



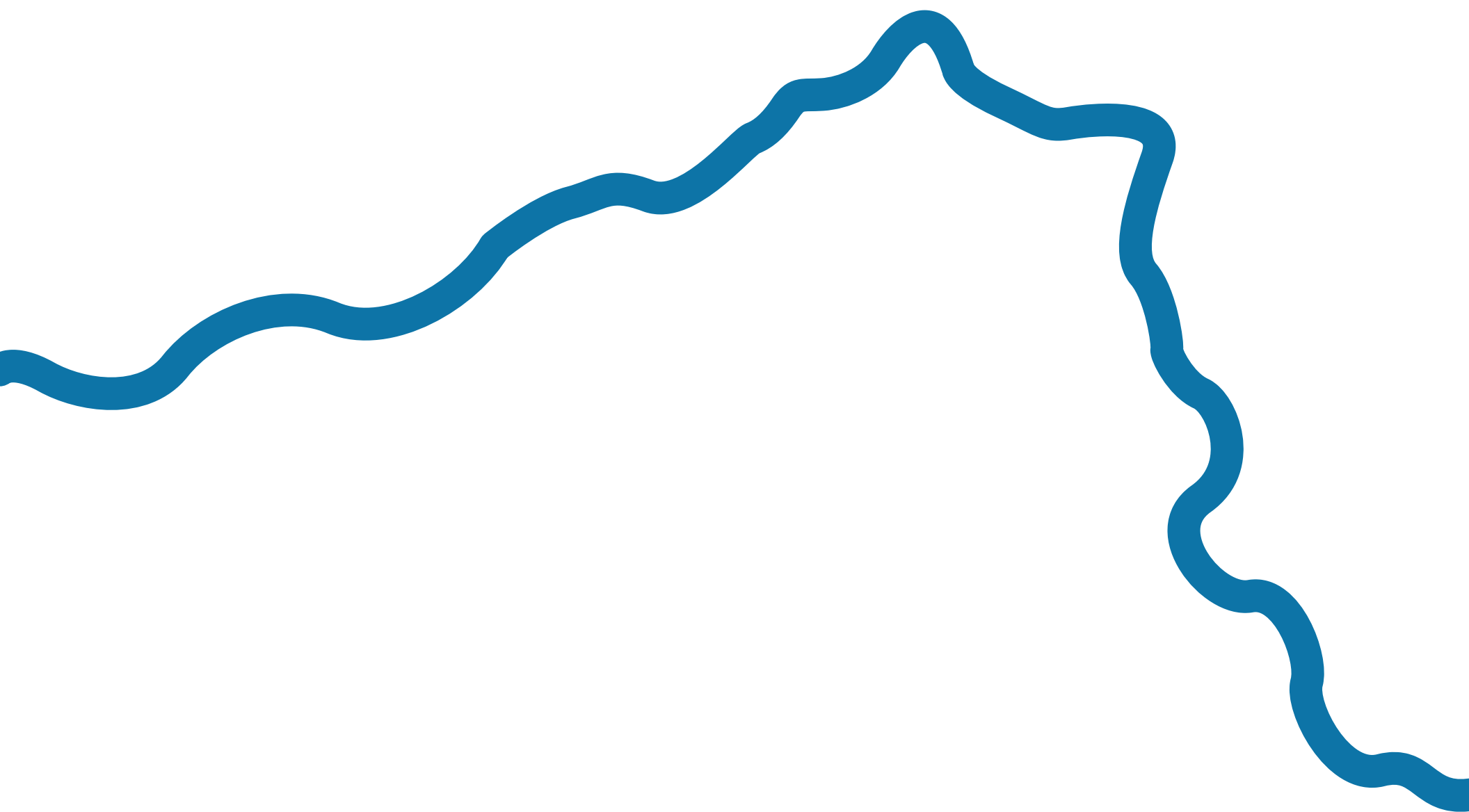
# Experience the Mighty Peace

A Recreation & Tourism Strategy for the Upper Peace River

March 2020

RC + PERC  
strategies

  
LEGACY TOURISM GROUP  
CREATING TOURISM SOLUTIONS AND LEGACIES WORLDWIDE





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# Acknowledgements

Development of the “Experience the Mighty Peace” strategy was a collaborative undertaking. The strategy is the culmination of recreation clubs, residents, tourism operators, Mighty Peace Tourism, the Government of Alberta, and industry representatives together with the vision and guiding direction of the Peace Valley Conservation, Recreation and Tourism Society and the consulting team from RC Strategies+PERC and Legacy Tourism Group. Whether it was written input, attending one of the open houses, participation in our surveys or sharing ideas through the online interactive mapping, we wish to truly thank everyone for helping to shape the future of recreation and tourism on this segment of the mighty Peace River.

We also wish to thank Al Trider with Green Island Outfitters for guiding the consulting team and sharing his extensive river knowledge.

Thank you!

*Peace Valley, Conservation, Recreation and Tourism Society*

*RC Strategies+PERC & Legacy Tourism Group*





# Executive Summary



Spanning nearly 230km, the Clayhurst to Town of Peace River segment of the Peace River is a popular recreation and tourism asset. The river is enjoyed by jet boaters, paddlers, fishers, hunters, wildlife watchers, water goers and many others. The river has carved its way out of bedrock and glacial till for thousands of years. On its western reaches, the banks range in height 70m – 200m providing visitors with spectacular views deeply incised valleys, cliffs and eroded hills. Described as a wilderness trip with big valley scenery, this segment of river is identified as a novice river (with good leadership) that take anywhere from ½ to 7 days depending on the mode of travel and the length of trip desired. As a major fur trade route and traditional territory for local Indigenous communities, the river is steeped in fascinating history that can greatly compliment the visitor experience. In addition to the river itself, there are many adjacent or nearby recreation and tourism attractions that can be integrated with the river to further enhance the visitor experience, extend visitors length of stay and increase the benefits to local communities from the river.

## PURPOSE

Though the river is recognized as a strong recreation and tourism asset, the Peace Valley Conservation Recreation and Tourism Society (PVCRTS), among others, believe that its true recreation and tourism potential has yet to be realized. Known as Experience the Mighty Peace, the PVCRTS has developed this strategy to further the recreation and tourism quality of the river, the benefits the river brings for residents and the local economy and to provide a clear focus for the organization and other stakeholders over the next 10 years.

## ENGAGEMENT

Realizing the recreation and tourism potential of the river is a big undertaking that will require strong relationships and partnerships between the PVCRTS, urban and rural municipalities along the river, Mighty Peace Tourism, tourism operators, recreational organizations the provincial government and many others. As such, the planning process ensured that anyone with an interest in the future of recreation and tourism in the river valley had a meaningful opportunity to shape this plan. A variety of engagement tactics were applied including:



### Stakeholder Interviews



### 3 Community Conversation Open Houses



### Online Survey – follow up to Open Houses



### Online Interactive Crowdsourcing Mapping

Engagement participants were clear:

- The does and can bring positive benefits to local residents, businesses and the economy,
- The recreation and tourism potential of the river is strong but has yet to be realized,
- Action should be taken to enhance recreation and tourism,
- Action needed to be taken to improve marketing of the river and trip planning tools,
- Recreation and tourism can create undesirable impacts which need to be proactively managed, and
- A number of challenges and barriers will need to be addressed if the recreation and tourism potential of the river is to be realized.



## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Enhancing the recreation and tourism quality of the river is about creating positive change for visitors to the river as well as communities along it. Through implementation of this strategy over the next 10 years, the PVCRTS and its partners will have:

### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Established the Peace River as one of the most desired multi day river experiences in the Province
- Increased and diversified the visitor experiences that are available to residents of the Peace Region and visitors.
- Grown the number of visitors who anchor their trips to the Mighty Peace region around a visitor experience in the river valley.
- Improved the quality and condition of recreation infrastructure on the river.

### ECONOMIC

- Increased the positive economic impacts that recreation and tourism in the river valley bring to the region and local communities
- Stimulated the development of new or growth of existing local businesses that provide services to residents and visitors to the river valley.

### ENVIRONMENTAL & MANAGEMENT

- Avoided unacceptable recreation and tourism impacts to the valley's natural environment, historic resources, local community quality of life as well as conflicts between visitors and adjacent landowners, tenure holders and industry.
- Optimized the supply of visitor infrastructure within the river valley in line with resident and market expectations.

### LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

- Increased local and regional support for recreation and tourism in the valley and an understanding of the importance of the valley as a recreation and tourism resource.

## PRIORITIES

To advance the recreation and tourism quality of the river and realize its potential, it was clear that the PVCRTS and its partners must take a comprehensive and coordinated approach. As such, the strategy's focus moves well beyond river access and infrastructure. Though access and infrastructure are certainly important priority, this strategy also sets direction for the steps that need to be taken to enhance marketing of the river, trip planning and visitor information, animating the river experience, business development, visitor management and partnerships and stewardship.

Achieving the desired outcomes will require deliberate action by the PVCRTS, its partners and local and provincial governments. To advance the quality of recreation and tourism in the river valley and to grow the benefits to local communities and the region, the following 13 priorities will become the focus of the PVCRTS and its partners over the next 10 years.

- Enhance Existing Boat Launches and River Access Points
- Diversify and Enhance Overnight Experiences
- Improve and Consistently Provide Visitor Comfort and Convenience Amenities
- Enhance Signage
- Connect Visitors to On and Off-River Activities and Attractions
- Make it Easier for Visitors to Experience the River
- Animate the River Experience
- Encourage and Support the Development and Expansion of Businesses to Deliver and Support Visitor Experiences
- Actively Manage Visitor Use, Impacts and Safety
- Motivate Target Markets to Experience the River and the Region to Support It
- Grow and Strengthen Partnerships, Stewardship and Volunteerism
- Strengthen the Profile of PVCRTS and Enhance Resourcing and Capacity
- Celebrate Progress and the Benefits from Recreation and Tourism Along the River

As outlined in the plan, each priority contains specific actions that, as resources allow, should be implemented. Please review the implementation plan to understand the general prioritization of identified actions.



## PLAN AT A GLANCE



The background of the slide is a photograph of a wide river, likely the Peace River, flowing through a valley. The river is in the foreground, with a rocky and pebbly shoreline. The opposite bank is a steep, eroded hillside covered in sparse vegetation and small trees. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. A thick, wavy blue line is drawn across the image, starting from the left, curving around the text, and extending towards the right edge.

# Peace Valley Conservation, Recreation & Tourism Society



The Peace Valley Conservation, Recreation & Tourism Society (the Society) is dedicated to:

- Promoting the use of access points and campgrounds along the Upper Peace River Valley (BC Border to Town of Peace River),
- Protecting and conserving the natural environment along the Peace River Valley as much as possible,
- Increasing recreation and tourism opportunities for residents of the Peace River region and visitors to the area,
- Linking the historic past of the Peace River and its valley with the development of tourism and recreation opportunities, and
- Encouraging, fostering and developing a recognition of the importance of and Peace River as a major resource.

The organization works in partnership with local recreation groups, tourism operators, Mighty Peace Tourism, industry, and the provincial government to achieve and enhance the recreation and tourism potential of the river.

## PVCRTS MEMBERSHIP

The society is comprised of one appointed elected official or recreation board member from each of the member municipalities, including:

- M.D. of Peace #135
- M.D. of Fairview #136
- Saddle Hills County
- Birch Hills County
- MD of Spirit River

Public Individual Members and Associate Members (Industry / Commercial) are also welcome.

## PVCRTS SUCCESS STORIES

With the support of provincial grants, the society and its partners have been responsible for developing:

- Many Islands Campground
- Carter's Camp
- Cotillion Park
- Keiho Park
- Pratt's Landing
- The Maples Day Use Park
- Tangent Park
- Dunvegan Boat Launch – now operated by the Dunvegan River Rats

The society also led the development of a waterproof river guide which was published in 1993 but is now out of production.



# 1 Introduction



## 1.1 PURPOSE

Spanning nearly 230km, the Clayhurst to Town of Peace River segment of the Peace River is a popular recreation and tourism asset. The river is enjoyed by jet boaters, paddlers, fishers, hunters, wildlife watchers, water goers and many others. The river has carved its way out of bedrock and glacial till for thousands of years. On its western reaches, the banks range in height 70m – 200m providing visitors with spectacular views of deeply incised valleys, cliffs and eroded hills. Described as a wilderness trip with big valley scenery, this segment of river is identified as a novice river (with good leadership) that takes anywhere from ½ to 7 days depending on the mode of travel and the length of trip desired. As a major fur trade route and traditional territory for local Indigenous communities, the river is steeped in fascinating history that can greatly compliment the visitor experience. In addition to the river itself, there are adjacent or nearby recreation and tourism attractions that can be integrated with the river to further enhance the visitor experience, extend visitor's length of stay and increase the benefits to local communities from the river.

Though the river is recognized as a strong recreation and tourism asset, the Peace Valley Conservation Recreation and Tourism Society (PVCRTS), among others, believe that its true recreation and tourism potential has yet to be realized. With an interest in realizing the river's unmet potential and to provide a clear focus for the organization and other stakeholders over the next 10 years, the PVCRTS has developed this strategy to further the recreation and tourism quality of the river and the benefits it brings for residents and the local economy. Informed by meaningful engagement, the strategy worked to identify and understand:

- Target markets and their expectations;
- Existing and the need for new:
  - » Access points to the river and the level of service for these access points;
  - » Recreational sites and opportunities along the river;
  - » Visitor infrastructure;
- Opportunities to improve connection and integration with off-river experiences;
- The barriers and challenges to developing river access and recreation opportunities;
- Strategies to improve visitor safety and visitor management, and
- Opportunities to improve marketing of the river.





## 1.2 STUDY AREA

The Peace River is Alberta's largest and longest river stretching 1,923 km from its source in the northern Rocky Mountains in British Columbia to the Slave River junction in north eastern Alberta. The river ranges from 1 to 1.8 km wide and the slope is approximately 1m per km. The river flows for most of its length through northern Alberta and is a nationally significant waterway that supplies water to one of the largest freshwater deltas in the world – the Peace-Athabasca Delta.

Recognizing its connection to a much larger river experience and system, the study area for this project, and area of focus for the PVCRTS, was the 232 km segment stretching from the BC – AB border in the west to the Town of Peace River in the east. This segment represents approximately 12% of the total length of the Peace River.

The study area intersects with nine (9) different municipalities. However, the majority of the study is contained within five municipalities:

- Clear Hills County No. 21
- Saddle Hills County No. 20
- MD of Peace No. 135
- MD of Fairview No. 136
- Birch Hills County

Municipality	Length in Study Area	% of Study Area
Municipal District of Fairview No. 136	92.1km	18.99%
Municipal District of Peace No. 135	94.8km	19.55%
Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133	0.5km	0.10%
Northern Sunrise County No. 131	4.8km	0.99%
Birch Hills County	72.3km	14.91%
Saddle Hills County No. 20	96.5km	19.90%
Clear Hills County No. 21	120.5km	24.85%
County of Northern Lights	3km	0.62%
Town of Peace River	13.4km	2.76%



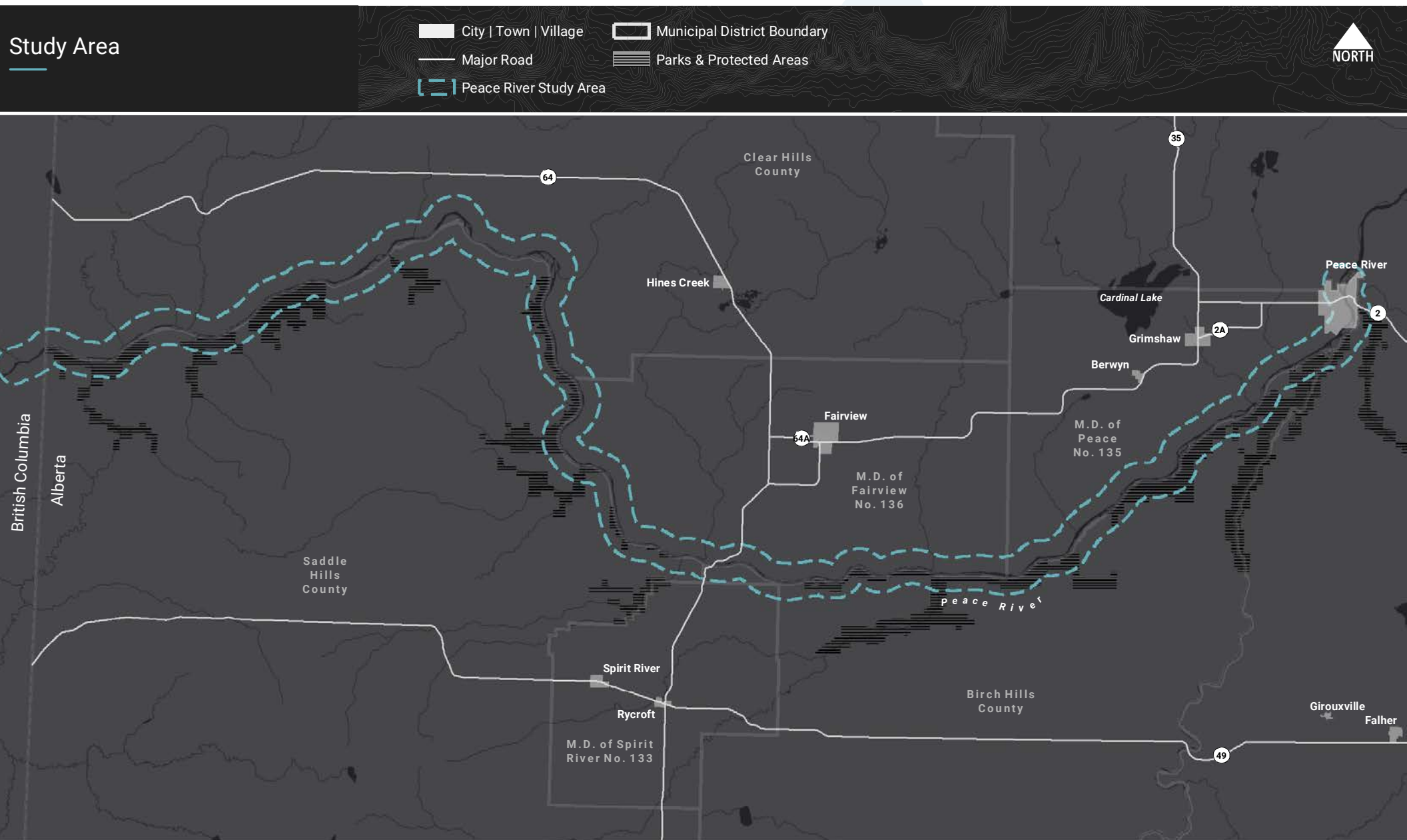


Figure 1 - Study Area

## 1.3 PROJECT PROCESS & METHODS

Initiated in the summer of 2019, development of this strategy was a significant undertaking. Built upon the input of residents, recreational clubs, tourism operators, destination marketing organizations and others, the planning process transitioned through four phases:

1. Phase 1: Project Start Up, Background & Regional Analysis
2. Phase 2: Engagement & Connections
3. Phase 3: Mapping, Marketing Review & Big Ideas
4. Phase 4: Draft & Final Report



Figure 2 - Project Process





## 2 What We Heard

Realizing the recreation and tourism potential of the river is a big undertaking. Determining how best to do so needs to be a collaborative effort. As such, the planning process ensured that anyone with an interest in the future of recreation and tourism in the river valley had a meaningful opportunity to shape this strategy.

To enable convenient participation in the process and minimize as many barriers to participation as possible, a variety of engagement tactics were used to engage residents, stakeholders and government organizations. Tactics included:



## Stakeholder Interviews



## 3 Community Conversation Open Houses



## Online Survey – follow up to Open Houses



## Online Interactive Crowdsource Mapping

A variety of communication tactics were implemented to make residents and stakeholders aware of the planning process and opportunities to engage. Notices were distributed through:

- PVCRTS member municipality websites
- PVCRTS member municipality social media channels
- Direct email to local stakeholders
- Local newspaper ad and radio stories
- Posters on community notice boards

## ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

- Residents, general public & private landowners
- Recreational organizations and recreational users of the river
- Tourism operators and businesses along the river
- Mighty Peace Tourism
- Alberta Public Land Managers
- Alberta Parks Managers
- Municipal Staff – PVCRTS representatives
- Tenure holders along the river
- Hydro-electric dam proponents



## 2.1 KEY LEARNINGS

Input received through each engagement tactic was analysed collectively to identify common themes. The common themes and key learnings that emerged were as follows:

### RECREATION AND TOURISM IN THE RIVER VALLEY CAN BRING DIVERSE BENEFITS

Engagement participants recognized that quality recreation and tourism opportunities on the river can bring many diverse benefits to the region and local communities including:

- Enhancing quality of life and physical activity for residents by improving recreational opportunities,
- Growing and diversifying the regional and local economies and increasing employment as new businesses develop and / or existing businesses expand their services,
- Retaining existing and attracting new residents to the region, and
- Enabling residents and visitors to connect with nature and generate a deeper appreciation for and understanding of nature and the river.

### THERE ARE A DIVERSITY OF VISITOR ATTRACTIONS IN THE RIVER VALLEY

Participants recognized that visitor attractions along the river are diverse. The most frequently identified visitor attractions include:

- Impressive natural beauty and scenery
- Hoodoos
- Waterfalls
- Diverse wildlife such as bears and moose
- Sport fish species
- Historical sites including:
  - » Dunvegan Provincial Park
  - » Dunvegan Bridge
  - » Shaftesbury Ferry
- Campgrounds and associated amenities
- Events and festivals

Image Source: Peace River, Grimshaw, Alberta - mightypeace.com

## SOME ACTIVITIES HAVE GREATER POTENTIAL TO GENERATE BENEFITS THAN OTHER ACTIVITIES

Though the river is a foundation for many diverse activities, participants suggested that the following summer activities hold the greatest potential to maximize the recreation and tourism benefits from the river:

- Jet Boating
- Paddling (canoe, kayak, raft)
- Overnight Experiences
- Trails

Participants suggested that festivals and events and tourism operators should be further developed around these activities. Winter activities associated with the river did not emerge as a priority focus.

## ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ENHANCE RECREATION & TOURISM IN THE VALLEY

Participants strongly agreed that there is a need to take action to improve the quality of recreation and tourism experiences associated with the river. The following actions emerged as the most important to pursue:

- Improve the quality and condition of existing boat launches
- Improve existing and create diversity of overnight experiences (e.g. comfort camping)
- Maintain the road access to existing campgrounds and boat launches
- Enhance gateway, wayfinding and interpretive signage
- Provide essential visitor amenities (e.g. bear proof food storage, picnic areas)
- Support existing and develop new festivals and events focused on the river
- Encourage the development or expansion of visitor services (e.g. tours, guides, shuttle, equipment rentals)
- Develop modern trip planning and navigation tools
- Enhance marketing and promotion of the river, especially for fully independent travellers
- Develop and support partnerships to enable the management and maintenance of visitation and visitor infrastructure on the river as well as marketing and promotion of the river

## ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE MARKETING & TRIP PLANNING

In general, participants agreed that actions should be taken to improve trip planning tools and marketing of the river. Participants recognized that the 1993 river guide was a good resource but is dated and needs to be modernized. Participants also acknowledged that Mighty Peace Tourism Association does market the river, but that greater efforts could and should occur as visitor experiences are enhanced. The most common suggestions included the development of:

- Gateway, wayfinding and interpretive signage
- App based trail guide
- Hard copy and geo-referenced maps / guidebook
- Website with trip planning details for multi-length trips (day use, full day, multi-day), itineraries, connections to service providers, weather, water flows, blog, testimonials etc.
- Direct advertisements and promotion campaigns (print and social media, videos)

## RECREATION AND TOURISM CAN GENERATE UNDESIRABLE IMPACTS

Though participants supported improving recreation and tourism use of the river, they are concerned about the potential for undesirable impacts such as:

- Vandalism
- Litter and inappropriate waste disposal
- Shoreline disturbance
- Human wildlife conflicts (e.g. attractant management)
- Pollution of the river
- Wildfire
- Conflict (between visitors and with adjacent landowners and industry)

Participants were clear that visitation needs to be actively managed to avoid undesirable impacts.



