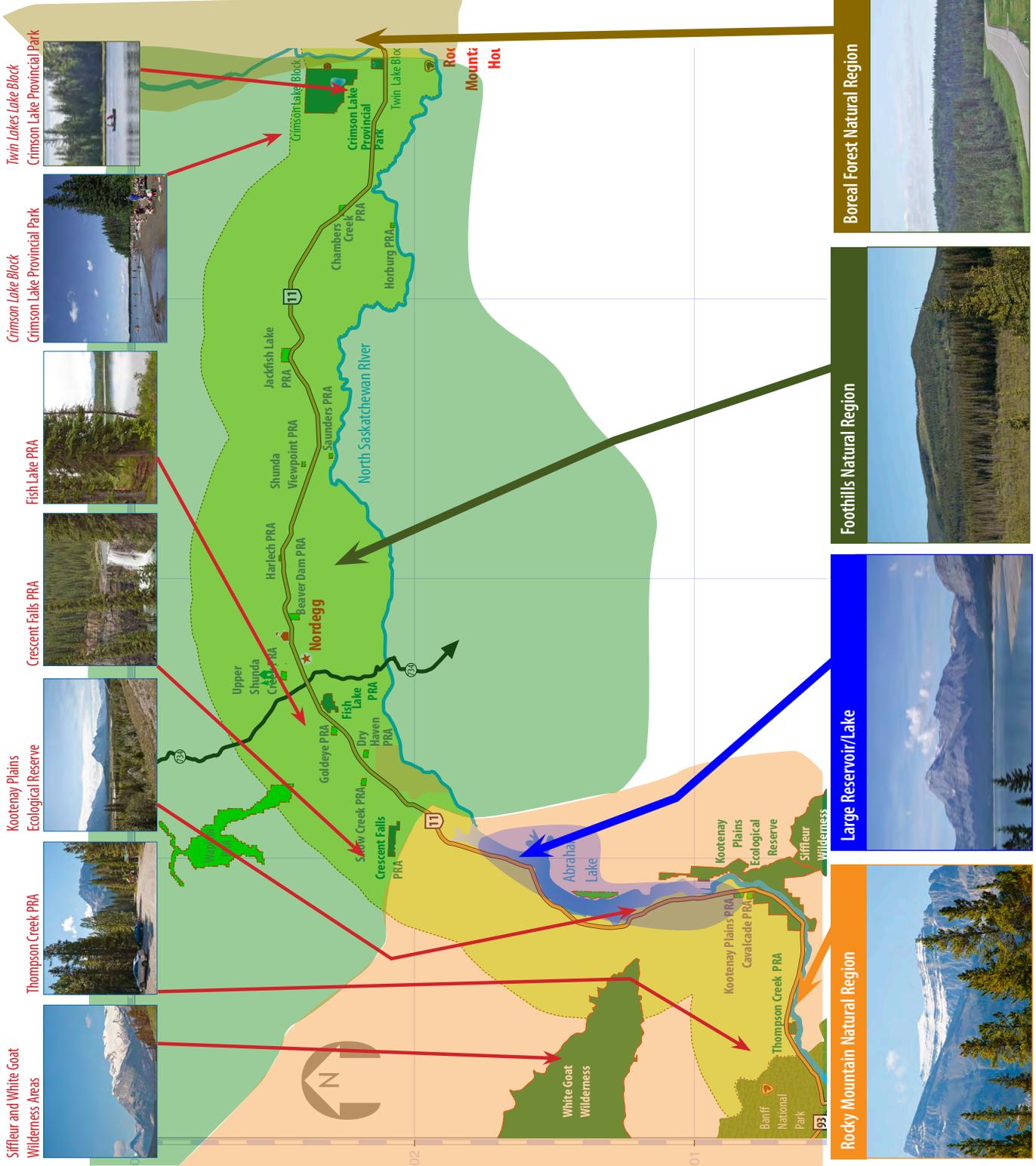


Introduction



Visitor Services Development Plan for the David Thompson Corridor

Figure 1
Map of the David Thompson Corridor showing Alberta Parks Properties covered in this plan (see red arrows) and the location of the major Natural Regions within the corridor.



Introduction

In January 2010, EcoLeaders Interpretation was contracted by Alberta Parks to develop a Visitor Services District Plan for the David Thompson Corridor. Because of funding challenges, this project was completed in January 2012.

The David Thompson Corridor

The David Thompson Corridor extends approximately 180 km from Rocky Mountain House to the eastern boundary of Banff National Park (see Figure 1 on the facing page). The properties covered in this plan from east to west include:

- Crimson Lake Provincial Park
 - Twin Lakes Block
 - Crimson Lake Block
- Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area
- Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area
- Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve
- Siffleur Wilderness Area
- White Goat Wilderness Area
- Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area

There are many more smaller properties in the corridor managed by Alberta Parks that are not included in this plan (see Figure 1 for the location of many of these Provincial Recreation Areas [grey text]).

The corridor also includes two of Alberta's Natural Regions, the Rocky Mountain Natural Region (orange shading in Figure 1) and The Foothills Natural Region (green shading in Figure 1).

As well the corridor includes a large water body, the Abraham Lake Reservoir (blue shading in Figure 1). According to volumes displayed on the Alberta Government website; *Status of Major Water Storage Reservoirs Sep-09-2011* (www.environment.alberta.ca/forecasting/reports/Res_Storage.pdf) this is the province's largest reservoir—storing over 1 million cubic metres of water.

Finally, the David Thompson Corridor lies adjacent to the Boreal Forest Natural Region (brown shading in Figure 1).

The dividing line between the corridor's two Natural Regions lies approximately twenty kilometers to the southwest of the village of Nordegg. To the east, the foothills occupy over half of the corridor. The western half is located within the Rocky Mountains.

The corridor is scenic—the western $\frac{1}{3}$ offers some of the province's best mountain scenery (e.g., see Figure 2).

