



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

BC Parks

BC PARKS

2016/17 Annual Report

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Cover Photo: Alice Lake Provincial Park, South Coast Region

Alice Lake Provincial Park is surrounded by towering mountains, dense forests and grassy areas. There are four freshwater lakes that dominate the landscape and make swimming and fishing very enjoyable pastimes.

The trail around Alice Lake is popular for evening strolls and for the more adventurous, there is [Four Lakes Trail](#). There are excellent views of the Squamish River and the Tantalus Range from the [DeBeck's Hill Trail](#). This is a favourite family park.

Interior pages photo credits:

Pg 3: Khutzey Mateen

Pg 6: McMillain Park Iain Robert Reid

Pg 5, 8, 9, 10, 23 & 24: Elk Lakes Iain Robert Reid

Pg 11: Chilliwack Lake Iain Robert Reid

Pg 13 & 32: Top of the world Iain Robert Reid

Pg 4, 7, 19 & 29: Ancient Forest Iain Robert Reid

Pg 34: Strathcona Iain Robert Reid

Pg 36: Wells Gray Iain Robert Reid

Back cover: Top of the world Iain Robert Reid



About BC Parks

B.C.'s protected areas system is a public trust with exceptional opportunities for conservation, outdoor recreation, education, scientific study and social interactions.

Who we are

BC Parks is part of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. BC Parks' services and management are delivered through a central office in Victoria and five regions located throughout the province. The regions are subdivided into 12 sections. The sections are further sub-divided into 46 management areas (MAs).

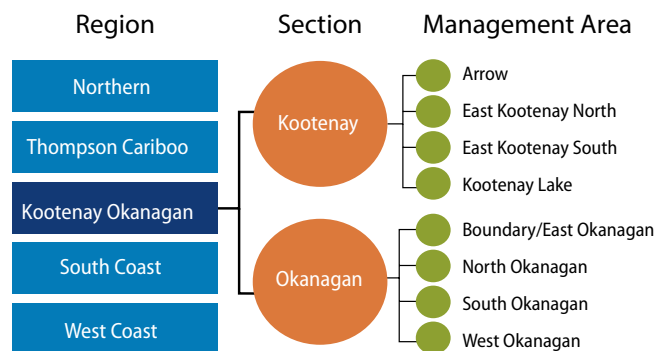
Most backcountry facilities and services are provided and maintained by BC Parks staff. Most frontcountry facilities and services are managed by contractors, called Park Operators (POs). Some POs manage one park and others manage a grouping or bundle of parks in a specific location. POs provide onsite management, services and routine maintenance in day use areas and campgrounds. Standards for this service are set by BC Parks.

What we manage

B.C.'s protected areas system provides protection and maintenance of important natural and cultural values, while providing outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Protected areas contain some of the best representative elements of B.C.'s natural and cultural heritage. They include ecological reserves, provincial parks, conservancies, recreation areas and protected areas established under the Environment and Land Use Act.

Example of BC Parks Organizational Hierachy



BC Parks has a total of 5 Regions, 9 Sections and 49 Management Areas



As of March 31, 2017, the system managed by BC Parks included 1,033 protected lands, covering approximately 14.4% of the province or approximately 14 million hectares (ha). B.C. has the highest percentage of its land base dedicated to protected area status of all Canadian provincial or territorial jurisdictions. BC Parks manages the third largest parks system in North America behind the U.S. National Parks Service and Parks Canada.

**Protected Areas System Administered by BC Parks
(as of March 31, 2017)**

Designation	Number	Area (hectares)
Ecological Reserves	148	160,456
Class A Parks	628	10,515,994
Class B Parks	2	3,778
Class C Parks	13	484
Conservancies	156	2,998,504
Environment and Land Act designations	84	384,733
Recreation Areas	2	5,929
Total	1033	14,069,881



What are...?

Ecological reserves are reserved for ecological purposes including areas: for research and education; that maintain representative examples of natural ecosystems; that serve as examples of ecosystems modified by human activities and offer an opportunity to study their recovery; that protect rare or endangered flora and fauna; and unique examples of botanical, zoological or geological phenomena. While most ecological reserves are open to the public, they are not established for outdoor recreation and no extra activities are allowed.

Class A parks are lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in a Class A park is limited to that which is necessary for the maintenance of its recreational values. Activities such as grazing, hay cutting and other uses (except commercial logging, mining or hydroelectric development) that existed at the time the park was established may be allowed to continue in certain parks.

Class B parks differ from Class A parks in that a Class B park may permit a broader range of activities and uses provided that such uses are not detrimental to the recreational values of the park.

Class C parks differ from Class A parks in that a Class C park must be managed by a local board. They are generally small parks providing local recreational amenities.

Conservancies are set aside for: (a) the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments; (b) the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations; (c) the protection and maintenance of their recreational values; and (d) development or use of natural resources in a manner consistent with the purposes of (a), (b) and (c) above. Conservancies provide a wider range of low impact, compatible economic opportunities than Class A parks, however, commercial logging, mining and hydroelectric power generation (other than local run-of-the-river projects) are prohibited.

Protected areas are established by Order in Council under the Environment and Land Use Act and generally have one or more existing or proposed activities that are not usually allowed in a park (e.g., proposed industrial road, pipeline, transmission line or communication site). Allowable activities are determined by specific provisions when the area is established as well as relevant sections of the Park Act and regulations.

Recreation areas are set aside for public recreational use. The majority of these areas were established to allow a mineral resource evaluation under a time-limited tenure; no other industrial activities are permitted. All current recreation areas are being evaluated to determine if they should become fully protected or returned to integrated resource management lands.



Managing the System

Legislative Framework

The provincial protected areas system is governed by several pieces of legislation.

Ecological Reserve Act

This Act provides for the establishment and administration of ecological reserves. Ecological reserves are established by inclusion to the schedules of the Protected Areas of BC Act or by Order in Council under the Act.

Park Act

This Act provides for the establishment, classification and management of parks, conservancies and recreation areas. Class A parks and conservancies are established by inclusion in the schedules to the Protected Areas of BC Act or by Order in Council under the Act. Class B and C parks and recreation areas are established by Order in Council under the Act.

Protected Areas of BC Act

This Act consolidates in its schedules most of the Class A parks, conservancies and ecological reserves for the purposes of the Park Act and the Ecological Reserve Act. The Act ensures that the boundaries of these areas cannot be modified to remove lands except by an Act of the Legislature.

Environment and Land Use Act

This Act empowers a Land Use Committee of Cabinet to ensure all aspects of the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment are fully considered in the

administration of land use and resource development. Orders can be made respecting the environment or land use, including the establishment of protected areas. The Act is under the administration of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act

Only sections 5(b), and 6 and 9 relate to the portfolio of the Minister of Environment. Section 5(b) describes one of the functions of the ministry as being to encourage outdoor recreation, establish parks and conserve the natural scenic and historic features of B.C. Section 6 provides the minister with the authority, for the purposes of the Act, to enter into agreements (subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council) with the Government of Canada, the government of another province, or with any other person or a municipality. Section 9 gives authority to the minister to dispose of, acquire and manage land for ministry purposes.

Ministry of Environment Act

This Act gives the minister authority to acquire property and to enter into agreements with other governments with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act

This Act establishes special accounts. These are accounts in the general fund of the consolidated revenue fund where the authorization to expend money from the account is located in an Act other than a Supply Act.



Changes to B.C.'s Protected Areas System in 2016/17

Section 9.6 of the Act deals with the Park Enhancement Fund. This section details what monies can be added to the special account and how the monies can be used by the ministry to enhance volunteer, research and other opportunities in parks and protected areas.

Designations and Changes to the System

Changes to B.C.'s protected areas system continue the ongoing process of designing and implementing a system that provides for improved protection of environmental and cultural values, providing recreational experiences and providing economic opportunities to communities.

In 2016/17, the Province added 12,564 ha to B.C.'s protected areas system by establishing one new park (Ancient Forest / Chun T'oh Whudujut Park) and three new protected areas (Ancient Forest / Chun T'oh Whudujut, Finn Creek and Small Inlet protected areas), as well as adding lands to five parks (Halkett Bay Marine, Okanagan Mountain, Prudhomme Lake, **s̓x̓wə̓x̓wnitk̓w** and Tweedsmuir parks) and one conservancy (Sheemahant Conservancy).

In Prudhomme Lake Park, 0.04 ha were removed and 2.43 ha were removed from Finn Creek Park and re-established as Finn Creek Protected Area under the Environment and Land Use Act.

New Protected Areas		Area (ha)
Ancient Forest / Chun T'oh Whudujut Park		11,190
Ancient Forest / Chun T'oh Whudujut Protected Area		685
Finn Creek Protected Area		2.43
Small Inlet Protected Area		157
Area Added to Existing Protected Areas		Area (ha)
Halkett Bay Marine Park		136
Okanagan Mountain Park		263
Prudhomme Lake Park		4.1
Sheemahant Conservancy		28.5
s̓x̓wə̓x̓wnitk̓w Park		0.4
Tweedsmuir Park		98
Area Removed from Existing Protected Areas		Area (ha)
Finn Creek Park		2.43
Prudhomme Lake Park		0.04



Land Acquisitions

From time to time, the provincial government acquires lands for protected areas through purchase, donation, and/or exchange to fill gaps in the protected areas system. These are solutions include partnerships contribute to successful projects.