## THERE ARE CHALLENGES & BARRIERS THAT WILL NEED TO BE OVERCOME

Participants recognized that several challenges and barriers will need to be overcome if the quality of recreation and the tourism potential of the river is to be realized. The frequently referenced challenges and barriers include:

- Cost and funding to sustainably develop and maintain visitor infrastructure and visitor management
- Provincial and municipal government support for enhancing recreation and tourism use of the river and approvals for infrastructure development.
- River dynamics – the river continues to evolve. Flows continue to change which makes development along its shores difficult.
- The potential for hydroelectric development on the river poses uncertainty for investment in visitor infrastructure and the development of tourism business associated with the river.

*To review detailed input received during the engagement process, please review the What We Heard Compendium which is a companion document to this strategy.*

Image Source: Jet Boating Peace River-Peace River Boating Association, facebook.com



## 2.2 POLICY CONTEXT

Recreation and tourism use of the Peace River is delivered and managed in accordance with a variety of provincial, regional and local plans and policies as well sector-based plans and strategies. This plan has been developed to align with and, where feasible, support the priorities in these documents.

	Policy or Plan
<b>Provincial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land Use Framework</li><li>• Alberta Tourism Framework (being replaced with 10 Year Tourism Strategy)</li><li>• Alberta Plan for Parks</li><li>• Water for Life</li></ul>
<b>Regional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrated Watershed Management Plan</li></ul>
<b>Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Municipal Development Plans</li><li>• Intermunicipal Development Plan</li><li>• Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks</li></ul>
<b>Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mighty Peace Tourism Operational Plans</li></ul>







# 3 Planning Context

The Peace River valley is a multi-use land base that is managed to achieve many different and sometimes competing land use objectives.

The banks are lined with varying landowners, dispositions and land use designations that assign different land management intents. Much of the river is managed as protected areas to maintain the valley's important ecological functions. The region is one of North America's most northerly and high-producing agricultural zones. Forestry and oil and gas are also important industries. In addition, and potentially most notably, the river is subject to further hydro-electric development in British Columbia as well as ongoing proposals in Alberta which will have implications to river-based recreation and tourism.

The PVCRTS recognizes that, as it moves forward with its plans for recreation and tourism on and along the river, it must understand, consider and remain cognizant of the many other values and land use objectives along the river. The following sections outline some of the planning context that has and will continue to be considered at PVCRTS moves forward.

### 3.1 RIVER FLOW REGIME

The Peace River's flow regime is regulated by upstream dams, most notably the W.A.C Bennett Dam which was constructed in the late 1960's. The regulation of the river has not affected the total annual flow. However, it has changed the timing of seasonal flows which are now approximately 250% higher in the winter, affecting the ability of the river to freeze, and approximately 25% lower at peak spring /summer (Peace River Flow Regime Working Group, 2017). The river levels can be significantly affected by dam operations – rising or dropping rapidly. These fluctuations can pose navigational and safety challenges for river users.

As can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, flows tend to peak in June at around 3,000 cms and are lowest in the fall. The average flow is 2,110 cms and the river can peak to over 9,790 cms in flood events. When sitting idle, the river current flows between 2 – 7 km/hr pending time of year, river volume and location.

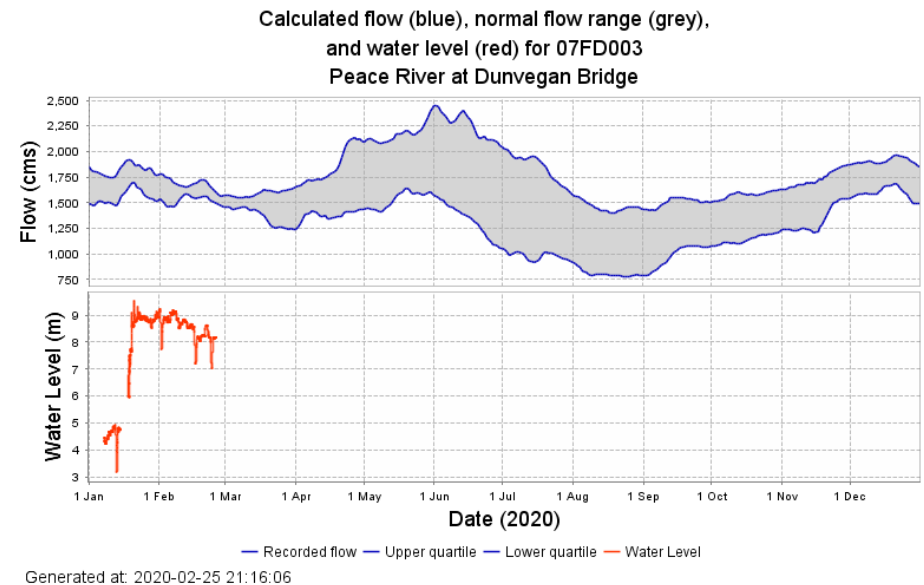


Figure 3 - Peace River Flow Range (2020)

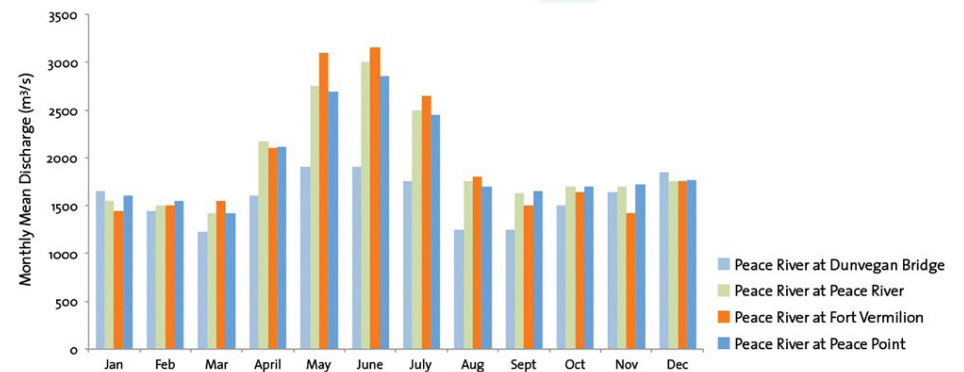


Figure 4 - Average Flow in the Peace River (1977-2010)



## 3.2 PROVINCIAL PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS

Alberta Parks manages their park system to ensure the sustainability of the province's natural landscapes and help inspire people to discover, value, protect, and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations. Nearly 21% of the study is contained in five different provincial parks and protected areas. Each of the parks in the study area has been classified into one of four different park classifications. The parks classification is an essential consideration for PVCRTS as it provides direction as to the types of activities and development that are permitted within the park.

**21%**

of the study area is in a provincial park or protected area

**5**

the number of provincial parks and protected areas in the study area.

	Protection	Conservation		Recreation
	Ecological Reserve	Wildland Provincial Park	Provincial Park	Provincial Recreation Area
<b>Management Intent</b>	To preserve and protect natural heritage in an undisturbed state for scientific research or education.	To preserve and protect natural heritage and provide opportunities for compatible backcountry recreation.	To preserve natural heritage of provincial significance or higher, while supporting outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and natural heritage appreciation that depend upon and are compatible with environmental protection.	To support compatible outdoor recreation and tourism, often providing access to lakes, river, reservoirs and adjacent crown land.
<b>Visitor Experience</b>	Foot access only.	Remote, wilderness hunting, motorized access may be permitted.	Natural environment with diversity of compatible, facilitated recreation	Diversity of frontcountry recreation
<b>Parks in the Study Area (% of Study Area)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Silver Valley ER (1.32%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dunvegan West WPP (9%)</li> <li>Peace River WPP (10.4%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greene Valley Provincial Park (&lt;1%)</li> <li>Dunvegan Provincial Park (&lt;1%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace River PRA (&lt; 1%)</li> </ul>

# Alberta Parks & Protected Areas

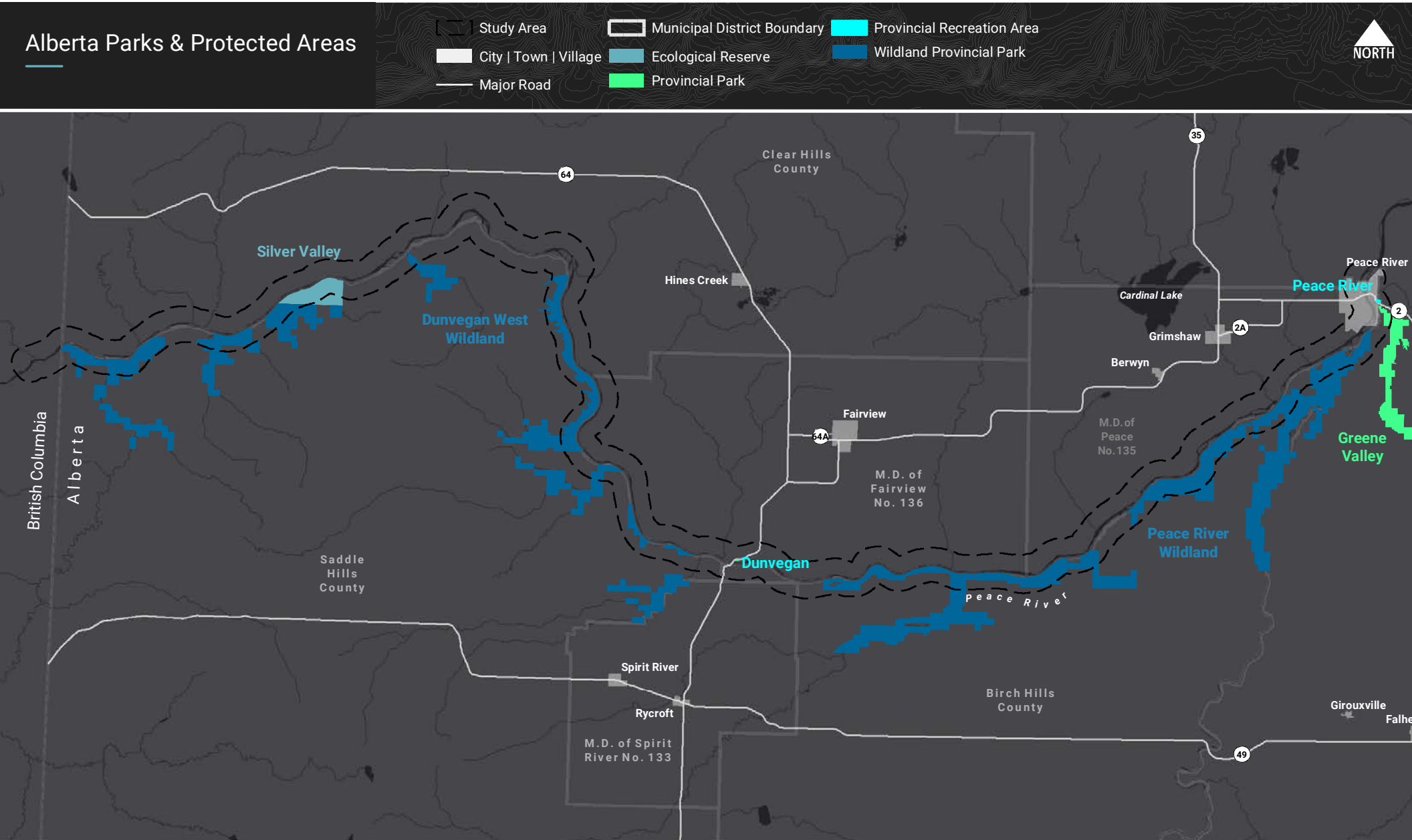


Figure 5 - Parks and Protected Areas



## GREENE VALLEY PROVINCIAL PARK – LESS THAN 1% OF THE STUDY AREA

Stretching 3,131.31 Ha, along both sides of the Heart River (a major tributary of the Peace River), Greene Valley is an important wildlife corridor for moose and mule deer. The park preserves the deeply incised river valley and the area has long been protected as a wildlife sanctuary. The valley provides habitat for black bear, mule deer, white-tailed deer and other wildlife in a largely agricultural landscape. There are no overnight camping facilities in the park and the only vehicle access to this park is to Twelve Foot Davis Day Use, the viewpoint here provides spectacular views of the junction of the Smoky and Peace rivers.

## DUNVEGAN PROVINCIAL PARK – LESS THAN 1% OF THE STUDY AREA

This small 9.26 Ha park offers visitors the opportunity to hike, paddle, camp, and enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Peace River Valley. Dunvegan Provincial Park's campground has 67 power sites, wheel-chair accessible washrooms, fire pits, a playground and a sewage disposal station. In addition, the park also provides visitors the opportunity to experience the rich history of the area, the adjacent Historic Dunvegan Historic Site, provides information on the over 200 years of First Nations, fur trade and missionary history in the visitor centre and four restored buildings

## DUNVEGAN WEST WILDLAND PROVINCIAL PARK – 9% OF THE STUDY AREA

Stretching 20,967.8 HA, along the south bank of the Peace River from Dunvegan to the B.C. border, this park includes a unique mixture of grassland, aspen forest and steep-sided creek valleys. Many of the plants and birds here are more typical of the Parkland Natural Region located far to the south. Dunvegan West contains hoodoos and fossil beds. Its bedrock cliffs are home to nesting bald eagles, golden eagles and falcons. Red-sided and wandering garter snakes den along the river. South-facing slopes support typical parkland vegetation, with clones of aspen, shrubs, and grassland communities. Cacti are found on some of the drier sites. The valleys are key year-round habitat for deer and elk. There are random back country camping opportunities, but limited facilities are available.

## PEACE RIVER WILDLAND PROVINCIAL PARK – 10% OF THE STUDY AREA

The Peace River Wildland Provincial Park protects 24,563.18 Ha of forest and grassland habitats around the confluence of the Peace and Smoky rivers. The area is an important wildlife corridor for deer, elk and bears. The park is also home to a wide variety of birds. Along with river recreation, this park offers hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on marked trails, or the backcountry. Backcountry camping is allowed year round in the park but limited facilities exist. This park is also a significant area for human history, housing a National Historic Site, Fort Fork Site, located in the park on the east bank of the Peace River. The fort was built in 1792 by the North West Company. Explorers Alexander Mackenzie and David Thompson spent the winters at Fort Fork in 1792 and 1802 respectively. The fort was abandoned in 1805 and has since been almost completely eroded by the Peace River. A flag planted at Fort Fork's former site is all that remains.

## SILVER VALLEY ECOLOGICAL RESERVE – 1.32% OF STUDY AREA

Covering 1,805 Ha of land this ER is in a fairly remote location making access difficult. There are no public roads in the reserve and travel within the reserve is restricted to foot only. Most of this ecological reserve consists of valley slopes of the Peace River; maturing aspen/shrub forest with mixedwood stands covering 70% of the site; moose, mule deer & black bear are common; waterfowl nesting & breeding habitat is limited but the Peace River is a spring & fall staging area for ducks & geese.



### 3.3 MUNICIPAL PARKS PROVINCIAL RECREATION LEASES

Eight municipal parks are situated within the study area. Except for Maples Park and Strong Creek Park, all parks exist on crown land and have been approved through a recreation lease with the province (Table 1). Maples Day Use park, located near Historic Dunvegan Provincial Park, is owned by the MD of Fairview and Strong Creek Park is owned by MD of Peace.

**TABLE 1 MUNICIPAL PARKS & RECREATION LEASES**

Site	Total Size	Lessee	Status
<b>Many Islands Campground</b>	56.7 ha	Clear Hills County	Active
<b>Carters Campground</b>	88.2 ha	Clear Hills County	Active
<b>Cotillion Campground</b>	14.2 ha (includes planned expansion)	Saddle Hills	Active
<b>Kieyho Campground</b>	7.7 ha	Kieyho Park Society	Active
<b>Pratt's Landing</b>	5.5 ha	MD of Fairview	Active
<b>Tangent Park</b>	28.7 ha	Tangent Park Society	Active





## 3.4 ECOSYSTEMS & SPECIES OF THE PEACE REGION

The Peace River is one of the most diverse and productive river valleys in the province. The study area features two of Alberta's six natural regions and natural subregions:

- **Boreal Forest Natural Region**
  - » Dry Mixed Wood natural subregion – 76% of the study area
- **Parkland Natural Region**
  - » Peace River Parkland natural subregion – 24% of the study area

### 3.4.1 VEGETATION

#### DRY MIXEDWOOD NATURAL SUBREGION

This subregion is known for warmer summers and milder winters than most other subregions in the Boreal Forest Natural Region. The region is characterized by aspen forests and cultivated landscapes, with fens commonly occurring in low-lying areas. The driest sites are small areas along the steep, south- and west-facing upper slopes of the Peace, Smoky and Wapiti Rivers. It is here that Porcupine grass, June grass, sedges and pasture sagewort are interspersed with bare mineral soil on the steepest slopes. On less pronounced slopes with a better supply of moisture, northern and slender wheat grasses are more abundant, and Saskatoon–buckbrush shrublands occur in lower slope positions and in ravines or gullies. Open jack pine stands with lichen understories occupy very dry, coarse textured glaciofluvial or eolian deposits. On coarse textured deposits where the water supply is somewhat better, jack pine, aspen and white spruce occur in pure or mixed stands.

#### PEACE RIVER PARKLAND

This subregion is defined by gently rolling plains and steep, south facing grassy and forested slopes along the Peace River. It is the smallest Natural Subregion in Alberta, with only 3,120 km<sup>2</sup> or 5% of the total Parkland Natural Region land base. Most of the land is cultivated for agriculture the remaining forests consists of aspen and white spruce; dry grasslands and aspen forests take up the valley slopes. This sub region is slightly drier and warmer than the surrounding Dry Mixedwood Boreal Natural Subregion.



76%

of the study area is Boreal Forest Natural Region

24%

of the study area is Parkland Natural Region

# Natural Subregions

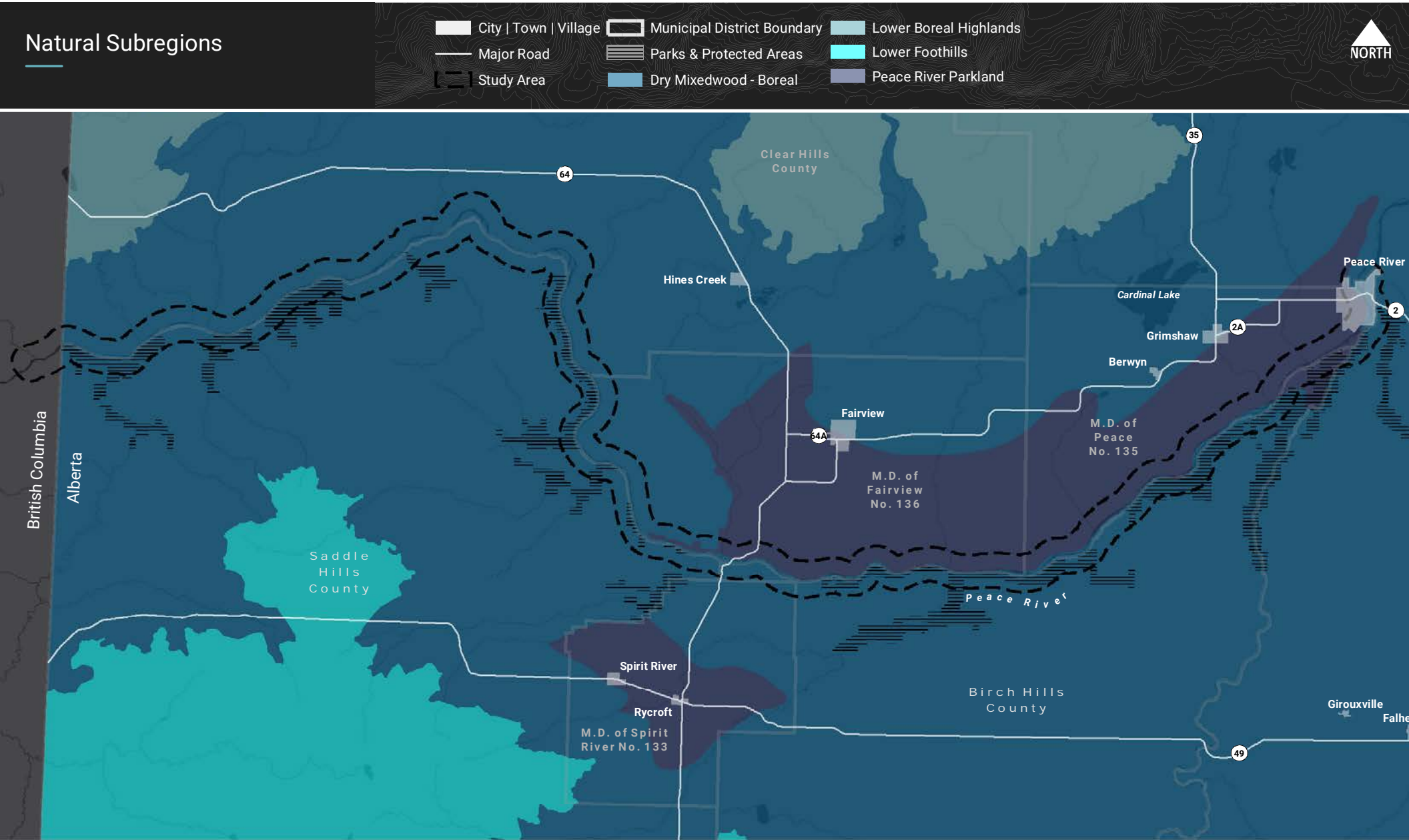


Figure 6 - Natural Subregions



### 3.4.2 WILDLIFE

The valley provides significant year-round habitat and habitat connectivity for many mammal species such as:

- Moose
- Elk
- Deer
- Black Bears
- Grizzly Bears
- Beaver

In addition, the valley is home to, and provides important habitat for, many different bird species including rare birds of prey such as golden eagles, bald eagles and osprey. It is also serves as a provincially significant staging area for geese migration.

The river itself is considered to be a high productivity river containing strong biodiversity. Good water quality, low turbidity and suitable substrates for spawning support a strong fishery including sport fish species such as:

- Arctic Grayling
- Rainbow Trout
- Bull Trout
- Burbot
- Mountain Whitefish
- Golden Eye
- Walleye
- Yellow Perch
- Norther Pike

Wandering and red-sided garter snakes hibernacula are common along the banks of the river.



Image Source: Eric Hanson, flickr.com



## 3.5 BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

Emphasizing the ecological importance of the river and the river valley, the region has been identified as an environmentally significant area while public land managers from Alberta Environment and Parks have established Key Biodiversity and Wildlife Zones along the river to help protect the habitat quality.