Key aspects of the David Thompson Corridor include:

- relatively little settlement except for:
 - Rocky Mountain House in the eastern edge of the corridor
 - the village of Nordegg in the central section of the corridor
 - the Stoney Nation's Bighorn Reserve north of Lake Abraham
- almost all of the land along the corridor is wild natural wilderness
- a large proportion of crown land (managed mostly by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development)
- except for Crimson Lake Provincial Park, Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve and the White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas, the size of Alberta Parks properties is small

Chapters that Focus on the David Thompson Corridor

Part 1: Background and Tools All Chapters (1-7)

Part 2: The David Thompson Corridor

- Chapter 8: District-wide Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 9: Market Analysis
- Chapter 10: District Visitor Services Vision, Mission and Goals
- Chapter 11: Visitor Services Program Implementation Across the David Thompson Corridor

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor

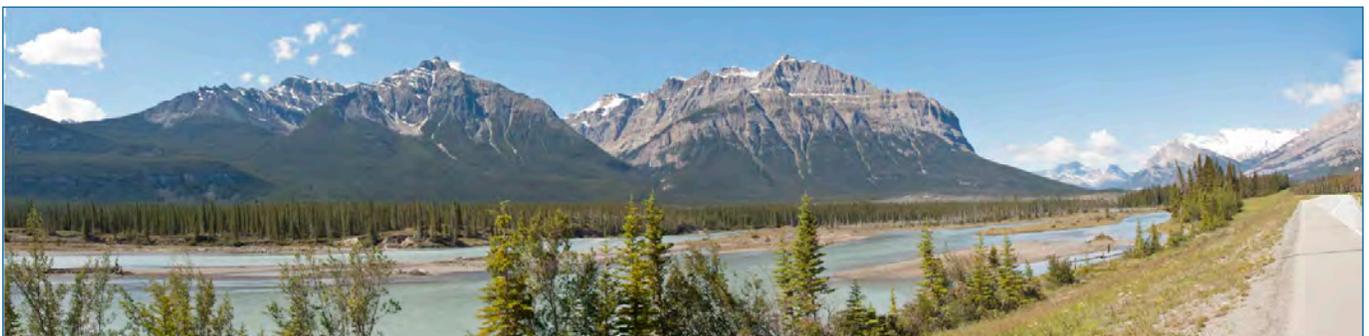
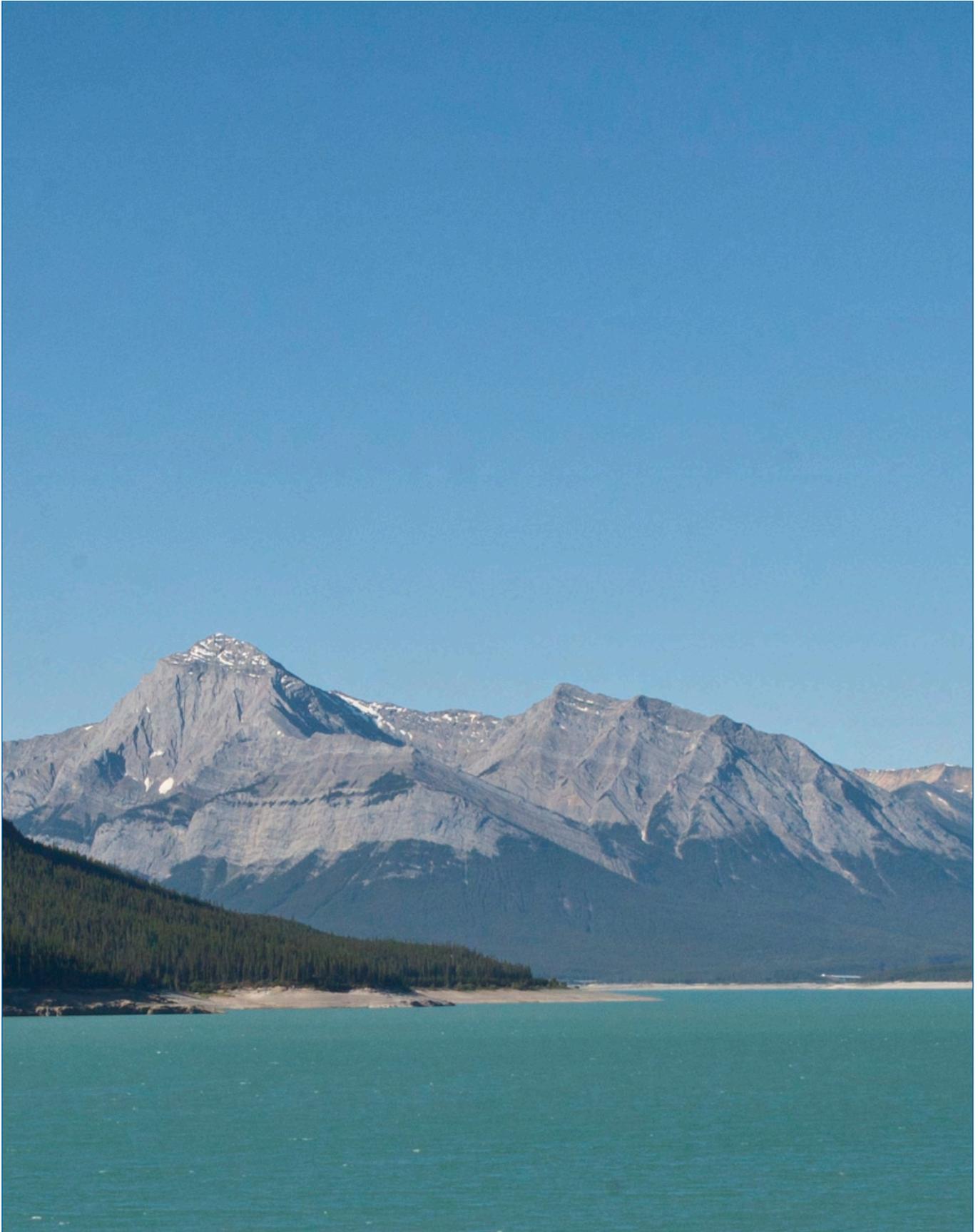


Figure 2: Mountain scenery just south of Whirlpool Point. The North Saskatchewan River is in the foreground.



