

ENVIRONMENT



National Parks

Canada's seven mountain parks, Banff, Jasper, Yoho, Kootenay, Mount Revelstoke, Glacier, and Waterton Lakes, received 57.9% of all attendance to national parks in Canada through 2016-17. In the first six months of 2017, national park attendance was up by 9% compared to the year before. Park passes were free in 2017, in commemoration of Canada 150.

Waterton Lakes National Park

Waterton Lakes, Southwestern Alberta's very own national park, achieved record attendance numbers despite enduring a shortened season due to the devastation of the Kenow Wildfire in September 2017. Overall attendance increased by 7.35% over 2016. The park was such a popular destination that during the August long weekend it reached maximum capacity, and for the first time in its history, found itself temporarily unable to admit more visitors.

KENOW 2017 FIRE



The 35,000-hectare Kenow Wildfire forced the closure of the Waterton Lakes National Park from September 8th to the 20th. Almost two-fifths of the park was burned by the fire, and approximately half of its vegetation was lost. Reforestation after a forest fire depends on a variety of factors, including topography, amount of affected land, types of trees burned, and levels of natural and artificial regeneration.

Provincial Parks

In addition to Canada's 42 national parks, Canadians benefit from hundreds of provincial parks. Alberta has 76 provincial parks over 246,798 hectares, and 32 wildland provincial parks, covering over 1.8 million hectares.



Wildland provincial parks—such as the newly-established Castle Wildland Provincial Park—differ from the standard provincial park designation, affording the territory a higher level of environmental protection.

HOW THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HELPS

In 2017, the Community Foundation awarded \$46,500 in grant funding to six organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Environment Impact Area.

CHAIN LAKES PROVINCIAL PARK FIRE



A 2017 wildfire near Chain Lakes Provincial Park in the Municipal District of Ranchland prompted evacuations along Chimney Rock Road. The wildfire grew to an enormous size of 1,535 hectares by the time Alberta Wildfire classified it as "being held."

NOVEMBER 2011 FIRES



Unrelated fires broke out on the same day on the Blood Reserve west of Lethbridge and on the Milk River Ridge. The fire on the Blood Reserve destroyed two homes, prompted the evacuation of 100 more near Lethbridge, and burned an area of almost 1,600 hectares. The Milk River Ridge fire burned an area of grassland approximately 6,950 hectares in size; structural damage was limited to fencing.

SEPTEMBER 2012 FIRES



Two fires again broke out on the same day, originating in roughly the same areas as the fires in the previous year. The fire originating on the Blood Reserve consumed approximately 4,800 hectares and resulted in evacuation orders for Coalhurst and parts of West Lethbridge, while the second Milk River Ridge fire consumed approximately 6,500 hectares, this time closer to city limits. Residents of Milk River evacuated to Raymond.



Did You Know? The Kenow Wildfire burned 19,303 hectares of Waterton Lakes National Park. That's 38.6% of the park's total area.

The Castle Mountain Area

Southwestern Alberta's Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park, designated in February of 2017, cover a combined total of 105,179 hectares of land.

THE CASTLE AREA IS HOME TO

Over 800 vascular plant species.

25 species of fish.

59 species of mammals.

This makes it one of the most biologically diverse regions in the province.



The Castle area is a major habitat for grizzly bears. Grizzly bears, included on Alberta's Threatened Species List, are an indicator species: their vitality reflects the conditions of the ecosystem they inhabit. Conditions that endanger the grizzly bear, whether natural or human-caused, affect the health of the ecosystem and the region as a whole.

Human-caused mortality is a major cause of death for Alberta's grizzly bears.



Off-highway vehicle (OHV) usage also contributes to the displacement of bears from habitable areas, limiting their ability to forage and prepare for hibernation.

OHV Use in Southwestern Alberta



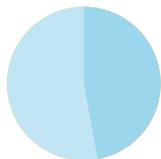
88.4% of Albertans over 18 believe that protecting wilderness land is important.

2 in 3 Albertans prefer non-motorized outdoor recreation.

Between 4% and 6% of Albertans over the age of 18 participate in OHV recreation throughout the year. Twenty-five percent of survey respondents believed there were not enough areas designated for OHV recreation, while 33% felt there was an oversupply. The survey was completed in 2015, before the designation of the Castle Provincial and Wildland Parks, as well as the establishment of the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills Public Land Use Zones. As of 2018, OHV use is permitted in three of the Public Land Use Zones in Southwestern Alberta: the Allison/Chinook, Livingstone, and Porcupine Hills zones.

Renewable Energy

The Climate Leadership Plan set out by the Alberta Government aims to increase renewable electricity generation to 30%, and phase out coal-fired generation by 2030. Renewable energy generation in Alberta has been increasing gradually since 2011.



NON-RENEWABLE SOURCES

As much as 47% and 40% of Alberta's electricity is still produced by coal and natural gas, respectively.



RENEWABLE SOURCES

Just 13% of electricity is produced by renewable sources.

Alberta's power consumption record was set in December 2017, when in just one hour we consumed 11,473 megawatts (MW)—Albertans typically consume between 10,200 and 10,300 MW. One MW is roughly the amount of electricity required to power 1,000 homes. With a 2017 population of 4,306,039, this means that each MW of power generated can provide for the peak demand of 375 Albertans.



The 21 wind farms and 525 turbines in Southwestern Alberta can generate a total of 825 MW.

825 MW of wind energy at 35% capacity supplies the peak power needs of 102,506 Albertans. The 35% capacity factor accounts for the fact that wind does not blow constantly—though it may seem like it does!

The 96 MW of hydroelectric power generated by the 8 hydroelectric generating stations throughout Southwestern Alberta, at 22% capacity, can theoretically provide enough power for 7,498 Albertans.