### 3.5.1 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

Over 61% of the study area has been identified as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) of national importance. ESA's are generally defined as areas that are important to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, physical landscape features and/or other natural processes, both locally and within a larger spatial context (Jennings & Reganold 1991). The primary intended use of ESA information, mapping, and assessment is to inform land-use and watershed planning for those areas identified as having high environmental significance, based on the best information available.

### 3.5.2 KEY BIODIVERSITY & WILDLIFE ZONES

Key Biodiversity and Wildlife Zones (KBWZ) are considered to be areas of land that offer key winter ungulate habitat and areas that offer biodiversity potential for the future. It is common for river valleys and riparian vegetation areas to be considered important winter ranges for many ungulates. Not surprisingly, 99.97% of the study area is designated as a KBWZ. Approximately 15.65% of the study area is designated as ungulate winter range, 2.66% as ungulate habitat protection area, 1.03% as ungulate migration corridor, meaning that development and disturbances must be kept to a minimum, especially in winter months to avoid unnecessary stress and forcing wildlife out of desired habitat.





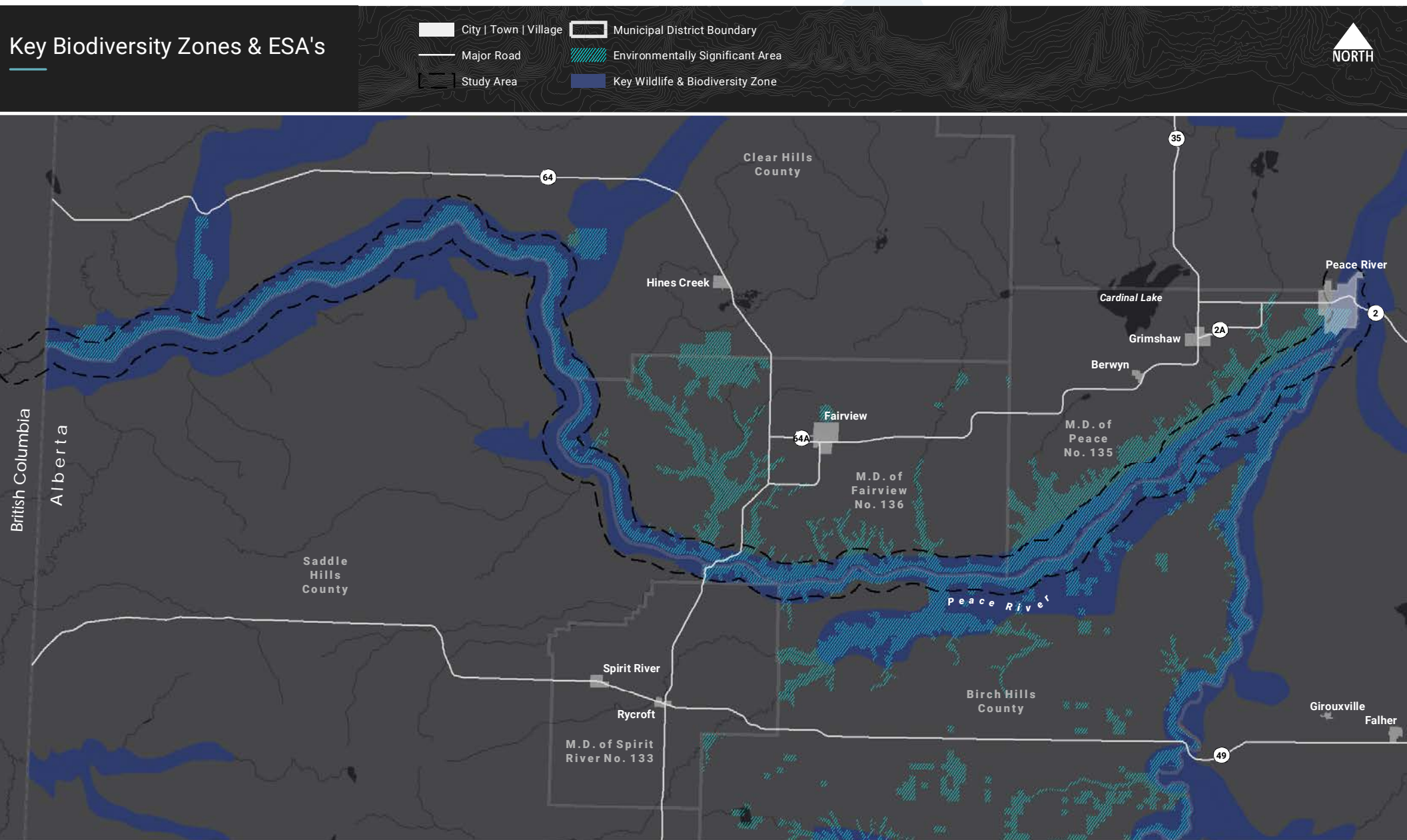


Figure 7 - ESA and Key Biodiversity Zones

## 3.6 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Alberta's listing of historic resources identifies lands that contain or may contain historic resource concerns. The listing helps to identify whether projects may impact historic resources including archaeological sites, paleontological sites, Indigenous traditional use sites of a historic resource nature and historic structures.

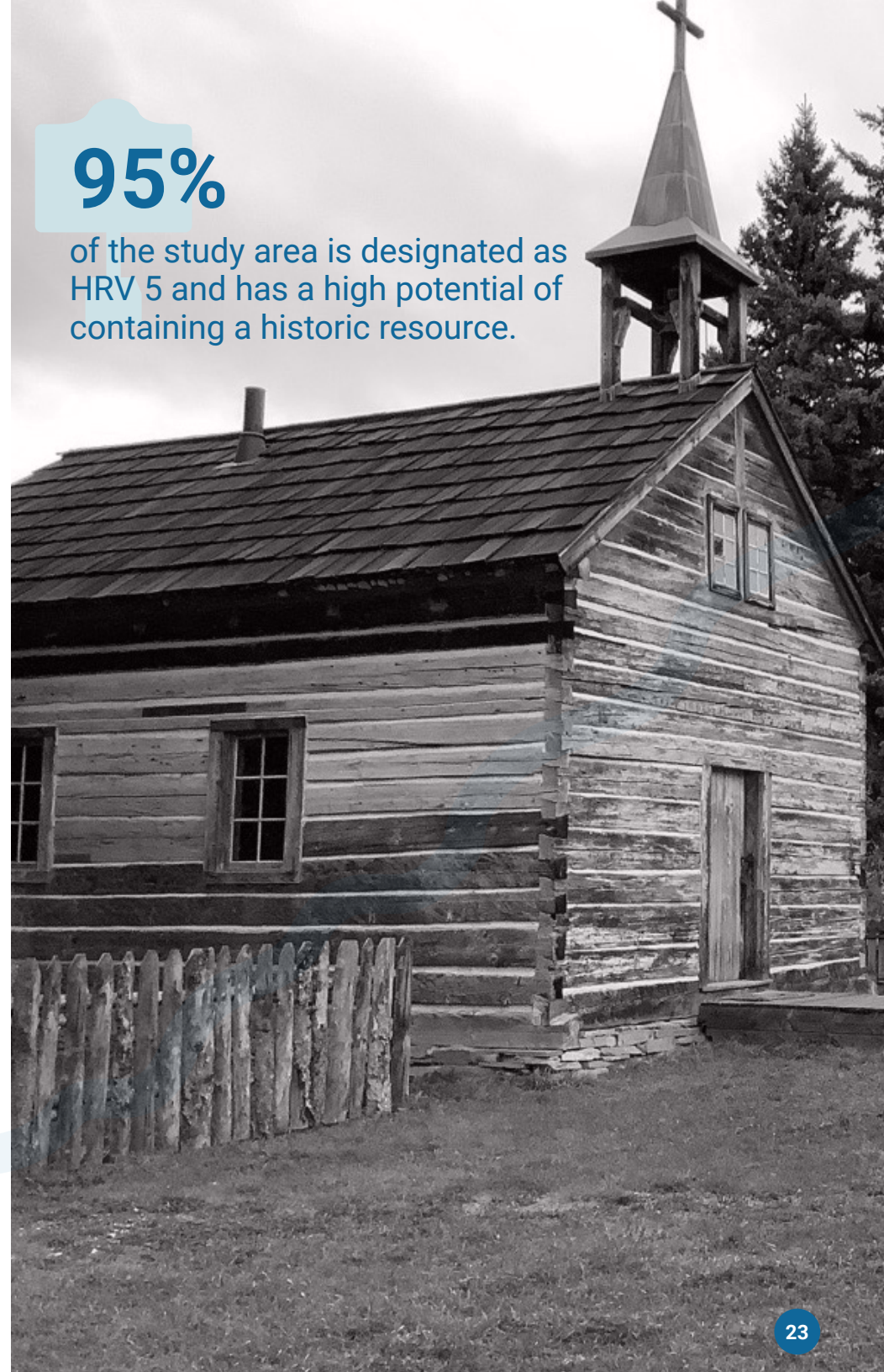
Approximately 0.52% of the study area has been designated under the Historic Resource Act as a Provincial Historic Resource. However, approximately 95% of the study area is rated as having a potential of containing a historic resource (HRV 5). Approximately 14% of the study is identified as containing a historic resource that may require avoidance (HRV 4). 0.33% of the study area has been identified as containing a significant historic resource that will likely require avoidance.

The study area contains two National Historic Sites:

- **Fort Dunvegan National & Provincial Historic Site**
  - » The site was the most important post in the Peace River valley and the centre of the fur trade and communication.
- **Fort Fork National Historic Site**
  - » The site relates to the exploration of the country and Alexander Mackenzie's first transcontinental journey and was the North West Company's uppermost post on the Peace River. Following the merger of the XY and North West Companies, Fort Fork was replaced with Fort Dunvegan National Historic Site of Canada.

# 95%

of the study area is designated as HRV 5 and has a high potential of containing a historic resource.



## 3.7 LAND USE COMMITMENTS

A diversity of dispositions for agriculture, energy, recreation, linear infrastructure (pipeline, road) have been approved on Crown Lands throughout the valley and need to be considered by PVCRTS. The most significant disposition types are:

- Grazing Leases – 90 sq.km
- Recreation Leases – 3 sq.km

Other agreements, permits, easements have also been issued but are much smaller in total area than grazing leases and recreation leases.

In addition, the province has assigned notations to signal varying land use interests including:

- Consultative Notations (various purpose codes) – 20 sq.km
- Protective Notations (various purpose codes) – 185 sq.km

### 3.7.1 PROPOSED AMISK HYDROELECTRIC DAM PROJECT

AHP Development Corporation (AHP) is in the planning stages of the Amisk Hydroelectric Project. Amisk is a 330 MW run-of-river hydroelectric project proposed for the Peace River in northwestern Alberta. The Project would generate approximately 1,875 GWh per year of renewable electricity, which is enough power to supply roughly 250,000 homes while producing minimal greenhouse gas emissions in comparison to fossil fuels. The head pond created by the dam will extend roughly 50 km upstream and will flood approximately 800 ha of the Peace River valley walls (Figure 8). Early forecasting suggests that campgrounds at Pratt's Landing and Carter's Camp may be impacted by the impoundment, as well as 1 on the 17 available river access points (Carter's boat launch). In addition to the facilities and services effected, the proposed project would impact 295 ha of Dunvegan West Wildland Provincial Park.

### 3.7.2 GLACIER DUNVEGAN HYDROLOGICAL PROJECT

Glacier Power Ltd. (Glacier Power) proposed to build a 100 megawatt (MW) run-of-river hydroelectric project on the Peace River approximately 2 km upstream of the Dunvegan bridge. The project would have involved a 6m high dam across the river. Glacier Power received approval in 2009 to complete a run-of-river hydroelectric dam on the Peace River near Fairview, but withdrew its application in 2015.



# Proposed Amisk Dam and Inundation Reservoir

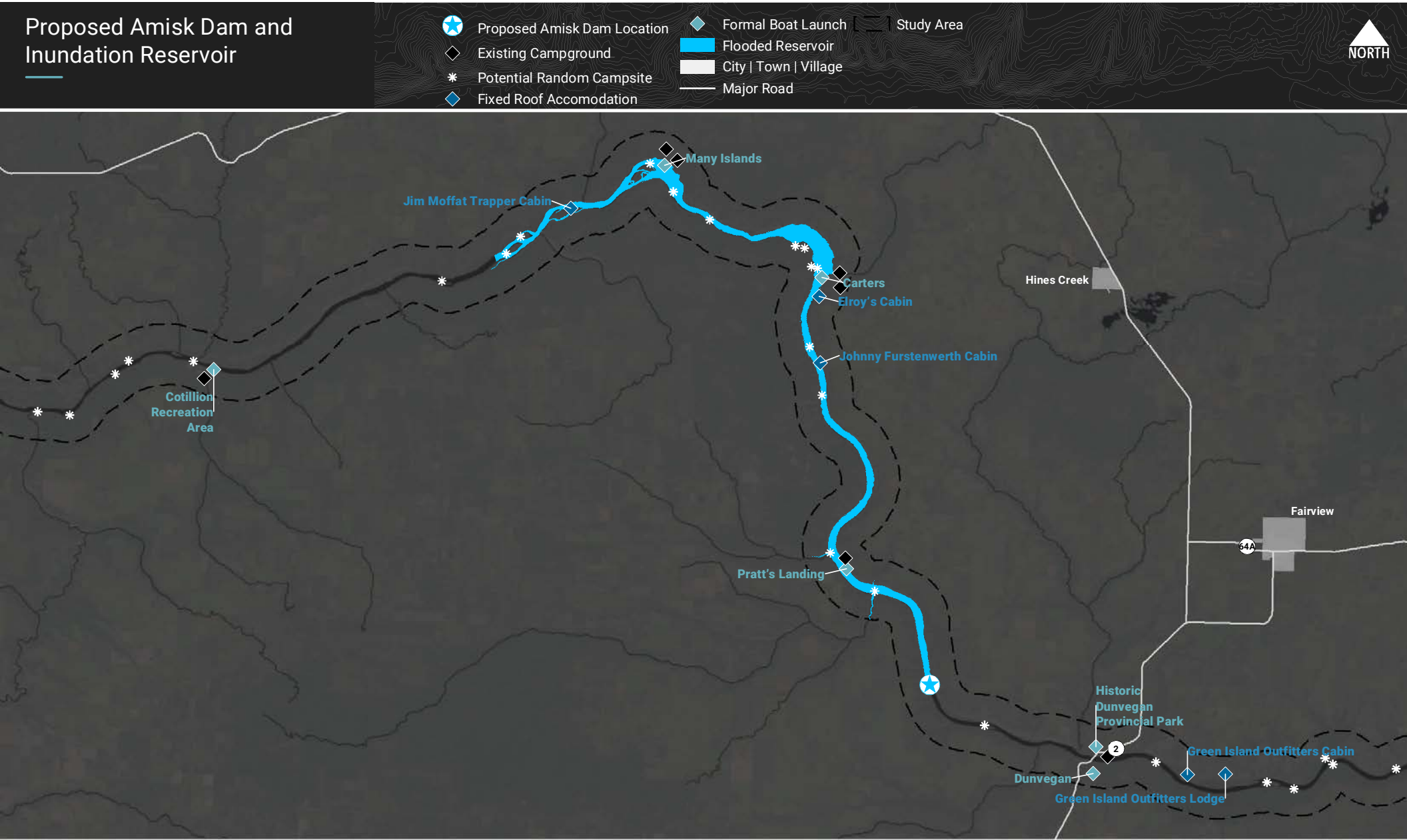


Figure 8 - Reservoir Area

## 3.8 INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES

No First Nation reserves exist within this 232km segment of the Peace River. However, the Peace River area of Alberta and British Columbia is home to, and traditional territory of, many Treaty 8 First Nations and Métis peoples from the Region 6 Métis Nation of Alberta.

Nearest First Nation communities include:

- Western Cree Tribal Council member Nation's including Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Sturgeon Lake First Nation
- Woodland Cree First Nation

The Peace River Valley was and remains a primary gathering place for area Indigenous peoples. In a survey conducted by the Treaty 8 Tribal Association in 2009, the three biggest uses of the valley were for community gathering, hunting, and fishing (First Light Initiatives, 2009). Over 75 per cent of Treaty 8 First Nations respondents indicated the Peace River valley is an important gathering place. In the same survey, people who frequent the area for gatherings (including family trips) and spiritual ceremonies indicated on average they come to the Peace River valley between three and five times per year for this purpose.

As the PVCRTS moves forward, much greater involvement of and partnerships with the region's local Indigenous communities will be pursued to strengthen the visitor experience along the river and create opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents and to deepen visitor's understanding of and appreciation for local Indigenous peoples.







# 4 Recreation & Tourism Opportunities Today





A recreation and tourism opportunity, at its most basic level, is defined as the ability for an individual to participate in their desired activity, within their desired recreation and tourism setting within their desired natural region. The combination of these three elements generates the basic recreation and tourism experience. As such, planning the future of recreation and tourism on the river required an understanding of the current activities, the recreation and tourism settings and the natural regions along the river.

# [ ACTIVITY + SETTING ] X NATURAL REGION ➔ EXPERIENCE

## BENEFITS



COMMUNITY



FINANCIAL



HEALTH +  
WELLNESS

Figure 9 - Elements of a Recreation / Tourism Opportunity

## 4.1.1 RECREATION & TOURISM ACTIVITIES

The ever-changing water levels and uncertain ice conditions make the river generally unsuitable for winter-based activities such as snowmobiling, ice-fishing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. While most of the use on the river occurs in the summer months, the shoulder seasons (fall and spring) are also a desirable time to experience the river. The most common river-based recreation and tourism activities include:



**Jet Boating**  
(including jet boat races)



**Paddling**  
(canoe, voyageur canoe, kayak, stand up paddle board)



**Tubing**



**Camping**



**Swimming**



**Fishing**



**Hunting**



**Photography**

In addition to river-based activities, the valley also hosts hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use and interpretation.

## 4.1.2 RECREATION & TOURISM SETTINGS

From the front-country areas within the Town of Peace River to the remote backcountry of the Wildland Provincial Parks, this segment of the Peace River provides visitors with the full spectrum of recreation and tourism settings (Figure 10). However, recreation and tourism settings are not equally distributed along the river. The vast majority of this segment of the river, over 72%, is classified as a mid-country setting. Twenty-three (23%) percent is classified as either frontcountry or developed settings while only 3% of the river is considered to be a backcountry setting. Though the full range of settings does exist, this segment of the river will be most appealing to those visitors who are seeking a midcountry and frontcountry experience.

### ***Developed***

This setting is found within urban environments and is dominated by human development and easy vehicle access. Recreation and tourism infrastructure and management controls are extensive, elaborate and desired. Large volumes of users are expected and the sights and sounds of others dominate. Many modern conveniences are available.

### ***Frontcountry***

A vehicle accessible area that is naturally scenic though evidence of human development is obvious. Encounters with other visitors are frequent and parking lots, trail heads, trails, visitor buildings, full-service washrooms, and other visitor amenities are common and expected by visitors.

### ***Midcountry***

A natural but not backcountry area. Motorized and non-motorized uses occur and vehicle access may be available. Evidence of human development may be visible but does not dominate the area. Encounters with other visitors may or may not occur and are not frequent. Visitor amenities such as parking lots, trail heads, trails, washrooms and campsites may be available but are of a basic design.

### ***Backcountry***

A natural area where evidence of human development is limited to non-existent. Access occurs via non-motorized modes of travel and encounters with other visitors are minimal to non-existent. Basic visitor amenities such as primitive trails and rustic campsites may be available. Signage is limited to non-existent. In this setting, visitors can expect to experience solitude, isolation, closeness to nature and higher levels of risk and personal challenge.

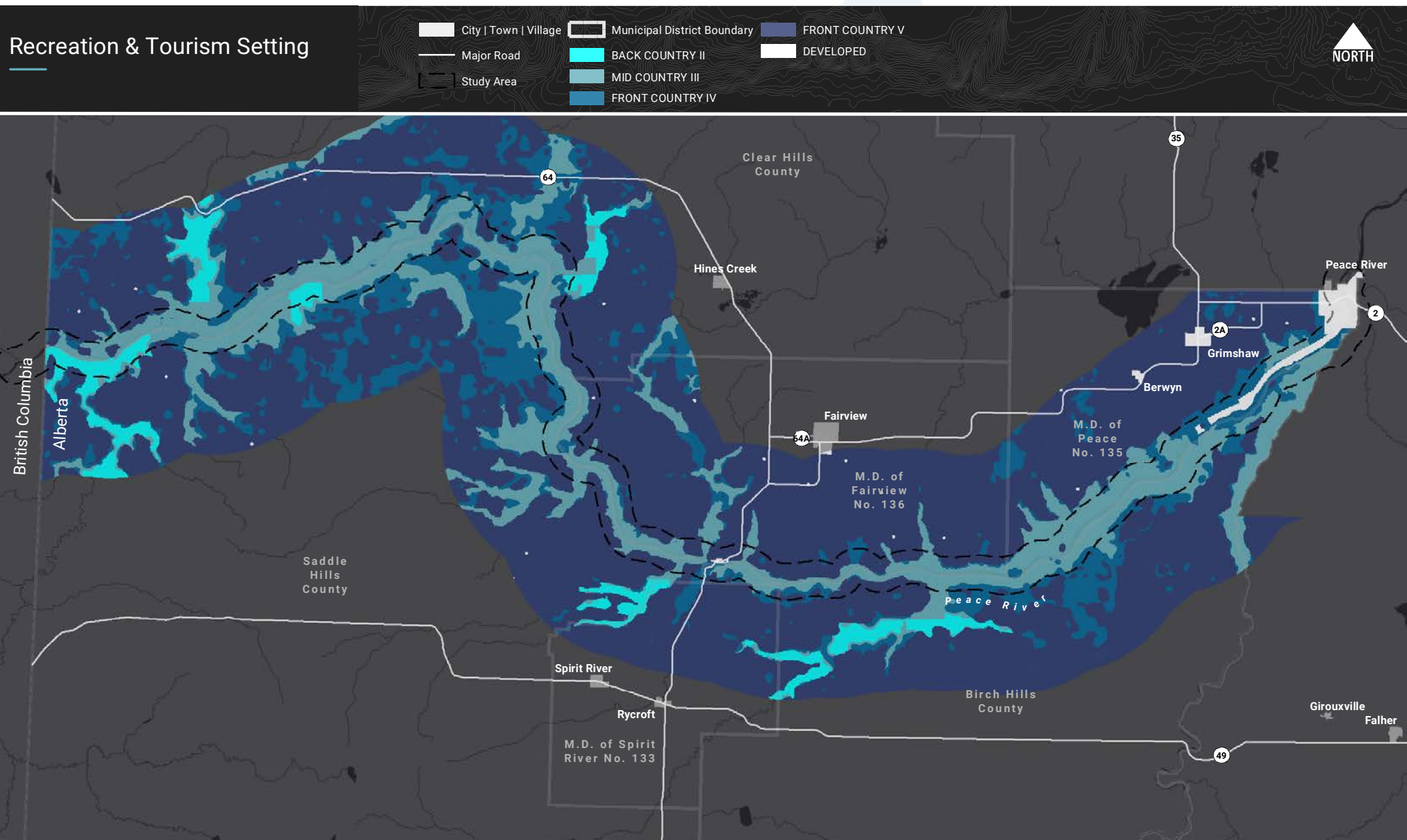


Figure 10 - Recreation & Tourism Settings



### 4.1.3 SCENIC RESOURCES

Known for its expansive views and incised canyons, the Peace River allows visitors to experience the incredible natural beauty of the river valley. Naturally, destinations with greater visual appeal can be inherently attractive to varying target markets. As such, in planning for the future of recreation and tourism on the river, it was important to understand the scenic quality of this segment of the river.

