
  - special needs with respect to location and timing of Visitor Services
  - what portion are return visitors/new users?
  - how often do return visitors come to the site?
  - when do they come (season, day of the week, time of day)?
  - how long do they stay?
  - where do they come from?
  - why do they come to the David Thompson Corridor?
  - what else do they do when they visit the corridor?
  - what are their other interests?
  - what do they already know about the corridor?
  - what are their current attitudes about park-related issues?
  - what appropriate and inappropriate behaviours do they display?

Visitor Services staff should encourage and enable appropriate research on Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts in the David Thompson Corridor by Travel Alberta and by academic institutions such as the Universities of Calgary and Alberta

2. Because the David Thompson Corridor is an important provincial destination for several Hard Outdoor Adventure pursuits, Visitor Services staff should consider developing appropriate visitor services for this group similar to some of the non-personal and personal products developed by the Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area in Ontario to inform rock climbers of the delicate and extremely ancient cliff-face vegetation and engage them in related stewardship activities. This could include non-personal interpretation such as signs, brochures and mobile device applications, and personal programs such as point duty at trailheads and access points.
3. Research Resolutions and Consulting Ltd. seem to be hedging in their predictions for future growth of Hard Outdoor Adventure activity in Alberta, suggesting on one hand that the population of Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts is likely to grow and, on the other hand, it may decrease as future populations in the province and in the nation become more urban-focused.

Clearly, Visitor Services staff will need to monitor, encourage and enable further research on the growth of Hard Outdoor Adventure activity in Alberta in general and in the David Thompson Corridor in particular. This will ensure that Visitor Services staff know and understand developing trends in this area of visitor activity so that they can develop appropriate levels of service for this potentially important group.

### Canadian Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts

The David Thompson Corridor is rich in cultural history and has some potential as a future attraction to local and tourist history buffs. In 2007, the Canadian Tourism Commission published *Canada's Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts A Special Analysis of the Travel Activities and Motivation Survey*. Some of their findings are discussed below.

Canadian Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts are people who have taken leisure trips in Canada and have a particular interest in heritage-oriented activities when they travel. These activities include visits to:

- historic sites
- aboriginal attractions
- general history museums
- local festivals or fairs
- aboriginal cultural experiences in a rural setting
- pow wow/other aboriginal celebration
- science or technology museums
- western theme events
- farmers' fairs or markets
- pick your own farms/harvesting
- historical replicas of cities/towns
- children's museums
- French Canadian cultural experiences
- carnivals

Of these, the first six are or could be attractions in the David Thompson Corridor.

Activities engaged in by more than 30 percent of Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts include:

- general history museums (86 percent)
- farmers' fairs or markets (67 percent)
- local festivals or fairs (65 percent)
- historic sites (55 percent)
- science and technology museums (58 percent)
- historical replicas of cities/towns (54 percent)
- pick your own farms / harvesting (39 percent)
- French Canadian cultural experiences (31 percent)

Other findings of this study include:

- many Canadians concentrate their travel within the province or region in which they live
- those with recent leisure travel experiences in their own country have relatively wide-ranging tourism interests, with a particular emphasis on the outdoors
- the Heritage Tourism Enthusiasts group is substantively under-represented among younger Canadians, and especially among those between 18 and 34 years
  - this age group represents 33 percent of domestic travellers but only 25 percent are interested in heritage tourism opportunities

# Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

- most live in adult-only households (no members under the age of 18 years)
- most are also somewhat more affluent than is the “typical” domestic traveller in Canada
  - average household income of \$60,000
  - 28 percent have at least one university degree
  - a further 42 percent have had some post-secondary education
- participate in multiple heritage-related activities while on trips

