

PARK VISITOR – INFORMATION

UPDATED APRIL 16, 2020

The health and safety of Canadians, visitors and Parks Canada team members is our top priority. We are following the advice of public health experts and taking steps to support the Government of Canada's efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and reduce risks to visitors, employees, and other users of Parks Canada spaces.

Parks Canada is calling on Canadians to support the national effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 and stay home. Anyone considering a visit to Prince Albert National Park should cancel their plans.

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 and until further notice, Parks Canada is temporarily suspending all motor vehicle access by visitors at all national parks, including Prince Albert National Park. All visitor services are suspended and all facilities are closed. This means that all parking lots, trailheads, trails, washrooms and shower facilities, day use facilities, visitor centres, and all camping facilities are closed until further notice.

This action is being taken due to elevated levels of visitation experienced across the Parks Canada network since the temporary suspension of visitor services on March 19, 2020. This increased visitation has led to public safety and public health concerns as well as increased risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

While visitor services are temporarily suspended, Parks Canada continues to deliver a number of critical functions, including highway management and snow removal and fire response.

The situation is evaluated on an ongoing basis and we will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

Please visit www.pc.gc.ca/princealbert and follow Parks Canada's social media channels for information and updates on the status of all Parks Canada places. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/sk/princealbert/visit/covid-19-info>

Following is some information specific to Prince Albert National Park.

When will Prince Albert National Park reopen?

To continue to support the national effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 and reduce health risks for visitors and employees, effective Wednesday, April 15, 2020, Parks Canada has announced these additional measures:

- All visitor services, including reception and information, remain suspended until further notice.
- All visitor facilities, including parking lots, washrooms, day use areas, and visitor centres remain closed until further notice.
- All camping facilities, including backcountry camping and oTENTiks, remain closed until further notice.
- All events, group and interpretive activities are cancelled until at least May 31, 2020.

While the Agency looks forward to resuming services, anyone planning a visit should be aware that these measures may extend beyond May 2020 and any resumption of services will take time or be incremental in nature.

What facilities are closed in Prince Albert National Park?

- Visitor Centre
- Park Entrance Gate Kiosks
- All washroom and shower facilities including outhouses at day-use areas
- Playground at Waskesiu main beach
- Trails, trailheads and day use areas
- All enclosed kitchen shelters are closed: Waskesiu Main beach, Paignton Beach, Birch Bay, South End (Kingsmere), Crean day-use and Crean Kitchen
- Camping facilities, including backcountry camping remain closed until further notice
- Highway #263 from the South Gate to the Narrows Road, including all visitor facilities along the highway
- The Northshore/Kingsmere Road and the Narrows Road is suspended and limited to local traffic only. All visitor facilities in those areas are closed.

What is still available in Prince Albert National Park?

Parks Canada continues to deliver critical functions, but capacity for these services is limited.

- Highway management and snow removal
- Fire response
- Law Enforcement
- Water and waste treatment

What emergency services are active?

The RCMP, Parks Canada Law Enforcement, the Waskesiu Fire Department and Medical First Responder Services are all active. Please dial 911 in a life threatening emergency.

For safety, wildlife, or wildfire incidents call Parks Canada dispatch at 1-877-852-3100.

What about my camping reservation for this season?

- All existing reservations set to take place prior to May 31, 2020, will be automatically cancelled and refunded in full.
- Parks Canada will not be taking any new reservations until at least June 1, 2020.
- If you have a reservation after May 31, you do not need to cancel this reservation. You are encouraged to check back closer to your arrival regarding cancellations.

Can I get a refund for my park pass since visitor services are closed?

The sales of all annual passes has been temporarily suspended until further notice. Please check regularly for updates www.parkscanada.gc.ca/covid-19.

For current pass holders, Parks Canada will automatically extend the end date of Discovery Passes for the full duration of the suspension period. That means that for each month or part of a month that visitor services are not offered due to Parks Canada's efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19, a full month will be added to the end date of the annual pass.

Can I buy an annual pass?

The sales of all passes has been temporarily suspended until further notice.

