



BC Parks

Commitment to Inclusion





INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge with respect and gratitude that this commitment was produced on the territory of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples, Songhees and Esquimalt (Xwsepsum) Nations. We also acknowledge with humility the presence of BC Parks sites on the lands of many Nations, whose deep connections to this land continue to this day.

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1 | Minister's Message from Minister **GEORGE HEYMAN**



B.C.'s provincial parks and protected areas are special and important places. They are areas where important ecosystem values are conserved. They provide connection to the natural world. They are places with rich histories of Indigenous Peoples' cultures, traditions, and spirituality. They also bring friends, families, and communities together. They are spaces where everyone should be able to be their authentic selves.

Our province is strong because of the diversity of the people who live in and care for this place. It is important the provincial park system mirrors this diversity.

For BC Parks, inclusion means that we consider every potential visitor's needs and support everyone who visits or works in parks to feel respected, valued, engaged and connected across all settings – from natural spaces to digital spaces, from park facilities to programs. Inclusion also means we continue to make BC Parks facilities, infrastructure, and information meaningfully accessible to people no matter their specific abilities.

As we undertake and continue this important work, we are guided by B.C.'s comprehensive [accessibility legislation](#). We also remain mindful of – and adapt to – our broader context and priorities: firstly reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and also the changing climate, our aging population, and a progressing social consciousness about the right to inclusion.

We acknowledge First Nations Peoples' deep connection to the land where they have lived for millennia and where we have arrived much more recently. To fully respect the importance of reconciliation in the context of BC Parks we have a separate and unique commitment underway – which you can learn about on the BC Parks website (bcparks.ca/reconciliation).

As more people visit B.C.'s provincial parks, we are taking action to ensure everyone feels – and is – welcome, and we remove all barriers to a true sense of belonging and connection with the beauty and peace of natural spaces.

George Heyman

Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

2 | A Message from Parliamentary Secretary **AMAN SINGH**



Provincial parks are cherished by the people who both live in and visit British Columbia. As the new Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, and regular visitor to these protected areas, I love to explore the forest trails and experience all they have to offer – the wind in the leaves, the damp earth underneath, the waves washing up on shore. These moments take us out of the hustle and bustle of everyday life and centre us in a feeling of peace.

Everyone should feel encouraged and supported to access and enjoy parks, regardless of ability or identity. It's a core foundation of the commitment to inclusion outlined in this document.

The development of this commitment owes a significant amount to the work of Kelly Greene – previously, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, now Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture. I would like to thank her for her efforts and dedication to improving accessibility and inclusion in BC Parks.

The insight gathered from diverse community organizations was critical to the development of this commitment to greater inclusion and increased accessibility. Working with these partners, and many more in the future, BC Parks will strive to create spaces that are welcoming and meaningfully accessible to all.

Aman Singh

Parliamentary Secretary for Environment

3 | A Message from Parliamentary Secretary **KELLY GREENE**



Last year, I had the opportunity to meet with diverse community organizations – to listen and learn about how their members use provincial parks. These groups have shared information about the types of barriers they face accessing BC Parks and how parks can be more inclusive and welcoming. I would like to thank the following partners for their willingness to share their expertise and lived experiences, their continued input and passion for helping us build this inclusion commitment:

- BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society
- Canucks Autism Network
- Disability Alliance BC
- Power to Be
- Qmunity
- Rick Hansen Foundation
- SPARC-BC
- Spinal Cord Injury BC
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

Kelly Greene

Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture
former Parliamentary Secretary for Environment

4 | BC Parks Today

B.C.'s provincial parks¹ are important, revered places and a singular, irreplaceable part of our provincial identity. The journey to our renewed and expanded commitment to inclusion begins with an understanding of the integral and varied role BC Parks² plays within the ever-changing context of British Columbia.

BC Parks is the largest provincial protected areas system in Canada. It represents British Columbia's unparalleled natural diversity with examples of every land-based

ecosystem in the province. More than 14 percent of the province is now protected by parks, conservancies, ecological reserves, and recreation areas.³

As we implement our commitment to inclusion, we are mindful that the commitment is connected, informed, and strengthened by these existing areas of focus.

