

South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan

Recreation and Tourism

This plan will focus and enhance recreation and tourism management to provide quality recreation experiences that are environmentally and culturally sustainable.

Key Components of the Plan

- **Recreation Management Areas (Page 31)** – Identifies areas where recreation and tourism are a priority land use. Recreation and/or trail planning will occur in these areas.
- **Cooperative Management (Page 32)** – Some recreation management areas will be cooperatively managed with Indigenous communities and organizations to support Indigenous priority uses, including traditional land uses or Indigenous-led tourism.
- **Operational requirements (Page 32)** – New operational requirements (i.e. maximum trail widths and off-highway vehicle timing restrictions) are intended to minimize environmental impacts in some sensitive areas.
- **Update recreation infrastructure (Page 32)** – Intends to improve future visitor opportunities through updates to facilities, services, and trails.

Recreation and Tourism Facts

In this sub-region:

- In 2023, the tourism industry contributed an estimated 0.7% of the GDP.
- In 2023, tourism accounted for roughly 8% of the local labour force.

Did you know...

- This sub-region is popular for nature-based recreation activities including camping, fishing, hunting, birdwatching, and canoeing.
- This area also supports trail-based recreation activities including hiking, biking, and off-highway vehicle use (i.e. snowmobiles and quads).
- This sub-region is rich in birding areas with over 200 species of birds found in lakes, wetlands, and mixed wood boreal forests.
- Tourism operations on public lands have long-term dispositions (up to 60 years) enabled through the tourism and commercial lease process.
- Larger communities such as Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, and Athabasca often act as service centres for tourists to the sub-region.

Map of the existing and proposed recreation management areas where recreation and tourism activities will be prioritized (Figure 5 from the Draft South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan)