In 2016/17, four properties, totaling 132.8 ha valued at \$568,000, were acquired. Two of these properties (65.6 ha) were subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations for administration and management under the Wildlife Act and to be considered for establishment as Wildlife Management Areas.

Acquired properties include:

- 64 ha along the Robson Valley trench, adjacent to West Twin Park and Protected Area, providing salmon spawning grounds and wildlife corridors for caribou, grizzly bear, mountain goats, deer and moose.
- 3.2 ha of upland forest, including second growth coastal Douglas-fir forest, at Cusheon Cove, adjacent to Ruckle Park on Salt Spring Island.
- 0.6 ha adjacent to Elizabeth Lake Wildlife Reserve, furthering conservation and education/recreation opportunities for the wetland, shore land, grassland, and forest land habitat.
- 65 ha of low-lying wetlands, upland forest and trails adjacent to the Natasha Boyd Conservation Area near McBride.

Management Planning

A management plan is the most important document for a protected area. The management plan sets out the high-level framework from which all subsequent protected area management, planning and implementation will take place.

The Strategic Management Planning Policy for Ecological Reserves, Parks, Conservancies, Protected Areas and Recreation Areas was approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister in July 2013. This policy requires that a management plan be prepared and kept current for every protected area in the BC Parks' system. This performance measure (percentage of protected areas with approved management plans) is reported on annually.

Performance Indicator	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Percentage of protected areas with valid approved management plans	70%	71%	71%



Five new management plans (covering 6 areas) were approved in 2016/17:

1. Mquqwin/Brooks Peninsula Park and Hisnit/Power River Watershed Protected Area
2. Skaha Bluffs Park
3. Long Creek Park
4. Beaver Valley Park, and
5. Trout Creek Ecological Reserve.

The percentage of protected areas with valid management direction remained at 71%.

How it is measured:

Only 'valid' management plans are included. Management plans are considered to be 'valid' if the management plan still provides adequate strategic direction and guidance for the management of a protected area.

Management Plan Policy

As of March 31, 2017, there were 56 active management planning projects across the province. Active projects represent approximately 19% of the 298 protected areas without approved management direction. There were also two draft management plans released for public review through the BC Parks website. All management planning processes include a minimum of a 30-day web-based public review of the draft management plan.

Tools to Assist Management Planning

Several management planning tools are now available to assist BC Parks planners and partners to develop consistent and high quality protected area management plans.

The toolkit includes four guidelines and three templates:

- BC Parks Protected Area Management Planning Manual;
- BC Parks Guide to Writing Management Plans;
- BC Parks Management Plan Review and Approval Guide;
- Zoning Framework;
- BC Parks Management Plan Template;

Management Plans Approved in 2016/17

Mquqwin /Brooks Peninsula Park and Hisnit/Power River Watershed Protected Area

Skaha Bluffs Park

Long Creek Park

Beaver Valley Park

Trout Creek Ecological Reserve

Draft Management Plans Released for Public Review in 2016/17

Mount Geoffrey Escarpment Park

Kt'ii/Racey Conservancy



Intergovernmental Relations

BC Parks works with federal, territorial and provincial governments, First Nations as well as other ministries and agencies within the B.C. government on areas of mutual interest in the planning and management of protected areas.

Canadian Parks Council

The Canadian Parks Council (CPC) is an organization consisting of senior managers representing Canada's national, provincial and territorial parks agencies. BC Parks is an active participant on the Council. The Council provides a Canada-wide forum for inter-governmental information sharing and action on protected areas that:

- promotes excellence in protected areas planning and management,
- advocates protected areas values and interests, and
- encourages cooperation and provides support.

National Park Reserves and Marine Protected Areas

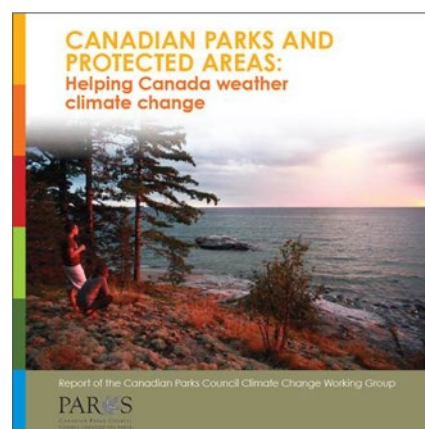
BC Parks works with other provincial agencies, First Nations and the federal government on national park reserve and marine protected areas establishment activities, including proposals for a National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan (Parks Canada), a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the Southern Strait of Georgia (Parks Canada), a marine National Wildlife Management Area around the Scott Islands (Canadian Wildlife Service), and a Marine Protected Area in Hecate Strait/Queen Charlotte Sound for glass sponge reefs (Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans); and participation in initiatives such as the Marine Protected Area Technical Team (MPATT) and the Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP) for the North Pacific Coast (each with Ministry of Forests,

Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development as the provincial lead). Each of these proposals and initiatives are at different stages of development and implementation but all of them require the cooperation of provincial agencies, First Nations and federal government departments.

Canadian Heritage Rivers

BC Parks represents the province in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, which aims to conserve and protect the best examples of Canada's river heritage and celebrate the role of rivers in Canada's history and society. B.C. presently has three rivers officially designated as "Canadian Heritage Rivers": the Fraser, the Cowichan and the Kicking Horse.

You can find out more about B.C.'s Heritage River Program and the active nominations at the following link: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/heritage_rivers_program/





Visitor Experiences

B.C.'s incredible system of protected areas offers experiences as unforgettable and diverse as the province's natural landscapes. Travelling alone or with friends or family, BC Parks has opportunities for visitors of all ages, in all seasons, to explore and enjoy. Accessibility to parks experiences varies and they can be found by land and water, including: picnicking, wilderness camping and backcountry cabins, winter sports, cycling, wildlife viewing and hiking, boating, fishing and swimming. An adventure awaits everyone.

Overnight Accommodations

Vehicle-accessible [frontcountry campgrounds](#), often surrounded by forested habitat and in close proximity to beaches and trails, provide campers with easy access to a variety of nature and recreation-based activities. POs maintain BC Parks' facilities and services in over 250 campgrounds and day use areas and often provide visitors with complementary amenities such as equipment rentals, interpretive programs and small concessions. In some locations, visitors arriving by bicycle will find walk-in campsites and boaters needing vessel camping can tie up to mooring buoys or docks. Those looking for an alternative to camping may enjoy some 'cabin' comforts, available in select frontcountry campgrounds, such as Wells Gray or Kikomun Creek Parks or the Olympic Legacy Cabins in Porteau Cove Park.

Designated [group campsites](#), such as those found in Alice Lake, French Beach, Paul Lake, Kokanee Creek Parks

and in many other frontcountry locations, can accommodate school groups or large gatherings of family and friends (15 people or more) in one site. Facilities vary from shelters to picnic tables, to fire pits and wood burning stoves, to additional services such as barbeques and propane lights.

A variety of [backcountry camping](#) opportunities are offered in parks throughout the province, including Stone Mountain and Golden Ears Parks and Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park. In some locations, facilities such as tent pads, picnic tables and food caches are provided, while other backcountry campsites are in truly wilderness settings without any facilities. Some campsites are accessed by foot, horse, ATV, snowmobile or are in marine environments, such as Desolation Sound and Shuswap Lake Marine Parks which are accessed by boat. Vessel camping in the backcountry is often found in protected anchorages with few or no facilities.

Backcountry cabins and huts are found in a variety of environments such as in the Height of the Rockies, Tantalus and Wapiti Parks, often throughout the four seasons, and range from basic shelters to more equipped accommodations. Facilities and services range from sleeping bunks and pit toilets, to kitchens, woodstoves, wash sinks, and propane lights and heat. Visitors seeking a base for hiking, ski touring, climbing or just enjoying the view can experience the backcountry in rustic comfort. For hiking, ski touring, climbing or just enjoying the view can experience the backcountry in rustic comfort.



Day Use Opportunities

Day use activities, either as part of the camping experience or as a destination event, are plentiful across the province. Waterfront picnic areas provide a variety of beach activities for everyone to enjoy while forested, grassland, and alpine environments offer other day use opportunities ranging from the relaxed to the challenging. Visitors can swim, paddle or ski while children of all ages can explore tide-pools, climb adventure playgrounds or take part in a nature program with Jerry the Moose, the BC Parks mascot. Others may learn to fish, photograph the local flora or hike one of the many trails designed for every fitness level.

Designated group picnic sites are available in several frontcountry locations, such as Martha Creek, Rath Trevor Beach and West Lake Parks. Facilities and services range from large, open shelters and change houses to barbecues, playgrounds and nearby sandy beaches.

B.C.'s parks and protected areas also offer unique experiences thanks to the natural, cultural and historic features found throughout the province. A visitor can climb the granite cliffs of the Stawamus Chief, horseback ride the Dewdney (heritage) Trail, tour the Nisga'a basalt flows, cycle the Kettle Valley Railway, or scuba-dive with the Emerald Princess in Mermaid Cove, to name just a few adventures.

Visitors preferring not to 'go it on their own' will find a variety of commercial recreation companies operating throughout the province. These authorized adventure

tourism specialists may offer overnight accommodations or guide guests on hiking, climbing, skiing or river-rafting trips, kayak/canoe tours or big game and fishing excursions. For more information on where these operations are available in BC Parks, [click here](#) and search by Permit Type – 'Commercial Recreation.' or visit the BC Parks website at: <http://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/pub/pae/active-permits>

BC Parks Reservation Service

The Discover Camping™ Reservation Service provides visitors with peace of mind when planning their favourite experiences in BC Parks. The reservation service allows campers to book their spot and be assured that a site that meets their needs is waiting for them upon arrival. Discover Camping also allows people to look up campsite features, view pictures and manage their bookings.