## Future Predictions

- there will be an increase in the absolute number of Canadians who will be in the market for heritage activities between 2000 and 2026
  - from about 2.2 million to 3.0 million
  - growth rate is higher than the population growth rate of Canada as a whole
    - because heritage activities tend to appeal to older people and to those who are born outside Canada
    - amenities and services must be upgraded to accommodate the needs and interests of an increasingly aging population
- New Canadians
  - the proportion of new Canadians will increase over the next two decades
  - many will be interested in heritage activities
  - it is not a foregone conclusion that these new heritage tourists will seek fairs, festivals, museums and cultural events in Canada
  - *new Canadians display a strong tendency to take their leisure trips to destinations outside North America (e.g., back home to visit friends and family)*
  - exhibit a strong tendency to seek heritage experiences when they travel
    - new Canadians may require special cultural amenities (e.g., language, dietary needs, religious observances, etc.) to encourage them to explore Canada’s heritage

## Implications for the David Thompson Corridor and its Visitor Services Program

1. As with information about outdoor recreation enthusiasts, this information is not directly focused on the David Thompson Corridor. However, it provides some interesting insights into the types of people likely to visit the corridor both as local residents of Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg and as tourists from farther away.
  - until corridor-specific information is gathered, this information can be used at least as a guide for thinking about park users’ backgrounds, interests and motivations
2. Many of the people interested in cultural history are older, more educated and already have knowledge of many aspects of Canadian history. Visitor Services programs will have to be:
  - sophisticated and in-depth
  - interactive and experiential, providing participants with opportunities to share their knowledge, experience and opinions
3. Because cultural history is less attractive to people under 35 years old, special effort and experimentation will be needed to reach and attract this demographic of local people and tourists.
4. Information on new Canadians here and elsewhere indicates that this group is very diverse in interests, understanding and motivation toward Canadian cultural heritage.

## Recommendations

1. At present and for the near future, the David Thompson Corridor’s parks should not put much effort into developing themselves as a heritage tourist destination—current information show there is very little evidenced of tangible heritage features and structures on lands managed by Alberta Parks or in the case of petroglyphs in White Goat Wilderness Area there is little protection). Instead, Alberta Parks best may work with partners such as the Alberta Central and Canadian Rockies Tourism Destination Regions, Parks Canada’s Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site and local First Nations communities to cross-promote each others’ programs.
2. Visitor Services staff should regularly review tourism research conducted by Travel Alberta, the Canadian Tourism Commission and other tourism institutions for up-to-date research results that can be applied to current and future park visitors.

# School Market Findings and Recommendations





Figure 9.12

Public school districts (red) that could be served by the David Thompson Corridor.

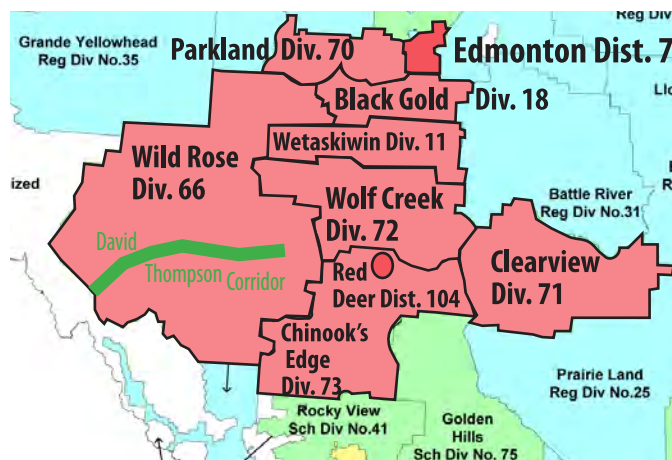


Figure 9.13

Percentages of students from nearby public school districts that could be served by the David Thompson Corridor.

