

Frequently Asked Questions:

William Watson Lodge

Reconstruction

Peter Lougheed Provincial Park

What is William Watson Lodge?

Originally built in 1981, William Watson Lodge is an Alberta Parks facility that provides year-round, barrier-free, wilderness lodging for persons with disabilities, seniors and their families. The goal of this facility is to connect persons with disabilities, seniors and their families to recreational opportunities in nature. The facility currently offers a day use lodge, 22 accessible cabins, 11 accessible RV (full-service) campsites, one comfort parks trailer, one accessible comfort camping hut, accessible picnic sites, more than 20km of accessible trails, and equipment rentals.

Where is William Watson Lodge?

William Watson Lodge (WWL) is located in beautiful Peter Lougheed Provincial Park (PLPP) in Kananaskis Country. The Lodge overlooks Lower Kananaskis Lake and is surrounded by a system of year-round trails and scenic habitat typical of the Rocky Mountains. Access to WWL is off Highway 40.

What is the Project?

Alberta Parks is replacing the main day lodge (the Project) to bring it up to today's international accessibility standards to meet the needs of current and future generations of visitors. The Project involves demolition of the existing main lodge and replacement with a new lodge. Associated work includes replacement of the existing lift station, and minor civil works.

The objectives of the Project are as follows:

- To bring the facility to compliance with international accessibility standard
- To meet regulatory code requirements (building, fire, barrier free access)
- To reduce utility and maintenance costs associated with deteriorating exterior shell
- To replace deteriorated / worn out fixtures and finishes
- Improve safety for users, caregivers and staff
- Compliance with international accessibility standard
- Reduce operational and maintenance challenges
- Repair building and fire code issues within the facilities
- Improved environmental footprint and stewardship
- Aligning facilities with current conditions of park

Why is Alberta Parks replacing the main day lodge?

The existing main lodge no longer meets the requirements of serving Albertans with disabilities, seniors, and their families. After nearly 40 years of high use, the lodge is deteriorating and in poor condition. Maintenance and energy costs are high and facilities no longer meet building, accessibility or occupancy related codes or standards. To address these issues, Alberta Parks is reconstructing the day lodge.

What are the construction timelines? Will there be closures?

Construction Start Date: July 27 2020

Estimated* Completion Date: June 2022

Full Closure: To support reconstruction, a full closure of the day lodge and overnight accommodation will be in place for the duration of construction.

How will the closure affect me as a day user or overnight guest?

Day users and overnight guests will not be able to visit WWL during construction. This includes the trails and picnic areas. Day users are encouraged to explore alternative excursions such as the Peter Lougheed Discovery Centre. Visitors looking for accessible experiences can visit www.AlbertaParks.ca or call 1-877-537-2757.

Is there a different facility for seniors groups to gather?

Seniors groups can gather at Pocaterra Hut in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. This facility is available as a warm gathering space.

How do I stay updated?

Alberta Parks will update construction and closure advisories as necessary to keep visitors and the public informed at:

<https://www.albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/advisories-public-safety/>

How will this Project affect ecological integrity and historic resources?

Alberta Parks conducted an Environment Review Level II in addition to Historic Resources Approval. Alberta Parks does not anticipate adverse impacts to the surrounding environment.

The Project is within a Facility Zone and the footprint is remaining largely the same, with only minor areas of expansion to facilitate the construction envelope. The design incorporates efforts to maintain foliage, natural screening, and the scenic aesthetic. The Project requires native plantings to revegetate the construction area and includes mitigations to address drainage, erosion, and amongst other items.

How does this Project relate to the Alberta Parks' Inclusion Plan: Everybody Belongs Outside?

This Project directly connects to inclusion efforts by delivering a new day lodge designed to address the needs of people with disabilities and seniors.

The Project:

- Improves Access → Directly fosters accessible experiences in nature.

- Invites Participation → Delivers programming and a facility that promotes a culture of inclusion.
- Increases Capacity → Contributes to a network of accessible experiences and creates opportunities for partnerships.

Who do I contact for more information or questions?

Trip Planning: 1-877-537-2757

Project Inquiries: Kananaskis.Projects@gov.ab.ca