



Understanding Alberta’s Growing Crown Land Outdoor Recreation Economy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (*Calgary, Alberta*) As the leading advocate for Alberta’s visitor economy, the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) has launched a collaborative, sector-wide study to research outdoor recreation participation on Crown lands and to estimate the economic contribution it makes provincially, and regionally.

The study, a first of its kind in Alberta, will assist Crown land managers in better understanding, and quantifying, the powerful economic role that Crown land based outdoor recreation plays in Alberta, while providing essential insights to help strengthen and align advocacy efforts by the stakeholders across the Crown land outdoor recreation ecosystem.

Darren Reeder, TIAA Board Advisor, explains, “As Alberta is embarking on a new vision for Crown lands, the time is right to create the foundational insights and research to better inform decisions about, and investments in, our Crown land outdoor recreation economy. Not unlike our traditional resource industries, the outdoor recreation economy requires a supportive and intentional policy framework, and well-planned public sector investment decisions, to motivate a thriving and successful industry.”

Crown land outdoor recreation has always been important to Albertans. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has put a spotlight on just how much value Albertans’ attribute to those lands for outdoor recreation purposes. Continues Reeder, “By understanding the potential of sustainable, outdoor recreation opportunities on Alberta Crown lands, the province can set the stage to grow, strengthen and diversify the provincial economy - especially in more of Alberta’s rural, Crown land gateway communities.”

Though some sectors of the Crown land outdoor recreation economy have studied their individual economic contributions, no single study thus far has focused comprehensively on the entire outdoor recreation economy ecosystem, nor on the role Crown lands play in driving this economic segment.

Alberta’s Crown lands have long been recognized for the economic contribution they support through activities such as oil and gas, mining, grazing, and forestry. However, the role these lands play in supporting and growing a robust outdoor recreation economy has largely been overlooked. Often, outdoor recreation is simply viewed as an activity that *just happens* and, from a land use perspective, as a use that simply needs to be *managed* to minimize impacts (and conflicts) of outdoor recreation on other industries and, provincial environmental priorities.

To support the project, TIAA has established an Outdoor Recreation Project Advisory Panel, consisting of cross-sectoral, Crown land outdoor recreation stakeholder organizations to help advise TIAA on the project. Over 20 organizations have been invited to participate in the process, which will culminate with the delivery of a final report by June 2021.

See Attached Question & Answer Summary

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Q&A – Outdoor Recreation Economy Study

What are Provincial Crown Lands?

Crown lands are lands contained within Alberta’s network of parks and protected areas or lands managed under Alberta’s Public Lands Act. Crown land covers approximately 60% of the province. These lands support conservation, outdoor recreation, continued exercise of Treaty rights and resource-based industries, including tourism.

What Activities are Included in Outdoor Recreation?

To the extent possible, the study will work to include all day use and overnight outdoor recreation activities that occur on Crown lands, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Non-motorized, mechanized, and motorized recreation activities,
- Land and water-based activities,
- Consumptive (fishing, hunting) and non-consumptive activities, and
- Summer and winter activities.

The study will work to account for Crown land associated outdoor recreation expenditures by both Albertans and visitors to the province.

Is this study being Developed in Response to the Recent Land Use Decisions and Policy Changes Regarding Coal Development on Crown Lands?

No. This work was initiated before the recent announcements regarding coal policy changes and is happening in response to the impacts that COVID-19 has had on Alberta’s tourism industry and the dramatic increases in outdoor recreation participation. TIAA has long recognized the under-realized potential of the outdoor recreation economy and is watching Alberta’s competitors invest in growing their outdoor recreation economies, which is driving greater economic leakage from Alberta. Growing the Crown land outdoor recreation economy was an important advocacy priority for TIAA during the recent Alberta 10 Year Tourism Strategy consultations and in TIAA’s *Call to Action Report: Recommendations to Accelerate the Recovery, Sustainable Growth and Resilience of Alberta’s Visitor Economy* (<https://www.tiaalberta.ca/cpages/news>) released last year.

Why is this Study Occurring Now?

The Government of Alberta is undertaking a new vision for Crown lands. Given this new policy work and a heightened provincial interest in economic development, diversification, and recovery, it is a timely opportunity for the outdoor recreation community to come together to conceive and present a compelling and whole of sector study on the economic importance of Alberta’s Crown land outdoor recreation economy and advocate for deliberate attention and support for strengthening the sector.

When will the Study be Complete?

The study is intended to be completed and released by early summer 2021.

Who is leading the project for TIAA?

RC Strategies, one of Alberta’s leading outdoor recreation planning firms, will manage the project on behalf of TIAA.

About TIAA

The Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (<https://www.tiaalberta.ca/cpages/about>) is a not-for-profit, tourism association that advocates on behalf of all segments of Alberta’s tourism economy for a competitive and sustainable business environment that generates substantial economic value for the province. TIAA’s vision is that Alberta’s tourism industry will be the driving force of sustainable, community economic development and the organization works collaboratively with the Government of Alberta and Travel Alberta to support an audacious target of growing the value of Alberta’s tourism economy to \$20B by the year 2030. tiaalberta.ca