The Discover Camping Reservation Service has been in place since 1996. It is a user-pay model to ensure it is not subsidized by taxpayers. The reservation, change and cancellation charges remain at 1996 pricing.

The objectives of the reservation system are to:

- offer consumers certainty,
- provide fair and consistent access to campsites, and
- improve business efficiencies and customer service.

In 2016, the BC Parks Discover Camping Reservation Service offered local, national and international visitors access to campsites in 102 provincial parks and in 122 frontcountry campgrounds, including: 75 group campsites, four cabins, over 6,000 frontcountry campsites and



three limited-entry backcountry wilderness experiences (Garibaldi backcountry, Bowron Lake Canoe Circuit and the Berg Lake Trail in Mount Robson Park) for a total of over 6,300 individual resources on the reservation system. Approximately 45% of BC Parks' camping opportunities were "First Come, First Serve."

Three new frontcountry campgrounds were added to the Discover Camping Reservation Service in 2016: Dry Gulch, Inland Lake and **s̓x̓w̓ə̓x̓nitk̓w̓** Provincial Parks. Also, Garibaldi Provincial Park was added to the reservation service as a limited entry backcountry wilderness experience, along with a new campground in Ruckle Provincial Park. New group camping and picnic sites were added at six provincial parks: Syringa, Kootenay Lake, Summit Lake, Ten Mile, Lac La Hache and Green Lake.

More than 187,000 reservations were made through Discover Camping in 2016 (a 16% increase from the 2015 season). 97% of the reservations were made online while 3% were made through the call centre. Approximately 7% of the overall Internet transactions occurred over the mobile interface. 71.9% of all reservations made in 2016 originated from B.C.

Enhancements to the reservation service in 2016 include:

- Policy updates to address public concerns over increased demand, the reselling of reservations, overbooking and lack of availability in high-demand parks:

- » Elimination of opening day on March 15 and implementation of a four month rolling reservation window;
- » Customers can no longer change permit holder names on a reservation, but can instead provide two names at the time of booking;
- » Implementing a restricted booking policy for reservations made as soon as inventory is released;
- » Pilot a seven day maximum allowable stay in five high-demand provincial parks.

Historical enhancements to the reservation service include:

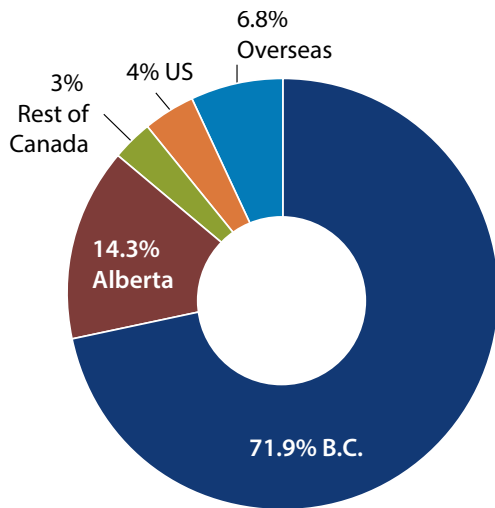
- the ability to book up to three reservations at one time (shopping cart model),
- a first-come-first-serve inventory availability tool,
- refund request guidelines improvements and process on BC Parks' website, and,
- reminder emails for customers to ensure they had a chance to change or cancel their reservations prior to any penalties applying.

BC Parks continually improves the reservation service by conducting annual reviews, reviewing customer feedback and by increasing the number of campgrounds and sites on the system, where appropriate.

To view the Discover Camping website, please [click here](#) or visit <https://secure.camis.com/Discovercamping/>



Discover Camping Customer Profile - 2016



For more information about BC Parks’ reservation service and its policies, please visit: [BC Parks Reservation Service](#). To make a reservation, visit [Discover Camping](#).

BC Parks Backcountry Registration System

BC Parks introduced the ability to purchase backcountry permits through the Discover Camping Registration System in 2011. The backcountry registration system is for backcountry and marine campsites only and is not used for frontcountry (vehicle accessible) camping reservations. There are no service fees to purchase backcountry permits online; it is simply a convenient way to prepay for permits prior to arriving in the park.

The Discover Camping Registration System sold over 6,500 permits, for approximately 13,000 overnight stays, in 30 provincial parks during 2016.

For more information about the backcountry registration system: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/registration/>

Attendance

Attendance information is used by BC Parks to track visitation trends, assist in evaluation of performance, and guide planning for the operation and management of B.C.’s protected areas system.

Visits (in person days)	2015 /16	2016 /17	Variance	% Change
Day use visits	20,998,600	21,838,700	840,100	4.0%
Camping visits	2,738,900	2,923,700	184,800	6.7%
Marine visits	186,100	181,000	-5,100	-2.8%
Total Park Attendance	23,923,600	24,943,300	1,019,700	4.3%

What it means:

The number of visitors to provincial protected areas is used to measure the contribution of protected areas to the government’s priorities of affordability, healthy communities, and tourism development.



Park attendance is affected by the availability, quality and accessibility of facilities and services. It is also strongly influenced by external factors such as local weather conditions, transportation infrastructure (e.g., highway construction), the value of the Canadian dollar and general tourism trends.

Park attendance continued to rise in 2016/17 with a 4.3% increase over 2015/16. This was driven in part by good weather and increasing demand for affordable camping and recreation opportunities.

How attendance is measured:

BC Parks tracks attendance through campground registrations, trail and traffic counters and visual counts. In order to have standard, comparable information, all “visits” are stated in person days (so one person staying for two days counts as two “visits”). Average party sizes are applied to daily counts of cars, boats, camping parties, etc. to obtain the number of actual visits. Average party sizes are based on detailed party composition.

Total Attendance by Region (Five-Year Trends)

Region	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Five Year Variance	Five Year Annual average Growth
Kootenay Okanagan	4,756,200	4,830,200	4,791,500	5,029,500	5,674,900	5,715,000	958,700	3.7%
Northern	1,393,900	1,573,100	1,596,200	1,871,500	1,767,900	1,830,300	436,300	5.6%
South Coast	6,139,600	7,473,700	7,860,500	7,259,800	8,354,200	9,304,700	3,165,000	8.7%
Thompson Cariboo	1,800,700	1,857,300	1,864,200	1,947,300	2,214,700	2,077,300	276,700	2.9%
West Coast	4,462,200	4,829,400	4,946,800	5,233,300	5,912,000	6,016,100	1,554,000	6.2%
All Regions	18,552,600	20,563,600	21,059,100	21,341,500	23,923,600	24,943,400	6,390,700	6.1%

Source: Parks Attendance and Revenue System



Visitor Satisfaction

BC Parks is committed to ensuring visitors have a safe, fun experience in campgrounds with clean, well-run facilities and services.

The BC Parks Visitor Survey is conducted each year in select parks to get a better understanding of park visitors' views, needs, and experiences in provincial parks. Survey data is used to assess performance, identify visitation trends, inform capital planning, and guide decision-making in a number of areas. The "Satisfaction" rating is the percentage of respondents that assigned a score of either "Above Average" or "Excellent" to a given service. The "Importance" rating is the percentage of respondents that assigned a score of either "Important" or "Very Important" to a given service. 2016 Satisfaction and Importance scores are summarized in the table on the right.

Overall, respondents reported high satisfaction with their camping experiences. In particular, visitors were highly satisfied with the customer service provided by POs (89% for "Cleanliness of grounds"; 88% for "Friendliness and courtesy of staff"). High scores were also given for condition of facilities and the responsiveness of staff to visitor concerns. BC Parks will work with POs to maintain a high overall level of service and improve areas of deficiency identified by survey respondents to ensure visitors continue to be satisfied with their BC Parks camping experiences.

Service	Importance Rating	Satisfaction Rating
Cleanliness of grounds	96	89
Cleanliness of restrooms	94	76
Condition of facilities	94	80
Your sense of security	91	79
Friendliness and courtesy of staff	90	88
Value for fee	90	63
Responsiveness of staff to visitor concerns	86	77
Control of noise	84	74
Park information services	68	59
Availability of firewood	61	61

Improving Visitor Facilities

Public recreation needs constantly change and evolve. BC Parks strives to continue to meet the evolving needs of its visitors and maintain their high satisfaction with its performance.

Over the past five years, BC Parks has invested over \$60 million in buildings and land improvements across the province. Projects include the construction and/or replacement of a variety of campground and day use facilities, such as campsites, toilet and shower buildings, water and sewer systems, roads, trails, picnic shelters, boat launches, visitor centers and wildlife viewing platforms.

BC Parks Capital Facilities Program Investments

Year	Expenditure Amount
2014/15	\$13,392,335
2015/16	\$13,797,427
2016/17	\$14,601,758

Success Story: Rathtreavor Beach Provincial Park Seawall Removal and Shoreline Restoration Project

A reinforced concrete seawall, approximately 300 m long, was built in the 1970s along the southeast shoreline of

Rathtreavor Beach. By 2015, the seawall was deteriorating and becoming a public safety hazard. Seawalls can often cause other negative impacts, including loss of beach sand and vegetation, increased erosion of the surrounding area, and reduction of recreation opportunities. Rather than rebuild the seawall, BC Parks decided to take a Green Shores type of approach using large woody debris and beach nourishment.

