

ELEVATING OUTDOOR GUIDES

Red Tape and Access Barriers Are Limiting Economic Growth in Alberta's Outdoor Sector

A recent survey of Alberta's outdoor guides indicates that **improving access to parks and crown land** through a streamlined permitting process could **boost tourism revenue by \$1M annually*** and **save local operators thousands in fees**.

The survey involved **72 guiding operations across Alberta**, examining how outdoor guides can foster economic growth while supporting environmental stewardship.

Untapped Potential of Outdoor Guides

79% report that access issues impact their ability to create stable, reliable business plans.

75% have had to turn away clients due to limited parks and crown land.

70% say access issues directly limit their ability to offer new services or trips.

69% want policies that support local operators.

What Can Be Saved, What Can Be Made?

Improving access for the 72 businesses surveyed could increase outdoor industry revenue by \$1,009,000 annually* – a conservative estimate, with the potential for much larger growth across the entire sector. Addressing access barriers could also save small operators an average of \$3,695.30 per year.

*The survey targeted certified members of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, the Interpretative Guides Association, and the Outdoor Council of Canada.

*Larger potential savings and growth are estimated for the entire outdoor sector.



Refusing trips to clients is a constant for my business. I have access to busy areas they don't want to visit, but not the quiet areas they do."

– Guiding operator in the Bow Valley

The overall stress of being worried that there will be changes to access or renewal of existing permits is constant."

– Guiding operator in Alberta

I spend so much of my time just trying to stay in operation that it takes away from me being able to grow and expand."

– Guiding operator in the Southern Rockies



The Outdoor Council of Canada | outdoorcouncil.ca

Connect with us at connect@outdoorcouncil.ca



OUTDOOR COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL CANADIEN DE PLEIN AIR

Guides are Part of the Solution

Guides are essential to **sustainable tourism, reducing congestion, managing visitors, protecting sensitive areas, and educating guests.**

96% align with Parks Canada's and Alberta Parks' mandates.

“ *Guides play a crucial role in managing visitors, educating them about the environment, and protecting sensitive areas in parks.”*

– Guiding operator in Alberta

Increasing Capacity in Our Parks

“ *We got into this business because we love the outdoors and want to share that with others. We want to continue to work in these beautiful places.”*

– Guiding operator in Alberta

98% follow and teach environmental ethics to visitors.

87% say their operations support the local tourism community and welcome visitors.

79% state their operations protect and steward natural spaces.

71% believe their operations provide tools for the public to be respectful visitors.

In the Last Three Years

“ *A guide often helps to increase the understanding of nature which in turn helps the visitors to develop respect for it.”*

– Guiding operator in Alberta

95% provide navigational assistance to unguided visitors.

93% advocate for respectful and safe trail behaviour to unguided visitors.

56% report providing rescue or first aid to an unguided visitor.

“ *We can often work with guests who are interested in booking a trip to our parks to come during slower parts of the summer.”*

– Guiding operator in Alberta

91% believe guides can help reduce visitor congestion in high use areas