Structure of This Plan

This plan consists of the following:

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 3: Features Inventory: Crimson Lake Provincial Park
- Background Paper 4: Features Inventory: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

The Interpretation Plan

Part 1: Background and Tools

- Chapter 1: Defining Visitor Services
- Chapter 2: Summary of Foundations for Visitor Services
- Chapter 3: Best Practice in Visitor Analysis and Market Analysis
- Chapter 4: Analysis of Potential Partners
- Chapter 5: Curriculum Review
- Chapter 6: Presentation Options
- Chapter 7: Review of Sign Standards

Part 2: The David Thompson Corridor

- Chapter 8: District-wide Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 9: Market Analysis
- Chapter 10: District Visitor Services Vision, Mission and Goals
- Chapter 11: Visitor Services Program Implementation Across the David Thompson Corridor

Part 3: Crimson Lake Provincial Park

- Chapter 12: Visitor Services Foundations
- Chapter 13: Features Analysis
- Chapter 14: Management Issues of Importance to Visitor Services
- Chapter 15: Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 16: Interpretive Goals Objectives and Themes
- Chapter 17: Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation

Part 4: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

- Chapter 18: Visitor Services Foundations
- Chapter 19: Features Analysis
- Chapter 20: Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 21: Interpretive Goals Objectives and Themes
- Chapter 22: Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation

Part 5: Other Key Properties

- Chapter 23: White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services
- Chapter 24: Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services
- Chapter 25: Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services
- Chapter 26: Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services

Background Papers

Each Background Paper is a separate document. Background Papers explore in detail important foundations and resources that support or could be the focus of Visitor Services in David Thompson Corridor. Visitor Services staff can refer to these documents as resources for the ongoing development of Visitor Services programming. There are four Background Papers Associated with this plan — see Table 1 below for a brief description of each.

Table 1: Outlines of the Plan’s Background Papers

Background Paper	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Background Paper 1: <i>Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of key planning and policy documents of Alberta Parks, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, other Alberta Government agencies and the Government of Alberta • highlights key policies and initiatives that have direct connections to Alberta Parks and comments on and recommends how and why Visitor Services staff can contribute to these initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist Visitor Services program managers to defend and justify their programs to the public, regional and provincial managers and political representatives • show the many ways that their programs contribute to and support agency and government goals and values
Background Paper 2: <i>Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review and description of important natural and cultural features and processes that can be observed in many of the Alberta Parks properties in the district and/or throughout the David Thompson Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be used along with Features Analysis chapters found elsewhere in this plan • a primary information source for development of new programs • an orientation tool for new staff to learn about the David Thompson Corridor
Background Paper 3: <i>Features Inventory: Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of important natural and cultural features and processes that can be observed in Crimson Lake Provincial Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be used in conjunction with Background Paper 1 and the park’s features analysis (Section 3: Chapter 13) • a primary information source for development of new programs • an orientation tool for new staff to learn about Crimson Lake Provincial Park
Background Paper 4: <i>Features Inventory: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of important natural and cultural features and processes that can be observed in Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be used in conjunction with Background Paper 1 and the park’s features analysis (Section 4: Chapter 19) • a primary information source for development of new programs • an orientation tool for new staff to learn about Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

The Plan

Part 1: Background and Tools

This section contains information that can be used by Visitor Services staff throughout the David Thompson Corridor. This part has seven chapters — see Table 2 below for a brief description of each.

Table 2: Chapters in Part 1: Background and Tools

Chapter	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Chapter 1: <i>Defining Visitor Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces Alberta Parks' current definitions of Visitor Services and its value and benefits to Alberta Parks, park users and nearby communities includes summaries of current best practice, concepts, ideas and learning models used by heritage interpreters and environmental educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is vital that Visitor Services field staff and their managers can clearly articulate the benefits Visitor Services in order to assure that appropriate programming in the David Thompson Corridor these concepts and learning models are the foundation for effective Visitor Services programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff must understand them and apply them in programming
Chapter 2: <i>Summary of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarizes the findings of Background Paper 1 identifies the Alberta Parks and the Alberta Governments goals and initiatives that defines and justifies the agency's Visitor Services Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should regularly review this chapter to ensure that they understand the broad mandate that their positions fill
Chapter 3: <i>Defining Visitor Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces Alberta Parks' current definitions of Visitor Services and its value and benefits to Alberta Parks and park users and the communities nearby summarizes the best methods and approaches to visitor and market analysis that are conducted by professionals in Canadian visitor services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should use this chapter as a guide for conducting regular comprehensive reviews of site visitors and the market for visitor services in the David Thompson Corridor it is vital that Visitor Services field staff and their managers can clearly articulate the benefits Visitor Services in order to guide development of appropriate programming in the district
Chapter 4: <i>Analysis of Potential Partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defines key types of collaborations including partnerships and sponsorships appropriate for Alberta Parks in the David Thompson Corridor identifies criteria that should be used for selecting groups, organizations and companies as collaborators, partners and/or sponsors focuses on applying these criteria to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential funding partners/sponsors groups with high collaboration potential groups with moderate collaboration potential groups with lower collaboration potential but still of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can use this chapter as a guide for developing and maintaining partnerships a first step for identifying and contacting potential partners
Chapter 5: <i>Curriculum Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviews Alberta Education's grade-specific science and social studies curriculum identifies courses, topic areas, learning units and subunits that can be addressed by Visitor Services programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use this chapter as a guide for developing meaningful school-focused programming that can take place in the park or at local schools
Chapter 6: <i>Presentation Options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defines and describes the vast array of personal and non-personal presentation media and methods available to Visitor Services staff outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> managers can use this chapter as a training tool for new staff experienced Visitor Services staff can use chapter as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a review of options a tool for selecting effective methods and media for new programs
Chapter 7: <i>Review of Sign Standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Parks has developed the <i>Alberta Parks Sign Program Manual</i>, a comprehensive guide to design of all signs used by Alberta Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes instructions for use of colour, fonts, logos and wordmarks and other design elements that give Alberta Parks signs a consistent and professional look and feel this chapter is a summary of those details within the Sign Program Manual that are of importance to Visitor Services staff who may be in charge of the development of information/orientation and interpretation signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use this chapter as a guide when developing new signs and kiosks

Part 2: The David Thompson Corridor

This section focuses on Visitor Services throughout the David Thompson Corridor. In some instances, they may be called upon to develop interpretive and information/orientation products and services that are located outside of Alberta Parks properties, most likely along Highway 11.