The province has undertaken a landscape level scenic resource assessment and inventory. Analysis of this inventory confirms the visual appeal of the Peace River valley. Over 82% of this segment of the river is classified as having Very High or High scenic value. Another 10.3% of the valley is classified as moderate scenic value.



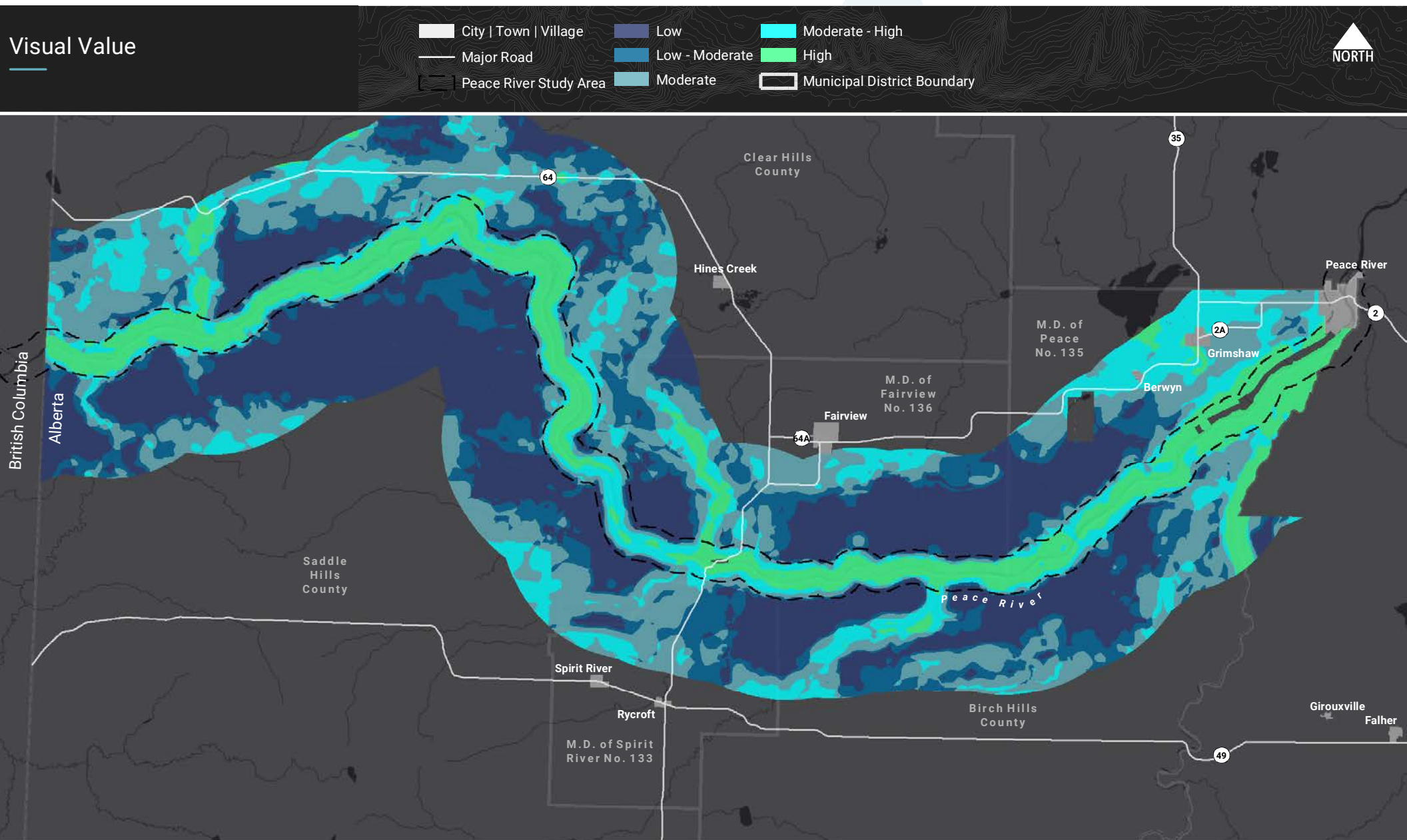


Figure 11 - Scenic Resources



## 4.1.4 RIVER ACCESS POINTS

Access to the river varies greatly from fully serviced boat launches to simple informal put-in and take-out's that are commonly used but rarely promoted. Most are publicly accessible while others are privately owned. In total, 17 water access points were identified in this segment of river (Figure 12). Eight (8) of the access points were classified as formal boat launches, 2 are informal boat launches, 2 are formal river accesses, 3 are informal river access points and the remaining 2 were private river access points (Table 2).

The most significant problems with access on the Peace River is not the necessarily the frequency of boat launches, but rather the high variability of the condition and quality. A rapid condition assessment was undertaken on each of the publicly accessible boat launches and river access points. In keeping with the input received during the engagements, many of the river access points and boat launches are in need of upgrades. Only one of the river access points was considered to be in excellent condition, 2 were in good condition, 6 were in moderate condition and 6 were in poor condition. The two access points on private lands were not assessed.





**TABLE 2 RIVER ACCESS BY CLASSIFICATION, CONDITION & DISTANCE**

Access Point Name	Status	Classification	Condition	Distance between Access point (km) Clayhurst – Town of Peace River
Blackfoot Regional Park Boat Launch	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Moderate	n/a
Cotillion Recreation Area Boat Launch	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Moderate	25.9km
Many Islands	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Excellent	40km
Carters Campground Boat Launch	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Poor	32.6
Pratts Landing	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Good	25.4km
Dunvegan boat launch	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Moderate	26.7km
Dunvegan Provincial Park	Existing	Formal River Access	Poor	0.7km
Green Island Cabin Access	Existing	Private River Access	N/A	7.5km
Paul's Market Garden	Existing	Informal River Access	Poor	15.9km
Kieyho Park (need to add launch here at the end of the most easterly trail shown to river)	Existing	Informal River Access	Poor	22.8km
Shaftesbury Ferry North (need to add this point to data)	Existing	Informal Boat Launch	Moderate	28.9km
Shaftesbury Ferry South (need to add this point to data)	Existing	Informal Boat Launch	Moderate	0.5km
Tangent Park	Existing	Informal River Access	Poor	0.5km
Private River Access	Existing	Private River Access	N/A	7.5km
Strong Creek Park	Existing	Formal River Access	Poor	4.5km
Peace River Boat Launch (west)	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Moderate	11.8km
Peace River Boat Launch (east)	Existing	Formal Boat Launch	Good	0.7km

**Formal Boat Launch** - an approved and promoted access to the river that is intended to support the launch of both motorized and non-motorized boats.

**Formal River Access** - an approved and promoted access to the river that is intended to support the launch of non-motorized boats.

**Informal Access** - accesses that are used to launch motorized or non-motorized boats but are not necessarily approved or promoted.

## Boat Launches & River Access

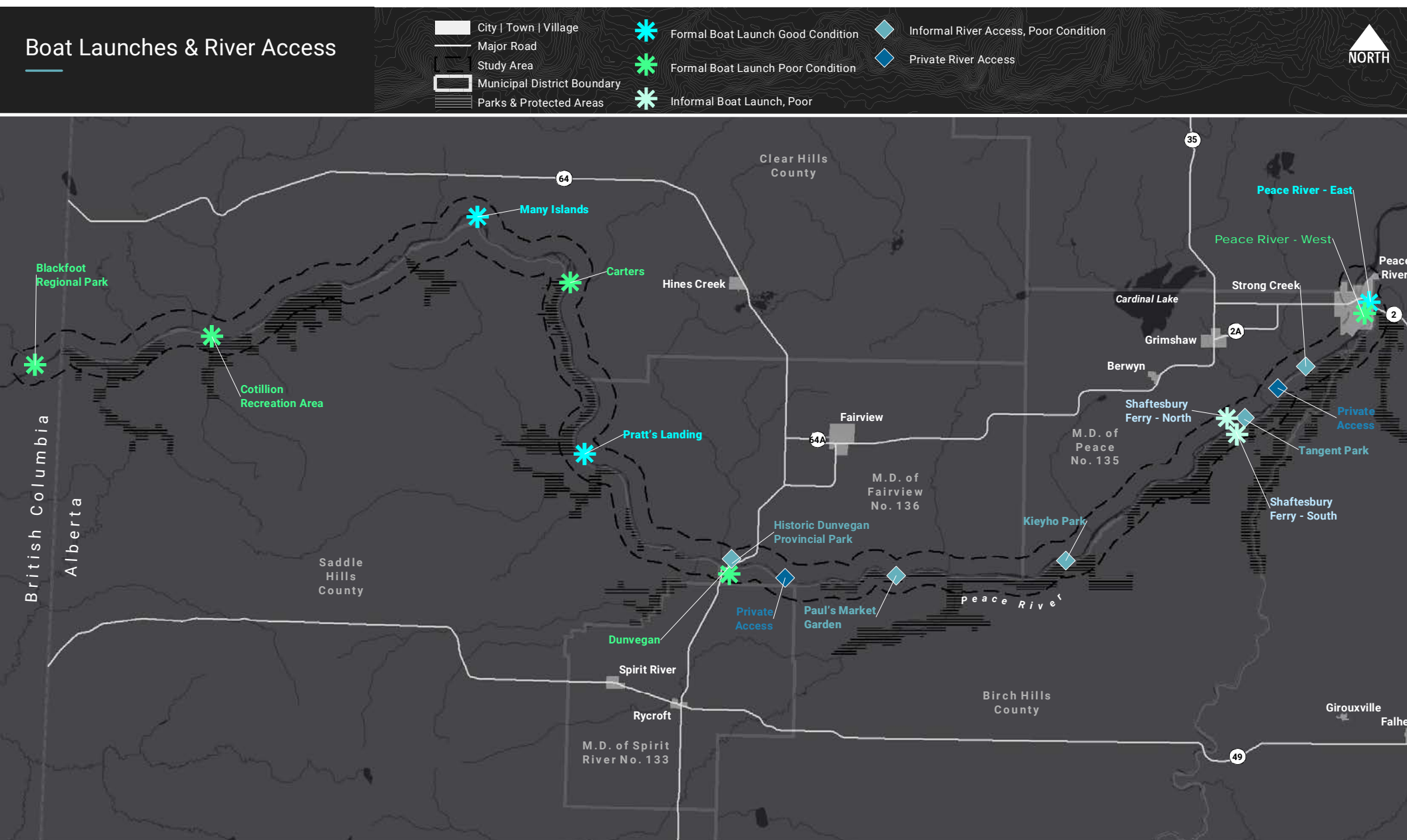


Figure 12 - Boat Launches

# Boat Launch & Accommodation River Distances

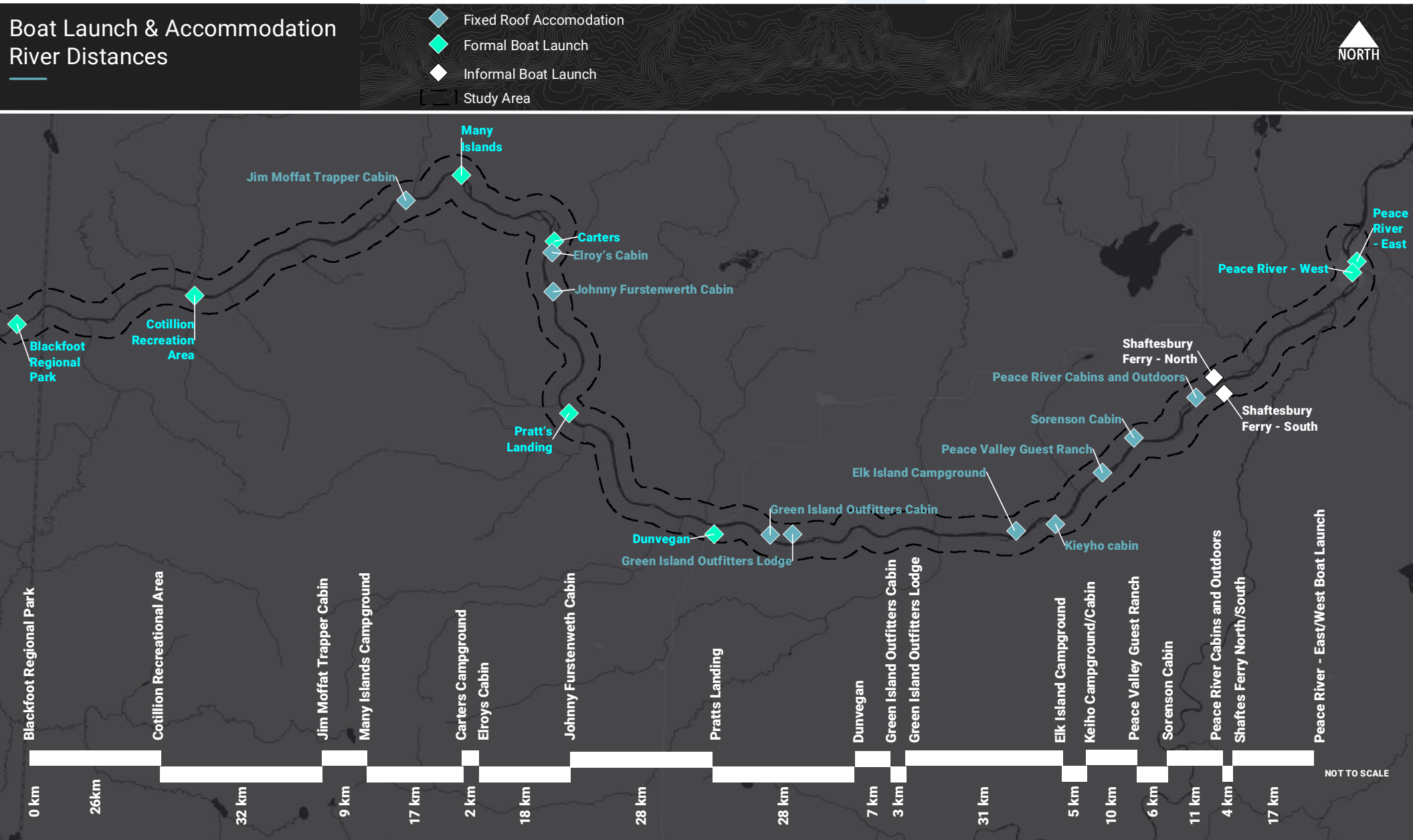


Figure 13 - Distances Between Boat Launches



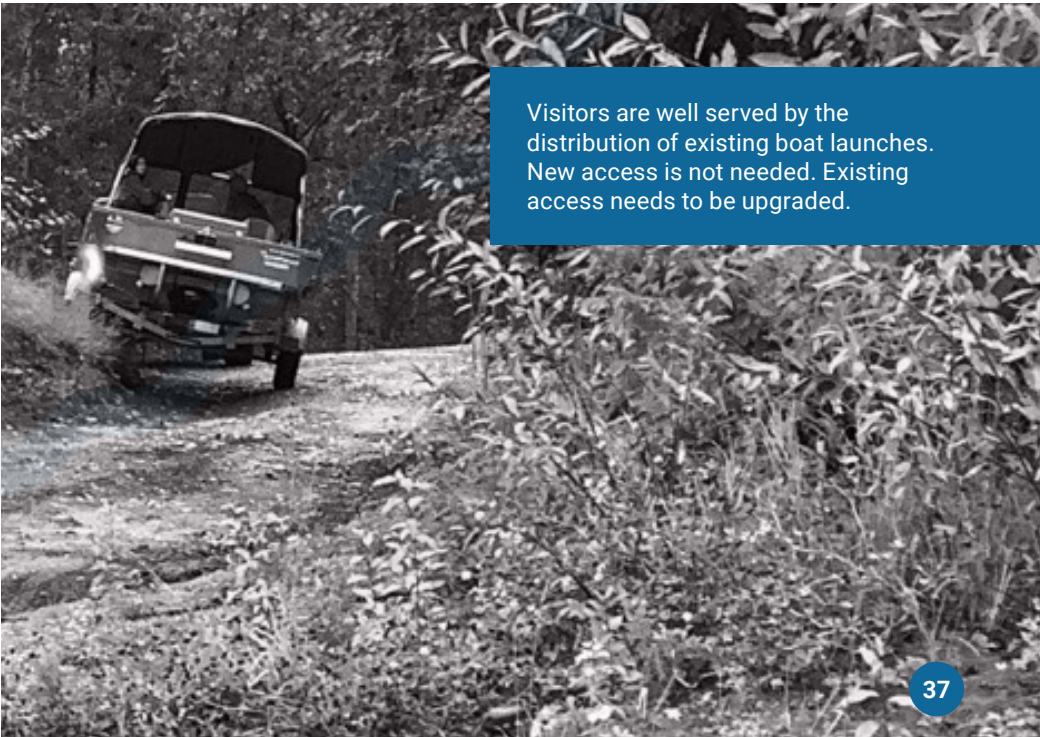
Spatial analysis, using geographic information system, was used to evaluate what proportions of each PVCRTS municipality had access to a boat launch in general and to a boat launch that is in good to excellent condition. The analysis (Figure 13) shows that, with the exception of Clear Hills, the majority of municipalities along the river have access to at least one formal boat launch within a 60 minute drive and almost all municipalities have access to a boat launch within a 90 minute drive (Table 3). Members of PVCRTS are in agreement that a 60-minute drive is a reasonable level of service for river access. However, when the analysis considers the quality and condition of the boat launch, the results are considerably different. This analysis confirms that, in general, reasonable access is available to the river but the condition and quality of the access should be improved to better service river visitors (Table 4).

TABLE 3 ACCESS TO BOAT LAUNCH BY MUNICIPALITY

Municipality	Percent of Municipality by Drive Time to a Formal Boat Launch		
	30 Minute Catchment (35km)	60 Minute Catchment (70km)	90 Minute Catchment (105km)
M.D. of Peace No. 135	40.39%	98.41%	99.95%
M.D. of Fairview No. 136	64.83%	100.00%	100.01%
Saddle Hills County No. 20	11.79%	71.68%	90.95%
Birch Hills County	10.39%	72.02%	94.91%
M.D. of Spirit River No. 133	82.92%	99.97%	99.97%
Clear Hills County No. 21	11.11%	31.34%	40.27%

TABLE 4 ACCESS TO BOAT LAUNCH BY CONDITION FOR EACH MUNICIPALITY

Municipality	Percent of Municipality with Access to a Boat Launch within 60 Minute Catchment that is in....		Percent of Municipality with Access to a Boat Launch within 90 Minute Catchment that is in....	
	Excellent / Good Condition	Moderate / Poor Condition	Excellent / Good Condition	Moderate / Poor Condition
M.D. of Peace No. 135	94.4%	4.0%	99.4%	0.6%
M.D. of Fairview No. 136	98.1%	1.9%	100.0%	0.0%
Saddle Hills County No. 20	1.9%	69.8%	17.2%	73.8%
Birch Hills County	21.6%	50.4%	77.5%	17.4%
M.D. of Spirit River No. 133	33.1%	66.9%	99.9%	0.0%
Clear Hills County No. 21	27.0%	4.3%	40.2%	0.1%



Visitors are well served by the distribution of existing boat launches. New access is not needed. Existing access needs to be upgraded.

# 60 Minute Service Catchment By Condition

- ◆ Boat Launch - Good Condition
- ◆ Boat Launch - Poor Condition
- 60 Minute Service Catchment to Boat Launch in Good Condition
- 60 Minute Service Catchment to Boat Launch in Poor Condition
- City | Town | Village
- Major Road
- Peace River Study Area
- Municipal District Boundary

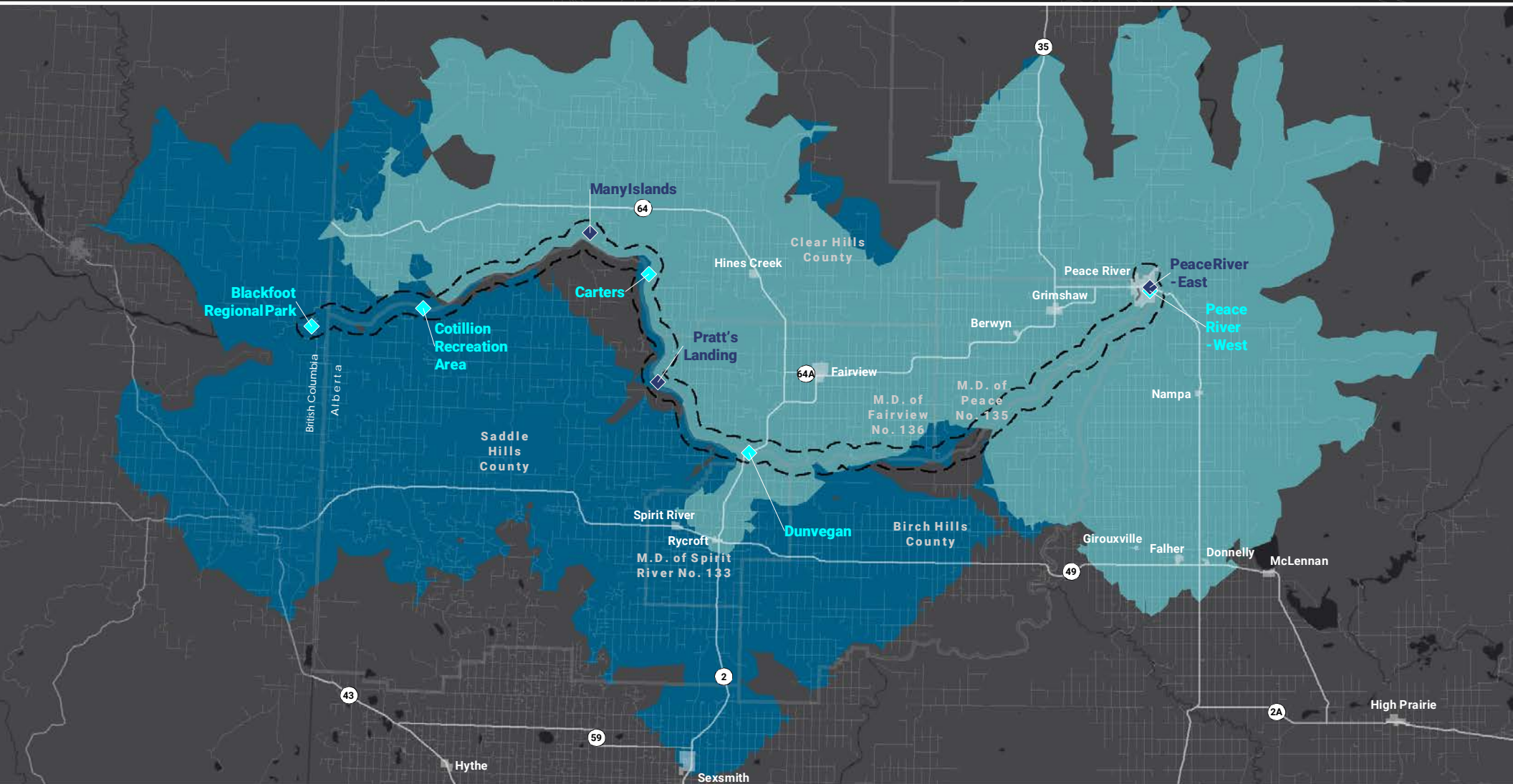


Figure 14 - Boat Launch Catchments



## 4.1.5 ON-RIVER ACCOMMODATIONS

### FIXED ROOF

Accommodation options along the river include commercial accommodations such as hotels and cabins, private but publicly accessible cabins, designated campgrounds and areas suitable for random camping. Hotels are limited to the Town of Peace River. Four commercial fixed roof accommodations (cabins, lodges) are available along, or near, the river including:

- Green Island Outfitter's Riverside Cabin (approx 1.5 km from shoreline),
- Green Island Outfitters Lodge (adjacent to the river but not on the river),
- Peace Valley Guest Ranch,
- Peace River Cabins and Outdoors.

