

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021ENV0043-001156  
June 15, 2021

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

### **BC Parks pilots plans for managing, promoting access to nature**

VICTORIA – Better protection for the environment and new, expanded measures for British Columbians to access nature are coming to BC Parks this summer.

To address the surge in visitors in five of the province’s most popular parks, new and revised initiatives are being introduced this season as part of the continued free day-use pass pilot program.

“People in B.C. love the outdoors. For many of us, it’s an important part of who we are. The pilot program, as part of a comprehensive strategy, protects nature and improves managed access to parks and trails,” said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “These changes will improve visitor planning and experience while keeping our parks spectacular for years to come.”

Beginning June 22, 2021, plans for this season include:

- opening Joffre Lakes Provincial Park, in partnership with Lil’wat Nation and N’Quatqua, under the new Joffre Lakes Park Visitor Use Management Strategy, which includes free day-use passes and continuing the Ske’l7awlh Stewards Program;
- implementing free day-use passes for Mount Robson Park (Berg Lake Trail), Stawamus Chief Park (Chief Parks Backside Trail), Garibaldi Park (trailheads at Diamond Head, Rubble Creek and Cheakamus) and Golden Ears Park; and
- partnering with the BC Parks Foundation to introduce more than 30 full-time discover parks ambassadors to welcome visitors and provide information about safe and responsible recreation.

Based on stakeholder feedback, day-use passes will no longer be required this summer for Mount Seymour Park and Cypress Park. For the parks included in the summer pilot, the number of passes available each day will be adjusted to accommodate as many visitors as possible. Changes include extending the booking time to 7 a.m. the day prior to arrival to help with planning. Youth will not require a pass when accompanied by a parent or guardian with a pass.

Opening Joffre Lakes Park reflects the leadership and contribution of the Lil’wat and N’Quatqua Nations. The collaborative visitor use management strategy is a first for BC Parks and demonstrates a commitment to managing parks for a high-quality visitor experience, protecting Indigenous cultural values and the natural environment.

“Including Indigenous knowledge and conservation values requires a consultative and adaptive approach, which means listening,” said Kelly Greene, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment. “I want to thank everyone who provided feedback to make this season more enriching and respectful of the special places we cherish.”

As more people discover the value of spending time in nature, balancing recreation with protection of the environment is a common challenge for many jurisdictions.

“We are seeing recreational demand grow exponentially in park systems across Canada. While it’s wonderful to see the public appreciation for parks and outdoor recreation, this is creating real environmental pressures and posing park management challenges for all jurisdictions,” said Dawn Carr, executive director, Canadian Parks Council. “B.C. is in the forefront of trying to tackle these challenges and deserves credit for its innovative and responsive approach.”

More people in provincial parks means an increased focus on visitor safety.

“We support the effort BC Parks is making to have discover parks ambassadors in some of our most popular parks to greet people and talk about safe and responsible recreation,” said Doug Pope, manager, North Shore Rescue. “This is a welcome development to the day-pass program and ensures everyone can enjoy a safer experience. It’s important people plan ahead and are prepared before they venture into the outdoors, including visiting AdventureSmart.ca to plan their trip.”

Park visitors often stay on popular trails that can become overused and crowded in areas such as viewpoints. Overuse of trails leads to environmental impacts such as trail widening, soil erosion, altered hydrology, damaged vegetation and increased garbage from people littering.

Under the pilot program, park rangers noted a reduction in littering and attractants, resulting in no human-wildlife conflicts in Garibaldi Park for the first time in several years. To understand the impacts of recreational activities on wildlife, a multi-year University of British Columbia study is using motion-triggered cameras to capture images of wildlife in provincial parks, including Garibaldi and Joffre Lakes.

“One of the real challenges is to navigate this dual mandate of providing important recreation opportunities to people while also protecting the biodiversity that depends on these parks,” said study lead Cole Burton, assistant professor, UBC’s department of forest resources management.

BC Parks will be evaluating the second phase of the day-use pass pilot program to inform future decisions and approaches for day passes in provincial parks. Further details about the free passes for the five parks can be found online: <https://bcparks.ca/reserve/day-use/>

#### **Quotes:**

**Annita Mcphee, executive director, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - British Columbia (CPAWS-BC) –**

“As demand for outdoor recreation continues to surge, it’s important to make sure people can access our parks and protected areas in a way that respects and protects nature. Our parks safeguard some of B.C.’s most beautiful and unique places, and we welcome solutions that aim to balance increased visitation with the needs of nature and wildlife in the places we visit and love. CPAWS-BC is pleased to see improvements to the day-pass pilot and supports the learning approach to inform future decisions through monitoring and data collection.”

**Sandra Riches, executive director, BC AdventureSmart –**

“The south coast is one of the busiest regions in the province and for search and rescue. We strongly support BC Parks initiatives that protect nature, keep the wilderness wild and educate park visitors about responsible recreation. Before heading outdoors, we encourage everyone to be prepared and follow our three Ts (trip planning, training, taking essentials).”

**Stu Burgess, operator, Golden Ears Park–**

“As a park operator, we have found the day-use passes have really helped us to safely and effectively manage the volume of traffic entering the park to prevent overcrowding. Park visitors with day-use passes have certainty about being able to use and enjoy the park during peak visitation hours. We heard positive feedback from visitors and our staff about the benefits of the day-use pass pilot, and we’re pleased about the enhancements to the pilot this year.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Day use in provincial parks has increased by 34% since 2011. In 2018-19, BC Parks had 26 million day-use visits. Over 42% of this visitation was in the South Coast region.
- Since 2010, park visitation in the South Coast has increased 57%, from 6,610,144 visits in 2010-11 to 10,376,873 visits in 2018-19.
- In 2018-19 Golden Ears Park had 853,700 visitors, Garibaldi Park had 124,600 visitors, Stawamus Chief Park had 590,200 visitors and Mount Robson Park had 216,600 visitors.
- In 2019, Joffre Lakes Park had 196,322 visitors, for a 222% increase since 2010.

**Learn More:**

For more information about the day-use pass pilot program, visit:

<https://bcparks.ca/reserve/day-use/>

For more information about the Joffre Lakes Visitor Use Management Strategy, visit:

<https://bcparks.ca/parks/joffre-lakes/>

**Contact:**

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

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)