Health, wellness, and recreation

Time spent recreating and exercising in nature can measurably improve such mental and physical health indicators as:

- physical fitness,
- stress,
- anxiety,
- depression,
- memory,
- focus,
- heart function,
- blood pressure,
- lung function, and
- lifespan.⁴



¹ Within *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion*, the term B.C.'s provincial parks refers to the system of provincial parks, conservancies, ecological reserves, protected areas and recreation areas for which BC Parks is responsible.

² BC Parks refers to the team whose mission is to protect representative and natural places within the province's Protected Area System for world-class conservation, outdoor recreation, education, and scientific study.

³ <https://bcparks.ca/docs/bcparks.pdf?v=1635370281244>

⁴ <https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/en/whynature>

To improve their well-being, people turn to nature to restore mind, body, and soul. B.C.'s provincial parks provide an invaluable support to the health of people by providing access to nature.

This explains, in part, why BC Parks has seen unprecedented growth in visitation in the past few years. Over 3.6 million campers stayed in B.C.'s provincial parks during the 2021 camping season, and more than 260,000 reservations were made. This was the highest number of camping visitors on record. Almost 90 percent of British Columbians have used a provincial park at some time.⁵ Through BC Parks, provincial protected areas provide a multitude of services that people are using more and more. To enjoy the benefits that parks provide, people must be and feel welcome and able to access B.C.'s provincial parks. *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion* will strive to make this possible.

Protection of biodiversity and climate change mitigation

British Columbia's protected area system plays an important role in conserving a healthy environment. Protected areas provide clean water and air, absorb carbon, and protect B.C.'s living things in all their rich biodiversity. These benefits of protected areas are more important than ever as climate change transforms the world. As we refocus our energy to ensure parks are inclusive and accessible to all, we are mindful of our conservation mandate. Combining our focus on conservation with our expanded commitment to inclusion ensures that B.C.'s provincial parks can continue to be a benefit for all – forever.

Ending violence, hatred and discrimination

One of B.C.'s greatest strengths is the diversity of the people who call this province home. Violence, hatred, and discrimination have no place in our society. The province is committed to creating a B.C. where everyone can live free of discrimination and violence; a place that promotes multiculturalism, working against racism,^{6,7} advancing gender equity and building inclusive communities.

When all people – regardless of their gender, gender identity, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, or other identifying factors – can reach their full potential, our communities and economy are stronger, better places for everyone.

BC Parks is guided by these provincial commitments. *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion* helps to guide our journey to ensuring that people of all backgrounds and identities are and feel safe and welcome in B.C.'s provincial parks.

Reconciliation

The BC Parks system is a part of the province's colonial history – as many of the older parks were established with little to no consultation or consideration for the Indigenous Peoples who occupy or use these areas. As we move towards our vision of making everyone be and feel welcome in B.C.'s provincial parks, we remain conscious of our colonial legacy and acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples who have always been here. *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion* is intended to articulate our vision of inclusivity for all, in addition to government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

BC Parks is working towards true and meaningful collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, informed by respect for their deep and on-going connections to the land. To fully respect the importance and breadth of reconciliation in the context of BC Parks, a separate and unique commitment is underway. For more, please visit: www.bcparks.ca/reconciliation

⁵ <https://bcparks.ca/about/facts-figures/>

⁶ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/anti-racism/resiliencebc>

⁷ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/multiculturalism/multiculturalismgrants>

5 | BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion

People of all ages and backgrounds consider provincial parks one of the greatest things about living here. But for some, there are barriers to their ability to be and feel included, welcomed, and safe in B.C.'s natural beauty. We acknowledge the equity-deserving groups who may have traditionally been excluded or felt excluded in B.C.'s provincial parks due to both seen and unseen barriers. *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion* embarks on a renewed commitment to remove barriers.

Defining Inclusion

For BC Parks, true inclusion means everyone is welcomed. We respect everyone for who they are and, wherever possible, we remove limitations or barriers to accessibility to encourage and facilitate full participation in B.C.'s provincial parks for all.