Image Source: [greenislandoutfitters.com](http://greenislandoutfitters.com)



Image Source: [greenislandoutfitters.com](http://greenislandoutfitters.com)



Image Source: [Peace River Cabins and Outdoors, peacerivercanada.com](http://PeaceRiverCabinsandOutdoors.com)



Image Source: [Peace Valley Guest Ranch, nightypeace.com](http://PeaceValleyGuestRanch.com)





There are also two non-commercial public cabins along the river:

- Elroy's Cabin, and
- Kieyho Park Cabin.

Three (3) non-commercial private cabins exist along the river that are known locally to permit public access when people are in need:

- Johnny Furstenwerth's Cabin,
- Jim Moffat's Trapper Cabin, and
- Sorenson Cabin.

However, the owners of these cabins have not confirmed that they are available for public access.





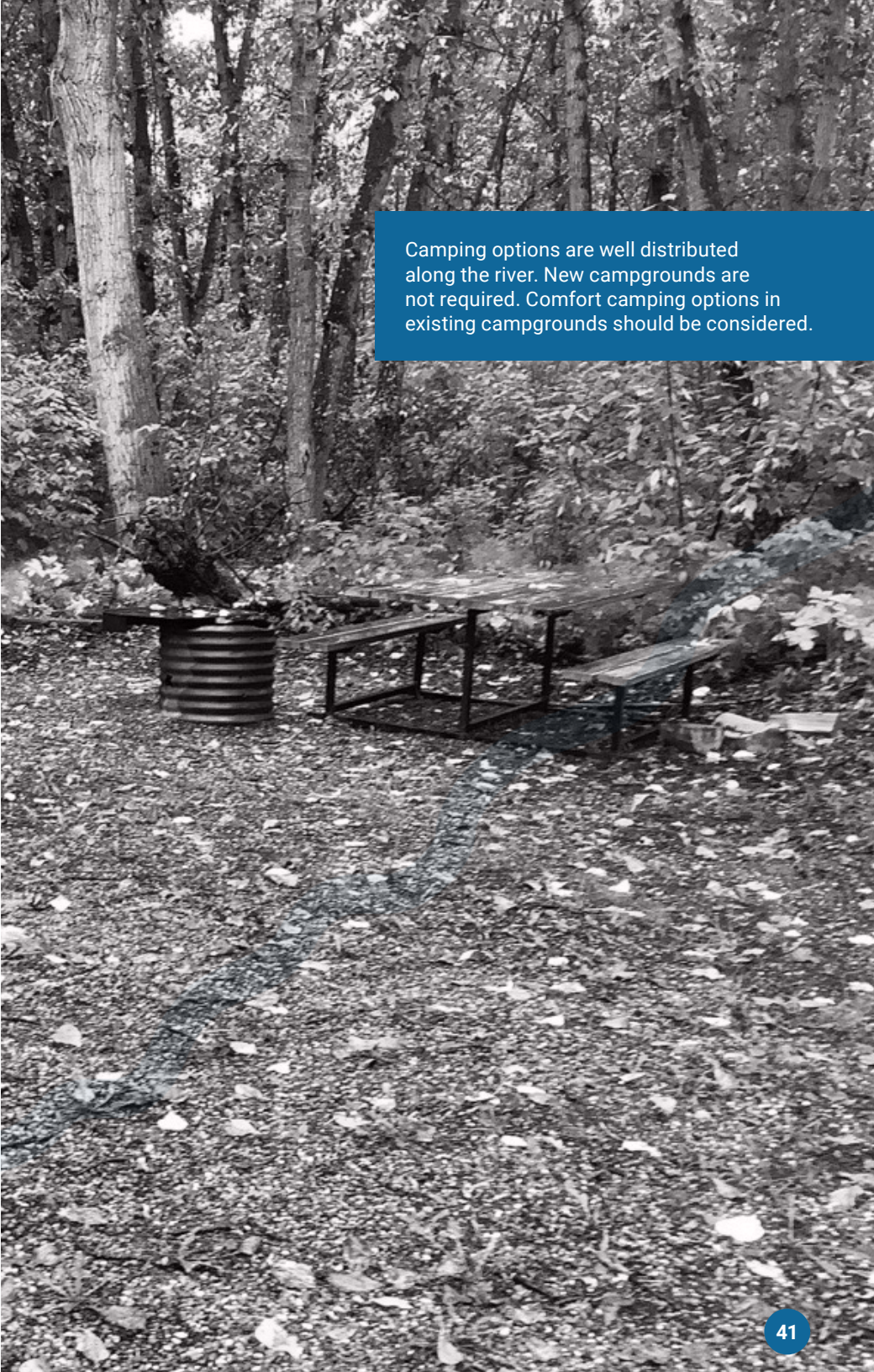
# CAMPING

The river offers visitors many opportunities for camping. Camping experiences range from fully serviced campgrounds with power and camp stores to others that provide the most basic amenities to random camping. Visitors have access to ten (10) major campgrounds along the river (Table 5). These campgrounds are relatively well distributed along the river and are, for the most part, accessible within a reasonable day’s paddle from the next campground for most paddling abilities (see Table 5 & Figure 16).

TABLE 5

Accommodation Name	Type	Distance from Previous Campground
Blackfoot Regional Park and Campground	Campground	0km
Cotillion Campground	Campground	25.7km
Many Islands Campground	Campground	40.4km
Carters Campground	Campground	16.1km
Pratts Landing	Campground	25.1km
Historic Dunvegan Park	Campground	27.8km
Elk Island Campground	Campground	40.7km
Kieyho Campground	Campground	4.8km
Tangent Park	Campground	30.2km
Strong Creek campground	Campground	12.2

Camping options are well distributed along the river. New campgrounds are not required. Comfort camping options in existing campgrounds should be considered.



# Accommodations

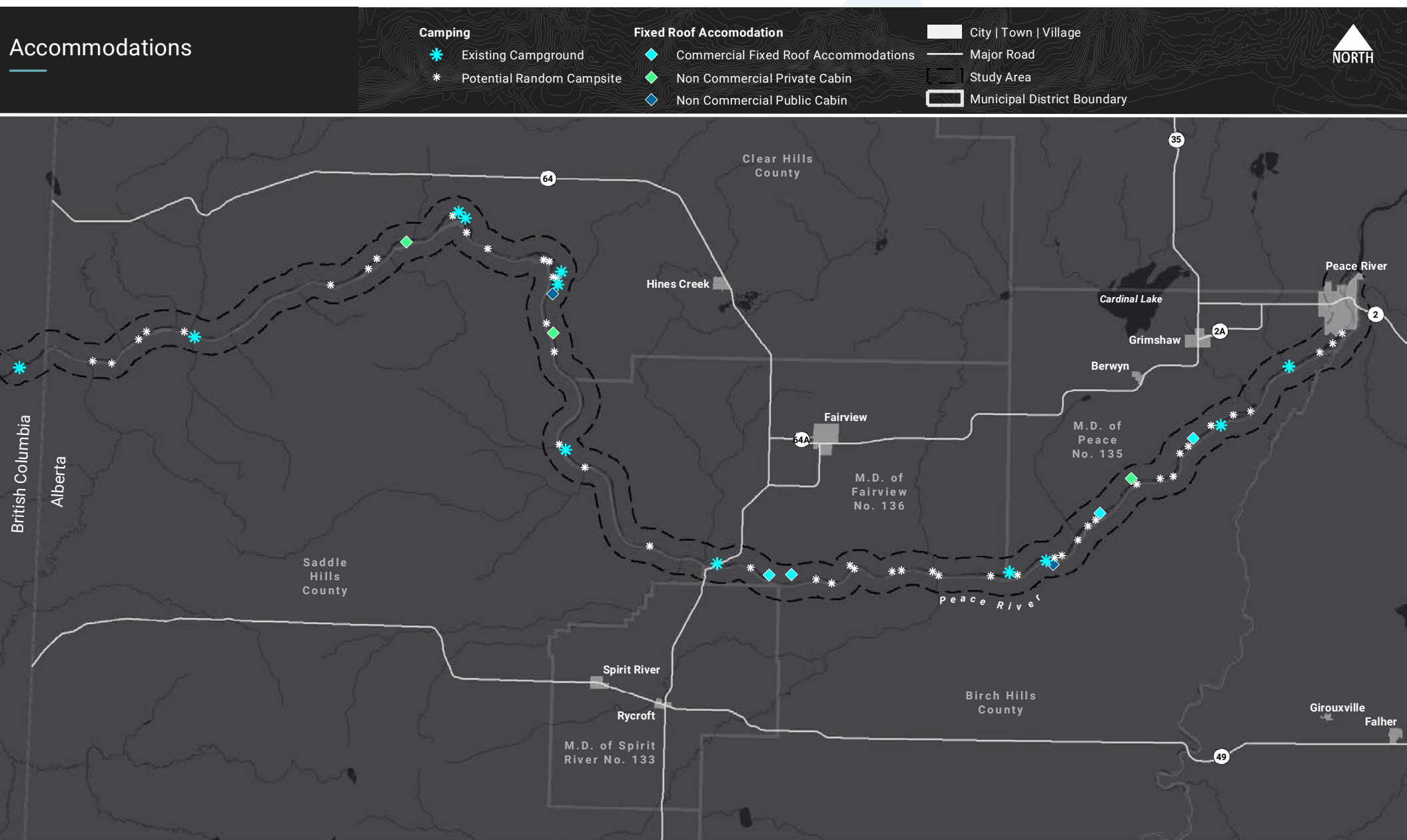


Figure 15 - Accommodations



## Boat Launch & Accommodation River Distances

- ◆ Fixed Roof Accomodation
- ◆ Formal Boat Launch
- ◆ Informal Boat Launch
- Study Area

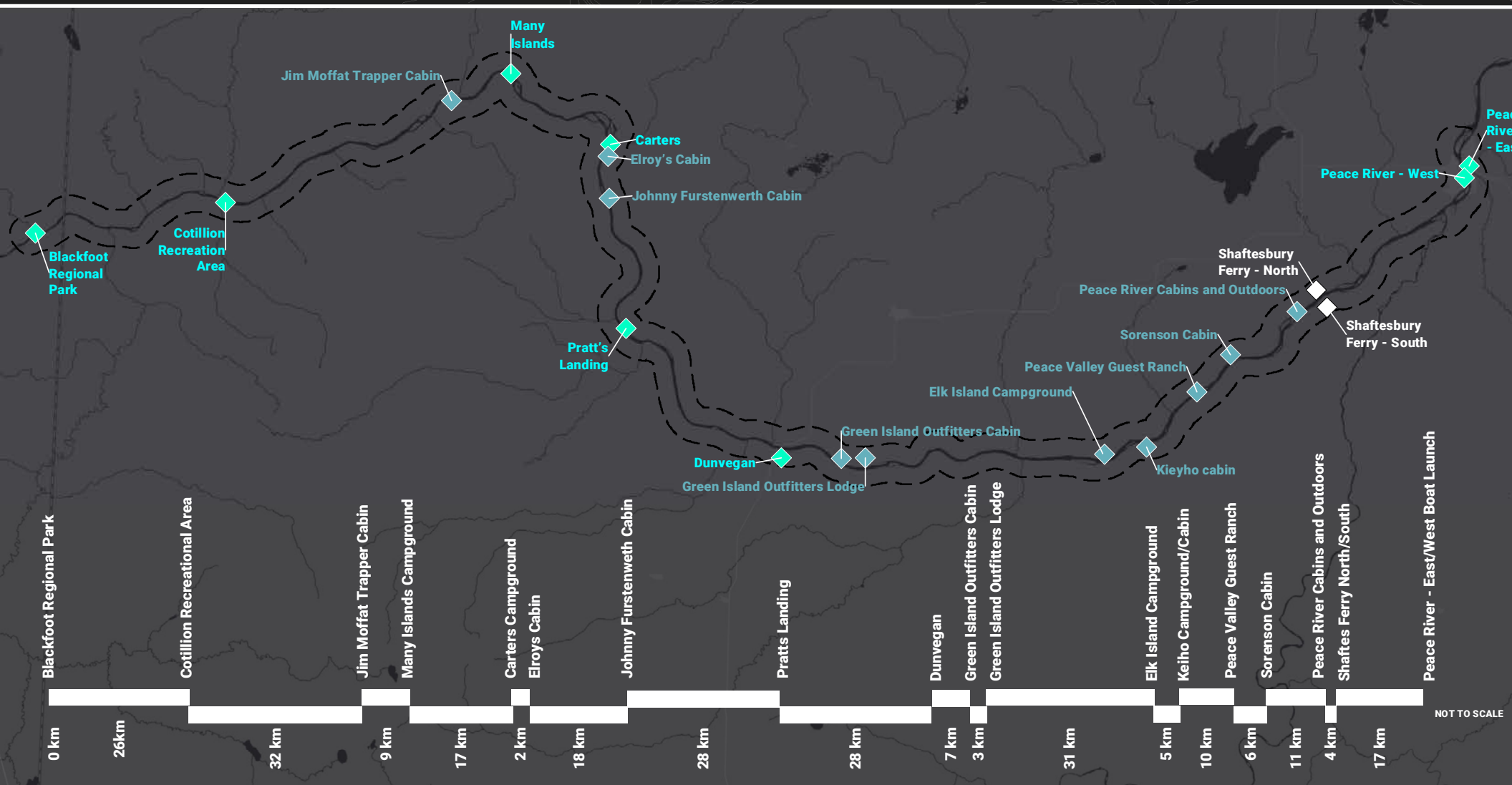


Figure 16 - Distances between Accomodations

For those visitors seeking a more primitive camping experience, random camping opportunities are readily available along most of the river. However, due to the risk of fire, waste management and other impacts, random camping should be discouraged. A rapid identification of potential random campsites was performed during the field assessment. Forty-five (45) sites that appeared suitable for random camping were identified. These sites appeared to have the appropriate topography to support random camping, such as flat, open, accessible shorelines. None of the identified potential random campsites have any infrastructure such as outhouses, picnic tables, fire pits etc.

Accommodations

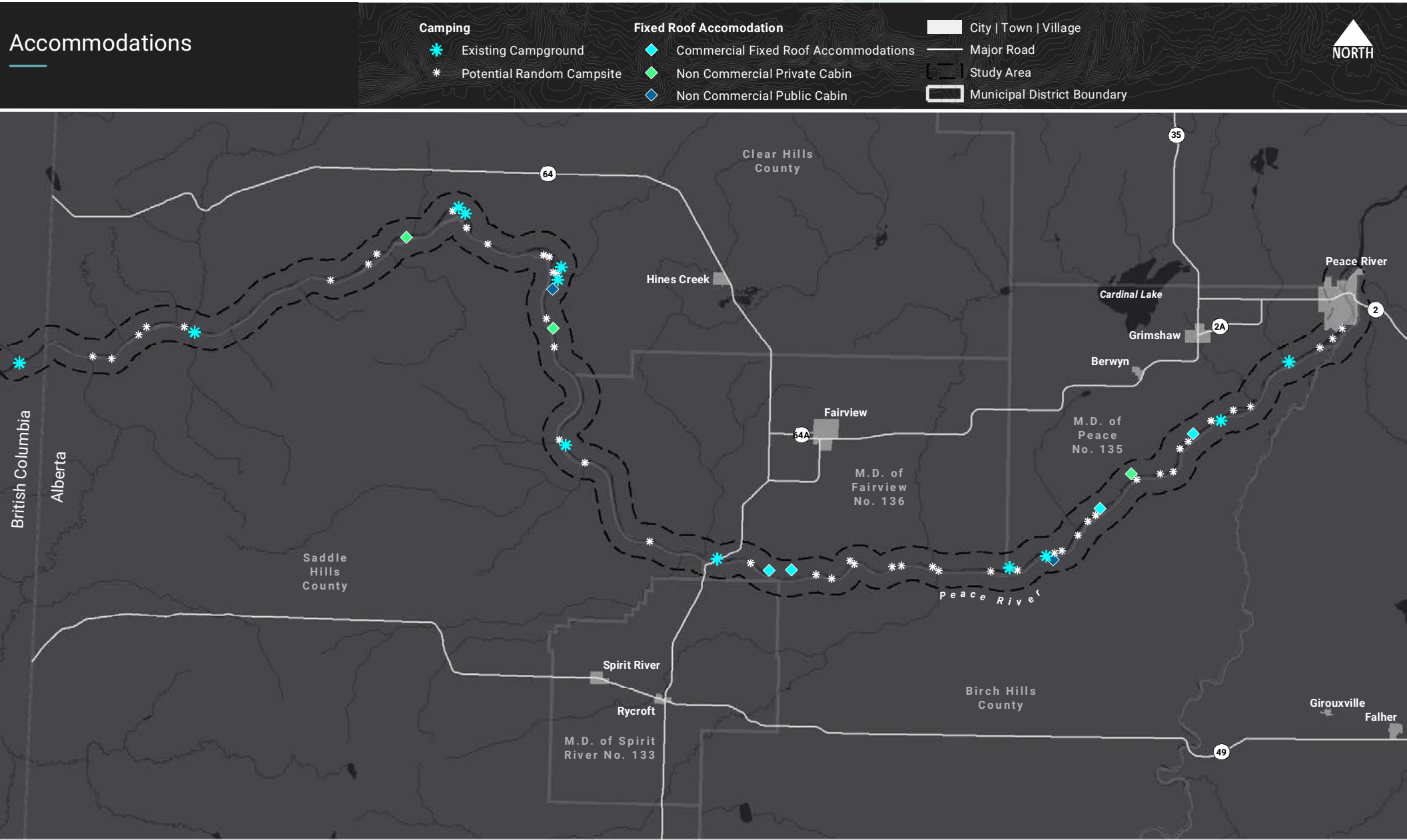
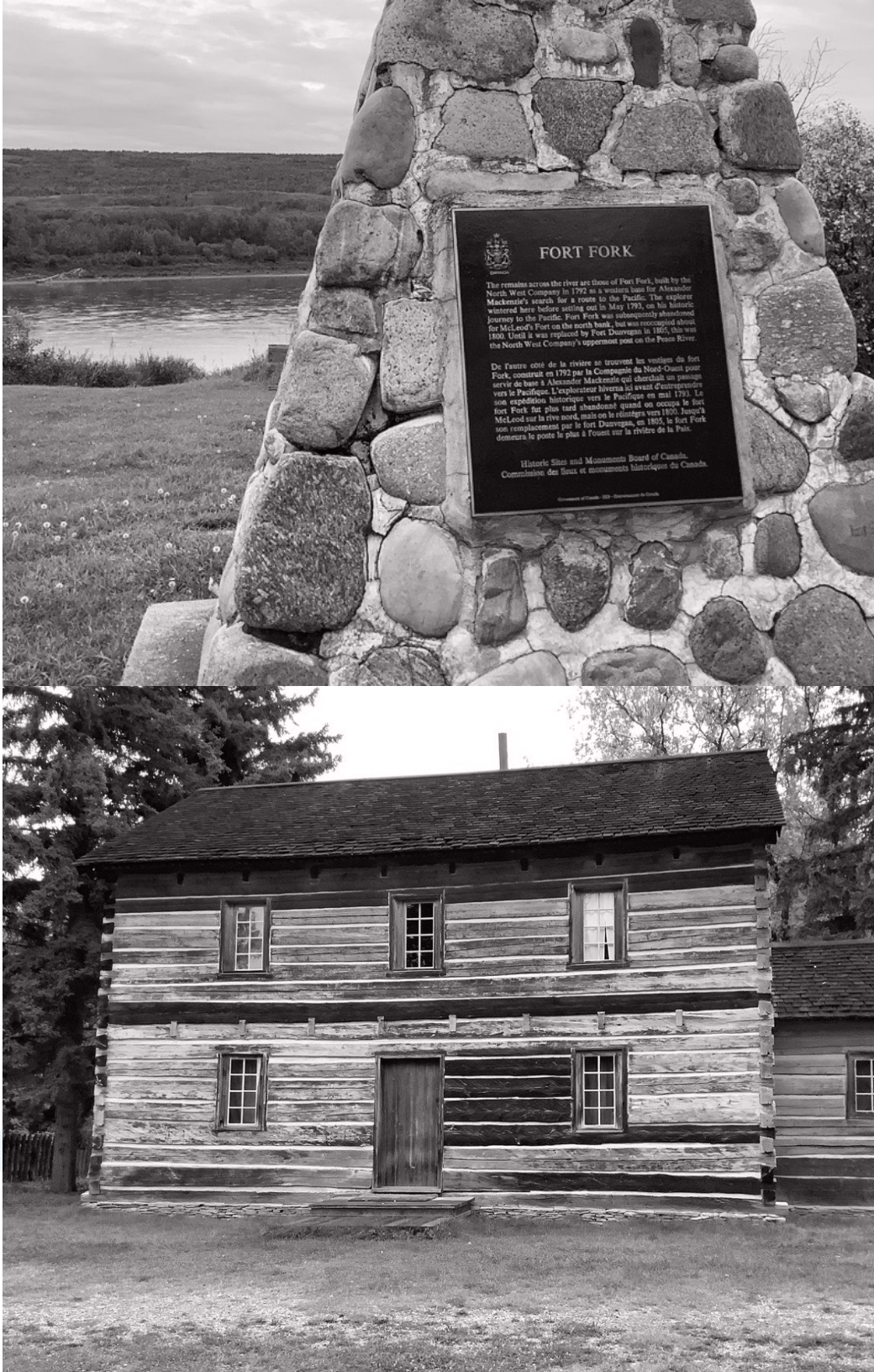


Figure 17 - Random Camping

# 4.1.6 ATTRACTIONS

From the extensive history of Dunvegan to the prehistoric wonder on the river valley. Visitors are attracted to the Peace Region because of its built, historical, cultural and natural attractions. Though many of the attractions have yet to be developed, virtually or physically, for visitors, they possess a strong potential to facilitate memorable visitor experiences. The most significant visitor attractions along the river include:

Natural	Cultural	Historic
Parks and protected areas	Historic Dunvegan Provincial Park	Historic Dunvegan Provincial Park
Smiths trail - log dump trail	St Augustine's Mission	Jim Moffat Trapper Cabin
Maples day-use-park	MacKenzie Cairn	Historic Dunvegan Cemetery
ATV trail to Smoky and Peace confluence	Shaftesbury Ferr & Cairn	St Augustine's Mission
Hoodoos		
Confluence with Smoky River		Fort Fork National Historic Site
Fossil bed		
Sawchuks Rapids		





## 4.1.7 AMENITIES

Amenities and services along the River are limited to the gateways of the Town of Peace River, Fairview, and Dunvegan, as well as some towns and hamlets along the northern side of the river following highway 2. In these communities, visitors have access to grocery stores, fuel, waste pump-outs, liquor stores, equipment suppliers, visitor information, medical treatment, and other essential services. Once visitors depart these established areas, they are limited to those provided at the campgrounds along the river.