During construction, no trees were damaged and vegetation exposed to excavations was carefully moved, stored and replanted back in its original location. Additional native plants were provided to accelerate the restoration and improve aesthetic values. An extensive Archeological Impact Assessment (AIA) was completed for the entire project area, which resulted in the discovery of a new registered archeological site.

All concrete and metal materials from the seawall were removed from the park and transported to recycling facilities. For beach nourishment, about 900 truckloads of material, ranging in size from sand to 100mm cobble stones, was imported and placed.

For BC Parks, the benefits of this approach include:

- A shoreline that is naturally resilient to erosion shorelines and better able to absorb wave energy,
- Increased public access to the beach – the seawall acted as a barrier for park users,
- Improved wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and
- Beautification and naturalization of the shoreline.



Success Story:
Okanagan Lake – Campground Improvements

The Okanagan Lake South Campground was recently upgraded in a number of areas, which enhances the campground’s appearance and amenities.

The aging toilet/shower building was replaced with a new structure, along with a new septic disposal system for the entire campground. Individual flush toilets were also constructed at each end of the campground, ensuring that one of the most popular campgrounds has excellent washroom facilities.

To improve the visual aesthetic of the entrance to the campground, the PO’s site and service yard were moved from the front of the campground to the back. The campground host site at the front was reconstructed. A new playground was also installed to provide a fun environment for the younger visitors.



Success Story:
Nisga’a Memorial Lava Bed Visitor Centre

It has been 20 years since a visitor centre was constructed to celebrate BC Parks’ agreement with the Nisga’a people to jointly manage Nisga’a Memorial Lava Bed Park. The interpretive exhibits in the visitor centre needed a modern update. New tactile displays were installed, in both English and Nisga’a, to bring to life the history of both the park and the Nisga’a people. The artwork in the building was done by a local Nisga’a artist.

By making room for these new exhibits, dozens of images of contemporary Nisga’a culture needed to be preserved from the original exhibits to honour the work and history of the park. To do this, the original exhibits were professionally photographed and bound in a custom book that remains in the visitor centre.





Public Safety

BC Parks strives to provide high quality and safe recreation opportunities for visitors.

Hazard Trees Program

The objective of this program is to promote the conservation of wildlife trees and associated stand-level biodiversity in a safe and operationally efficient manner. In 2016/17, BC Parks expended \$65,000 on hazard tree management throughout the province.

Fuel Management

Living in or adjacent to forests is highly desirable, however risks from potential wildfires exist in such areas. BC Parks endeavours to be good neighbours by reducing these risks through prescribed fire and tree removal to thin forests in interface areas.

Prescribed fire is used by BC Parks both to reduce forest fuels and restore ecological integrity. The method is a controlled application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish management objectives. These fires are managed to minimize the emission of smoke and maximize the benefits to the site. Fire is a natural, normal process in many ecosystems and is necessary to maintain a healthy forest. Many plants and animals have adapted to fire and some actually depend on it.

In 2016/17, BC Parks treated over 195 ha of protected area lands with prescribed fire in two protected areas: Syringa Park (in the Kootenay Region) and Churn Creek (in the Cariboo Region).

Compliance and Enforcement

Park rangers patrol parks and protected areas across the province, making contact with thousands of visitors each year. In most cases, park rangers use education and information as their primary tool to generate voluntary compliance with park and protected areas rules and regulations.

In 2016/17, the most common offences under the Park Act and the Park, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulation were related to domestic animals (unrestrained or in closed parks), failing to obey signs, guiding without a permit, unauthorized activities (e.g. illegal use of vegetation) and trespass. 2016/17 saw increased enforcement actions in support of the Off-road Vehicle (ORV) Act following its introduction in 2015/16 (see Kakwa Patrol Success Story below). Park rangers also enforce other provincial statutes in protected areas such as the Wildlife Act, Motor Vehicle Act, Liquor Control and Licensing Act.

Park rangers exercise a significant degree of discretion in how they resolve compliance matters and utilize a combination of approaches (including public relations, warnings, evictions, violation tickets, Park Act orders, and court prosecution) to generate compliance.

BC Parks continued to work closely with various agencies (e.g. POs, Conservation Officers, Natural Resource Officers as well as RCMP and local police) to ensure the protection of the public and natural and cultural values contained in the protected areas BC Parks manages. In 2016/17, park rangers were engaged in joint compliance and enforcement activities including campfire ban enforcement, long weekend compliance and enforcement projects.

Success Story: Kakwa Park

Following the introduction of the Off-road Vehicle (ORV) Act in 2016/17, BC Parks undertook a number of patrols into Kakwa Provincial Park in support of the legislation. Park rangers spent 17 days in the park patrolling between January 1- March 31, 2017. Most of these patrols included at least one conservation officer. Between BC Parks and the Conservation Officer Service, 44 violation tickets were issued, 11 warning tickets were issued and two evictions. BC Parks staff issued 35 of the violation tickets.

Kakwa Park is a destination riding area for northern B.C. and Alberta. The park sees close to 4,300 visitors from December 1 to April 30. 4,000 of these visitors are from the Alberta access and the remainder are from the B.C. access.

During one of the patrols, staff arrived at a fatal accident 20 minutes after it happened and were instrumental in coordinating on site safety and logistics for the body recovery that was performed the next day by Parks Canada mountain rescue team. Thanks to the effort BC Parks have been putting into Kakwa Park, there is more compliance with closures and a slight improvement on the ORV regulation compliance. There are still have incursions into closed areas and this will become the focus on some of the 2018 patrols as BC Parks continues ORV and liquor checks. The outreach with the two snowmobile clubs, Prince George and Swan City, has resulted in partnerships and volunteer agreements that are huge benefits to all parties involved.



Engaging the Public

Community Engagement

In the context of rapidly changing demographics and increasingly diverse communities across the province, BC Parks aims to stay relevant and connect with the public. Throughout 2016/17, BC Parks was involved with community partnerships, youth engagement initiatives and public events.

Youth Engagement

Inspiring B.C.'s next generation of protected area users.

Get Outside BC (GOBC) is a free outdoor leadership program offered in partnership with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) since 2011. The goal of the program is to strengthen youth attachment to B.C. wilderness by empowering young natural leaders in a meaningful and sustainable way to help inspire other youth to spend more time outdoors.

The program is a collaborative effort between BC Parks, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – BC Chapter (CPAWS-BC), Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), and the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada (CNAC). CPAWS-BC provided the coordination support and management for the project and BC Parks contributed to the overall program design.

The four-phased program provides a gateway experience for youth engagement with B.C.'s wilderness and subsequent opportunities for engagement through youth-led

follow-up events and the creation of a supportive youth network of natural leaders. Rather than providing a one-time experience, GOBC provides youth with the tools and resources necessary to develop an enduring connection to the outdoors and a lifelong identity as a natural leader.

2016 marked a shift in the format of GOBC from hosting one central summit in southern B.C. to hosting multiple community summits across the province. Through community summits, GOBC will facilitate youth to develop a stronger connection to their local BC Parks and community-based outdoor leaders. Further, community summits will enable GOBC to involve more youth from selected regions and increase the impact of the program. In 2016, GOBC piloted one community project for youth in the greater Kimberley area and two community feedback sessions in Kelowna and Port Alberni.

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

2016 was BC Parks' fifth year partnering to support the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup as Conservation Supporter. Community groups and BC Parks' staff organized cleanup events in many of the provincial parks to remove shoreline litter while raising awareness on the issue of marine debris. There were 23 registered cleanup events within provincial parks and over 43 km of shoreline cleaned in 2016.

'Shoreline litter and marine debris can seem like an overwhelming problem, but through the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup we encourage our volunteers to take



real, meaningful action by coordinating cleanups. BC Parks are thrilled to work with BC Parks to increase the number of volunteers caring for shorelines in parks all over the beautiful province of BC. – Kate Le Souef, Program Manager, Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.