Defining Accessibility

For BC Parks, accessibility means removing as many barriers to full participation as possible through the entire experience that visitors have with BC Parks. Creating meaningful access welcomes people to BC Parks and is a fundamental part of our commitment to inclusion.

Identifying barriers in BC Parks

People cannot be included if they are confronted by barriers. An important first step is for BC Parks to identify, define and acknowledge the barriers that many face

in accessing parks. Research studies conducted on a national level identify several categories of common barriers, including:

- attitudinal,
- cultural,
- financial,
- knowledge,
- language,
- physical,
- sensory,
- technology, and
- visual representation.^{8,9}

We strive for a visitor experience that is inclusive. From our website to campsites, we will be meaningfully accessible to everybody, regardless of ability, and welcoming to everybody, regardless of identity. By respecting everyone's right to access nature,¹⁰ and by actively working to break down barriers that impede access, we continue working toward our commitment to inclusion:

BC Parks is taking action to co-create inclusive, diverse, and respectful places where everyone can connect to the beauty and benefits of nature.

⁸ Race and Nature in the City by Jacqueline L Scott and Ambika Tenneti, University of Toronto, May 2021.
<https://naturecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Race-Nature-in-the-City-Report.pdf>

⁹ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion/accessibility>

¹⁰ <https://www.iucn.org/news/world-commission-environmental-law/202110/right-a-healthy-environment>

BC Parks' inclusion principles

BC Parks is committed to the values of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and strives to be both a destination of choice and an employer of choice. Our commitment is guided by the following principles:

i. Engagement with park visitors

We actively seek opportunities to engage with visitors and diverse community organizations. We strive to learn about their experiences in the parks system and their interactions with BC Parks. Engagement will help us better understand the evolving needs of parks visitors. We will transparently share the results of these engagements and take action to respond to their input.

ii. Listening to diverse lived experience

We listen to visitors, volunteers, partners, external stakeholders, and staff with diverse lived experiences. We seek to better understand what individuals need to be and feel psychologically and physically safe and respected in B.C.'s provincial parks, in a way that respects their background and personal circumstances.

iii. Inclusive policies, processes, and practices

We continue to deepen our understanding of the systemic implications of historical exclusionary policies, processes, and practices. Our learnings help guide our way forward. Inclusive and diverse teams continue to embed EDI considerations in all aspects of our policies, processes, and practices.

iv. Universal Design

We follow the principles of Universal Design¹¹ so B.C.'s parks can be accessed, understood, and enjoyed to the greatest extent possible by all people.

v. Continuous improvement

Through a commitment to learning and growth, we continue to make strides in ensuring B.C.'s provincial parks are meaningfully accessible and welcoming. We remain focused on long-term innovation by being open to adapting our approach as we go.



vi. Longevity

Recognizing that inclusion is a journey, not a destination, we remain focused on the longevity of our commitment. We understand that developing and maintaining a culture of inclusion requires a future focus. We plan long-term engagement, maintenance, and adaptation strategies for all inclusion initiatives.

vii. Inclusive work culture

We foster a fair and respectful workplace. A workplace that harnesses diversity as a strength. We value unique backgrounds and characteristics and support each employee to flourish.

viii. Diverse workforce

We proactively cultivate a workforce that reflects the diversity of British Columbia. We understand that a broad range of backgrounds strengthens our organization.

These principles will lead the way through our journey to achieve our two separate but interconnected visions:

- B.C.'s provincial parks are welcoming to all.
- B.C.'s provincial parks are meaningfully accessible to all.

¹¹ Universal Design is the process of creating products that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics.

6 | **OUR VISION:** B.C.'s provincial parks are welcoming to all



INCLUSION IN ACTION— Welcome Signs

In 2021, BC Parks installed 500 new welcome signs in frontcountry parks. This is a first step in our long-term commitment to equity and inclusion. The focus of the initial roll-out was in popular parks across all regions, with signs posted at kiosks in campgrounds, day-use areas, and at trailheads.



British Columbia is home to a wide diversity of people. This includes diversity in culture, race, gender identities, sex, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental abilities, and many other identities. BC Parks strives to create safe, welcoming spaces – spaces where everyone can be their authentic self.