Most of the formal campgrounds along river provide visitors access to:

- Toilets
- Shower buildings (very few)
- Firewood
- Firepits
- Day use and cooking shelters
- Playgrounds and courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Band stands / stages





# 5 River Visitors & Markets of Greatest Potential



To provide a better understanding of who the current and future users of the Peace River may be, the macro demographics of the people who are currently visiting the Northern Alberta and Northern BC regions were researched and examined.

## 5.1 VISITATION PATTERNS

### 5.1.1 NORTH ALBERTA VISITOR STATISTICS

The Alberta North Tourism Region [ANTR] produced a summary of 2014 Visitor Numbers, Expenditures, and Characteristics, completed in July 2016. This document was drafted by Alberta Culture and Tourism, and provides macro data on general visitation to this region for that year. This data is compared to the Department's 2017 numbers below. This data is based upon the analysis of the 2014/2017 Travel Surveys of Residents of Canada (TSRC) and the 2014/2017 International Travel Surveys both done by Statistics Canada. There were 1.81M total visits to the Alberta North Tourism Region (ANTR) in 2014 and 1.87M in 2017. This represented 5% of the total visitation to Alberta in both 2014 and 2017. In 2014, of the 1.81M visits, 85.2% of visitors were residents of Alberta and in 2017 84% were from Alberta.

Approximately 50% of all visits to the ANTR include at least one overnight stay. Edmonton area residents accounted for 38% of all overnight stays. Northern Alberta residents accounted for 19% of overnight stays and Central Alberta accounted for 15%. In 2017, 28% were Albertans originating from the Edmonton area, 22% were from Northern Alberta and 19% were from Central Alberta.

In 2014, 42.9% of visitors stated visiting family and friends as the main reason for their visit, 28.9% stated pleasure/leisure, and 20.4% stated business as their primary reasons. In 2017, 43% were visiting family and friends, with 30% stating pleasure/leisure, and only 16% stated business as their primary reason for visiting; showing the decline in the oil and gas sector over this period. Of the total overnight visits in 2014, 18% of visitors stayed in a campground or RV park vs 16% in 2017, 14% stayed in hotels in 2014 with 18% in hotels in 2017. In 2014, Alberta residents averaged a stay of 2.3 nights compared to other Canadians who stayed 5.1 nights on average. 2017 saw Albertans staying on average 2.9 nights and other Canadians staying 5.4 nights.

Not surprisingly, visitation to the ANTR in 2014 and 2017 was the highest in July, August and September at 39% and 36% respectively followed by April, May and June which accounted for 29% and 23%.

Additional information, that was only available for the 2017 data, showed that the average party size of Albertan visitors to the region was 2.4 persons while parties consisting of other Canadians averaged 2.1 persons.

In summary, the Alberta Northern Tourism Region sees a relatively small portion of the overall visitation to the province. In general, the data between 2014 and 2017 saw relatively little change other than the total visitation to the region increased by approximately 5%.

### 5.1.2 NORTHERN BC TOURISM STATISTICS

The last Regional Tourism Profile for Northern BC was released in May of 2017, however the date used represents research gathered in 2014/15. Northern BC received 936,000 overnight visits in 2014 and generated over \$412 million in related spending. Domestic overnight travellers accounted for 80% of visitation and 64% of related spending. International travellers accounted for 20% and 36%, respectively.

On average, travellers in Northern BC stayed 4.4 nights and spent \$100 per night during their trip. BC residents stayed 3.8 nights and spent \$83 per night during their trip. Other Canadian travellers stayed 5.0 nights and spent \$104 per night.

British Columbia residents make up the largest share of overnight visitation (76%) and spending (56%) in the Northern British Columbia region followed by visitors from Alberta. With the Alaska highway traversing this region, visitors from Alaska and other US states round out the top three.

1. British Columbia residents 65% of visitation, 47% of spending
2. Alberta residents 12% of visitation, 9% of spending
3. Alaska residents 2% of visitation, 1% of spending

More than two-fifths of BC residents and half of other Canadians visiting Northern BC stayed with friends and family. The most popular accommodation for other international visitors was also with friends and family, followed by camping/RV parks. US residents most often stayed in camping/RV Parks followed by motels or hotels. In summary, the visitation statistics for Northern BC are somewhat similar and represent a small portion of the total visitation volume to the Province however, the volume of visitors is significantly (50%) less than that of Northern Alberta (936k for Northern BC vs. 1.81M for Northern Alberta in 2014).

## 5.2 TARGET MARKET SEGMENTS

Once the macro demographics and general visitation to the region is understood, specific, socio-economic market personas need to be explored to determine who is currently using the river and who it will likely be in the future.

### 5.2.1 DESTINATION CANADA EXPLORER QUOTIENT MARKET SEGMENTATION

The Explorer Quotient (EQ) market segmentation model developed by the Canadian Tourism Commission (later renamed Destination Canada) uses both demographics and psychographics to determine various segments of the tourism market and to identify the things that motivate these segments to engage in various forms of travel experiences. Provincial and Territorial Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) use this model to determine which segments make up most of their visitor base. This assists the province or territory in developing a brand, and subsequent marketing strategy, that is aligned with their visitors' needs and expectations thus helping to attract more of these visitors as well as ensuring that the DMO realizes the highest return on their tourism marketing investments.

Destination Canada defines EQ in the 2012 Canadian Tourism Explorer Quotient Profiles document as follows: "EQ breaks each geographic market down into different psychographic groups, called Explorer Types. Each type is identified by particular characteristics stemming from social and travel values, travel motivation and behaviours."

It is important to understand these segment characteristics while using this research to create a tourism product that will ultimately exceed the customers' expectations. Knowing what motivates a potential customer to travel is a key part of knowing the customer. In general, this customer-centric focus is what is needed to accurately determine how the Peace River experience should be developed so that it meets the expectations of its visitors.

The Cultural Explorer and Authentic Experienter are the market segment personas most often identified by Tourism Alberta as representing the greatest number of prospective visitors to Alberta. The desire of these market personas for hands-on experiences and authentic cultural experiences means that they are also two of the most obvious personas to be attracted to a Peace River experience as well. After applying the EQ methodology, we have also identified Free Spirits as being most closely aligned, specifically, to the Peace River experience.

It is important to note that of the several Explorer Types identified in the EQ research, the Authentic Experienter, Cultural Explorer and Free Spirit segments make up the primary market segmentation for Canada as a whole. This is of great importance as it is an enormous benefit to have the Peace River market segments align with those of Canada. This ensures that most of the marketing created by Destination Canada for Canada will be aimed at market segments that are the same as those that the Peace River attracts. This also means that in most cases, cooperative marketing opportunities with Destination Canada will ultimately leverage any marketing spend by Peace River agencies as they are being aimed squarely at those same potential visitors.

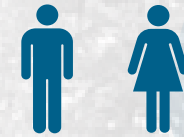


### 5.2.1.1 THE CULTURAL EXPLORER

As described by Destination Canada, the Cultural Explorer tends to value spontaneity, cultural sampling, and is open to trying and accepting new experiences. They are defined by their desire for constant travel and continuous opportunities to discover and immerse themselves in the culture, people and settings of the places they visit. They enjoy pursuing values such as novelty and tend to value personal control and personal escape. They are known for being creative, enthusiastic, open-minded, flexible, risk-taking, and tend to be interested in the following attractions: heritage sites, cultural events, museums, festivals, B&B's, and hostels.

The Cultural Explorer makes up approximately 12% of the global market. There are more females than males (57% compared to 43%) and they have higher than average levels of education and income. About 28% of this group is 18-34 years of age, compared to 43% in the 35-54 age group and 30% being 55 years of age and older. With respect to their life stage, about 34% are middle aged with no kids at home, compared to 27% living with their families and 19% being mature.

#### Demographics



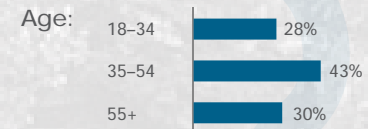
43%

57%

Education: Higher than average

Employment: FT – lower than avg. % are retirees

Household Income: Average



#### Lifestage

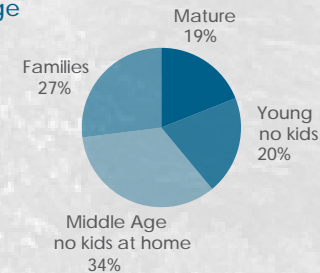


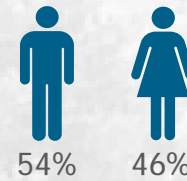
Figure 18 – Cultural Explorer Demographics and Lifestage

### 5.2.1.2 THE AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCER

The Authentic Experienter is described as rational, spontaneous, ethical, eco-conscious, and curious. This person desires personal control, self-direction and is confident. They are looking for authentic, tangible engagement with the destinations they seek, and are interested in understanding the history of the places they visit. Like the Cultural Explorer, the Authentic Experienter values cultural sampling and tends to devalue the joy of consumption, living virtually, and the importance of brands. Valuing nature, cultural immersion and personal development the Authentic Experienter is interested in the following attractions: nature reserves, world heritage sites, hiking trails, museums, homestays, and campsites.

The Authentic Experienter is about 9% of the global market with a greater number of males than females (54% compared to 46%). They have higher than average education, average income, and just over half (55%) are 55 years of age or older. About 42% are mature, while 28% are empty nesters and close to 20% live with their families. Unlike the Cultural Explorer who is less inclined to more rustic outdoor experiences, the Authentic Experienter is interested in adventure and is seeking less comfort amenities and more immersive experiences.

#### Demographics



Education: Higher than average

Employment: FT – more likely than avg. to be retired

Household Income: Average



#### Lifestage

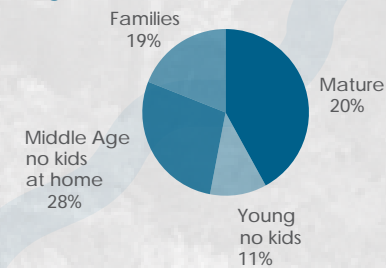


Figure 19 – Authentic Experiencers Demographics and Lifestage



### 5.2.1.3 THE FREE SPIRIT

The Free Spirit is described as extroverted, open, fun loving, and adventurous. They are one of the most social of all the segments and are attracted to groups where they can share their experiences as well as one on one conversations. They have a zest for life and being spontaneous is thrilling for them. Free Spirits have a higher penchant for risk than the other segments. They are more likely to enjoy water based outdoor activities and of their most appealing activities, 76% enjoy seeing beautiful coastlines and 66% enjoy visiting provincial/state parks and natural wonders.

They represent 13% of the global market, 46% are men and 54% women. They tend to have an average education but a higher level of income. The 18-34 age group represents 40% of the segment, 35-54 is also 40% with 55+ being 20% of this group. 13% are considered mature, 37% have families, 25% are young with no children and 25% are middle aged with no kids.





## 5.2.2 ADVENTURE TRAVEL TRADE ASSOCIATION MARKET SEGMENTATION

Included in the 2014 Adventure Pulse Report, prepared by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) (see Appendix B), were the results of a survey that was completed in the United States regarding market segmentation and traveller motivation. From this survey of 1700 participants age 18 and older, market segment personas were created. The motivation for this research was similar to that of Destination Canada's EQ research. Namely, to provide members of ATTA with greater insights into how to effectively market to their segment(s) as well as match the experiences they offered to their market segments' desires. Many of the ATTA results, though generated in the US, are assumed to reflect many of the characteristics of the North American (hence Canadian) market as well.

The three market segments were titled Adventure Grazers, Adventurers, and Adventure Enthusiasts. The primary characteristic that defined each segment was the level of their acceptance for risk. Most of the other characteristics were very similar between the three groups. Adventure Grazers were novice participants and were the most risk adverse. The Adventurers were categorized as having intermediate skills and a desire to accept moderate risk. Finally, the Adventure Enthusiasts had advanced skills and were quite prepared to accept a high level of risk with their adventure travel experiences. These segments match very well with the personas developed for this report.

The Adventure Grazers most likely represent the Peace River Day Tripper persona described later in this section. These are the visitors who are out to enjoy nature and have a fun day on the water but are neither looking for nor, prepared to deal with, any real form of adventure-based risk. These folks are mainly local and regional visitors. They likely make up the largest number of Peace River users and they will be found not venturing more than a day's travel from the major centres of Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd and Grand Prairie.

The Adventurers would likely be the equivalent of the Peace River Weekend Warrior persona. This person is expecting and equipped to deal with situations that might arise on an overnight paddling or boating trip in an area with the relative remoteness of the Clayhurst to Peace River section. This person may be local or may have completed long-haul travel to get to the river and is excited to paddle what he or she considers a wilderness river. He or she is not however, motivated by extreme risk.

The person who is the hard-core paddling/boating enthusiast who is actually seeking out the most challenging experience where significant risk may be inherent in the activity. That segment is the Peace River Wilderness Paddler/Boater a person who is most likely to emulate the ATTA Adventure Enthusiast. This person will have had significant experience conducting multi-day/week, adventures. The Clayhurst to Peace River section, will actually be considered tame to this participant. Mitigating the risk associated with this type of expeditionary activity is what has drawn them to paddling in the first place.







## 5.3 SPECIFIC PEACE RIVER MARKET SEGMENT PERSONAS

Based on the potential visitor characteristics we have examined the Peace River has 3 distinct experiences:

1. The day-trip experience
2. The 2 to 3-day trip
3. The multi-day rip

Based on the research above as well as interviews in the field with Peace River users, outfitters and EQ and ATTA research, a corresponding visitor profile or “specific market segment persona” who is likely attracted to these particular experiences was developed for potential visitors to the Peace River.

### 5.3.1 THE DAY TRIP EXPERIENCE (APPROXIMATELY 70% OF CURRENT USAGE)

The classic day trip experience would be well represented by a trip that would see participants boating one or two hours upriver of Dunvegan, enjoying a leisurely lunch on shore, and returning to the Dunvegan boat launch before dark. The market segment persona attached to this section of river is known as the “Day Tripper”. This visitor is looking for a one-day boating experience, with easy access and egress, has novice to intermediate paddling skills, and is often looking for a relaxed outing with family or a group of friends. This person enjoys activities in a natural setting but has no desire to camp out on the land. Preparation for this day-long adventure is minimal. The organizers of these trips are likely to be 25 to 45 years of age, live and work in the local area, and enjoy a middle-income lifestyle that might allow them to own a jet boat. Their experience on the river is seen as outdoor recreation and while they appreciate and enjoy being in a natural setting, they are less likely to list historical sites as a major motivation for travelling on the river. The Day Tripper is here for a good time not a long time. With all of this in mind, this section of river is likely to appeal to both the power boater (jet boating is popular) as well as canoeists and those floating the river in any manner of floating vessels from inner tubes to rafts.



### 5.3.2 THE 2-3 DAY EXPERIENCE (APPROXIMATELY 25% OF CURRENT USAGE)

A classic example of this trip would be a two-day canoe trip between Many Islands and Dunvegan but it could be anywhere between Clayhurst and Peace River. This is the trip for the “Weekend Warrior”. These folks are prepared to commit to the planning and preparation required for an overnight adventure. They have camped before and are comfortable on the river. They are prepared to sleep out in a tent at a wilderness campsite but would likely prefer to stay at a prepared campsite that provided a way to get out of the rain, dry their gear, use a pit toilet and have a source for drinking water provided. These are often groups of 6 or more and are usually extended families or groups of friends looking for a mini vacation. Children may be part of this segment and this is more likely for boaters than paddlers. This segment loves being in the outdoors however, the social aspect of boating, camping and cooking together is the highlight of their experience. They may be locals but are domestic visitors and almost all from Alberta.

### 5.3.3 THE MULTI-DAY TRIP EXPERIENCE (APPROXIMATELY 5% OF CURRENT USAGE)

This multi-day experience is as much an expedition as it is a trip. This trip would most likely see groups paddling/boating through the Clayhurst to Peace River section and could actually see a person travelling all the way to the Arctic Ocean via the Slave/Mackenzie with the Peace River as the starting point for this grand adventure. The market segment persona attached to the multi-day experience is the “Wilderness Paddler/Boater”. This person has significant experience in wilderness travel through remote country. They have likely paddled or jet boated rivers with more difficult rapids however, they understand and appreciate the risks associated with paddling or power boating on any high-volume cold river where self rescue is a must. They tend to travel in smaller groups of 2 to 6 people. They do not perceive a trip like this so much as recreation but rather being an integral part of their lifestyle. The Wilderness Paddler/Boater may take a year or more to meticulously plan all the logistical elements of this trip. Most of these outdoors people will have completed long-haul domestic or international travel to get to the Peace. Men outnumber women on these expeditionary types of experiences and the average ages are significantly higher than the Day Tripper segment with many participants being 55+ in age. This visitor tends to enjoy a middle to higher income level and if not retired, is at a point in his or her life where taking a month off to enjoy a major paddling trip is not only possible, but a regular, sometimes annual, occurrence. The historical significance of the Peace may be an important part of the river’s attraction and they will likely have researched the most significant historical sights along the route.



Image Source: Peace River, Alberta - Leigh McAdam, flickr.com

# 6 River Comparators



Four “comparator” rivers were chosen to help determine the possible opportunities for improving the recreation and tourism quality of the Peace River and to understand how comparable rivers are marketed and if this marketing is successful. The rivers that were chosen were the Yukon River (YT), the North Saskatchewan River (SK), the Athabasca River (AB), and the Mackenzie River (NWT). Detailed river descriptions as well as the website links and search summaries can be found in Appendix A of this report. The research methodology consisted of internet searches replicating the process that a potential river enthusiast without a lot of pre-search knowledge, would pursue when planning a canoe or power boat trip but was still at the stage of looking at a number of potential rivers, including the Peace.

All these rivers share a number of primary characteristics with the Peace. They are relatively remote but the put-ins can all be accessed by the long-haul traveller. They are long rivers that have few major rapids (mostly class I) over their entire length however, the speed of the current and remoteness still demand that the paddler has intermediate to advanced paddling/boating skills and advanced wilderness camping skills. They are also rivers with mid-to-high scenic and historical values.





## YUKON RIVER

The Yukon River paddler may be a guided or unguided participant. They likely have some pre-search awareness and knowledge of the river due to its historical significance as part of the Klondike Gold Rush. They are likely paddling a section of the river or may be part of the small group of paddlers that travel the river in its entirety to the Arctic Ocean. Most share the same market segment persona as the Peace River Wilderness Paddle/Boater. They need to be intermediate whitewater paddlers if in canoes but advanced wilderness campers. They are attracted to the historical values found on the river but the scenery and brand equity of the river's name is what primarily attracted them to paddle here. There is also a small group of local paddlers that paddle the whitewater found downstream of the Schwatka Lake hydro dam within city limits of Whitehorse, the capital city, as a day trip experience.





Image Source: MacKenzie River - Bing Gallery, flickr.com

## MACKENZIE RIVER

The Mackenzie River paddler is an unguided river enthusiast. They are most often seeking a very long, very remote paddling experience. Many are intending to finish in Inuvik. While most of the groups on the river are parties of friends or family, this river has an unusual number of solo paddlers attempt it each year, likely a reflection of the fact that there are so few technical rapids but a strong current for most of its length. The historical significance of the river while of interest, does not seem to be the primary motivator for its travellers. The brand equity of being a major section of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) Arctic Water Route, its distance, remoteness and its non-technical nature appear to be the main attractors for this river. It also shares the same market segment attributes as the Yukon and Athabasca. This is a river for the Wilderness Paddler/Boater, demanding intermediate paddling skills and advanced to expert wilderness camping skills. Perhaps due to the massive volume, depth and width of the river, paddlers often make this journey in all sorts of boats from rafts to voyageur canoes to jet boats. This is unlike the other rivers where the open Canadian canoe is most often the traditional vessel of choice.

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## NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER

The North Saskatchewan River paddler can be divided into two groups. The person looking for a day-trip experience (guided or unguided) and the multi-day enthusiast (guided or unguided). The day trip paddlers are centred around populated areas such as Edmonton, Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg. Whereas, the multi-day paddlers are looking for a short to mid-length trip with road access (2-7 days or so) on a relatively non-technical river. Again, the historical values of the river are not emphasized as much as the scenic values in any trip reports or pre-trip information and do not appear to be a major motivator in the decision to paddle this river. This river shares the same characteristics as the Peace of flowing through agricultural areas at times as well as having many potential access and egress points.



## ATHABASCA RIVER

The length of the entire Athabasca River is 1232 km and as such, it makes up a large part of the Trans Canada Arctic Water Route. In general, the Athabasca River is of national significance both historically and from an environmental perspective as the Lake Athabasca Delta is the largest inland freshwater delta in the world.

The Upper Athabasca River section, found within Jasper National Park, has been designated as a Canadian Heritage River. The upper river from Athabasca to Fort McMurray includes a number of Provincial Parks and protected areas. Unlike most of the lower river, the upper also has many rapids interspersed along its entire length that are well known and often paddled by competent boaters.

This is, however, not a section of river that would appeal to the expert paddler as there is too much distance to be paddled between sets of rapids. In this regard, the Upper Athabasca is different than the Lower Athabasca in that there are many more distinct rapids (15 in all) making this section a more interesting and attractive section to paddle to the intermediate paddler than the lower, Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan section. That said, paddlers who continue below Lake Athabasca along the Slave River encounter the whitewater of the Slave Rapids between Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith which is of a caliber that is entirely different. The Slave Rapids are a world-class whitewater resource that is known amongst the world's expert paddling community.

There are very few commercial recreation and tourism businesses operating on the upper river. There are a handful of lodges and a couple of jet boating, fishing and canoeing guide services. There are even fewer of these businesses operating on the lower river with Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan and Fort Fitzgerald accounting for all of these types of operations. While the negative media representation of the oil sands is a definite constraint on tourism growth for this river, having an opportunity to paddle right up to the Suncor industrial complex has also been identified and described as a remarkable experience.





The Yukon River, by far, has the most information available from companies providing guided trips to personal trip reports posted on the internet to historical accounts and digital marketing materials presented by Tourism Yukon, the Territory's destination marketing organization. The Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan and Athabasca Rivers have a similar level of limited river-paddling information available online. The material is primarily the odd personal trip report or blog along with information from a local tour operator providing a guided experience or gear rental (often the only option available).

For the Yukon and North Saskatchewan Rivers, locals and regional visitors make up a large portion of the river travellers. The Yukon also attracts national and international visitors. The Mackenzie and the Athabasca seem to attract mostly long-haul Canadians and international visitors.

The Yukon has by far, the biggest organic digital presence due to its Territorial Government's digital destination marketing and its wilderness tourism industry association's digital marketing including the Yukon Wild ([www.yukonwild.com](http://www.yukonwild.com)) cooperative marketing program.

Based upon our research, it appears that having a designation as a Canadian Heritage River does not ensure high visitation nor does it necessarily ensure increased market awareness of the river. When we completed organic searches for these rivers, we only discovered what rivers held this designation when the Canadian Heritage River website itself was reviewed.

Overall, the digital presence of the three rivers, not including the Yukon River, is quite weak especially in terms of marketing the rivers as go-to paddling destinations and driving visitation. The upside of this reality is that it would not take much of an investment into an online marketing plan to exponentially increase the profile of the Peace River as the competitive landscape is not congested. Travel Yukon has purchased Google Ad words and Google ads that pop up on web pages that are not Yukon-specific or even related. This suggests that putting the material and ads for the Peace in front of paddlers that are searching the web interested in information on other rivers is likely worthwhile and may result in those potential visitors looking at the possibility of a Peace River trip in the future.

