



I USE ALBERTA PARKS

“I Use Alberta Parks”: Parks users across Alberta logging visits to combat government claim that provincial parks are ‘under-utilized’

Edmonton - Alberta parks users are rallying behind a project called “I Use Alberta Parks” to oppose the Government of Alberta’s decision to remove and close 175 provincial parks.

Part of the government’s justification for delisting these parks is based on the claim that many of the sites are ‘under-utilized’ - despite the fact that no visitation data have been publicly provided, and many sites are day-use areas with no systems in place to record visitation.

The I Use Alberta Parks project is the grassroots initiative of a group of concerned Albertans. The project is filling the gap in public visitation data by asking parks users to self-report their visits to the 175 park sites in question. The project team aims to demonstrate to the provincial government the value of the sites, both in terms of visitor usage and the personal connection that many users have to the parks.

Upon logging a visit at the project website (iusealbertaparks.org), parks users can submit a personal message to a Twitter feed (@IUseABParks). Hundreds of Tweets have been submitted since the project launched on July 10th, with many visitors sharing emotions and stories that show how important the issue is to them.



“This wonderful nature reserve was donated to the province under the impression that would be the best way to ensure it was maintained and free for future generations. This would be an insult on that Albertan’s donation to delist,” said one visitor to the Riverlot 56 site.

“Enjoyed a wonderful canoe trip around the lake. Watched loon chicks, osprey, pelicans, and herons. Fish biting. Continuous bird song. A quick dip in the lake too. A paradise that needs to be preserved,” said another visitor to the Chain Lakes Provincial Recreation Area.

Committed supporters of the project have been going a step further and helping to spread the word by “adopting” a park. Adopters print off an I Use Alberta Parks poster at home and post it at the trailhead of their adopted park. The poster lets other visitors know that the park is at risk and encourages them to go to the project website and log their visit.

As of August 12th, the I Use Alberta Parks project has been live for approximately one month. Within that time 418 visits have been logged and 54 parks have been adopted.