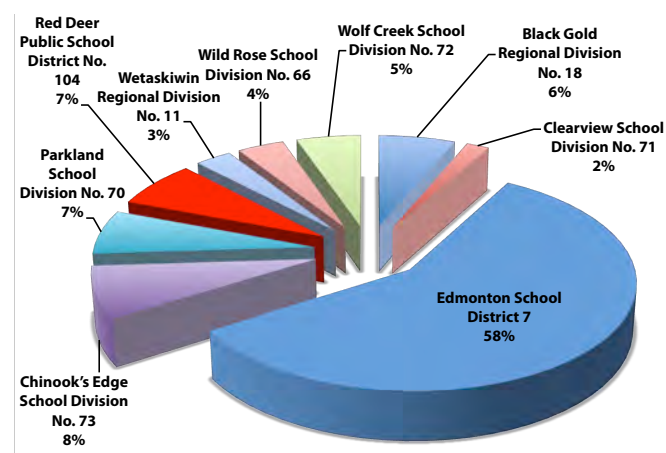


Figure 9.14

Catholic school districts (red boxes) that could be served by the David Thompson Corridor.

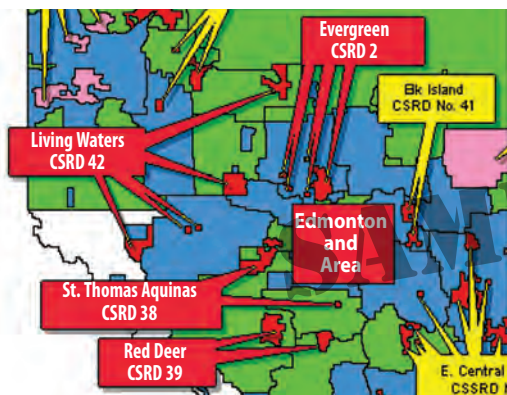


Figure 9.15

Percentages of students from nearby catholic school districts that could be served by the David Thompson Corridor.

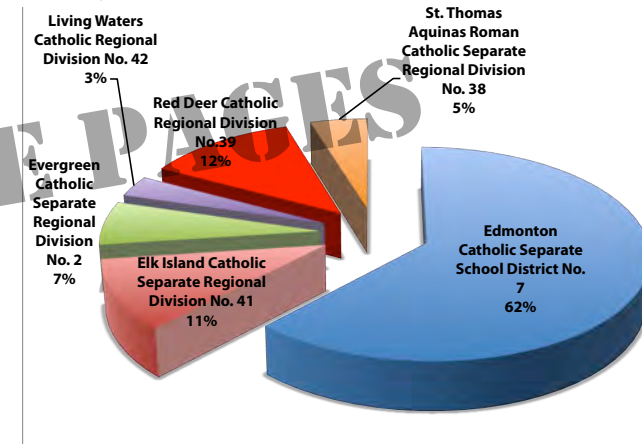
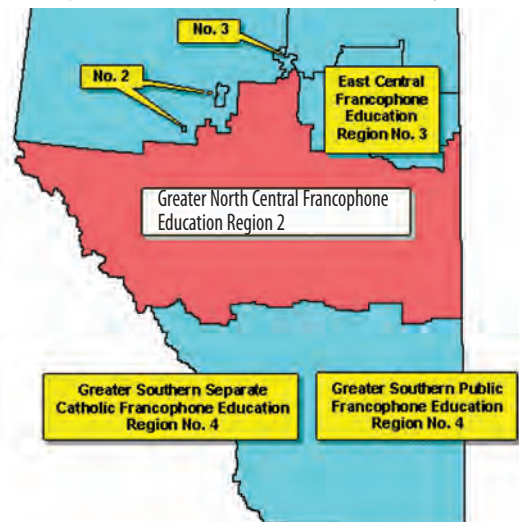


Figure 9.16

The Francophone school district (red) that could be served by the David Thompson Corridor.



## An Overview of the Overall School Market

The potential overall school market for the David Thompson Corridor could be the same basic catchment area for current public use—Central Alberta. This would include Edmonton south to Red Deer and also include Clearwater County.

### Potential Public School Districts and Divisions

Figure 9.12 shows the location of public school districts and divisions that could take part in curriculum-based education programs offered in the David Thompson Corridor. Data for 2008/09 show that the student population from this catchment was about 138,000.