Can I take a scenic drive through the park?

Parks Canada is temporarily suspending all visitor services and visitor motor vehicle access in national parks.

- Access to highway #263 is closed from the South Gate to the Narrows road, including all the facilities along the highway.
- The Northshore/Kingsmere Road and the Narrows Road is suspended and limited to local traffic only. All visitor facilities in those areas are closed.

Residents, cabin/cottage owners, commercial business owners and contractors can access the park via Highway #264 through the East Gate (main park access)

Are there businesses open in Prince Albert National Park?

Local services are limited at this time. Business operators are valued partners and provide important services to visitors. Individual businesses are making their own decisions regarding opening.

Parks Canada is strongly encouraging residents to follow government direction and stay home. We must all do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19 and reduce risks to visitors, employees, and all users of Parks Canada spaces.

Where can I get updates on closures?

Please visit www.pc.gc.ca frequently for information and updates.

Why has Parks Canada suspended visitor services and all motor vehicle access by visitors in Prince Albert National Park?

Canadians are asked to stay home and support the national effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Anyone considering a visit to a Parks Canada location, including those in urban areas, should cancel their plans.

Parks Canada's top priority is the health and safety of visitors and employees. The park is doing its part to contain COVID-19 and reduce the risks to employees and visitors. We look forward to resuming normal operations, but for now we must all work together to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Parks Canada's measures reflect the government wide approach of limiting non-essential travel, promoting social distancing and having employees in non-critical positions work from home.

Why don't you just increase cleaning for prevention instead of closing the Park?

The health and safety of Canadians, visitors, and Parks Canada team members is of the utmost importance. Parks Canada is following the advice of public health experts and implementing these measures to support the Government of Canada's efforts to limit the spread of the COVID-19 and reduce risks to employees and visitors.

Canadians are asked to stay home and support the national effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Anyone considering a visit to a Parks Canada location, including those in urban areas, should cancel their plans.

Does Parks Canada advise against visiting? What about the health benefits of nature and reduced chance of virus transmission in outdoor spaces?

Parks Canada is asking Canadians to stay home. Anyone considering a visit to a Parks Canada location, including those in urban areas, should cancel their plans.

Parks Canada's top priority is the health and safety of visitors and employees. The park is doing its part to contain COVID-19 and reduce risks to visitors and employees. We look forward to resuming normal operations, but for now we must all work together to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Can I come visit the park to bike or hike?

Canadians are asked to stay home and support the national effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Anyone considering a visit to a Parks Canada location, including those in urban areas, should cancel their plans.

Is Waskesiu townsite open? Can people go to their cottages and cabins?

Parks Canada is strongly encouraging residents to follow government direction and stay home where possible. Parks Canada is asking that visitors support Canada's efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19. Please stay home and cancel any non-essential travel.

There is limited access to the Waskesiu townsite. Cottage and cabin owners are able to access and stay at their properties beginning April 1, 2020, as per their leases.

When does Parks Canada plan to reassess the closure?

While the Agency looks forward to resuming services, anyone planning a visit should be aware that these measures may extend beyond May 2020 and any resumption of services will take time or be incremental in nature.

Parks Canada is monitoring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation closely and is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the federal government lead on the virus, and other partners to respond to COVID-19 and mitigate risks to employees and visitors. Parks Canada will re-evaluate this closure on an ongoing basis and will communicate regularly.

A complete list of Parks Canada closures and the parameters of the closures is available on the Parks Canada website. Please visit www.pc.gc.ca and Parks Canada's social media channels for information and updates on the status of all Parks Canada places.

Will the Community Fuel Break and Amyot Trail prescribed fires happen this spring at Prince Albert National Park?

Fire is a natural process and a key part of a healthy ecosystem. Parks Canada conducts prescribed fire programs in carefully selected conditions to return fire to the landscape in a way that prioritizes the safety of the people, infrastructure, cultural heritage and neighbouring lands. The prescribed fires that were scheduled for this spring have been postponed until a later date. For more information, please visit www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/sk/princealbert/nature/feux-fire/brulages_diriges-prescribed_fires.