



## DECISION TO NOT CONSTRUCT FIVE RUSTIC BACKCOUNTRY CABINS IN LAKELAND PROVINCIAL PARK

### What We Heard

Public input was received through approximately 159 formal responses (14-neutral, 116-against, 28-support) and 66 social media response captures (11-neutral, 28-against, 27-support). This valuable feedback has been analyzed and grouped by theme.

A majority of comments were opposed to the construction of cabins in Lakeland Provincial Park. Responses were received from a range of individuals, municipalities, local community members, park users, the business community and various associations.

There were 17 key groupings of comments, suggestions or concerns that were raised. They were primarily but not limited to:

- keep as a wilderness setting with little or no more development;
- maintenance and enforcement of the new infrastructure;
- consider different locations within Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area instead of the park;
- the need for an environmental assessment to be done;
- increased pressure on lakes, wildlife and the park, people will stay longer;
- restriction on engine size and the numbers of motorized watercraft, there is already too much motorized activity;
- need to maintain and upgrade existing facilities;
- provides accessibility to new demographics of people;
- concerns about the cost of construction and return on investment;
- concerns that the Lakeland Management Plan and its intent are not being followed;
- the lack of adequate consultation and communication;
- this is the only canoe circuit in Alberta.

#	What We Heard	Frequency of Comment	Response
1	Keep as wilderness park/ leave the park as it is. Keep the wilderness experience.	80 (50%)	Lakeland Provincial Park is one of the few parks in the northeast that can provide a genuine wilderness experience that is accessible to Albertans. Alberta Parks recognizes that this is unique and has listened to Albertans regarding their concern to keep it that way by deciding to not build the cabins at the proposed backcountry

			location.
2	Concerns with maintenance and enforcement at the site and how vandalism and visitor safety (regarding fire) would be handled.	36 (23%)	Increased maintenance and enforcement was considered in the planning process for the cabins.
3	Consider other locations for the cabins that are not on canoe circuit. The proposed backcountry location is not appropriate. Consider Touchwood or Pinehurst as alternate sites.	31 (20%)	Alberta Parks will consider frontcountry options for the cabins at various lakes within Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area as suggested by Albertans.
4	Have environmental and impact reviews, as well as capacity and visitor use studies been completed? Due to potentially longer stays by visitors to the proposed cabins, there would foreseeably be an increased human footprint in the park, increased pressure on the lakes, wildlife and wildlife movement, increased ecological impacts, and impacts to campsites. Need to reduce environmental pressure not increase it.	28 (17.6%)	Alberta Parks conducted preliminary ground truthing, as well as a site assessment during the planning stages for the proposed backcountry location. A capacity study was completed in 2013. Alberta Parks will ensure these pre-planning activities are clearly communicated to Albertans in future public input periods.
5	There will be a demand for increased access by all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and motorized watercraft. This will lead to increased/illegal motorized access.	25 (16%)	Demand may increase but motorized ATV access is only allowed on designated trails into the Provincial Park. The proposed site for these cabins is accessible only by canoe, boat, or hiking during the summer with opportunity for winter use as well.
6	Restrictions on size of motorized watercraft and the need to have motorized watercraft restrictions.	23 (14.5%)	Alberta Parks will review the concerns about increased motorized use and potential detrimental effects on the lakes and the aesthetics, and if warranted, research and implement mitigating measures.
7	Need to maintain and upgrade existing facilities.	19 (12%)	Alberta Parks is working on and correcting maintenance concerns.
8	The cabins are a positive addition because they will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Allow for all season use of the park. Great year round recreation for families and groups, those who do not want to tent, and those who want to continue the backcountry experience as they age.</li> <li>b) Reach new and changing demographics.</li> <li>c) Contribute to increased tourism and user potential.</li> </ul>	17 (10.7%)	The concept of the cabins contributes to a commitment under the <a href="#">Lower Athabasca Regional Plan</a> and the <a href="#">Plan for Parks</a> to increase and diversify recreational opportunities in the Northeast region. Alberta Parks will consider frontcountry options for the cabins at various lakes within Lakeland Provincial

			Recreation Area as suggested by Albertans.
9	Concerns about the cost of construction and return on investment, and whether a cost benefit analysis was completed. Some believe that it is a waste of time and money.	16 (10%)	A cost benefit analysis has been completed as part of the planning process.
10	Concerns that the Lakeland Management Plan and its intent are not being followed. Cabins were not part of the management plan and that it indicated development of the provincial recreation area not the provincial park. This would be a change to the policy of the original management plan.	15 (9%)	The draft Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Management Plan was crafted in 1996 but was never finalized or signed off by the appropriate levels, though there is significant philosophical guidance provided by the draft plan. The current direction is for exploring the provision of new and diversified recreational opportunities in the Lower Athabasca Region where they are acceptable and feasible.
11	Lack of adequate consultation and communication. Needed more open house sessions and/or to provide more background information.	10 (6.2%)	Alberta Parks will review process that it undertook with this public input period and determine whether further refinements are required for similar proposals in the future.
12	Lakeland Provincial Park is home to the only backcountry canoe circuit in Alberta. This circuit should be preserved for paddling.	10 (6.2%)	Paddlers currently make up around 10% of the current users of the lakes within the Lakeland core lakes of Jackson, Kinnaird, Blackett and McGuffin. We understand the importance of the canoe circuit to the paddling community. Our decision to not construct cabins at the proposal location is a reflection of not only what we have heard from the paddling community, but also other user groups as well.
13	Would we be able to reserve and guarantee a spot? How will registration and booking be handled? Concerns about reservation system not being good for this park.	9 (5.7%)	Eventually the cabins will be booked online through Reserve Alberta Parks <a href="http://www.reserve.albertaparks.ca">www.reserve.albertaparks.ca</a>
15	Recommend a user/backcountry fee for backcountry use. Need to charge overnight fees for camping.	4 (2.5%)	Alberta Parks will consider and review the recommendation to implement a backcountry user fee, and the logistics behind accomplishing this.

16	The metal appearance of the proposed cabins does not look like a rustic cabin. The cabins should appear as natural as possible.	4 (2.5%)	Moving forward, Alberta Parks will consider the appearance and aesthetics of the cabins in a natural setting.
17	Concerns that the cabins are not being developed as public access cabins, but for use only by Parks Division personnel.	3 (1.9%)	The cabins would have been located on an existing backcountry camping site and available for rent year round by the public. The cabins, due to their remote location, are not conducive to those with no backcountry experience. Frontcountry locations will be more accessible and will be available for a wider variety of visitors.