The North Saskatchewan and Mackenzie Rivers both have a very meagre internet presence compared to the Yukon. The results of completing this same search for the Athabasca River were also fairly weak. There is less information regarding the Lower Athabasca than the Upper. The only easily accessible information on any of these three rivers was with regards to paddling the Slave River Rapids on the Athabasca. In this instance, a fair amount of information was discovered without having to dig deeper than page one or two of the web search.



# 7 The Blueprint



## 7.1 FOCUS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Realizing the benefits that can come from recreation and tourism in the river valley requires clear focus on developing and delivering excellent visitor experiences. Though once focused on providing and marketing infrastructure and products, the recreation and tourism industry now works to provide engaging, authentic and memorable visitor experiences. These types of experiences are proven to deliver much greater benefits for visitors and to local communities. The Trails Tourism Experience Spectrum (Figure 20) illustrates how the benefits increase as the quality and uniqueness of the experience increases. As visitor experiences move up the spectrum, the recreation and tourism competitiveness of the river valley will increase and so too will the ability to generate greater economic returns and benefits to local communities.

Currently, the river valley as a whole offers visitor experiences that are early on the quality and uniqueness spectrum. However, going forward, this plan has been designed to allow the PVCRTS and its partners to move river valley experiences up the spectrum by providing excellent visitors experiences that differentiate the river from other river experiences in Alberta and elsewhere.



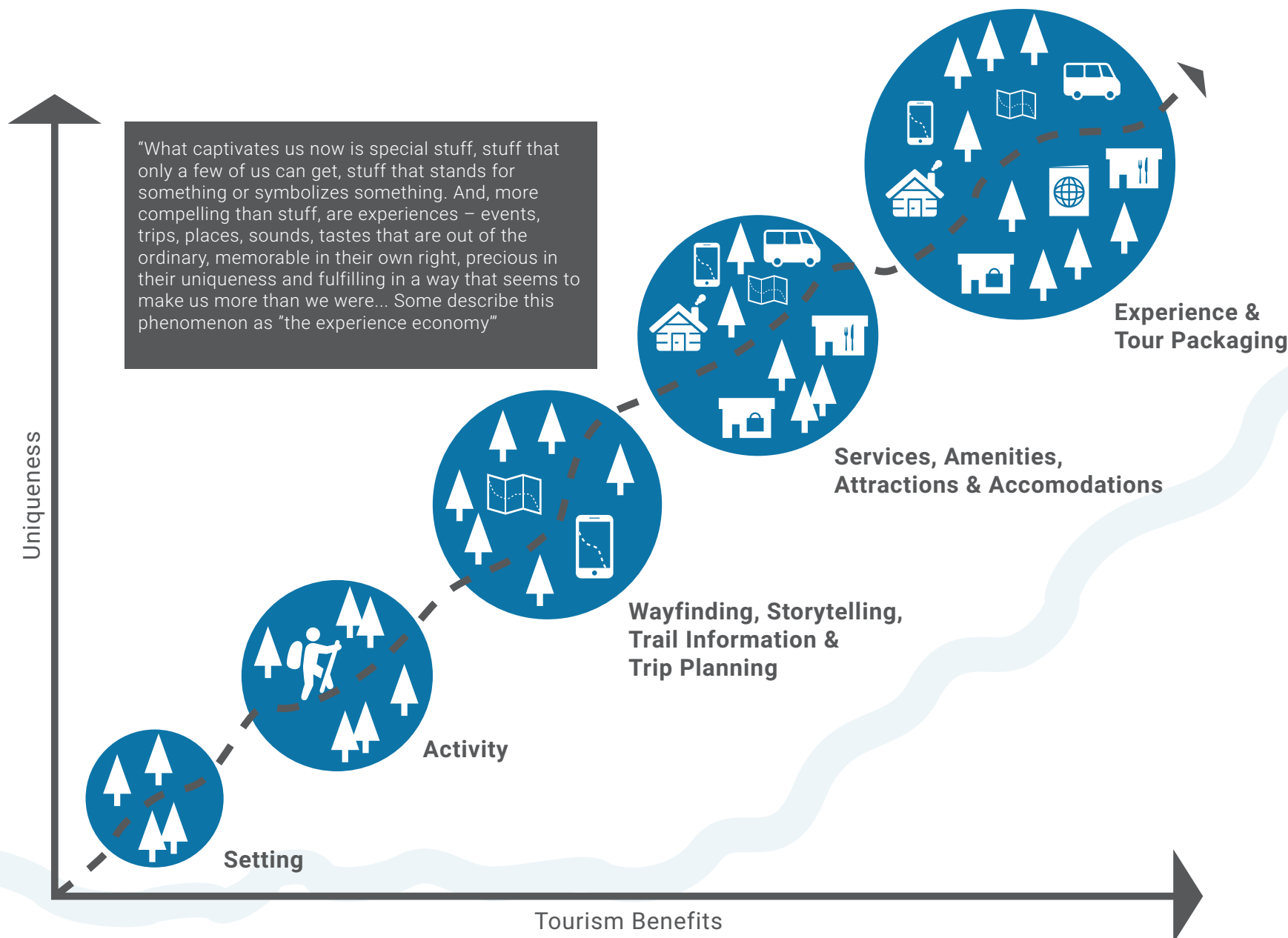


Figure 20 – Trails Tourism Experience Spectrum (Justin Ellis, 2016)



## 7.2 DESIRED OUTCOMES

Through implementation of this plan, by 2030, the PVCRTS and its partners will have:

### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Established the Peace River as one of the most desired multi day river experiences in the Province.
- Increased and diversified the visitor experiences that are available to residents of the Peace Region and visitors.
- Grown the number of visitors who anchor their trips to the Mighty Peace region around a visitor experience in the river valley.
- Improve the quality and condition of recreation infrastructure on the river.

### ECONOMIC

- Increased the positive economic impacts that recreation and tourism in the river valley bring to the region and local communities.
- Stimulated the development of new or growth of existing local businesses that provide services to residents and visitors to the river valley.

### ENVIRONMENTAL & MANAGEMENT

- Avoided unacceptable recreation and tourism impacts to the valley's natural environment, historic resources, local community quality of life as well as conflicts between visitors and adjacent landowners, tenure holders and industry.
- Optimized the supply of visitor infrastructure within the river valley in line with resident and market expectations.

### LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Increased local and regional support for recreation and tourism in the valley and an understanding of the importance of the valley as a recreation and tourism resource.

## 7.3 PRIORITIES & ACTIONS

Achieving the desired outcomes will require deliberate action by the PVCRTS, its partners and local and provincial governments. To advance the quality of recreation and tourism in the river valley and to grow the benefits to local communities and the region, 13 priorities have been identified and will become the focus of the PVCRTS over the next 10 years. Each priority contains a number of specific actions that, as resources allow, should be implemented. The following section outlines each priority and action.

### 7.3.1 ENHANCE EXISTING BOAT LAUNCHES AND RIVER ACCESS POINTS

In recreation and tourism, first impressions matter. Formalized boat launches and river access points serve as the gateway to the river and the visitor experience. These access points are a visitor's first in-person interaction with the Peace River brand and can set the tone for a visitor's entire experience. It is important that all river access points provide a welcoming and inspiring first impression and provide visitors with essential amenities and information they require for their journey. These access points can also serve as venues to host festivals and special events.

Boat launches are vehicle accessible river accesses that are designed to support access and egress of both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. Boat launches typically coincide with existing campgrounds as well as highway and ferry crossing points. River access points are formalized but may or may not be vehicle accessible and are designed to support the access and egress of non-motorized watercraft.

As indicated earlier, the current supply of formalized boat launches and river accesses provide residents with reasonable access to the river. Though some engagement participants suggested that additional access points should be considered, the PVCRTS believes that a 60-minute drive time is a reasonable river access level of service and that the development of new boat launches are not a priority. Though access to the river is reasonable, field assessment results and participants in the engagement process were clear, there is a need to improve the quality and condition of existing boat launches and river access points. Though most residents have access to the river within 60 minutes, many residents (excluding MD of Peace and MD of Fairview) do not have access to boat launches that are in good to excellent condition within a 60-minute drive. There is also a need to ensure that boat launches and river access points provide a consistent level of service in terms of amenities that are available for visitors. To ensure more consistent servicing, PVCRTS and its partners will work to ensure each river access point provides visitors with the services and amenities outlined in the River Access Service Guidelines (Table 6)

Moving forward, the PVCRTS will place priority on enhancing existing boat launches and river access points rather than developing new ones. To do so, the following actions should be implemented:

**TABLE 6 RIVER ACCESS SERVICE GUIDELINES**

River Access Type	Boat Type	Launch Surfacing	Parking		Signage				Amenities				Overnight	
			Truck & Trailer Parking	Vehicle Parking	Gateway	Educational	Safety	Parking Orientation	Toilet	Wildlife Proof Waste Receptacle	Picnic Tables / Benches	Firepits	Campsite(s)	Comfort Camping
Boat Launch	Motorized, Non-motorized	Improved (Desirable) or Natural	R	R	R	R	R	R	R (Pit, Compost)	R	O	O	O	O
River Access Point	Non-motorized	Improved (Desirable) or Natural	N	O	R	R	R	N	O	R	O	O	O	O

R – Required

N – Not Required

O – Optional







## ACTIONS

1. Continue to maintain a network of well distributed boat launches that provide reasonable access to the north and south sides of the river. The network should allow at least 75% of PVCRTS member municipalities to reach at least one boat launch that is in good to excellent condition within a 60-minute drive. The network of boat launches to be retained include the following:
  - » Blackfoot Regional Park Boat Launch (in British Columbia)
  - » Cotillion Boat Launch - support Saddle Hills County in current plans to upgrade the boat launch
  - » Many Islands Boat Launch
  - » Carters Camp Boat Launch
  - » Pratt's Landing Boat Launch
  - » Dunvegan Bridge (south)
  - » Shaftesbury Ferry Boat Launch (north and south) with approval of AB Transportation

Close and remediate all other boat launches.



2. In accordance with the boat launch level of service guidelines (see Table 6), upgrade and improve the quality and condition of existing boat launches and ensure amenities and signage are consistently provided. The following improvements should be considered at each boat launch:

**TABLE 7 POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS BY BOAT LAUNCH**

Boat Launch	Improvements
<b>Blackfoot Regional Park Boat Launch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside of study area. See Blackfoot Regional Park Plan (2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Cotillion Boat Launch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access road to launch (grading, width, potentially surfacing)</li> <li>• Examine feasibility of increasing water depth for launch &amp; landing</li> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / "deadmans stick"</li> <li>• Increase truck and trailer parking closer to launch</li> <li>• Provide seasonal amenities (pit toilet, wildlife-proof garbage cans)</li> </ul>
<b>Many Islands Boat Launch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / "deadmans stick"</li> <li>• Provide seasonal amenities (pit toilet, wildlife-proof garbage receptacles)</li> </ul>

Boat Launch	Improvements
<b>Carter's Camp Boat Launch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access road to launch (widen, turn radius for trailers, grading, surfacing)</li> <li>• Designated truck and trailer parking near launch</li> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / "deadmans stick"</li> </ul>
<b>Pratt's Landing Boat Launch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access road (new surface material)</li> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / "deadmans stick"</li> <li>• Provide seasonal amenities (upgrade pit toilet, wildlife-proof garbage receptacles)</li> </ul>
<b>Dunvegan Bridge (south)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study feasibility of re-orienting launch to be perpendicular to river flow to minimize sediment and debris build up.</li> <li>• Explore options to consolidate truck and trailer parking areas</li> <li>• Explore options to consolidate sponsorship acknowledgments in way that meaningfully acknowledge sponsors while retaining the visitor experience</li> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / "deadmans stick"</li> <li>• Upgrade toilet.</li> <li>• Provide wildlife proof garbage receptacles</li> </ul>

Boat Launch	Improvements
<b>Shaftesbury Ferry (north &amp; south)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain approval from AB Transportation to designate the Shaftesbury North and South as formal boat launches.</li> <li>• Parking orientation signage</li> <li>• Gateway signage</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage</li> <li>• Stewardship / Leave No Trace / safety signage</li> <li>• Provide seasonal boat tie-ups / “deadmans stick”</li> <li>• Provide day use amenities (toilet, wildlife proof garbage receptacles, picnic tables)</li> </ul>

As necessary, work with qualified professionals to undertake concept and detailed designs to ensure improvements are planned and designed appropriately.

3. The boat launch within Blackfoot Regional Park was formally closed to public access and remediated in 2014. However, the location continues to provide informal access to the river for both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. This location also serves as the nearest western river access point for Albertan’s and, without it, can considerably reduce the river access level of service for western residents. The PVCRTS should explore work collaboratively with the Peace River Regional District and encourage them to implement the Blackfoot Regional Park Plan to enhance the park and to identify a new boat launch location within or near Blackfoot Regional Park.

4. Work with the appropriate land managers to establish the following sites as formal non-motorized river access points:
  - » Dunvegan Provincial Park
  - » Kieyho Park
  - » Tangent Park
  - » Strong Creek

Ensure each river access point provides the amenities outlined in the river access service guidelines (Table 6)

5. Maintain emergency access to the river via the Paul’s Market Garden access point.



### 7.3.2 DIVERSIFY AND ENHANCE OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCES

On-river accommodations are essential to supporting both short overnight excursions and longer multi-night expedition experiences that the river can provide visitors. Equally as important is the quality of those accommodations as well as their diversity. Though accommodations are not the primary travel motivator of visitors who choose the Peace River, they can greatly enhance or detract from the visitor experience. Market research suggests that a variety of accommodations should be provided to meet visitor demands, though a moderate level of service will meet the expectations of most target markets.

To meet visitor and target market expectations, a diversity of overnight accommodation options, each providing a different experience and level of service, are envisioned. The network will include:

- Major Campgrounds
- Minor Campgrounds
- Commercial Fixed Roof
- Random Camping

### MAJOR CAMPGROUNDS

Major campgrounds are municipally owned, road accessible campgrounds that provide visitors with serviced and/or un-serviced campsites, comfort camping units, potable water and amenities such as toilets, shower buildings, picnic tables, fire pits, food storage lockers, wildlife proof waste receptacles, firewood, day use shelters / pavilions, signage. Major campgrounds also provide visitors with a boat launch and truck and trailer parking. These campgrounds cater to both motorized and non-motorized river users as well as off-river visitors who arrive by road.

Analysis shows that, with the exception of the stretch between Cotillion and Many Islands Campgrounds and Dunvegan Provincial Park and Elk Island Campground, the existing major campgrounds are appropriately distributed along the river and are consistent with the distances that novice to intermediate paddlers travel each day (approximately 20-30 km / day). In fact, from a river visitor's perspective, there may be more major campgrounds than necessary to meet the current and anticipated demands. The current condition of some campgrounds, little public pressure to improve the conditions of campgrounds such as Elk Island Campground, together with lower reported peak season occupancy rates may confirm that formal campgrounds are over supplied along the river. As such, no new major campgrounds are envisioned during the horizon of this plan.

### MINOR CAMPGROUNDS

Minor campgrounds are intended to be small, rustic and will provide visitors with basic amenities such as flattened but unsurfaced tent pads, wildlife proof food storage lockers, and designated rock fire rings. These campgrounds cater to both motorized and non-motorized river users and are sited to address distribution gaps between Major Campgrounds and to provide a lower level of service camping opportunity. Minor campgrounds are primarily accessed via the river but may be accessible via a rough road or trail with an Off-highway vehicle or 4x4. A "river access point" is provided at each minor campground to support the landing and launch of non-motorized watercraft and the safe mooring of motorized boats. These campgrounds are not intended to host visitors for extended stays nor are they intended to host special events. Investment in these minor campgrounds will be minimal.

**TABLE 8 CAMPGROUND SERVICE GUIDELINES**

Services & Amenities	Major Campground	Minor Campground
<b>Access</b>	River & all-weather road	River & OHV / 4x4 trail
<b>Tent Campsites</b>	10 – 15 sites (surfaced)	2- 4 sites (natural surfaced)
<b>RV Campsites</b>	Variable	No
<b>Comfort Camping Units</b>	Optional	Optional (primitive)
<b>Group Use Area</b>	Yes – picnic shelter	Yes – shared cooking area with single fire ring
<b>Day Use Area</b>	Typically provided	No
<b>Toilet Facilities</b>	Pump-outs are typical. Flush if optional is site is serviced	Pit (throne style or outhouse)
<b>Potable water</b>	Optional	No – visitor collect water from river or nearby tributaries
<b>Power</b>	Optional	No
<b>Waste Receptacles</b>	Yes – wildlife proof	No
<b>Food Storage Lockers</b>	Yes – in sites that will be used by river visitors, optional in drive-in campsites	Yes
<b>Site Furnishings</b>	Picnic tables, benches	Picnic tables
<b>Signage</b>	Gateway, wayfinding, stewardship, regulatory	Gateway, wayfinding, stewardship, regulatory
<b>Firewood</b>	Typically provided	No
<b>Recreational trails</b>	Typically provided	No
<b>Playground</b>	Optional	No
<b>Horseshoe Pits</b>	Optional	No
<b>Parking</b>	Truck & trailer parking at boat launch	No
<b>Boat Launch</b>	Yes	No
<b>River Access Point</b>	Not applicable	Yes
<b>Boat hitching posts</b>	Typically provided	Typically provided



## COMMERCIAL FIXED ROOF ACCOMMODATIONS

In addition, a number of commercial fixed roof accommodations are sited along the shores of the river. These businesses provide visitors with fixed roof accommodations and provide visitors with a much higher level of service than other overnight accommodations. This plan envisions these service providers being fully integrated into the river experience, visitor itineraries and the promotion of the river to target markets.

## RANDOM CAMPING

Depending water levels, the shoreline, islands and gravel bars provide visitors with many opportunities to random camp on public lands along the river. 45 potential random camping areas of varying sizes were identified during the river inventory and assessment. Market research confirms that some market segments prefer the un-serviced rustic experience of random camping over camping in formal campgrounds. Though this overnight opportunity will remain part of the mix of overnight experiences, the unmanaged nature of random camping can lead to undesirable impacts such as wildfire, human waste management, human-wildlife conflicts, soil and vegetation damage, trespass and conflicts. As such, the opportunity for random camping will be purposefully downplayed in all trip planning and marketing information though suitable random camping areas will still be identified on navigation aids such as maps and in trip planning materials.

## COMFORT CAMPING

Engagement participants and market research suggest that comfort camping units (cabins, yurts etc.), sited in appealing locations, are desirable and can diversify the current overnight experience and make the river more appealing to a wider range of markets. Some commercial tourism businesses (e.g. Peace River Cabins & Outdoors, Peace Valley Guest Ranch) provide a higher level of service comfort camping options while only one more primitive, publicly accessible comfort camping option is available – Kieyho Park cabin. As such, the development of a network of publicly available comfort camping accommodations is envisioned. These accommodations may be sited at existing major and new minor campgrounds.



The following actions should be implemented to better ensure visitors have access to the accommodations they desire and expect.

## ACTIONS

1. Continue to maintain a network of major campgrounds that are accessible from both the river and by vehicles, are appropriately distributed and meet or exceed visitor expectations. The network of major campgrounds should include:
  - » Blackfoot Regional Park Campground
  - » Cotillion Park Campground – support Saddle Hills County in current plans to expand the campground
  - » Many Islands Campground
  - » Carters Campground
  - » Pratt's Landing Campground
  - » Dunvegan Provincial Park
  - » Tangent Park Campground
  - » Strong Creek Park Campground
2. Evaluate the feasibility and undertake designs for the development of a network of minor campgrounds including:
  - » Part way between Cotillion Campground and Many Islands Campground (southern island east of the Silver Valley Ecological Reserve)
  - » Part way between Dunvegan Provincial Park and Elk Island and Kieyho Minor Campgrounds
  - » Kieyho Park
  - » Elk Island Campground – relocated to existing random campsite on the Island
3. Though major campgrounds should be maintained at the specified locations, a campsite optimization study should be undertaken to determine the optimal number of campsites that need to be provided at each campground to meet current and anticipated peak period demands of both river and vehicle based overnight visitors. Where campgrounds are determined to have an excess supply of campsites, the study should identify which and how excess sites should be decommissioned or re-purposed.
4. Following completion of the campsite optimization study, undertake general campsite maintenance in the Carters Camp Campground and Strong Creek Campground to improve the visitor experience by:
  - » Re-establishing a desirable campsite shape,
  - » Removing encroaching brush,
  - » Removing vegetation that is growing through campsite surfacing and / or
  - » Undertaking plantings to provide segregation between sites, shade and privacy.
5. Undertake a review of the current functionality and design of Carter's Campground to determine the pros, cons and feasibility of decommissioning the campground loop north of Montney Creek and consolidating those campsites into an expanded area south of Montney Creek. Consideration could also be given to designating the campground loop north of Montney Creek as an OVH campground to minimize large vehicle traffic through Montney Creek.
6. De-regulate and decommission the existing drive in campground at Elk Island Park.
7. Working with partners, undertake a feasibility study to determine the viability of developing a network of publicly accessible and primitive comfort camping units along the river including the cabin at Kieyho Park. Ensuring these units would not directly compete with existing on-river tourism businesses, the study should:
  - » Identify the ideal number and most feasible locations including examining the interest of private cabin owners in making their cabins available for public use,
  - » Determine the barriers and challenges to development of the network,
  - » Evaluate the range of accommodation unit options that are suitable and prepare concept designs and costs for the preferred design,
  - » Determine the service level that will be provided to meet market expectations,
  - » Develop a business case and proformas for construction and operation of the network, and
  - » Determine the optimal ownership and operational model and fee structure for the accommodation network.
8. Though 45 potential random campsites locations were identified during the rapid river inventory and assessment, these locations should be examined further to confirm their suitability and determine at what water levels the campsites will be available. Once confirmed, potential random campsite locations should be incorporated into trip planning information, mobile device application, maps etc.
9. As campground amenities such as day use shelters, bandstands and stages, playgrounds and horseshoe pits reach the end of their lifecycle, thoroughly evaluate the need and appropriateness of replacing these assets in line with local community needs and market expectations.



### 7.3.3 IMPROVE & CONSISTENTLY PROVIDE VISITOR COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE AMENITIES

To support their river experience, visitors to the river expect to have access to a variety of comfort and convenience amenities such as toilets, waste receptacles, boat tie-ups, appropriate and well sited parking, picnic tables, benches, firepits and others. In many cases, comfort and convenience amenities can play essential roles in managing undesirable recreational impacts (e.g. human waste management, litter management).

Engagement participants expressed the need to improve the quality, type, distribution and consistent provision of comfort and convenience amenities along the river. Further, the river inventory and assessment confirmed that the amenities available to visitors greatly vary in type and in condition and amenities are not consistently provided at all campgrounds, boat launches, river access points or attractions. To improve the type, quality and distribution of comfort and convenience amenities, the following actions should be taken:

#### ACTIONS:

1. With the aim of ensuring a consistent quality and cohesively branded visitor experience along the entire river and across municipal jurisdictions, the PVCRTS will work with its municipal and recreation partners to develop a comfort and convenience amenities design standard manual. The manual will specify the type, color and branding of comfort and convenience amenities that will be installed at boat launches, river access points, campgrounds and attractions along the river.
2. The PVCRTS and its partners will work to ensure all boat launches, river access points, campgrounds and attractions contain the necessary comfort and convenience amenities as specified in the manual. Existing amenities will be replaced with the new standardized amenities in line with lifecycle replacement scheduling and as resources are available.





