



Assessing Alberta's Crown Land Outdoor Recreation Economy



SOURCE: Jeff Bartlett @photobarlett

Project Background

Outdoor recreation is a significant economic sector in Alberta with considerable untapped potential. The Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) is encouraged by the Government of Alberta's commitment to craft a new vision for crown lands which appears to have some focus on outdoor recreation. Any efforts to enhance outdoor recreation on crown land will also support the province in meeting its aim of building a \$20B tourism industry by 2030.

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 have largely been overlooked. Instead, outdoor recreation is most often viewed as an activity that "just happens" and one that simply needs to be managed to minimize impacts and conflicts. This perspective has led to a reactive approach to crown land outdoor recreation. While other industries based on crown lands have articulated the contribution they make to Alberta's economy, Alberta's outdoor recreation economy has not.

With new policy work underway and a heightened provincial interest in economic development, diversification, and recovery, we now have 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 impact of Alberta's crown land outdoor recreation economy.

In this context, TIAA acknowledges and will actively work in support of responsible tourism and outdoor recreation practices, observing the sustainable development goals articulated for the tourism by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). As the UNWTO states, supporting sustainable tourism development is to ensure policies and practices make optimal use of environmental resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and provide socio-economic benefits for all.

Though we recognize that some segments of the outdoor recreation sector have attempted to evaluate their individual economic contributions, to date, we lack comprehensive sector wide insights, and the time is right to illustrate the important economic contributions that outdoor recreation on crown lands generates for Alberta. This information is intended to be one step towards helping Alberta's outdoor recreation sector advocate for a policy and investment climate that places deliberate attention on enabling, growing and supporting the outdoor recreation economy.

What is Involved in Participating on the Panel?

TIAA is establishing the **TIAA Outdoor Recreation Project Advisory Panel (ORPAP)** to provide advice and review of the project and project deliverables. We anticipate that ORPAP will meet on 3-4 occasions over the next 4 or so months. Meetings will be held virtually and are likely to last 2-3 hours long, depending on the agenda. An important component of the study is an online survey of Albertan's.

There is currently no policy lens through which supporting and growing the outdoor recreation economy is viewed, or encouraged, the current pandemic crisis has magnified the intensity and distribution of outdoor recreation activity on crown lands including in parks as well as political and tourism industry interest in the activity as an economic driver.

We would also look to your organization to help distribute this survey to your membership and through your communication channels. Finally, we would look to include your organization's logo on the final report.



SOURCE: Scott Bakken @scottbakken

ORPAP will involve representation from all forms of outdoor recreation. While we are sensitive to the fact that conflicts and differences of opinion can occur in this field of study, our expectation is that all ORPAP members will work productively and collaboratively toward supporting the interests of the outdoor recreation economy as a whole.

Is there a Requirement to Contribute Financially to the Study?

No. TIAA has secured funding for this study and there is no need for participants to contribute. While ORPAP participation is voluntary, there is no remuneration or reimbursement for panel-related participation activities (expenses).

What Activities are Included in our Definition of “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 Albertan's and visitors to the province.

What will the Final Deliverable Look Like?

The final deliverable will be a highly visual and compelling report that provides estimates of crown land outdoor recreation participation rates by activity, economic impact (direct, indirect, induced) of crown land outdoor recreation as a whole and by activity and work to understand the regional distribution of both participation and economic impact.

The study will also characterize the non-market benefits of crown land outdoor recreation and utilize the best available data to map Alberta's crown land outdoor recreation resources.

The report is envisioned as a strategic policy advocacy document that would be used by all segments of the outdoor recreation economy to call for more effective, enabling and supportive provincial policy and investment in the sector and support for the wholistic management of crown lands.

SOURCE: AOHA website



Is this Work Happening in Response to Recent Land Use Decisions Regarding Coal Development on Crown Lands?

No. This work was initiated before the recent announcements regarding coal and 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.

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, released June, 2020. (<https://www.tiaalberta.ca/cpages/news>).



SOURCE: Travel Alberta/Roth & Ramberg

About the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA)

TIAA 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.

www.tiaalberta.ca