This part has four chapters — see Table 3 below for a brief description of each.

Table 3: Chapters in Part 2: The David Thompson Corridor

Chapter	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Chapter 8: <i>District-wide Visitor Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviews available information about people who currently visit the David Thompson Corridor identifies the implications of these findings for the delivery of Visitor Services products and services in the District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use this information when developing new Visitor Service staff to ensure that they are appropriate for target participants
Chapter 9: <i>Market Analysis for Visitor Services in Alberta Parks Properties in the David Thompson Corridor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviews available information on markets and market trends for Alberta Parks and provincial and local tourism - including Learning Enrichment and Experiential Travel Tourism (LEET Tourism) includes many recommendations for addressing these markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> should review this chapter to ensure that new programs are appropriate for their target markets
Chapter 10: <i>District Visitor Services Vision Mission and Goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies the core outcomes of Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> district staff should regularly review this chapter to ensure that the offerings developed stay true to the intentions of the overall district Visitor Services Program
Chapter 11: <i>Visitor Services Program Implementation Across the David Thompson Corridor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies key procedures that should be followed by all Visitor Services staff at all sites across the David Thompson Corridor includes recommendations for Visitor Services Programs that should be developed for the David Thompson Corridor as a unit over the next five to ten years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all Visitor Services staff should follow the program planning and evaluations procedures identified in this chapter District Visitor Services staff should use this chapter as a guide for developing specific programs featuring the entire David Thompson Corridor

Definitions

Core Competencies

Core Competencies are the collective knowledge and skills needed by Visitor Service Staff to successfully do their jobs. They include the areas of operation and service in which the Visitor Services program should excel.

The areas of core competency identified in this chapter include:

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

For each core competency, the following areas are examined and discussed:

Outputs

These are the key products and services related to each core competency.

Critical Success Factors

These are the structures, materials, processes, procedure and/or staff capacity (knowledge, skills) that must be in place for an output to be achievable.

Key Performance Indicators

These are observable outcomes of the outputs. They will help Visitor Services staff define and measure progress toward delivering the outputs identified within each core competency.

Part 3:

Crimson Lake Provincial Park

This segment of the plan focuses on Crimson Lake Provincial Park.

This part has six chapters — see Table 4 below for a brief description of each.

Chapter	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Chapter 12: <i>Visitor Services Foundations for Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • features the Visitor Services guidelines and goals from the park's management plan - key points are reviewed and their implications for the Visitor Services program are discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all park Visitor Services staff must follow the directions for Visitor Services outlined in this chapter
Chapter 13: <i>Features Analysis for Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefly describes and analyses the park's natural and cultural features • identifies many features that should be highlighted in Visitor Services programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be used by Visitor Services staff as a starting point for developing new public and education programs • an ideal introduction to the park for new staff
Chapter 14: <i>Management Issues of Importance to Visitor Services at Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefly describes and analyses key park management issues and how Visitor Services can assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must know and understand management issues identified here • work with the park management team to develop appropriate information/orientation and interpretation programming to support park management initiatives
Chapter 15: <i>Visitor Analysis for Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of current information on current and potential park visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be used by Visitor Services staff as a starting point for developing new public and education programs that fit the needs and interests of target audiences • an introduction to park visitors for new staff
Chapter 16: <i>Interpretive Goals, Objectives and Themes for Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the framework for Visitor Services programming for Crimson Lake Provincial Park • defines interpretive goals, objectives, themes and subthemes based on the park's and the agency's mandate • themes and subthemes are based on the park and agency mandates, the park's natural and cultural features, plus what is known about park visitors' prior knowledge, interests, attitudes and behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must regularly review the park's interpretive goals and objectives • must use the park's interpretive themes and subthemes as a framework for developing new public and education programs
Chapter 17: <i>Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation for Crimson Lake Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a detailed review of the 10 areas of core competencies and the outputs, critical success factors and key performance indicators required to effectively deliver Visitor Services at Crimson Lake Provincial Park (see definition of the terms in the Sidebar on the facing page) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use included recommendations to guide the development of effective programming over the next five to ten years.

Part 4: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

This segment of the plan focuses on Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve.

This part has five chapters — see Table 5 below for a brief description of each.

Table 5: Chapters in Part 4: Kootenay Plain Ecological Reserve

Chapter	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Chapter 18: <i>Visitor Services Foundations for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • features the Visitor Services guidelines and goals from the ecological reserve’s management plan - key points are reviewed and their implications for the Visitor Services program are discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and follow the directions for Visitor Services outlined in this chapter
Chapter 19: <i>Features Analysis for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describes and analyses the ecological reserve’s natural and cultural features • identifies many that should be featured in Visitor Services programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be used by Visitor Services staff as a starting point for developing new public and education programs • an ideal introduction to the ecological reserve for new staff
Chapter 20: <i>Visitor Analysis for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describes and analyses the ecological reserve’s current and potential visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be used as a starting point for developing new public and education programs that fit the needs and interests of target participants • an introduction to ecological reserve’s visitors for new staff
Chapter 21: <i>Interpretive Goals, Objectives and Themes for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defines and provides clear interpretive goals, objectives, themes and subthemes - based on the reserve’s and the agency’s mandate plus a set of themes and subthemes based on these mandates, the park’s natural and cultural features plus what is known about ecological reserve visitors’ prior knowledge, interests, attitudes and behaviours • provides the framework for Visitor Services programming for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must regularly review the reserve’s interpretive goals and objectives • must base all new programs on the reserve’s interpretive themes and subthemes
Chapter 22: <i>Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation for Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommendations for the development of effective programming over the next five to ten years • includes a detailed review of the 10 areas of core competencies and the outputs, critical success factors and key performance indicators required to effectively deliver Visitor Services (see page 6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use this chapter is guide for implementing Visitor Services at Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve for the next five to ten years

Part 5: Other Key Properties

This segment of the plan focuses on five other key Alberta Parks properties .

This part has four chapters — see Table 6 below for a brief description of each.