Our vision to make BC Parks and provincial park spaces welcoming to all includes focused and sustained action toward:

- Inclusive and diverse language and cultural connections.
- Partnering with diverse community organizations.
- Fostering a culture of inclusion within BC Parks.





INCLUSION IN ACTION– Learn to Be in Nature

In 2022, BC Parks partnered with the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society of Prince George to host the Learn to be in Nature event for newcomers to Canada to learn how to recreate safely outdoors. The event had over 100 attendees from ten partnering organizations and newcomers from all over the world who gained the knowledge needed to safely recreate outdoors.



Inclusive and diverse language and cultural connections

Inclusive language that reflects B.C.'s diversity

BC Parks acknowledges that language evolves to reflect changing societal values. We are committed to using inclusive language that reflects all people. Our new signage standards will include guidance for inclusive language and the use of universal icons. Our new standards for visual materials appropriately express the diversity of people who visit and care about B.C.'s provincial parks.

Sharing diverse cultural connections in storytelling and interpretation

Cultural connections with the land protected within B.C.'s provincial parks extend far into the past and continue to this day. These diverse and ever-changing connections intersect to form a complex cultural landscape that extends well beyond the colonial connections that have so often been at the forefront of historical narratives in B.C.¹²



We want to reflect that true complexity to encourage a sense of welcome and meaning in B.C.'s provincial parks. We are working with community members to incorporate cultural landscapes into such initiatives as interpretative and educational programs, storytelling, and signage. These efforts will help share the stories of the diverse, interconnected, and complex relationships that continue today.

¹² https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/our-history/historic-places/documents/culturalheritagepolicy_final.pdf



INCLUSION IN ACTION– Alice Lake Story Trail

The Alice Lake Story Trail, located on the traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh People, is a partnership between BC Parks, the BC Parks Foundation, and the Squamish Nation. As visitors walk along the trail, 10 signs with QR codes can be scanned to hear stories from the students at Aya7Auylh Chet (Cultural Journeys – St'a7mes School). They share the teachings they have received about traditional medicinal plants from a local Skwxwú7mesh knowledge keeper.



Partnering with diverse community organizations

BC Parks actively seeks to partner with multi-cultural organizations, Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) organizations, 2SLGBTQ+ groups, First Nations and other groups supporting individuals who have traditionally not felt comfortable or have experienced barriers accessing BC Parks. This includes participating in community-led partnerships focused on deepening our understanding about the experiences of equity-deserving groups and collaborating on projects to break down barriers to inclusion.

Fostering a culture of inclusion within BC Parks

Inclusive and diverse teams bring varieties of thought, innovation and creativity, and helps build public trust as the team represents the community it serves.¹³



To foster a sense of inclusion for all in BC Parks, we recognized the need for employees to be able to help inform and guide the work ahead. In 2021, the internal BC Parks Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Council was established. This council is comprised of BC Parks staff members from across the province who bring diverse lived experiences. The purpose of the council is to extend and amplify BC Parks' EDI initiatives across the agency, and to connect to complementary initiatives underway across government. The council's work is critical to the ongoing implementation of *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion*.

¹³ Inclusion & diversity – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development



INCLUSION IN ACTION– BC Parks Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Training

BC Parks has developed an experiential Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training workshop that is mandatory for all BC Parks staff, including all park rangers. This 2-hour interactive training encourages participants to self-reflect and learn together.



Fostering inclusion for park visitors means creating an environment where parks staff, park operators, contractors, and volunteers work confidently and respectfully with colleagues and park visitors with diverse lived experiences.

Moving forward, this includes:

- Developing a continuous, sustainable, and consistent EDI training model for BC Parks staff, park operators and volunteers. Training will include dedicated modules and learning resources on accessibility and inclusivity with a focus on inclusive language, unconscious bias, and cultural sensitivity.
- Continuing our process of asking new and existing partners for feedback on the creation and evolution of *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion*.
- Actively inviting diverse participants to join park experiences such as events, program development, consultation, volunteerism, and partnerships.
- Designing a way to ensure that incidents of hate or racism in parks can be easily reported and addressed.
- Actively working to align with the Public Service Agency's *Where We All Belong: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*¹⁴ to remove barriers to employment and diversify the workforce.
- Taking steps to increase comfort and safety in park spaces by shifting to gender-neutral / universal facilities wherever feasible (e.g., outhouses, change rooms and bathroom buildings).
- Offering implicit bias training to BC Parks staff.