Camping and RVing BC Coalition

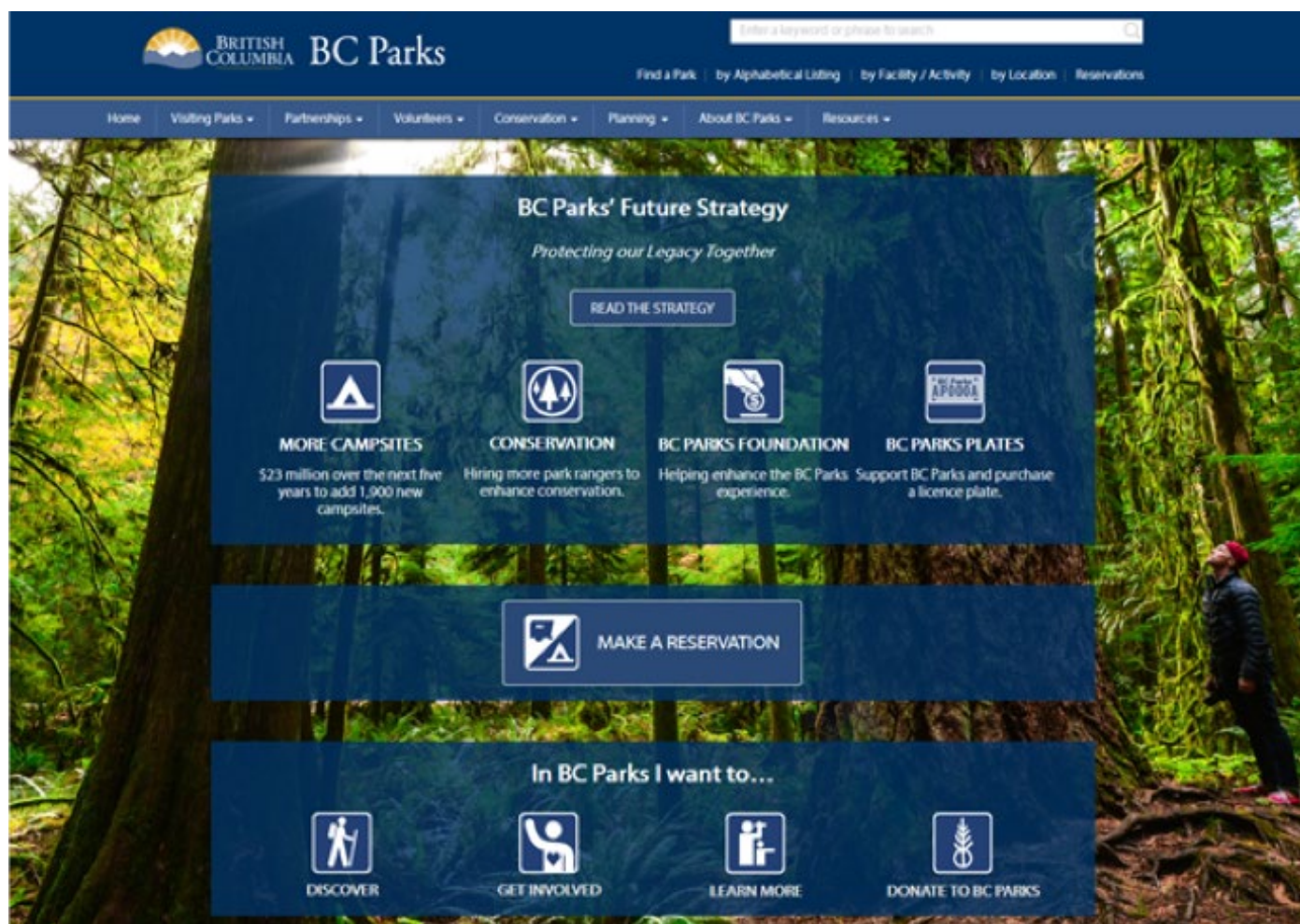
As a long-term partner of the Camping and RVing BC Coalition, BC Parks continues to contribute to and drive benefit from the coordination of marketing initiatives in this important sector. BC Parks’ membership in the coalition allows for leveraged resources in marketing provincial parks and supporting BC Parks’ programs. Current members of this non-profit coalition include: the BC Lodging and Campground Association, Destination BC, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, RV Rental Association of Canada, Northern BC Tourism Association, RV Dealers Association of BC, the BC Society of POs, Parks Canada and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC.

BC Parks Website

The BC Parks website continues to be one of the most popular websites within the BC government.

The [BC Parks website](#) provides real-time information about protected areas and serves as an essential communication and information focal point for the public, including:

- protected area information (fees, location maps, activities/facilities available, opening/closing dates and campsite availability dates);
- vital public health and safety messaging (campfire bans/protected area closures, wildfire alerts, flood alerts, wildlife issues, avalanche alerts, trail reports, and protected area related health alerts);
- policy and user information for the Discover Camping reservation service and direct links to the service;





- opportunities for public review and comment on draft management plans and boundary adjustment processes;
- conservation information (natural and cultural values);
- volunteers (volunteer opportunities/initiatives, stories and interactive blog);
- opportunities to support B.C.'s protected areas system through partnerships and sponsorship, and events calendar and links to public initiatives and promotional programs.

How it is measured:

Each unique visit represents one person with a unique address coming to the website. The number of "hits" is often quoted as a web statistic but this is inflated by the number of pages that the visitor clicks (so one visit can involve 10 or more hits)

Performance Indicator	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number of unique visits to BC Parks website	3,691,950	4,223,497	4,889,994
Average visits per day	10,112	11,539	13,397

In 2016, the BC Parks website averaged almost 14,000 visits each day, which was an increase of 16% over 2015. The average visitor spends approximately five minutes on the website.

Performance Indicator	Increase over previous year
2014/15	106%
2015/16	114%
2016/17	116%

Other insights around web performance include:

- About 20% of the visitors are international in origin – mostly from Western Europe, Germany, and Netherlands.
- June and July are the busiest months.
- The majority of referrals to the website come from google.ca (indicating strong organic search).

The busiest pages are:

- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/map.html
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/reserve/
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/reserve/frontcountry.html
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parks/

The files most downloaded are:

- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fees/userfees.pdf
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/goldenears/goldenears.pdf
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/juan_de_fuca/jdf_map.pdf
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/goldenears/goldcreek.pdf
- www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/mt_robson/berg_lake.pdf



BC Parks Social Media

Building off the success of the social media presence in 2015/2016, there is a strong growth and engagement with the BC Parks social media channels.

BC Parks has maintained a prominent presence on Facebook since 2011. Through Facebook, stories are shared, news that is related to protected areas, community connections and other important user information. It is also one avenue that can directly receive valuable park user feedback on issues relating to facilities, park management and visitor services in a cost-efficient way.

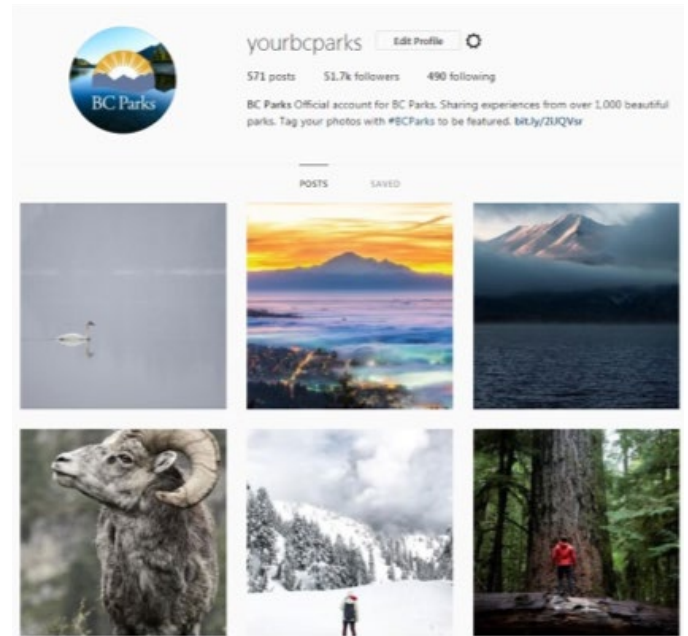
In 2016/2017, BC Parks ran multiple campaigns working with colleagues and partners to increase audience and fan engagement.

Public interaction with the BC Parks Facebook page has been overwhelmingly positive, with visitors, staff and other community members posting comments, photos and stories and engaging with each other and BC Parks.

New in 2016/2017 – launching an Instagram presence.

Through Instagram, BC Parks shares high-quality user generated photos, videos and stories about BC Parks experiences, in addition to sharing campaigns and other important park user information. BC Parks successfully ran multiple campaigns in 2016/2017 which helped contribute to rapid growth. Examples of this include the license plates program, along with a campaign targeting underutilized parks which supports the sustainable park management and corporate priorities.

Staff also monitor and contribute to the hashtag #BCParks. Prior to BC Parks launching an Instagram presence, there were 8,200 photos tagged with #BCParks by users, which has rapidly grown to 50K+ as a result of BC Park social media marketing efforts.



The [BC Parks website](#) continues to be one of the most popular websites within the B.C. government.

How it is measured:

Engagement rate is calculated by taking the total engagements on posts and dividing it by the amount of people who saw them (reach). Why is this important? It shows that of the content published and the people reached, what percentage of them are interacting with page and posts. In a nutshell: it tells whether content is resonating with the people desired to reach.



Shared Stewardship

BC Parks offers numerous ways for individuals, community groups, organizations and corporations to support the provincial protected areas system. Contributions made through volunteering, partnerships and donations enhance the protection and management of the province's protected areas system. A wide range of volunteering activities, including trail building, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements, ecological monitoring and research, and, restoration projects and interpretive programs are available. In addition to volunteer opportunities, partnerships are encouraged with universities, non-profit organizations, businesses and community groups with a shared interest in protected areas stewardship.

BC Parks also welcomes contributions from individuals, corporations, and the non-profit sector to acquire and protect more land and works very closely with POs and First Nations in managing protected areas.

Volunteers

Every year, thousands of dedicated volunteers contribute time, energy and expertise to BC Parks.

The goal of the Volunteer Program is to strengthen BC Parks' capacity by creating connections between communities and the natural world that result in lasting legacies.

Organized Volunteer Groups

Organized volunteer groups are legal entities, mainly registered non-profit societies, which have entered into partnership agreements with BC Parks. These groups collaborate with BC Parks to undertake various projects and programs in parks, providing significant contributions supporting park values, visitor experience and conversation action.

Partnership Agreement Highlights for 2016

Total Number of Active Partnership Agreements	61
Total Number of Volunteers working within a Partnership Agreement	1,487
Total Number of Volunteer Hours contributed under Partnership Agreements	24,391

Individual Volunteers

Individual volunteers are dedicated park enthusiasts who devote their time to giving back to the park system. They play an important role in the volunteer community and

park system by undertaking various volunteer services including trail maintenance and construction, ecological reserve warden services, park host services, invasive species management, ecological monitoring, garbage and marine debris removal, and more.