Table 6: Chapters in Part 5: Other Key Properties in the David Thompson Corridor		
Chapter	Description	How Visitor Services Staff Will Use It
Chapter 23: <i>White Goat Wilderness Area and Siffleur Wilderness Area Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services</i>	Each chapter consists of two sections: Section 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarizes the site's natural and cultural features • describes and assesses current Visitor Services-related infrastructure Section 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program statements (including interpretive Themes and Subthemes) • implementation recommendations for Visitor Services over the next five to ten years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an information source for new programming • guidelines for implementing Visitor Services for the site over the next five to ten years
Chapter 24: <i>Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services</i>		
Chapter 25: <i>Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services</i>		
Chapter 26: <i>Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services</i>		

Overview of Main Sites:

Crimson Lake Provincial Park

This is the David Thompson Corridor District's most important provincial park. It is located only several kilometres west of Rocky Mountain House. It is made up of two separate blocks:

- Crimson Lake Block (3,209 ha)
- Twin Lakes Block (4.97 ha)

The park receives the district's highest visitation (9,021 annual camper nights in the Crimson Lake Block plus 1,558 annual camper nights in the Twin Lakes Block in 2009). There has been a decline in visitation over the past six years from a high of 10,004 annual camper nights in 2004.

Day use statistics are not available but summer use of Crimson Lake and its beach by locals is very high according to park staff.

Natural Features

Information on the composition and species within the park's wetlands is dated (mostly from the 1970s). More research is needed to provide up-to-date information.

Wetlands

The park's wetlands are part of the provincially significant Crimson-Louise Lake Wetland. They are the major biological feature of the park, making up approximately 75 percent of its surface. The park has a wide spectrum of wetland types and includes at least one rare carnivorous wetland plant species (slender-leaved Sundew, *Drosera linearis*).

Since the original surveys in the 1970s, wetland succession has taken place. New research is required to identify the location and composition of current wetlands.

Forests

The park's forests are a mosaic of hardwood and softwood communities in various stages of succession. In the forty years since the park's forests were studied and mapped, natural succession has resulted in significant changes in forest composition. New research is needed to update the knowledge and understanding of current forest conditions.

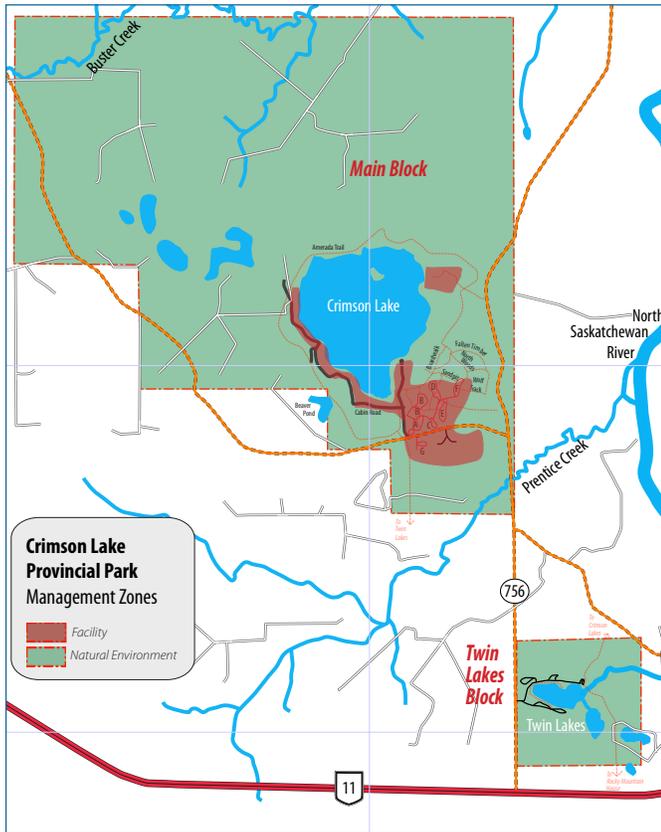


Figure 3: Map of Crimson Lake Provincial Park featuring its two block and facility and natural environment zones.



Figure 4: Boating and beach activities on Crimson Lake



Lakes

The park has three lakes.

Crimson Lake

This is a large shallow lake in the Crimson Lake Block averaging about 2.2 metres with a maximum depth of 9.1 metres. It is unique in having neither an inflow nor an outflow stream but retains a clean mesotrophic water chemistry. It appears that there is a steady flow of water into and out of the lake through adjacent wetlands. The exact mechanism of this flow has not been studied. This lake is too shallow to support large fish because each winter, anoxic conditions below the ice cause winter kill of all large fish.

Twin Lakes

These two small lakes, located in the Twin Lakes Block of the park, are deep enough to support large fish. The main lake is stocked annually with small rainbow trout as a resource for local anglers

to consume. Like Crimson Lake, these two lakes are intimately connected with adjacent wetlands.



Cultural and Historical Features

There has been almost no research on the cultural history of this park. One preliminary archeological survey found stone tool fragments adjacent to Crimson Lake, suggesting that the lake was a stopping place for early aboriginal hunters.

Park Infrastructure

With some notable exceptions (e.g., a new information kiosks in the Crimson Lake dayuse parking lot and at the trailhead of Amerada Trail), most Visitor Services-related infrastructure is old and in need of upgrading.

Almost all interpretive and information/orientation signs in this park do not comply with the Alberta Parks Sign Program standards.

Visitor Activities

The two blocks attract visitors for different activities:

Crimson Lake Block

- full service vehicle-based camping including regular interpretation programming
- boating and beach activities (see Figures 4 and 5)
- trail walking, wildlife-watching, enjoyment of natural environment
- focus is mostly on summer activities but the park provides winter cross country skiing

Twin Lakes Block

- rustic non-services camping with occasional interpretation services
- year-round angling for stocked rainbow trout

Alberta Parks has chosen this park as a key site for Visitor Services efforts including designating it as a gateway to the David Thompson Corridor. As a result, this site will not only promote learning and recreation opportunities Crimson Lake Provincial Park but also provide information/orientation recreation opportunities in the entire corridor including:

- other Alberta Parks properties in the district
- on public lands managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- other agencies, groups and businesses

Park Users

Campers

Crimson Lake and Twin Lakes campgrounds have high summer use. Alberta Parks has not collected detailed data about camper profiles. However, anecdotal information from park staff indicates that most campers are from Central Alberta with a significant number coming from nearby Rocky Mountain House and Red Deer.