¹⁴ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-strategy>

7 | **OUR VISION:** B.C.'s provincial parks are meaningfully accessible to all

At BC Parks, accessibility means more than removing physical barriers for staff and visitors with disabilities. It means we are working to remove visible and invisible barriers in all areas of BC Parks, including trip planning, transportation and in the workplace. Creating meaningful access welcomes people to BC Parks and builds on our vision of inclusivity.

Accessibility is an important outcome of inclusion. Ninety-one percent of Canadians agree accessibility is a human right rather than a privilege, and 92 percent of Canadians agree taxpayer-funded projects should be held to the highest accessibility standards.¹⁵

Making BC Parks meaningfully accessible for all includes focused and sustained action toward:

- Accessible facilities.
- User-centred design for digital services and programming.
- Partnerships for accessibility.
- Financial support to visit parks.



¹⁵ <https://www.rickhansen.com/sites/default/files/press-release/2021-11/rhfpotelectioneng.pdf>



INCLUSION IN ACTION– Accessible Design

Whiskers Point accessible playground is the newest addition to playgrounds with accessible features in B.C.'s provincial parks. This is the fifth playground of its kind in the Omineca Peace region.



Accessible facilities

BC Parks has been, and continues to be, a leader in promoting accessibility in parks based on the fundamental premise that people living with visible and invisible disabilities have a right to and should be able to enjoy outdoor activities.

To aid in this commitment, BC Parks established an Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2015. Member organizations include SPARC BC, Disability Alliance BC, the B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, and Power To Be. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice and feedback to make provincial park experiences welcoming and enjoyable for visitors with disabilities.

BC Parks has completed accessibility audits for all 330 frontcountry¹⁶ park sites and surveyed 20,000 British Columbians with mobility-related disabilities in partnership with SPARC BC to identify barriers to accessing BC Parks spaces. This is only the first step in research designed to help make park sites more accessible. Over time, BC Parks is committed to ensuring all frontcountry campgrounds and day-use areas have accessible campsites, toilets, natural features, and parking areas.

Design priorities in B.C.'s provincial parks, as determined by the audit and survey results, include upgrading gravel paths to park features and improving parking and toilet facilities. Universal Design also prioritizes guidelines for signage and wayfinding, for example visibility upgrades for people with vision impairments and use of icons to decrease barriers to written content.



¹⁶ Frontcountry means an area in a park or recreation area within one kilometre of either side of the centre line of a park road or a highway. Frontcountry campsites are generally accessible by vehicle and offer designated campsites, facilities and recreational opportunities.



INCLUSION IN ACTION– Front Loading Information

BC Parks has collaborated with Canucks Autism Network to create a video that explains the process of camping. The video covers finding the right campground, booking a campsite and what to pack to have the best experience.



Audit and survey results identified that the park sites most frequented by individuals with disabilities are those closest to population centres. Moving forward, accessible infrastructure upgrades will be prioritized at parks nearest to large population centres.

In 2021/2022, the province invested \$21.5 million (over three years) to expand and enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation, including new campsites and trails and upgrades to facilities. As one of the principles of *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion*, Universal Design guides facility investment wherever feasible.

Looking forward, leading practices in Universal Design will be regularly reviewed and BC Parks' Facility Standards updated accordingly.

User-centred design for digital services

The journey for many people seeking outdoor experiences with BC Parks begins online with BCParks.ca. To be useful, information must be communicated in a way that considers the multitude of ways people understand and access information. BC Parks follows the B.C. government's digital principles, which include:

- applying human-centered design practices¹⁷
- working directly with people, and
- striving to meet the highest standards of accessibility, inclusion, equity, and ethics.¹⁸

Recognizing the importance to our visitors of accessible, easy-to-use, meaningful online services, BC Parks has established a continuing practice of inviting people to participate in the redesign and improvement of new, more inclusive, digital services.