Volunteer Program Highlights for 2016/17	
Total Number of Individual Volunteers	372
Total Number of Individual Volunteer Hours	7,681

Support for Volunteer Projects

Each year, regional community engagement funding is allocated for projects that engage local park communities, with priority given to projects that have a volunteer component and where project contributions are leveraged from additional partnership and sponsorship.

In 2016/17, this funding was allocated across the province to 84 projects delivered by BC Parks staff and/or community partners, supporting various conservation and recreation initiatives. Projects varied from trail enhancements, research initiatives, community events in parks to invasive species education and management. Based on feedback from staff and community partners, success of these projects was based on collaboration with partners, volunteer enthusiasm and talent, and partner’s ability to leverage funding.

Regional Community Engagement Funding Highlights for 2016/17	
Park Enhancement Funding Investment	\$240,000
Total Value of Projects (i.e. leveraged resources)	\$1,444,380
Citizens Reached	43,504
Community Partners	246+

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

2016 was BC Parks’ fifth year partnering to support the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup as Conservation Supporter. Community groups as well as BC Parks’ staff organized cleanup events in many of the provincial parks to remove shoreline litter while raising awareness on the issue of marine debris. There were 23 registered cleanup events within provincial parks and over 43 km of shoreline cleaned in 2016.

‘Shoreline litter and marine debris can seem like an overwhelming problem, but through the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup we encourage our volunteers to take real, meaningful action by coordinating cleanups. We are thrilled to work with BC Parks to increase the number of volunteers caring for shorelines in parks all over the beautiful province of BC.’ – Kate Le Souef, Program Manager, Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. Volunteer Recognition

BC Parks continues to value the significant contributions of all volunteers and community partners. To recognize outstanding contributions and achievements, BC Parks honours exceptional individuals, groups and partners each year by selecting recipients for annual achievement awards.

The following individuals and community partners have worked tirelessly, donating their time and resources to champion, maintain and preserve areas and parks close to their hearts. Because of these volunteers, boardwalks and bridges have been built, habitats restored, events launched, protected areas created, and much more. These are the winners of the 2016 volunteer awards:



Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup - Divers for Cleaner Oceans at Cultus Lake Park



Dan Scott



David Webb



Above left: Caledonia Ramblers building universal access pathway so that people with all abilities can enjoy Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park. Above right: A crew of volunteers hard at work on Trestle #11. Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park



2016 Volunteer of the Year – Don Scott and David Webb

Volunteer of the Year recipients Don Scott and David Webb have been volunteering in the South Fraser area maintaining over 200 km of trail annually, contributing over 750 hours of time in 2016. Don and David have worked in two BC Parks regions, four provincial parks (Chilliwack Lake, E.C.

Manning, Skagit Valley and Cathedral Provincial Parks) and two ecological reserves (Skagit River Cottonwoods and Skagit River Forest). They have mentored numerous volunteers and staff over the years and provide invaluable insight and advocacy with local community groups. Equipment donations by Don and David were leveraged to finance multiple large-scale projects including two bridges in Skagit Valley and E.C. Manning Provincial Parks and 100 m of boardwalk in Cathedral Park.

2016 Volunteer Group of the Year – Caledonia Ramblers and Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society

Caledonia Ramblers
Volunteer Group of the Year recipients with the Caledonia Ramblers have worked tirelessly to make the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Park and protected area a reality, saving a globally significant area of the province. They were involved in meetings with government officials and collaborated with local First Nations and the University of Northern British Columbia to highlight the cultural and scientific significance of the area.

While regularly maintaining the area, the Caledonia Ramblers also built a 456 m long universal access path-

way so people with all abilities could enjoy the ancient cedars, and also built another 2210 m of boardwalk to features such as Tree Beard, Radies Tree and Big Tree along with an extension to a magnificent waterfall. In their spare time the Caledonia Ramblers, under the umbrella of the Prince George Back Country Recreation Society, clear the trails in Eskers, Bobtail Mountain, Stuart River, Giscome Portage, Mount Pope, Evanoff, Fort George Canyon and Sugarbowl - Grizzly Den parks.

Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society

Volunteer Group of the Year recipients with the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society are involved with promoting and enhancing the trestles and trail in Myra Canyon since 1992 and has been an integral partner of BC Parks since Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park was established in 2001. The Society was integral in lobbying for the Myra Canyon to be established as a provincial park. The Society also applied to the National Historical Sites and Monuments Board to have the canyon designated as a place of national historical significance -- this designation was awarded in 2003.

The Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society helps maintain 18 trestles and 12 km of trail which see over 80,000 visitors a year, providing essential services by clearing brush, fallen rocks and tress throughout the operating season. They also support and help facilitate many biking and running events held in Myra-Canyon, providing volunteers for some of the larger running and biking events, helping manage participants and park visitors.



Ruby Dunstan, photographed at Laurel Point Park in Victoria, B.C., June 8, 2015 Photo credit: Chad Hipolito for The Globe and Mail



Karen Wristen with a passive marine debris collector bag, Raft Cove Provincial Park

2016 Volunteer Legacy Award – Ruby Dunstan

Ruby Dunstan, Volunteer Legacy award winner, has worked to protect the Stein Valley for more than 30 years. As a key negotiator in the formation of the park and current elder of the Lytton First Nation, Dunstan's direct involvement officially began with the signing of the Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park Co-Management Agreement between the Lytton First Nation and the Province of BC in 1995.

Since the signing of this agreement, Dunstan has served as co-chair for the Stein Management Board; she serves as an advocate for many varying local and national issues. Dunstan, whose main vocation was as a social worker, continues to provide guidance and knowledge, particularly to children in the area. She visits the local Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux School often, providing students with cultural education including the history and values of the Stein.

2016 Community Partner of the Year – Living Oceans Society

Through their Clear the Coast program, Living Oceans Society has worked in partnership with BC Parks since 2013. Living Oceans Society initiatives include raising awareness of, locating, assessing and, where possible, responsibly removing and disposing of marine debris around Northern Vancouver Island. Living Oceans Society gathered over 10 tons of marine debris from the west end of Cape Scott Park. The Society also mounted an effort to collect and remove debris from the beaches and

coves of Lanz and Cox Islands parks, providing habitat for diving ducks, white-winged scoters, great blue herons, bald eagles, Peale's peregrine falcons, fulmars, shearwaters, petrels, oystercatchers and gulls, some of which are dependent upon foreshore habitat for foraging.

Living Oceans Society's impact on the communities on the North Island is broad and immense, from engaging park visitors and community members to participating in the passive collection program to engaging volunteers to help in the two week clear the coast expedition - all the while raising public awareness of marine debris on the west coast. Throughout the summer of 2016 marine debris was collected by volunteers at approximately 100 locations along Vancouver Island's West Coast from Cape Scott to Walbran River. A total of approximately 40 tons of material is retrieved so far!

Partnerships and Donations

Contributions made through partnerships and donations enhance the protection and management of the province's protected areas system.

The BC Parks' Partnership and Donation Program is designed to provide opportunities for individual citizens, community groups, non-government agencies and private corporations to work with BC Parks on mutually beneficial projects. Through the Park Enhancement Fund (PEF), BC Parks supporters can donate to specific projects or parks and receive an official tax receipt for their contribution.



While donation amounts vary significantly yearly and cannot be predicted with any accuracy, it is clear that BC Parks is a valuable partner, attracting significant donations since the establishment of the PEF in 2008. Over the last nine years, PEF has received over \$2.4 million from donations and community and corporate partnerships. It is important to note that donations for land acquisition initiatives cannot be deposited into PEF and are not included in the totals below.

Park Enhancement Fund

Performance Indicator	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Corporate Partnerships & Sponsorships	\$46,855	\$42,910	\$25,563
Community Partnerships	\$46,162	\$19,588	\$51,720
Donations & Make Your Mark Program	\$55,048	\$82,129	\$114,771
Other (i.e., merchandise)	\$2,322	\$2,781	\$25,888
Total partnership contributions to the Park Enhancement Fund	\$150,387	\$147,408	\$217,942

BC Parks' Planned Giving Program

BC Parks has received numerous bequests (gifts in wills), most of which have been donations of land through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program. In 2012, BC Parks officially launched the Planned Giving Program to provide BC Parks' supporters another option to donate financial securities to the PEF. As well as providing tax benefits to the donor, they also allow donors to support specific projects or parks of their choice while they are still alive.

Planned gifts are referred to as such because they require more planning, negotiation and counsel than other gifts. For example, donations of securities (stocks or bonds) may require the involvement of legal counsel and financial institutions. In addition, leaving a bequest may require counsel from professional estate planners.

Planned Giving is a method of supporting registered charities and other qualified donees that enables philanthropic individuals to make larger gifts than they could make from their daily income. Gifts can be specific assets of cash, securities or other property – and can be left to the beneficiary through a bequest, or donated while the donor is still alive.

The Canada Revenue Agency applies significant tax benefits to estates when individuals leave donations (of cash or land) in their wills to organizations permitted to issue official tax receipts. This means less of their estate is taxed and more is left to their chosen beneficiaries.

For more information on BC Parks' Planned Giving Program, please [click here](#) or visit the BC Parks [web-site: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/partnerships/planned-giving/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/partnerships/planned-giving/).



