



West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area Upgrades

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area?

West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area (PRA) is a trailhead staging area that provides access to an expansive network of high quality, multi-use, all season trails in Kananaskis Country. The trail system, developed in partnership with the [Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association](#) (GBCTA) has become a popular destination for outdoor recreation. A variety of activities can be enjoyed including cross-country skiing, mountain biking, snow biking, snowshoeing, trail riding (equestrian), hiking, dog walking, and trail-based events, races, and activity instruction.

West Bragg Creek is easily accessible to a large growing urban population being located only 30 minutes from the City of Calgary, 40 minutes from the Town of Cochrane, an hour from the Town of Canmore, and 9km west of Bragg Creek.

2. Why is Alberta Parks upgrading West Bragg Creek PRA?

Alberta Parks recognizes the need to expand the parking lot and modernize trailhead amenities to address site issues and respond to the evolving nature of the site. Upgrades are intended to reduce parking lot congestion and user conflict, create safe emergency access, improve the all-season trailhead experience for a variety of users, help maintain the trail system, and benefit local economic development.

3. What is the current situation?

West Bragg Creek has seen unprecedented visitor growth. In January 2016, the traffic counter indicated a monthly total of 10,465 vehicles – the largest recorded to date. The site has been operating beyond its capacity due to the increasing volume of users, the evolving nature of the site, and the multitude of different types of users. On any given day, the parking lot may be overflowing and congested causing traffic jams, emergency access issues and, conflict between users.

4. What is being upgraded?

Upgrades include the following:

- Parking lot expansion and paving with a total capacity of 485 including:
 - 475 public parking stalls
 - Eight pull-through stalls in a separate equestrian parking area
 - Two designated bus stalls
 - Designated emergency lane
- Perimeter trail for easy access to the surrounding trailheads
- Enhanced trailhead amenities including:
 - Signage and kiosks

- Benches
- Designated meeting locations
- Three washrooms (four vault toilet stalls/washroom)
- Waste and recycling receptacles
- Two 10x10 foot designated sites for event tents
- Maintenance compound and addition of electrical power for trail equipment storage and servicing
- Permanent location for the Trail Centre operated and funded by the [Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association](#)
- Designated instruction area for skills training and small-scale event staging

5. **When does construction start and how will access be impacted?**

The majority of construction will occur between March 29th and June 30th prior to the peak summer months of July and August. The parking lot will be closed for a three day period March 29th to 31st. Remaining construction will be minimal and is expected to be completed in the fall.

Parking will be limited during construction to about 80-90 parking spots and there may be periodic closures. While efforts are being made to stage construction and allow for safe public parking and access, limited spots will be available.

Alberta Parks asks users to be patient, to access the trail system from alternative sites, to explore other areas, and to remember that impacts to access are short-term, but improvements will be long term.

Please check out [Alberta Parks Advisories](#) for up to date information on construction advisories.

6. **Will the trail network be expanded as part of the project?**

The trail network is not being expanded as part of this project. All upgrades are happening within the Provincial Recreation Area boundary and are focused on trailhead amenities and the parking lot.

7. **What about picnic tables, group shelters, and fire pits?**

These amenities will not be provided. The primary purpose of West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area is trailhead staging. Picnic tables are being removed to discourage additional use at this already highly popular site. Group shelters and fire pits will not be added. Nearby picnicking opportunities are available at Bragg Creek Provincial Park and several other sites in the Elbow Valley, such as Forget-me-not Pond.

8. **Will commercial facilities be built?**

Commercial facilities such as rental or food concessions are not being developed as part of this project. Economic benefits generated by trail users visiting restaurants, cafes, bike shops, gas stations and other retail will continue to be directed to Bragg Creek to support the local economy.

9. **How will Alberta Parks manage future increases to visitation?**

Alberta Parks is looking at how we can expand access to the trail network from Elbow Valley along Highway 66 as well as look to other areas for development of trail-based recreation opportunities. In addition, planning is underway to upgrade and expand several other sites in Kananaskis Country which will help in the long-term to distribute visitation pressures.

We are looking towards the future and will also be investigating potential technologies (e.g., electronic parking signage) and regional transportation systems to help manage increasing visitation to Kananaskis Country.

10. Will special event facilities be added?

A location has been designated for two small special event rental tents (i.e., 10ft x 10ft) and is incorporated into the design. However, based on the current high usage of the area and the primary intent of the Provincial Recreation Area for trailhead staging, upgrades do not include additional amenities or facilities to support frequent or large-scale special events. The intention is for these types of events to be staged and hosted out of other sites such as Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park. Events staged at West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area will continue to utilize basic amenities, remain smaller scale in size, and will continue to require an event permit.

11. Why is fencing not being placed around the parking lot to keep cattle out?

Fencing will not be placed around the parking lot or Provincial Recreation Area at this time. Fencing may be re-assessed in the future should conflict between trail users and cattle become a more severely acute and defining issue for trail use and safety. Alberta Parks will monitor the situation.

As an alternative approach, Alberta Parks is working in collaboration with Public Lands and the grazing allotment holders to relocate the existing corrals from the east of the Provincial Recreation Area to the west of the Provincial Recreation Area. This will help reduce the need to move cattle directly through the Provincial Recreation Area.

12. Where did direction for this project come from?

Alberta Parks' plan to expand the parking lot date back to the ['All Seasons Trail Plan' \(2010\)](#). This plan was developed in consultation with the public and local stakeholders in 2009. Consultation at that time included recommendations and support from the public and stakeholders to expand the parking lot and enhance amenities. This recommendation was approved and was included for implementation under the [All Seasons Trail Plan](#).

Direction to expand and upgrade was re-affirmed under approval of the [Kananaskis Country Provincial Recreation Areas and Bragg Creek Provincial Park Management Plan \(2012\)](#). Numerous calls from the public and stakeholders to expand the parking lot have re-iterated the need to take action. With recent Government of Alberta funding announcements, Alberta Parks is now moving forward with implementation.

Plans to expand the parking lot have involved maintenance and infrastructure staff, trail crew, rangeland agrologists, public lands staff, ecologists, area managers, Conservation Officers, and public engagement amongst others. Key recreation user groups were also asked for their input to help inform the concept plan and design.

13. Was an Environmental Review and Historic Resource Act Clearance completed?

Alberta Parks conducted a Level II Environmental Review and received Historic Resource Act clearance.

*If you would like further information on the Project, please e-mail Kananaskis.Projects@gov.ab.ca and use the **subject line**: West Bragg Creek.*