We recognize that making B.C.'s provincial parks accessible starts before our visitors leave their house. We have heard from equity-deserving partners how important it is to have clear and detailed information about our parks, and their accessible features on our website. In an effort that will extend to all our online properties, many pages on our website now include improved accessibility information. Our Park Accessibility Information web page¹⁹ allows people to review accessibility information, photos, and descriptions to help them plan their trip. With specific information about park sites, people can choose the park that best meets their unique needs – including physical accessibility considerations – as they plan their adventure.

¹⁷ Human-centered design refers to a problem-solving approach that develops solutions by involving the perspectives of the people impacted by the problem.

¹⁸ <https://digital.gov.bc.ca/resources/digital-principles>

¹⁹ <https://accessibility.bcparks.ca/>



INCLUSION IN ACTION– Adaptive Equipment Partnerships

BC Parks provides funding to community organizations for the purchase and maintenance of adaptive recreational equipment for use in B.C.'s provincial parks. In the past several years, this has included:

- A TrailRider for use in parks in the Omineca area; in partnership with the Yellowhead Outdoor Recreation Association.
- An adaptive tandem kayak for use in parks in the Okanagan; in partnership with Access Revolution, Independent Living, and Vernon Paddling Club.
- An adaptive mountain bike for use in parks in the Kootenays; in partnership with Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association.
- An adaptive handcycle for use in parks in the Okanagan; in partnership with Community Recreational Initiatives Society.



Additionally, in spring 2021, BC Parks responded to user feedback by launching a new reservation service that presents a more user-friendly interface and flexible search options to enable an enhanced experience for online visitors.

Moving forward, BC Parks will make information more accessible and easier to navigate by:

- Improving overall website accessibility by striving to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Level AA (WCAG AA) international standards.
- Plain language writing and using graphic icons that replace the written word where appropriate.
- Consistent use of BC Sans typeface, which was specifically designed to improve readability and support Indigenous languages in B.C.²⁰
- Developing standards to make publications available in multiple languages and formats including but not limited to: American Sign Language, braille, simple text.
- Integrating accessibility audit information on park maps online and in the park.
- Including accessibility audit information in the reservation system, showing accessible features at parks.
- Integrating Alt Text²¹ on social media and all digital communication to support screen readers.²²
- Enhancing the BC Parks Sign Standards for increased accessibility.
- Incorporating Universal Design principles in all of BC Parks' designed activities and programming.

Partnerships for accessibility

Adaptive equipment partnerships

Where park terrain should not or cannot reasonably be altered, adaptive equipment, such as wheelchairs designed for trails, adaptive paddle boards, and adaptive mountain bikes can help improve accessibility. BC Parks will continue to seek out community-level partnerships that enable more people to enjoy the benefits of recreating in parks by making adaptive equipment easy to access. BC Parks will continue to invest funding from the **BC Parks Licence Plate Program** to support adaptive recreation partnerships and programs.

²⁰ See <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/services-for-government/policies-procedures/bc-visual-identity/bc-sans> for more information on the BC Sans typeface

²¹ Alt Text is a short, written description of an image.

²² Screen readers are software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.

Transportation partnerships

Most parks are not served by public transit, and transportation to get to parks is often cited as a barrier to participation. BC Parks is actively engaging with partners and other jurisdictions to provide public transportation for parks. This has included partnering with the District of Squamish around access to the Stawamus Chief and Shannon Falls Park and supporting bus access to Alice Lake Park by building a traffic circle and bus stop to lay the foundation for future transportation to the park.

In addition to these types of infrastructure upgrades, BC Parks will continue to support partnerships and explore new destinations for accessible transportation. We regularly work with our non-profit partners at Parkbus who provide park visitors in the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley, and along the Sea to Sky corridor with low-cost bus transportation to provincial parks. BC Parks will continue to explore collaborative ways to offer transportation opportunities that help people get to and from parks.