Within this total population, the school divisions can be listed in order of size:

- Edmonton School district accounted for almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  (58%)
- Chinook's Edge (8%)
- Red Deer Public (7%)
- Parkland (7%),
- Black Gold Regional (6%)
- Wolf Creek (5%)
- Wild Rose (4%)
- Wetaskiwin (3%)
- Clearwater (2%)

### Catholic School Districts and Divisions

Figure 9.14 shows the general location of catholic school districts that could take part in curriculum-based education programs in the David Thompson Corridor. Data for 2008/09 show that the student population from this catchment was about 53,000.

Within this total population, the school divisions can be listed in order of size:

- Edmonton Catholic Separate School District accounted for almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  (62%)
- Red Deer Catholic Regional Division (12%)
- Elk Island Catholic Regional Division (11%)
- Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division (7%),
- St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division (5%),
- Living Waters Catholic Regional Division (3%)

### Francophone School Districts and Divisions

The Greater North Central Francophone Education Region (Figure 9.16) is represents a broad band that extends the width of the province and accounts for only about 2,600 students.

## Other Schools

### Private and Charter Schools

These schools represent a small portion of the overall school market (exact numbers not available), but they often have teachers with enthusiasm and budget for field trips. According to park staff in the David Thompson Corridor there is strong interest from this market segment in school programming at Crimson Lake Provincial Park. Alberta education provides updated lists of private and charter schools at:

[www.education.alberta.ca/ei/reports/pdf\\_files/eis1007p/eis1007pbody.pdf](http://www.education.alberta.ca/ei/reports/pdf_files/eis1007p/eis1007pbody.pdf) (private schools) and

[www.education.alberta.ca/apps/schauth/lookup.asp?type=charter](http://www.education.alberta.ca/apps/schauth/lookup.asp?type=charter) (charter schools)

### Home Schoolers

Home schooling is a rapidly growing alternative in many parts of Alberta and throughout Canada. The consultant was unable to find definitive numbers for Alberta or the regions close to the David Thompson Corridor. The best way to contact home school families may be through local and provincial homeschool associations such as The Alberta Homeschool Association: <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/regional/Alberta.htm>.

## Discussion

### The Rocky Mountain House School Market

In 2009, the total population of students in Rocky Mountain House was 1,810. For the distribution of student by school see Figure 9.17 below.

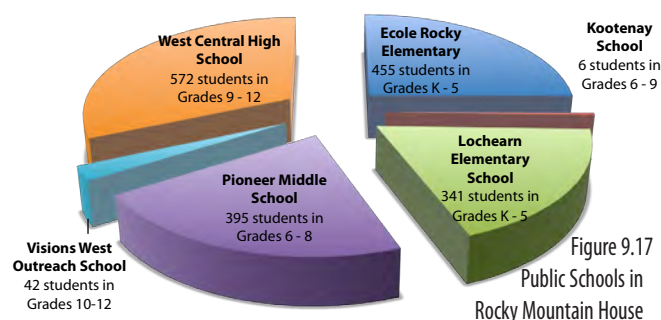


Figure 9.17

Public Schools in Rocky Mountain House

Schools in Rocky Mountain House are prime targets for:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  day and day-long class visits to Crimson Lake Provincial Park including Twin Lakes
- classroom visits by Visitor Services staff based in Rocky Mountain House

Students in upper elementary, middle and high school could also visit properties such as Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve, and/or Fish Lake and Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Areas for day-long field trips.