Day Users

Crimson Lake has high summer day use. But no formal studies of day users has been conducted for this park. Anecdotal information from park staff suggests that most day users come from Rocky Mountain House. Activities include boating and beach activities on Crimson Lake and boating and fishing on Twin Lakes.

Chapters of Importance to Crimson Lake Provincial Park

Part 1: Background and Tools

All Chapters (1-7)

Part 3: Crimson Lake Provincial Park

- Chapter 12: Visitor Services Foundations
- Chapter 13: Features Analysis
- Chapter 14: Management Issues of Importance to Visitor Services
- Chapter 15: Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 16: Interpretive Goals Objectives and Themes
- Chapter 17: Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 3: Features Inventory: Crimson Lake Provincial Park



Figure 5: Map of Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve.

Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

This 3,438 ha site is Alberta Park's David Thompson Corridor District's second most important site. It is located just south of the Abraham Lake Reservoir near the Bighorn First Nations Reserve and adjacent to lands used by members of the Stoney First Nation and other Alberta First Nations for ceremonies.

The site is Alberta's second largest ecological reserve and protects one of the province's unique dry montane grassland areas. Its dry, relatively mild winters in the upper edge of the foothill's chinook belt plus its location in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains give it a dry climate that supports a number of unique plant species and communities. The climate and vegetation in turn have created conditions that support large populations of big hoofed mammals. Large herds of elk and bighorn sheep use the area to overwinter.

In keeping with its status as an ecological reserve, visitor activities are limited to day-hiking. Also, mountain biking and horse riding are permitted, but according to the site's management plan, these activities are confined to certain trails and will be curtailed if significant trail damage results from these activities. Camping, fishing and use of motorized vehicles on the ecological reserve are not permitted.

Natural Features

Information on the composition and species within the ecological reserve is dated and/or incomplete. More research is needed to provide clearer, up-to-date information.



Figure 6: Atypical viewscape featuring a tributary to the North Saskatchewan River and the flat Kootenay Plains in the foreground with majestic front range mountains in the background.

Biological Features

Bruhjell et al (1997) (*Biophysical And Significant Ecological Features of the Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve*) identified nationally and provincially environmentally significant areas within the ecological reserve. This include:

Nationally Significant

- North Saskatchewan River

Provincially Significant

- Montane Grasslands
- Limber Pine Community
- Unique Meadow
- Calcareous Cliff
- Meadow
- Alkaline Pond and Seepage
- Montane Woodlands
- Unique Wetland
- Small Rivers
- Riverside Seepage Areas
- Spring Fens

Geological Features

The ecological reserve has some excellent viewable geological features including:

- Siffleur Falls
- Whirlpool Point
- Siffleur River Canyon
- views of the Front Ranges of the Rocky Mountains



Figure 7: Siffleur Falls. →



Figure 8: Siffleur River Canyon.

Cultural and Historical Features

Research on many aspects of the cultural and historic features of the site are far from complete. However, current sources indicate the following about the Kootenay Plains:

- may have been part of the ice free corridor through which First Nations people migrated into North America from Asia during the past ice age
- preliminary finds indicate early First Nations use of these lands 8,000 years ago
- was an important bison hunting area for thousands of years including the early fur trade
- was a major trade and travel corridor for First Nations before and after first contact with European traders and settlers

- part of the fur trade transportation route after its mapping by explorer David Thompson
- there was significant historical and continuing use of the reserve and surrounding area by local Aboriginal groups for religious and ceremonial activities
- there was a brief period of horse ranching on site in the early 1900s

Infrastructure

With some notable exceptions such as a series of new interpretive signs along a trail near the Siffleur Falls Staging Area, most Visitor Services-related infrastructure is old and in need of upgrading.

Almost all interpretive and information/orientation signs in this ecological reserve do not comply with the Alberta Parks Sign Program standards.

Visitor Activities

Hiking, sightseeing and wildlife-watching are the main visitor activities. As, well, the Siffleur Falls staging area in the ecological reserve is a main entry point for multi-night backcountry hikers entering the Siffleur Wilderness area that lies adjacent to the reserve.

Day Use

No detailed, formal studies of visitors to the ecological reserve has been conducted. Anecdotal information from Alberta Parks staff indicate that most visitors are hikers who use the trail system starting at the trailhead located adjacent to the Siffleur Falls Staging Area parking lot. Most spend a between and hour to a half-day or full-day walking the reserve's trails. Most likely walk to view the Siffleur River Canyon and Siffleur Falls. Alberta Park staff suggest that most visitors are from Central Alberta but a significant percentage are likely from other parts of Canada and the USA who are traveling to or from nearby National Parks. There is currently no information about the number of repeat visitors.

Chapters of Importance to Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

Part 1: Background and Tools

All Chapters (1-7)

Part 4: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

- Chapter 18: Visitor Services Foundations
- Chapter 19: Features Analysis
- Chapter 20: Visitor Analysis
- Chapter 21: Interpretive Goals Objectives and Themes
- Chapter 22: Visitor Services Program Statements and Implementation

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 4: Features Inventory: Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

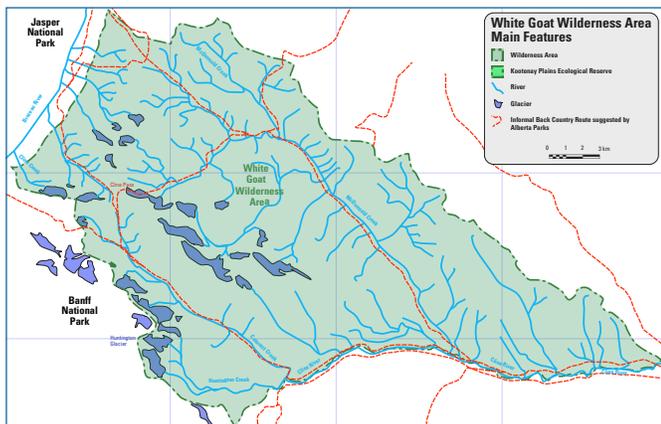


Figure 9: Map of White Goat Wilderness Area.