Financial support to visit BC Parks

Inclusion also means removing financial barriers that can deprive some people the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation. For over 50 years, BC Parks has offered free camping to park visitors with disabilities on income assistance. In recent years, more than 23,000 park visitors have benefited annually from the [Social Services Camping Fee Exemption](#) (SSCFE) – an almost two-fold increase in the past 10 years.

As BC Parks embarks on the next decade of the SSCFE program, we will continue to break down financial barriers where possible and look for ways to improve the design of the SSCFE program. BC Parks is reviewing the program, with a view to optimizing its delivery and further improving access to nature and the outdoors in BC Parks for visitors with disabilities who face significant financial challenges.

8 | Sharing our progress through storytelling

While we are already taking concrete action towards delivering on our commitment to inclusion, we acknowledge that this work is systemic and long-term. Throughout all the stages of implementing the vision laid out in this plan, we are committed to sharing our

progress and challenges with the public along the way. We will use digital storytelling to highlight the work we are doing alongside our partners and to celebrate our collective successes along the way.

9 | In closing

As BC Parks embarks on our commitment to inclusion, we look forward to continuing to work with community organizations to realize our vision.

If you are a member of a community organization and are interested in being a part of *BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion*, please reach out to us at: parkinfo@gov.bc.ca.

B.C.'s provincial parks are revered spaces where people who live in and visit British Columbia can connect to the beauty of nature. Through collaboration with communities, generous support from partners, and committed leadership at all levels of the organization, we are taking concrete action to make B.C.'s provincial parks welcoming and meaningfully accessible for all.

Welcome to BC Parks. You belong here.

BC Parks are inclusive,
diverse, and respectful
places where everyone
is welcome.



BC Parks

Inclusion in Action

Click on the blue text to learn more.



BC Parks employees learning about [Power to Be](#) and their adaptive recreation programming.



The BC Parks Foundation's [Discover Parks Ambassadors](#) hosting an interpretive nature walk for guests of the [Canucks Autism Network](#).



A BC Parks employee and their new baby in front of one of the many BC Parks welcome signs.

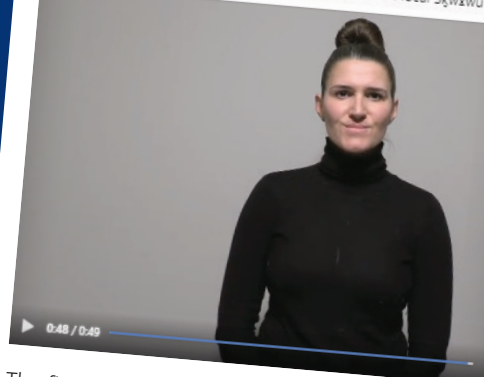


The [Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria \(ICA\)](#) leading a hike for newcomers to Canada near Strathcona Provincial Park.

...ced that our day-use pass information is available in French, and English. Our team is now exploring an (L) and braille, and how we can offer content in t accessible.

...first ASL video which tells the story of the Alice (Alice's story, or R16) described below. We look forward to sharing our commitment to inclusion in BC Parks continues.

Video script: The Alice Lake Story Trail, located on the traditional ter People, is a partnership between BC Parks, the BC Parks Foundation, visitors walk along the trail, 10 signs with QR codes can be scanned t students at Aya7Auyih Chet (Cultural Journeys - St'a7mes School). Th have received about traditional medicinal plants from a local Skwxwú



The first ASL video posted to BC Parks [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



BC Parks employees participating in a TrailRider adaptive equipment workshop.



Learn to be in Nature event Prince George, B.C. Hosted by BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC in partnership with the Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS).



Participants of the Learn to Camp event at Porteau Cove hosted in collaboration with Canucks Autism Network, Power To Be, and the Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria worked in collaboration with Parks Canada Learn-to Camp and BC Parks Foundation.



BC Parks employees delivering staff training about the BC Parks' Commitment to Inclusion.



BC Parks employee learning about adaptive equipment by trying out a TrailRider.

in Arabic, Chinese (simplified) and learning about American these languages to make our

Lake Story Trail more content and stories as

territory of the Skwawú7mesh and the Squamish Nation. As to hear stories from the they share the teachings they 7mesh knowledge keeper.'



BC Parks