## Chapter 9: Market Analysis for the David Thompson Corridor

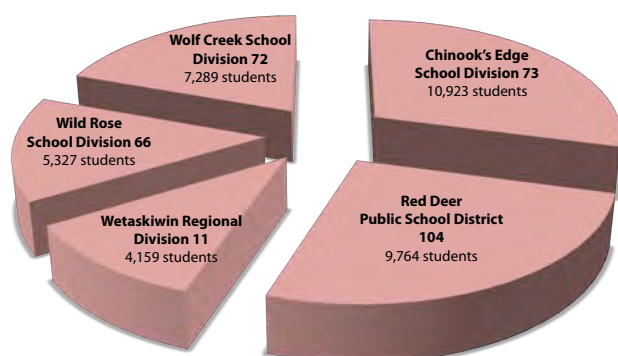


Figure 9.19 Student populations of nearby School Districts and Divisions

direct transportation routes to the eastern end of the David Thompson Corridor. For areas outside Rocky Mountain House, these three are the best target areas for both class visits to parks in the corridor and for Visitor Services staff visits to schools.

### The Edmonton and Calgary Markets

These cities are by far the largest market segments representing around 80 percent of both public schools and catholic schools within the overall market.

That said, they are a long way away. Most schools in those cities are a minimum of 220 kilometres (or at a least 2 hour and forty minute drive) to Rocky Mountain House on the eastern edge of the David Thompson Corridor. To reach Nordegg from Edmonton takes nearly 4 hours according to Travel Alberta. School day trips will be unlikely. Two alternative approaches to school programming for these markets are discussed in the sidebar on the facing page and a preliminary analysis of these options is made in the sidebar on this page.

### Other Education Markets Considered

Although representing a small portion of the total school market, Parkland, Black Gold and Clearview School Divisions have some potential as markets.

School District	Number of Students	% of Total School Market
Parkland	9,339	7 percent
Black Gold	8,686	6 percent
Clearview	2,600	2 percent

All three are a considerable distance from the David Thompson Corridor. This would make day-visits less likely. However, these market areas may find remote programs and multiple day overnight visits attractive.

### Implications for the Visitor Services Program in the David Thompson Corridor

1. The David Thompson Corridor is located adjacent to a fairly large school market.
  - the largest potential market segments include three school districts (Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer) and two school divisions (Wolf Creek and Chinook's Edge)
  - other important potential market segments include:
    - schools in the Town of Rocky Mountain House
    - Wetaskiwin School Division
2. A significant part of the potential school market (Calgary, Edmonton, Parkland, Black Gold and Clearview and much of Wild Rose) require a multi-hour drive to reach the David Thompson Corridor. To serve these market segments well, the David Thompson Corridor would need to feature overnight facilities for school groups (based on camping or a fixed roof accommodation) and/or a remote learning facility on the lines of the video conferencing centre based at Fish Creek Provincial Park in Calgary.

### Recommendations

1. Form partnerships with other groups such as the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site.
2. The education program based in the David Thompson Corridor should start small and develop the education program as budget, staffing and market interest allow.

#### Phase 1: Pilot the Education Program

Focus on ½ day and day-long class visits to parks and protected areas in the Corridor, and on classroom visits by Visitor Services staff to local schools (in Rocky Mountain House, Red Deer and other nearby communities) using existing facilities.

#### Phase 2: Expand the Program

Expand the program by developing partnerships with local facilities and groups to work together to deliver a wide variety of environmental education and outdoor education services in the David Thompson Corridor.

Expand the Park-based and school visit program:

- content to fill gaps in curriculum connections
- market area to schools further afield

#### Phase 3: Explore Further Options

Once the education program has been up and running for several years, when the district's education program is mature, and effective and Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor is recognized as an important local contributor to education in the district, work with partners to investigate the feasibility of an environmental education centre and distance learning centre based in the David Thompson Corridor.

3. If the district is prepared to commit to long-term delivery of education services in the David Thompson Corridor, the District must commit to:

#### High Quality Programming

- long-term employment of Visitor Services staff to ensure a continuity of the program and engagement of skilled, knowledgeable educators

#### Continued Support

- regular training and professional development of Visitor Services staff to build capacity to deliver top quality education experiences
- ensure that Visitor Services staff have membership in provincial and national professional associations so that they can learn and exchange knowledge with colleagues in the formal and informal teaching professions