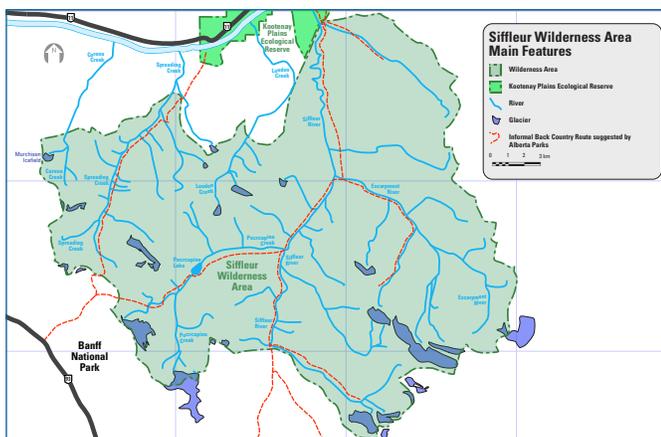


Figure 10: Map of Siffleur Wilderness Area.



Figure 11: A view of the Cataract Creek Valley in White Goat Wilderness Area showing exposed bedrock (a) and talus slopes (b).

White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas

White Goat (44,457 ha) and Siffleur (41,214 ha) Wilderness Areas are by far the largest Alberta Parks land holdings in the David Thompson Corridor. As designated wilderness areas, they contain no infrastructure (e.g., maintained campsites and trails). Backcountry hiking, skiing and climbing are encouraged and motor vehicles and horses are prohibited. These Wilderness Areas are for experienced backcountry enthusiasts who have the knowledge and skills to get themselves in and out of wilderness on their own. Although they do not have maintained trails, each Wilderness Area has a set of interconnected informal trail routes for hikers (see Figures 9 and 10). The management plan for these two wilderness areas stipulates that interpretation and information/orientation services must be located outside the sites' boundaries either at their trailheads situated near staging areas along Highway 11 or as carry-along media (e.g., maps, brochures, etc.) available through Alberta Parks.

Natural Features

Geological Features

These Wilderness Areas are located in the Front Range and Main Range of the Rocky Mountains. Roughly half of each of these Wilderness Areas consist of exposed rock—either bedrock or talus slopes (see Figure 11).

Much of the landscape has been sculpted by glaciers and numerous small glaciers can be found on high mountain peaks (see locations in Figures 9 and 10).

Biological Features

These two Wilderness Areas have a wide spectrum of native alpine and subalpine plant and animal species representative of Alberta's Rocky Mountains. The key to these natural features is that most remain in relatively pristine condition.

Cultural Features

The only know cultural feature is a series of petroglyphs of undetermined age located in White Goat Wilderness.

Infrastructure

Each Wilderness Area has an aging trailhead and gravel parking area located at staging areas along Highway 11.

Visitor Activities

Activities include backcountry camping, hiking, climbing, skiing and snowshoeing. Nothing is known about the number and background of site visitors.

Chapters of Importance to White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas

Part 1: Background and Tools

All Chapters (1-7)

Part 5: Other Key Properties

- Chapter 23: White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor

Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area

This small (409 ha) 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). It features a campground (92-sites), a small day use area adjacent to Fish Lake and a short loop interpretive trail. The site's main attractions are its quiet rustic campground and fishing for rainbow trout that are annually stocked in Fish Lake.

Natural Features

Biological Features

The recreation area is located in forest typical of the Foothills Natural Region.

The site's two lakes differ significantly. Fish Lake is deep enough to support a population of stocked rainbow trout. Mud Lake on the other hand is weedy and shallow—well on its way to becoming a wetland.

Cultural Features

No cultural features are known for this site.

Infrastructure

Much of the Visitor Services-related infrastructure (e.g., Resource Management Trail, Picnic Shelter, Information Kiosks) are old and in need of upgrading to current Alberta Parks standards

Visitor Activities

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.

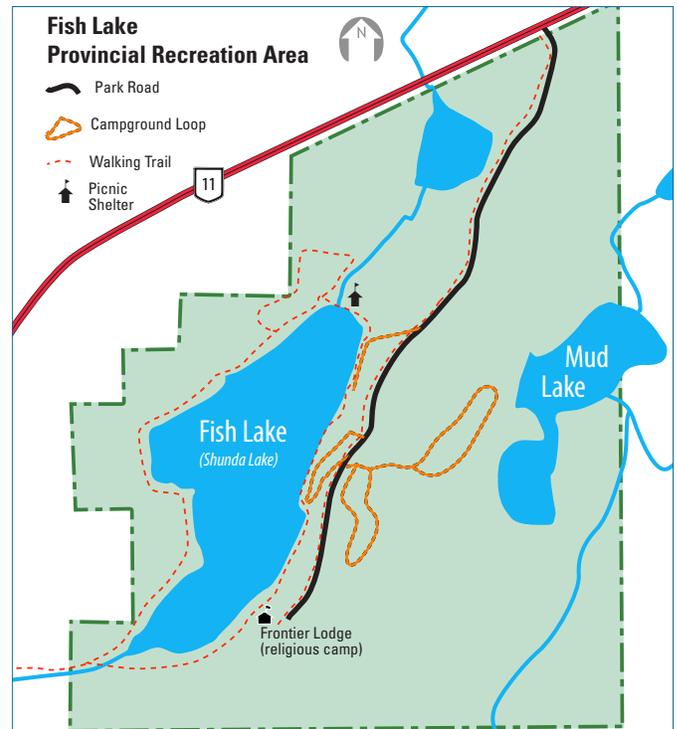


Figure 12: Map of Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area.



Figure 13: The stocked rainbow trout attract anglers year-round.

