
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Greater access to nature for a healthier, brighter future

VICTORIA – People in British Columbia are visiting BC Parks in ever-increasing numbers, and the Province is increasing its investment to promote access and protect nature in some of the most beautiful places on the planet.

During the next three years, the BC Parks operating and capital budgets, combined, will increase by more than \$83 million, resulting in new campsites, expanded trails and strengthened management of the park system, making visits to provincial parks more enjoyable than ever. The BC Parks capital budget will increase by an average of 57% and the operating budget will increase by an average of 22% for each year of Budget 2021.

“It’s absolutely clear how deeply people care about our provincial parks. The pandemic has brought more people than ever to visit BC Parks so they can safely spend time with family and friends while connecting to nature,” said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “Investing in our parks helps secure our magnificent natural legacy so more British Columbians can appreciate its beauty. We are also supporting local businesses and the economy by creating employment opportunities through new investments in park infrastructure.”

From 2014 to 2019, BC Parks experienced a 23% increase in visitors throughout the province and had another record-breaking year for camping reservations with more than 270,000 made in 2020. In response to the increased demand for camping and outdoor recreation opportunities, the additional funding will go toward construction of new campgrounds, more campsites and amenities at existing campgrounds. For this season, approximately 185 sites are being added to BC Parks, expanding on the over 1,500 sites added to BC Parks and recreational sites since 2017.

“B.C.’s parks and campgrounds are more popular than ever, which is why this investment is so timely,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Finance. “By investing in new camp spaces and improving trails and accessibility, we are creating jobs right here at home and protecting this important legacy for generations to come.”

The funding will be used to enhance trails and improve accessibility for people who use wheelchairs, strollers or have other accessibility challenges. In addition, the funding will support high-priority maintenance projects and renovations to existing facilities, additional staff and equipment, and improvements to backcountry facilities to enhance stewardship and the overall visitor experience. Planning is underway to determine where the new projects will take place.

“Being in nature improves our overall health and well-being. It offers the opportunity to

connect to history, culture and the teachings of Indigenous nations,” said Kelly Greene, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment. “We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations to reflect Indigenous history and culture in provincial parks, and expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation so everyone can enjoy our spectacular natural areas.”

Infrastructure improvements are nearing the finish line in 24 provincial parks through a \$5-million investment from B.C.’s \$10-billion COVID-19 response, which includes StrongerBC: BC’s Economic Recovery Plan. The projects include upgrades to parking lots, drinking water systems, boat launches and campgrounds, backcountry improvements and accessibility upgrades.

“Today’s announcement marks a real turning point for our provincial parks and is exactly the kind of bold action that nature needs right now,” said Annita Mcphee, executive director, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, British Columbia. “This investment in BC Parks will be appreciated generations into the future and will better support British Columbians today to experience, appreciate and learn from these special places that are so important to the people and the wildlife of this province.”

This announcement is part of B.C.’s Budget 2021, and is part of a continued investment in community infrastructure throughout the province and supports the foundation of a long-term recovery that includes everyone in B.C.

Quick Facts:

- B.C.’s provincial parks receive more than 23 million visits each year.
- A new, fully serviced 90-site campground in Manning Park is scheduled to open in July 2021. The project is the first of its kind for BC Parks, as it will be fully serviced, offering water, sewer and electrical sites.
- One of the largest park systems in North America, B.C. has more than 1,000 provincial parks, recreation areas, conservancies, ecological reserves and protected areas covering approximately 14.4% of the provincial land base.
- Approximately 98% of the parks and protected areas system remains largely undeveloped with an emphasis on conserving the natural environment.

Learn More:

For more information about BC Parks, visit: <https://bcparks.ca/>

Contact:

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Strategy
Media Relations
250 953-3834

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