Park Operators

Park operators (POs) provide operational services to maintain and enhance the quality of the visitor experience; the condition of the facilities and the ecological values that support B.C.'s protected areas system.

Since 1986, POs have been managing provincial parks on behalf of BC Parks. POs maintain a variety of facilities, campgrounds, day-use areas and trail systems around the province. Some POs manage one park while others manage a group of parks within a specific geographic location. The areas operated by POs are still protected under the full authority of the Park Act. POs enter into legal agreements with BC Parks to ensure these areas are managed in compliance with the Park Act.

BC Parks works closely with POs to deliver a high quality service to park visitors and to maintain the parks to a high standard. Park facility operators are a passionate group of contractors who believe in providing the highest quality of service to ensure all visitors enjoy their outdoor experience. Some of their responsibilities include providing visitors with quality recreational experiences, maintaining and enhancing facilities, and conserving natural, cultural and recreation values. B.C. has one of the highest quality park systems in the world, and this is reflected and showcased in the work POs do.

Success Story – 2016 Park Facility Operator of the Year – Mount Assiniboine Lodge Ltd.

The Park Facility Operator of the Year award is presented to a park facility operator that is recognized for excellence in park operations. Review criteria include customer service, community engagement and the relationship with BC Parks.

For 2016, the award was given to Mount Assiniboine Lodge Ltd. Andrew Renner and Claude Duchesne of Mount Assiniboine Lodge has operated the core area of Mount Assiniboine Park since 2011. They have gone out of their way to make visitors feel welcome, from continuing the long-time tea service at the Assiniboine Lodge, to assisting all clients, hikers, mountaineers, and campers with anything they may need to remain safe and comfortable while staying either at the Lodge or in the backcountry. Andrew and Claude have grown their business to deliver innovative services to an evolving group of users, such as partnering with a group that provides therapy services to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. Their high percentage of repeat clientele speaks to their superior customer service



Partnership with Nuxalk Nation in Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park. Carved by Alvin Mack, Master Nuxalk Artist

Engaging Indigenous Communities

BC Parks has been engaging and collaborating with Indigenous communities across B.C. on culturally-focused programs and initiatives, while moving forward with implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (TRC).

As a long-time leader in collaborative working models, BC Parks is contributing towards lasting reconciliation by collaborating with B.C.’s Indigenous communities while continuing to meet the needs of all British Columbians. This includes providing world-class recreational opportunities for B.C. residents and visitors, as well as facilitating Indigenous involvement in park management and ecological sustainability.

BC Parks has successfully collaborated with First Nations on a broad range of projects, including co-developing park management plans and maintaining collaborative agreements, which allow for greater First Nation participation in the management of B.C.’s protected areas. In addition to BC Parks-specific collaborative agreements, BC Parks also works with partner agencies on the development and negotiation of broader government agreements, such as strategic engagement, reconciliation and treaty agreements.

In 2016/17, BC Parks staff across all business areas was involved in a wide variety of reconciliation initiatives with First Nations. These projects support implementation of the UNDRIP and TRC. Highlights of this work include:

- Providing increased access to economic opportunities, support for Indigenous Guardian Watchmen programs, cultural recognition and overall increased involvement of First Nations in park and protected area management;
- Effectively collaborating with First Nations Indigenous cultural heritage projects;
- Collaborating with First Nations in the development of Protected Area management plans to ensure long-term conservation, Indigenous cultural heritage and recreation objectives;
- Working with First Nations through established collaborative management agreements for effective park and protected area management;
- Continued recognition of First Nations connections to their territories through a number of protected area cultural recognition signage and cultural connection projects; and
- Renaming Class A Parks, such as s̓wìw̓s Park and s̓x̓w̓ə̓x̓w̓nitk̓w̓ Park.



Conservation Management

Ecological Integrity

Ecological integrity is an important concept that influences protected area management to ensure natural areas are well managed into the future.

BC Parks continues to be committed to the proactive stewardship of ecological integrity and is focussed on the consistent use of conservation and business process tools that have been provided to regional staff.

Ecological integrity occurs when an area or network of areas supports natural ecosystem composition, structure and function and a capacity for self-renewal.

Ecological Integrity is a complex concept and difficult to measure directly. An assumption is made that the B.C.'s parks and protected areas system will be managed for ecological integrity when there is consistent application of conservation tools. Each of these tools interacts with each other, so without full use and understanding of the whole suite of tools, ecological integrity on the ground is at risk.

BC Parks' regional operations are subdivided into 12 sections. The sections are further sub-divided into 46 management areas (MAs). Annual management planning (AMPs) is a business process used to identify and prioritize work projects in a section or management area.

AMPs have been standardized across the province and are now required to be completed annually.

The Conservation Risk Assessment (CRA) is a database that catalogues the values and threats in each protected area in the province. It is used as input to many of the planning and evaluation processes in protected area management, including discussions that occur in the AMPs process.





Representation

To the extent that the protected areas system represents the ecosystems in the province, there is some assurance that the majority of species across the province have some level of protection.

The Protected Areas Strategy directed the land use planning tables to represent the biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones within the province in the protected areas system. BEC zones are broad areas of similar climate, geography and vegetative characteristics. There is currently roughly 14% of B.C.'s land base in the protected areas system. If all 16 BEC zones were represented evenly, they would each have 14% protected. However, there is a standard brought in by the Convention on Biodiversity, supported by Canada, that has identified 17% as the target for protected areas. Already BC has 7 of their 16 BEC Zones at or above this level.

The Zones	
BAFA	Boreal Altai Fescue Alpine
BG	Bunchgrass
BWBS	Boreal White and Black Spruce
CDF	Coastal Douglas-Fir
CMA	Coastal Mountain-heather Alpine
CWH	Coastal Western Hemlock
ESSF	Englemann Spruce-Subalpine Fir
ICH	Interior Cedar Hemlock
IDF	Interior Douglas-fir
IMA	Interior Mountain-heather Alpine
MH	Mountain Hemlock
MS	Montane Spruce
PP	Ponderosa Pine
SBPS	Sub-boreal Pine Spruce
SBS	Sub-boreal Spruce
SWB	Spruce Willow Birch

Bio Geo Climatic (BGC) Zone	% of the total BGC Zone area within the province that is protected
BAFA	29
BG	12
BWBS	8
CDF	4
CMA	18
CWH	19
ESSF	17
ICH	10
IDF	5
IMA	29
MH	20
MS	9
PP	5
SBPS	9
SBS	7
SWB	23

-  < 6% of the BEC zone in the B.C. protected areas system
-  > 6%, but not yet 12% of the system represented
-  Between 12 and 17% represented
-  > 17% protected, which is the new international goal agreed to by The Convention on Biodiversity with the full participation of Canada (Aichi Target 11)



Climate Change

B.C.'s protected areas system plays a key role in the province's response to climate change.

Climate-induced changes in protected areas are resulting from extreme weather events, droughts, flooding, insect outbreaks, invasive species, coastal erosion and wildfires. As a result of the gradual increase in temperature (especially in the winter), there are shrinking glaciers, rising sea levels, changes to the water cycle and the movement of organisms. These changes, while not dramatic on a day-to-day basis, are affecting the distribution of species and the organization of ecosystems.

An important focus of protected areas management in future years will be in maintaining functioning ecosystems and facilitating the movement of species within and across boundaries.

Large landscape-level processes have always played an important role in sustaining ecosystems. These processes are now recognized as being critical in maintaining the resilience of the natural world. One of the key ways that B.C.'s protected areas system can address these processes is by focussing on protecting large landscapes.

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17
Percentage of terrestrial protected areas network* in large landscapes >2,700 km ²	61	61
Percentage of terrestrial protected areas network in landscapes >1,000 km ²	71	71
Percentage of terrestrial protected areas network in landscapes >500 km ²	81	81

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17
Percentage of nearshore protected areas network in large landscapes >270 km ²	57	57
Percentage of nearshore protected areas network in landscapes >100 km ²	73	73
Percentage of nearshore protected areas network in landscapes >50 km ²	81	81
In 2015/16, data was collected from 19 sites		

* Protected areas network includes all provincially- and federally-designated protected areas.

What it means:

The terrestrial thresholds are based on work identifying minimum landscape areas to maintain mammals sensitive to disturbance. In nearshore ecosystems, research indicates that the optimal size of protected areas may be an order of magnitude less than in the terrestrial environment. The percentage of the system in large protected landscapes has remained constant at 61%.



Success Story:
Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park Seawall Restoration

A 650 m long, over 1m high concrete seawall ran along the shoreline at Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park. The seawall was built in 1971 to prevent logs from being swept into the day-use area of the park. The structure aged to a condition that required either extensive repairs or removal. BC Parks engaged a professional engineering consultant to determine options, and together decided that seawall removal and shoreline restoration would improve public access to the beach and enhance the shoreline's ability to withstand increased sea levels and storm surges related to climate change.

During September and October 2016, the concrete seawall was removed and a mixture of sand and cobble, similar to what occurs at Rathtrevor's beach, was added to the site to replace beach material lost from wave erosion over the 45 years the seawall was in place. To help buffer wave action and promote coastal sand ecosystem recovery, logs were secured to buried rock anchors along the upper shoreline. Before work began, coastal sand ecosystem plants were removed and seed was collected from the worksite, stored, and then replanted/sowed onsite around log structures.