Chapters of Importance to Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area

Part 1: Background and Tools

All Chapters (1-7)

Part 5: Other Key Properties

- Chapter 24: Fish Lake Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor

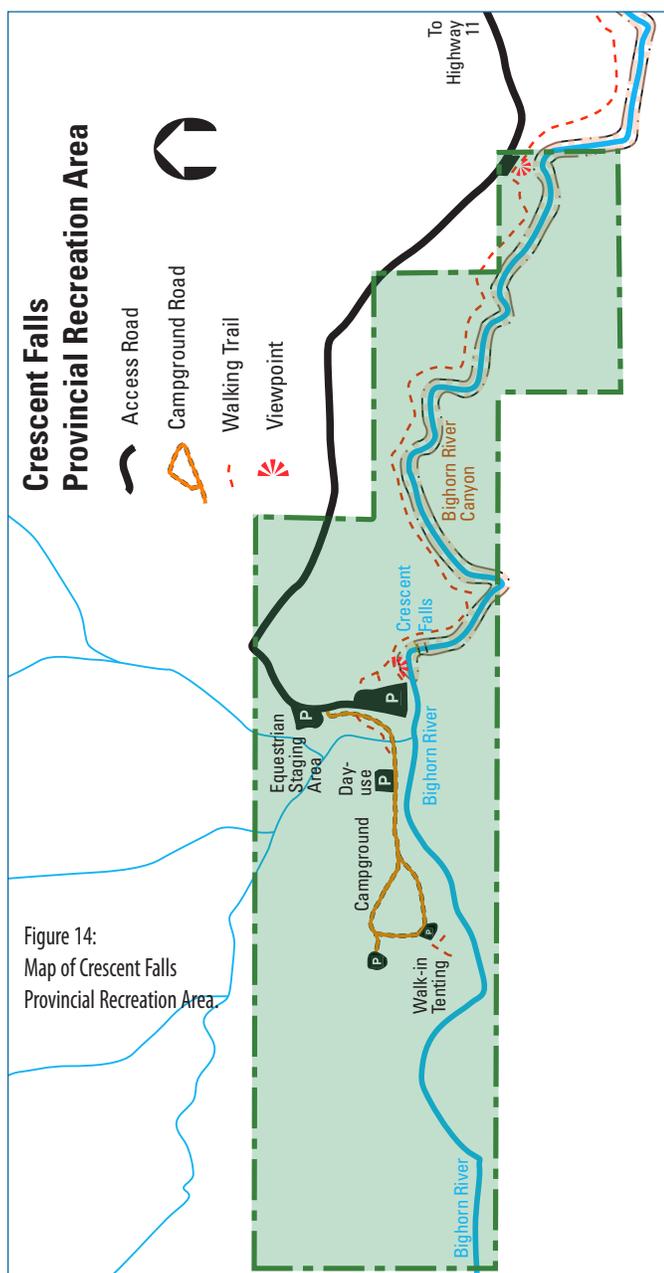


Figure 14: Map of Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area



Figure 15: Bighorn River Canyon.



Figure 16: Crescent Falls.

Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area

This small (262 ha) Recreation Area is located approximately 22 km west of Nordegg on Hwy. 11, then 6 km north on the recreation area’s access road. It encompasses a section of the Bighorn Rivers including Crescent Falls and the upper kilometre or so of the Bighorn River Canyon. The campground has 29 sites including several sites for equestrian riders who use the equestrian staging area.

Natural Features

General information about natural and cultural features of Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area is very limited. It has no biophysical inventory or management plan.

Biological Features

The recreation area is located in forest typical of the Foothills Natural Region.

Geological Features

Geological features such as Crescent Falls and the scenic Bighorn River Canyon are the main attractions of this site. Two viewpoints overlook each of these features. The recreation area is also part of the Bighorn Coalfield.

Infrastructure

Apart from the two viewpoints which are in good condition, much of the Visitor Services-related infrastructure (e.g., the canyon rim trail, safety/information/orientation signs, and information kiosks) are old and in need of upgrading to current Alberta Parks standards.

Information About Visitors

Apart from camping statistics, there is no detailed information that provides camper and or day user profiles.

Key recreation activities include sightseeing, hiking, camping and ice climbing. The site is also used as an equestrian and ATV staging area for trails on nearby public lands. Currently, except for camping, the extent and timing of these recreation activities is not known.

Chapters that Focus on Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area

Part 1: Background and Tools

All Chapters (1-7)

Part 5: Other Key Properties

- Chapter 25: Crescent Falls Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor

Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area

This small (117 ha, 55 campsite) Recreation Area is located on the south side of on Hwy. 11, approximately 10 km west of Saskatchewan Crossing. It encompasses a section of the flat North Saskatchewan River Valley and includes the lower section of Thompson Creek.

Natural Features

General information about natural and cultural features of this Recreation Area is very limited. It has no biophysical inventory or management plan.

Biological Features

The recreation area is located in riparian and montane forest typical of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region. This site provides several excellent views of the 2009 Upper North Saskatchewan Prescribed Fire that occupies lands on the north side of Highway 11 (see Figure 18).

Geological Features

Geological features on-site are limited. However, there are many excellent views of mountains that make up part of the Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains (see Figure 19).

Infrastructure

Apart from a relatively new information kiosk that features many of the Alberta Parks and tourism attractions in west central Alberta, the Visitor Services-related infrastructure are old and in need of upgrading to current Alberta Parks standards.

Information About Visitors

Apart from camping statistics, there is no detailed information that provides for camper and or day user profiles.

Key recreation activities include overnight camping for travelers on Highway 11, some extended stay camping, and perhaps some hiking and mountain biking on trails on nearby public lands. Currently, except for camping, the extent and timing of these recreation activities is not known.



Figure 17: Map of Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area.



Figure 18: View of the 2009 Upper North Saskatchewan Prescribed Fire seen from the dayuse area on the shore of Thompson Creek..



Figure 19: One of the many vies of nearby Front Range Mountains seen from Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area.

Chapters that Focus on Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area

Part 1: Background and Tools All Chapters (1-7)

Part 5: Other Key Properties

- Chapter 26: Thompson Creek Provincial Recreation Area: Assessment and Recommendations for Visitor Services

Background Papers

- Background Paper 1: Review of Foundations for Visitor Services in the David Thompson Corridor
- Background Paper 2: Feature Inventory: Big Picture Aspects with Application to Visitor Services in two or more sites in the David Thompson Corridor