Because beaches are dynamic environments, it is anticipated that it will take a number of years before equilibrium will be reached between materials added to the beach and those from surrounding areas, such

as offshore sandbars. Close monitoring of the project outcomes and depending on how the beach nourishment mixture responds to storm events and high tides, further additions may be required over time. Additional split-rail fencing will be built next to delineate beach access pathways and minimize impacts to coastal sand ecosystem plants. BC Parks will continue to enhance the abundance and diversity of unique coastal sand ecosystem plants and add interpretive signage to help visitors better understand this project and the ecological values of Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park.



Monitoring

Monitoring is particularly important during a period of rapid change. It is difficult to predict exactly where and how fast changes are occurring. Monitoring the changes can help illustrate the rate and variability across the province.

Long-term ecological monitoring has begun in BC Parks. While the monitoring framework identifies eight biomes that have associated data collection protocols, BC Parks is directly involved in setting up plots and collecting data in five biomes – alpine-subalpine, forest, grassland, and wetland and intertidal. Using standardized protocols, each MA is engaged in setting up plots in two biomes, which will result in approximately 94 permanent plots at full implementation. Approximately half of the sites are monitored annually and the other half is monitored every four years. When the program is fully implemented, there will be about 57 sites monitored each year. The program is based on the principles of citizen science and, where applicable, volunteers are involved in the data collection.

By the end of the 2015/16 fiscal year, BC Parks had established 65 sites for which they are responsible. Total number of sites monitored in 2015/16 was 32. This compared to 19 in 2014/15 and 30 in 2013/14.

Invasive Species Management

Invasive species are non-native species whose introduction into B.C. causes economic or environmental damage or harm to human health.

In response, BC Parks committed \$77,000 to invasive species projects in 2016/17 and an additional \$18,000 to proactively manage for White Nose Syndrome (disease that has killed millions of bats across North America). With this funding, BC Parks completed a number of projects in 2016/17 to monitor and treat invasive species including carpet burweed, English ivy, giant hogweed, hoary alyssum and baby's breath in parks and protected areas.

BC Parks Invasive Species Program

2016/17 Budget and Treatments	
Treatments	\$77,000
Proactive Management	\$18,000
Total Budget	\$95,000

Success Story: Successful partnerships to keep White Nose Syndrome at bay

White nose syndrome (WNS) is a deadly white fungus (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) that grows on the noses and bodies of bats. While the fungus has not yet been detected in B.C., more than six million bats in eastern United States have died from WNS since 2006.

In 2016, WNS was detected close to B.C. in Washington State. It is likely that the fungus could spread to B.C. putting bats at serious risk. In response, BC Parks is contributing to a number of effective partnerships to raise public awareness and reduce the risks of WNS. BC Parks staff, BatCaver and the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada developed consistent trailhead and cave entrance information signs. These signs were installed at most BC Parks with karst and caves, which are bat habitats.

BC Parks is collaborating with the Horne Lake Caves PO, provincial government staff, BatCaver, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, BC Speleological Society and the Canadian Cave Conservancy in building a new bio cleaning station at Horne Lakes Caves Provincial Park. The partnership determined the most suitable system to clean park visitors' footwear as they entered and exited caves to reduce the risk of WNS introduction. This project is expected to be completed by March 2018. In the future, BC Parks plans to participate in a campaign to develop consistent messaging around bat translocation and will be posting signs in campgrounds in 2018. Keeping WNS out of B.C. is a key priority for BC Parks.



Economic and Financial Benefits

Revenues

The parks and protected areas system is the single largest recreation operation in the province. It provides an extensive variety of recreation, commercial and research opportunities.

In 2016/17, BC Parks generated approximately \$24 million in revenue from recreation user fees (including camping, day use and boating fees). To support park operations experiencing rising costs, camping fees were increased in some parks by \$1 or \$2 in 2016. Another \$2 million was collected from fees for activities requiring park use permits (PUP). The majority of these revenues are re-invested in the parks and protected areas system. Most of recreation user fee revenues are retained by POs to help offset operating and contract costs. PUP revenues are paid into the government's consolidated revenue fund, plus approximately \$491,000 from recreation user fee activities. The increased revenue from PUP fees was mainly boosted by the higher Film Permit revenue.

Revenue	2015/16	2016/17	Variance	% Change
Recreation User Fees	\$22,025,900	\$24,036,200	\$2,010,300	9.1%
Misc. Revenues ¹	\$637,400	\$490,800	-\$146,600	-23.0%
PUP Fees	\$1,432,900	\$2,001,300	\$568,300	39.7%
Total Recoveries	\$334,500	\$367,200	\$32,600	9.8%
PEF	\$2,509,300	\$3,759,600	\$1,250,300	49.8%
Total Revenue	\$26,940,100	\$30,655,000	\$3,714,900	13.8%

Source: Recreation user fee revenues from Parks Attendance and Revenue System; other revenues from Financial Data Warehouse.

1. Misc. Revenues include revenues from Backcountry Permits, Return-to-Crown from Park Operators and other Fees and Licences.

Expenditures (complete)

Operating Expenditures	2015/16	2016/17	Variance	% Change
(1) BC Parks Operating Expenses ¹	\$24,541,900	\$25,706,500	\$1,164,600	4.7%
(2) Contract Services - Net Deficiency Payments ²	\$5,688,100	\$5,214,200	-\$473,900	-8.3%
(3) Contract Services - Retained Fees ³	\$21,402,400	\$23,468,600	\$2,066,200	9.7%
(4) Total Capital & Compensation Costs ⁴	\$13,797,400	\$14,601,800	\$504,100	3.7%
(5) PEF Expenses	\$2,314,200	\$3,570,100	\$1,255,900	54.3%
Sub Total BC Parks Operating Costs (1,2,3)	\$51,632,300	\$54,389,300	\$2,757,000	5.3%
Total Expenditures on Parks (1,2,3,4,5)	\$67,744,000	\$72,561,100	\$4,817,200	7.1%

Source: Financial Data Warehouse and Parks Attendance and Revenue System. Capital expenditures from information supplied by facilities staff.

1. BC Parks operating expenses include goods and services, amortization, salary, benefits and travel.

2. Net deficiency payments are provided to contracted Park Operators as compensation where retained recreation user fees are insufficient to cover costs.

3. Retained fees are calculated from camping, boating and group day use revenues reported in Parks Attendance and Revenue System, minus returns to Crown. These fees are collected and retained by Park Operators and form part of their compensation for operating the parks.

4. Capital costs include campsite expansion projects and facilities for campgrounds, day use and boating areas. Compensation costs are related to timber/mineral rights that have been expropriated for park or conservancy purposes. This amount tends to vary substantially from year to year depending upon the number and nature of negotiated settlements.

Park Use Permits

PUPs are used to manage various types of commercial, land use and research activities that take place in B.C.'s protected areas system, and ensure that these activities conform to park and protected area values.

In 2016/17, BC Parks managed 1,387 active permits. These covered a wide variety of purposes including commercial recreation, filming, communication sites and research activities. Total PUP revenues were \$1.8 million.

Active Park Use Permits by Region

Fiscal Year	2016/17
Kootenay Okanagan	345
Northern Region	360
South Coast	255
Thompson Cariboo	230
West Coast	302

Active Park Use Permits

Permit Type	Number of Permits 2014/15	Number of Permits 2015/16
Commercial Services	554	558
Land Use Occupancy	524	524
Ecological Reserve	26	23
Trap line	100	106
Film	59	53
Research	136	123
Other	20	0
Total	1,419	1,387

• Numbers do not include Park Operator Permits

• Commercial Service includes recreation, big game, angle guiding and associated structures, transportation, special events and accommodation

• Land Use/Occupancy includes structures, utilities, roads, etc.



Economic Benefits

B.C.'s parks and protected areas generate significant economic benefits for the province by supporting tourism, providing jobs, improving and maintaining population health and generating tax revenue for government. They also provide affordable vacation options for families.

Provincial parks and protected areas have a substantial impact on the economy and contribute significantly to economic growth. Investment in the parks and protected areas system creates jobs, generates income for local businesses and produces tax revenue for the government. Investments in the protected areas system by BC Parks and POs generates a significant amount of visitor spending on food, entertainment, transportation and other goods and services, according to the 2011 publication released by the Canadian Parks Council: [The Economic Impact of Canada's National, Provincial and Territorial Parks in 2009](#).

In May 2015, the Canadian Camping and RV Council, alongside the Camping RV BC Coalition released a report titled, which quantifies the impact of camping and RVing in British Columbia and Canada. The report found that campgrounds stimulate economic activity and create jobs for Canadians in urban and rural areas across the country. Over 5.7 million Canadian adults camp each year and the camping industry contributes a total of \$4.7 billion annually to Canada's economy and creates the equivalent of 60,000 full-time jobs.

Local, inter-provincial, and international visitors are drawn to the many spectacular places that are managed and protected by BC Parks. Approximately one quarter of BC Parks visitors are non-residents, making BC Parks comparable to a provincial exporting industry. Park visitors bring significant economic benefit and development to the surrounding communities.

BC Parks also protect many ecological services that have economic value. For example, the conservation of ecosystem biodiversity results in air and water purification and regulation of floods and climate. BC Parks also provides opportunities for accessible outdoors activities. Nature-related recreation is recognized as an important factor in maintaining population health.

As one of the largest providers of overnight accommodation in the province, B.C.'s provincial parks system provides families with more affordable vacationing options relative to hotels, and the revenues from vacationing in BC Parks are kept within the province and reinvested in BC Parks' system.

For more information on BC Parks and the protected areas system including information in this report, please visit the [BC Parks website](#).



BC Parks