### 7.3.4 ENHANCE SIGNAGE

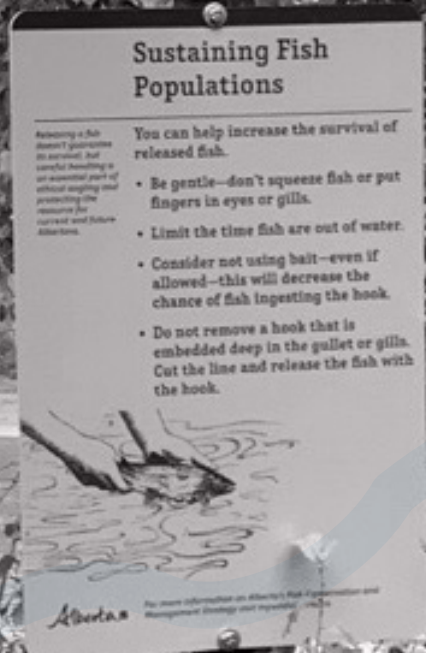
Quality, well placed signage provides an inviting welcoming to visitors and can enrich their experience while helping them enjoy the river responsibly and safely. Considerable efforts were made in the past to develop the “Historic Peace River” logo and signage. This signage provided visitors with a consistent visual identity and brand throughout their river experience. More recently, park operators, recreational clubs and municipal governments have done their best to ensure essential signage is in place to support visitor use. Despite these considerable efforts, signage along the river is in varying states of repair, lacks consistency and, in many cases, important signage is absent. Improving the consistency, quality and location of signage and was identified as an important priority for engagement participants. To enhance signage, the following actions should be implemented.

#### ACTIONS

1. The PVCRTS will work with its municipal and recreation partners to prepare signage design guidelines that provide a consistent and powerful visual aesthetic that enhances the visitor experience. The signage guidelines manual will establish a signage typology and articulate the typical dimensions, materials, colours, fonts, finishing, content, location and installation protocols for each sign type. The sign design will incorporate opportunities to recognize relevant partners and will integrate opportunities to promote local visitor services and tourism business and attractions.
2. Upon completion of the signage design manual, and as resources are available, the PVCRTs and its partners will work to install appropriate signage at all boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds and attractions and along highways.
3. As existing signage reaches the end of its lifecycle, it will be replaced with new signage that meets the new Peace River signage design standards.









## 7.3.5 CONNECT VISITORS TO ON AND OFF-RIVER ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

Providing and connecting visitors who are travelling the river to nearby attractions can enhance their experience. Though paddling or boating are likely the visitor's primary motivation, additional on-river experiences can help turn the visitor experience from good to great. However, those attractions and secondary activities must be close to the river and easily accessible to the river user. Or, they need to be integrated into a packaged guided experience where local tourism operators arrange transportation for the river visitors. To date, visitors have access to few well-known easily accessible attractions and secondary activities along the river. To connect visitors to on and off-river activities and

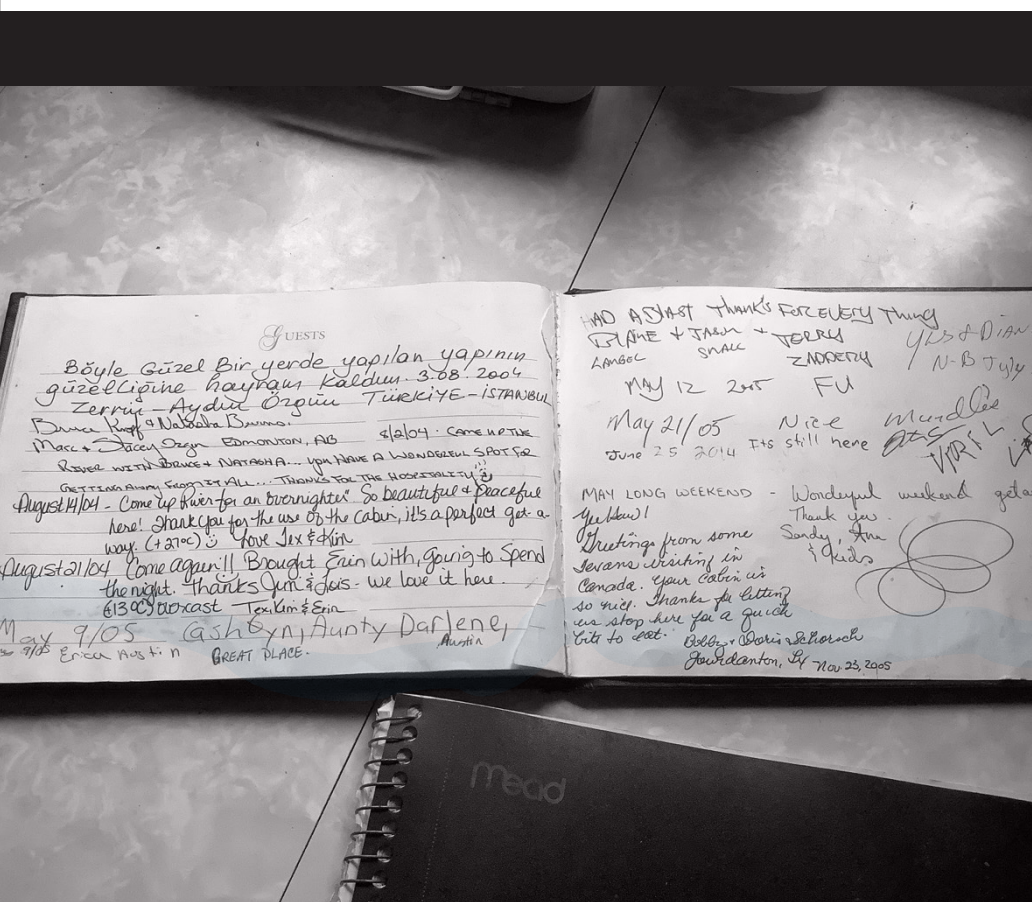
attractions, the following actions will be implemented.

### ACTIONS

1. Work with appropriate land managers to enhance the supply of land-based hiking trails that are accessible from the river and from major campgrounds and boat launches. Ensure trails are well signed and promote these trail experiences to visitors as opportunities to enhance their experiences in the valley.
2. Identify and promote the location of the best on-river and nearby (within short hike from the river) visitor attractions such as:
  - a. viewpoints,
  - b. historical attractions,
  - c. unique natural attractions (e.g. caves, hoodoos),
  - d. wildlife viewing areas, and
  - e. others

Provide clear, river-based signage and information in river guides that indicates pull-outs/tie-ups to access trails to the attractions. Provide visitors with clear information about the distance the attraction is off of the river and characteristics of the access trail (e.g. elevation gain). Also, update information about each attraction to clearly describe the experience to visitors (e.g. ensure visitors know if they are permitted to enter the attraction or simply view it from a distance behind a gate).

3. Package and promote unique and market ready off-river attractions, which are beyond walking distance from the river, in visitor itineraries, packages and guided experiences.





## 7.3.6 MAKE IT EASIER FOR VISITORS TO EXPERIENCE THE RIVER

Despite its lack of technical white water, the length, size and remoteness of the Peace River can be intimidating for many visitors. This is especially true for first timers and out town visitors who do not live near the river. Timely, accurate and easy to understand trip planning information and navigation resources can significantly increase the likelihood that uncertain visitors will choose the Peace River. In addition, good trip planning information and navigation aids are critical to helping visitors remain safe and better ensuring they enjoy the river responsibly.

To date, river focused trip planning and navigation resources are minimal. Those that do exist are out of date and difficult to obtain. Many visitors rely on firsthand trip reports that are posted online by other visitors as there is no authoritative source of trip planning and navigation information. Participants in the engagement process were clear, efforts need to be taken to improve the trip planning and navigation resources that are available to visitors so that it is easier for visitors to experience the river. To do so, the following actions should be implemented.

### ACTIONS

1. Develop and launch an “Experience the Peace River” website. The website should introduce potential visitors to the Peace River experience and provide them with:
  - » A compelling overview the Peace River experience
  - » All essential trip planning information including river details (e.g. transportation, accommodations, guides, safety and health considerations, equipment to bring, river etiquette, Leave No Trace, emergency procedures etc.)
  - » GPS / GPX downloads of boat launches, river access point, major and minor campgrounds, potential random campsites by water flow, river hazards and attractions
  - » Up to date river condition reports and trip reports
  - » Contacts for local tourism operators and service providers (e.g. guides, transportation, rentals, accommodations, food et.)
  - » Connections to other nearby, but off river, visitor attractions and experiences
  - » A schedule of special events, celebrations and competitions
- » Locations with cellular service along the river
- » Inspiring videos of the river and visitor testimonials
- » Media coverage of the river
- » River blog
- » Connections to other visitor experiences in the region
2. Work with partners to develop and maintain a mobile device-based river guide app that provides essential trip planning information for visitors, on-river navigation showing the location boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds, potential random campsites by water level, emergency cabins, water sources, river hazards etc. Using geo-fences, the app should also integrate self-guided interpretive experiences and other features that enhance the visitor’s experience and understanding and appreciation of the river. The mobile device should be designed to function in and outside of cellular service.
3. Work with partners to develop and maintain a high quality and accurate hard copy trip planning and on-river navigation quality guidebook. The guidebook could be made available to visitors for a fee.
4. Work with partners to develop downloadable georeferenced and hard copy maps that enable confident navigation by visitors.
5. As infrastructure and information actions in this plan are implemented, develop and promote a diversity of single and multi-day, single activity and multi-activity, visitor itineraries that appeal to visitors seeking easy to more adventurous excursions and every-thing in between. Guided by target market research, the itineraries will be tailored to address the varying interests of the target markets.

### 7.3.7 ANIMATE THE RIVER EXPERIENCE

Physical improvements to boat launches, campgrounds and attractions alone are not enough to optimize the benefits that river focused recreation and tourism can bring to local communities. Animating the river by developing events, itineraries and other elements that draw visitors to the river will enhance visitation, the visitor experience and the benefits to local communities. Though animation strategies such as events can be short-term, they expose visitors to the river, to local communities and the region and give them the knowledge that allows them to return or inspire visitation from others by sharing their experience. To animate the river experience, the following actions should be implemented.

#### ACTIONS

1. Continue to support the delivery of existing river-focused events such as the Jet Boat Races, Many Islands Country Music Festival, Voyageur Canoe Brigade etc.
2. Encourage and support Mighty Peace Tourism, recreation clubs, tourism operators, partners and others to develop a coordinated schedule of community-based events on, or featuring, the river.
3. Encourage and support Mighty Peace Tourism, recreation clubs, tourism operators, partners and others to enhance the diversity of competitive events that are focused on or incorporate the river.
4. Work with partners to develop self-guided and themed (e.g. natural history, Indigenous, historical, industry etc.) interpretive experiences on the river. Utilize a combination of interpretive signage and mobile device visitor guide application to share these experiences.



### 150 PADDLERS RETRACE THE PADDLE STROKES OF ALEXANDER MACKENZIE & DAVID THOMPSON

Volunteers of the Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society have organized a Canoe Brigade for summer of 2020 on the Peace River beginning July 8th on Rolla Road in British Columbia and arriving on July 13th in the Town of Peace River. The Brigade will consist of an estimated 150 paddlers in fifteen 25-foot canoes similar to the canoes used by the original voyageurs such as Alexander Mackenzie and David Thompson involved in Canada's fur trade in the late 1700's and early 1800's. The Brigade will travel a total of 240 kilometres with camping planned at designated campsites including Cotillion Park, Many Islands and at Maples Day Use Area adjacent to historic Dunvegan Provincial Park. Initial organization for celebrations involving the general public and the modern-day voyageurs have been organized for Dunvegan on July 11th and the Town of Peace River on July 13th.



### 7.3.8 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND / OR EXPANSION OF BUSINESSES TO DELIVER AND SUPPORT VISITOR EXPERIENCES

River visitation can stimulate business opportunities for local entrepreneurs. Many visitors to the river are seeking, and in some cases require, the services of local businesses. Whether its shuttles, local guides, accommodation providers, equipment rentals, fuel, food and beverage or simple souvenirs and merchandise, river-based recreation and tourism can support the development and expansion of local businesses. Recognizing the challenges associated with the region's short summer season, the development and delivery of supporting businesses needs to be strategically pursued and market driven. In addition, destination managers need to identify and take advantage of opportunities to promote and encourage visitors to support local businesses. A deliberate approach to ensuring that the services visitors desire exist and to ensuring that visitors are aware of and can easily and conveniently access those services will help to maximize the positive benefits of recreation and tourism on the Peace River to local businesses and the local economy. The following actions should be implemented to encourage and support the development and / or expansion of businesses the support visitor experiences.

#### ACTIONS

1. In line with the desired river experiences and visitor itineraries, work with partners create an inventory and review of existing river-based visitor services (e.g. guiding, transportation, accommodations, equipment rentals, supplies etc.). Gaps in existing services such as transportation, retail, equipment rental, food and beverage, fuel and others should be identified and opportunities to address those gaps should be determined. With this understanding, engage local businesses and explore opportunities to expand existing businesses or take steps to recruit new businesses to address identified service gaps. Provide support and assistance to these businesses as they work to grow or expand.
2. Integrate local businesses and service providers into all marketing channels and trip planning resources and visitor itineraries.
3. Develop and deliver information bulletins and educational sessions to local businesses to educate them on the potential business benefits of river based tourism, current visitation, target markets, their expectations, trends in river-based tourism and ways they can improve their services to maximize the business and deliver service excellence (e.g. SHiFT program).



### 7.3.9 ACTIVELY MANAGE VISITOR USE, IMPACTS & SAFETY

As visitation to the river grows, so can undesirable visitor impacts. Engagement participants expressed clear concerns about the potential for growing vandalism, litter, human waste, human-wildlife conflicts, wildfire and conflicts between different visitors and between visitors and private landowners, tenure holders and industry. These and other impacts may continue to grow without proactive visitor management. Though enhancing the quality of recreation experiences and tourism is desired, this must be done in a way that minimizes impacts on ecological values, historic resources, adjacent landowners / tenure holders / industry and the visitor experience.

Some visitors to the river are simply unaware of appropriate actions and rules, others lack the skills and knowledge of how to mitigate their impacts while some visitors are fully aware of the appropriate actions and rules but choose to ignore them. Recognizing this, effective visitor management relies on the application of a diversity of visitor management strategies and the selection of the appropriate strategy at the appropriate time.

As such, effort must be invested in developing and implementing a comprehensive visitor management program that includes:

- Proactive visitor education
- Targeted enforcement and officer presence
- Effective risk management and visitor safety information, and
- Monitoring

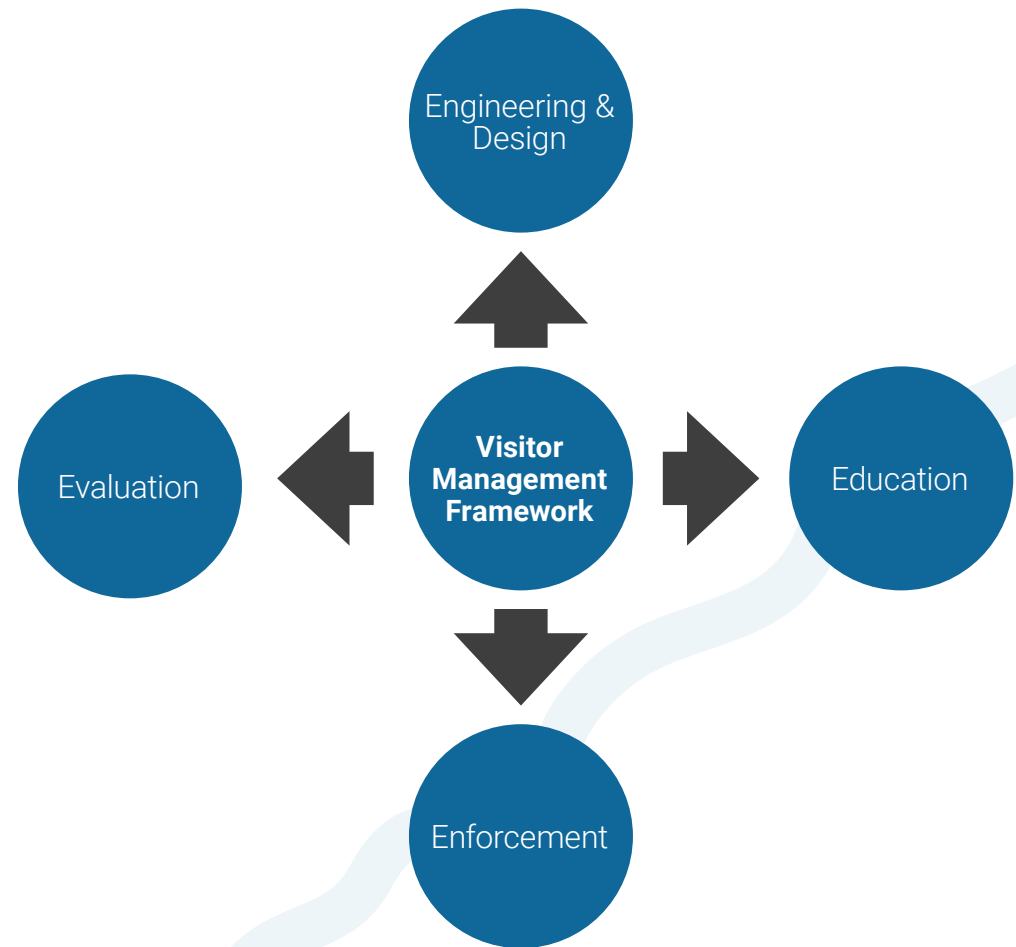


Figure 21 – Comprehensive Visitor Management Framework



To actively manage visitor use, impacts and safety, the following actions should be applied.

## ACTIONS

1. In accordance with the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council's visitor use management framework, prepare a visitor use management plan for the river.
2. Adopt and promote the Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics program ([www.leavenotrace.ca](http://www.leavenotrace.ca)) as the primary visitor education messaging for the river. Integrate Leave No Trace messages and principles into well places educational signage, website, mobile device app, navigation resource, trip planning and marketing materials.
3. Coordinate the delivery of Leave No Trace Awareness workshops with PVCRTS municipal staff, recreation organizations, tourism operators and others that are involved with management of visitation and visitor infrastructure on the river.
4. Work with partners to plan and deliver targeted education campaigns during peak season and special events to educate visitors on Leave No Trace practices.
5. Develop partnerships with local RCMP, Fish and Wildlife Officers and Conservation Officers to provide a presence during special events, peak season periods and in high problem areas to address recurring compliance issues.
6. Inform and educate visitors about river conditions, the skills and equipment they should have to enjoy the river safely and risks and hazards that they may encounter while visiting the river.
7. Though visitor infrastructure will be planned to avoid areas that pose unreasonable risks to visitors, conditions along the river and within sites can change rapidly. As such, PVCRTS should work with partners to develop an infrastructure inspection and documentation protocol including minimum infrastructure inspection periods to identify substandard conditions, hazards and maintenance requirements and procedures for documenting and filing inspection results and ensuing maintenance activities (Figure 22).
8. Develop a means for visitors to report maintenance problems, hazardous conditions and injuries sustained.
9. Work with local first responders along the river to ensure emergency response protocols for rescuing visitors from the river are prepared. Work with STRAR's air ambulance to identify, designate and communicate STARS landing sites.

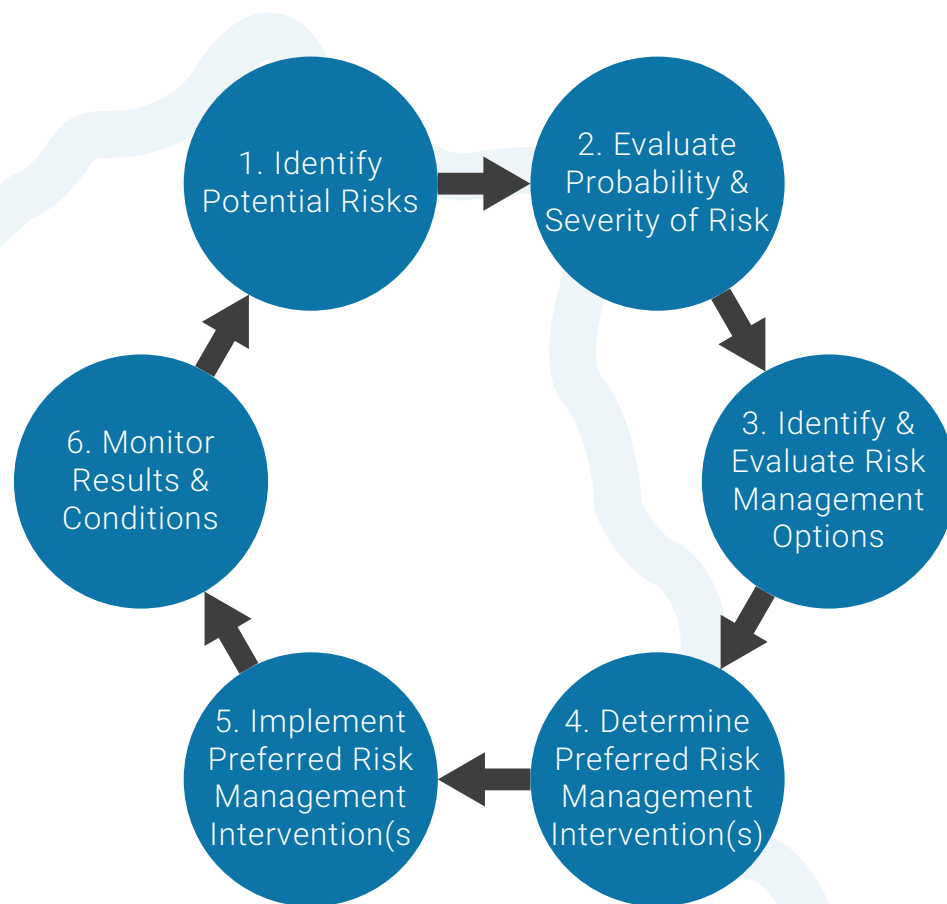


Figure 22 – Risk Management Process

### 7.3.10 MOTIVATE TARGET MARKETS TO EXPERIENCE THE RIVER & THE REGION TO SUPPORT IT

Achieving the personal, social and economic benefits that river-based recreation and tourism can bring to the region will depend on the ability of destination managers to compel residents and visitors to choose the Peace River experience. Visitors have many river experiences to choose from, as such, destination managers will need to work purposefully to motivate target markets to experience the Peace River. Though the short comings in the market readiness of river experiences are acknowledged, engagement participants clearly articulated the need to develop a compelling “Experience the Peace River” brand and to improve the marketing of river experiences. Today’s marketing materials are limited to existing tour operators and do not appear to target or consider fully independent travellers. In addition, existing marketing materials do not reflect or target visitors on each stage of their Pathway to Purchase. Future marketing efforts should be tailored to reach visitors at each stage of the Pathway to Purchase and, once

the brand is established, it will be important to work collaboratively with partners to ensure the brand promise is met.

In addition to building market interest in the Peace River, it is equally important to grow local support for and understanding of the benefits recreation and tourism on the river bring. Residents, elected officials, adjacent landowners need to be well informed and supportive of this plan and, ideally, become champions of its implementation. As knowledge and understanding of the benefits of recreation and tourism grow, so too should local support.

To motivate target markets to choose the Peace River and to build local and regional support, the following actions should be implemented.

#### PATHWAY TO PURCHASE

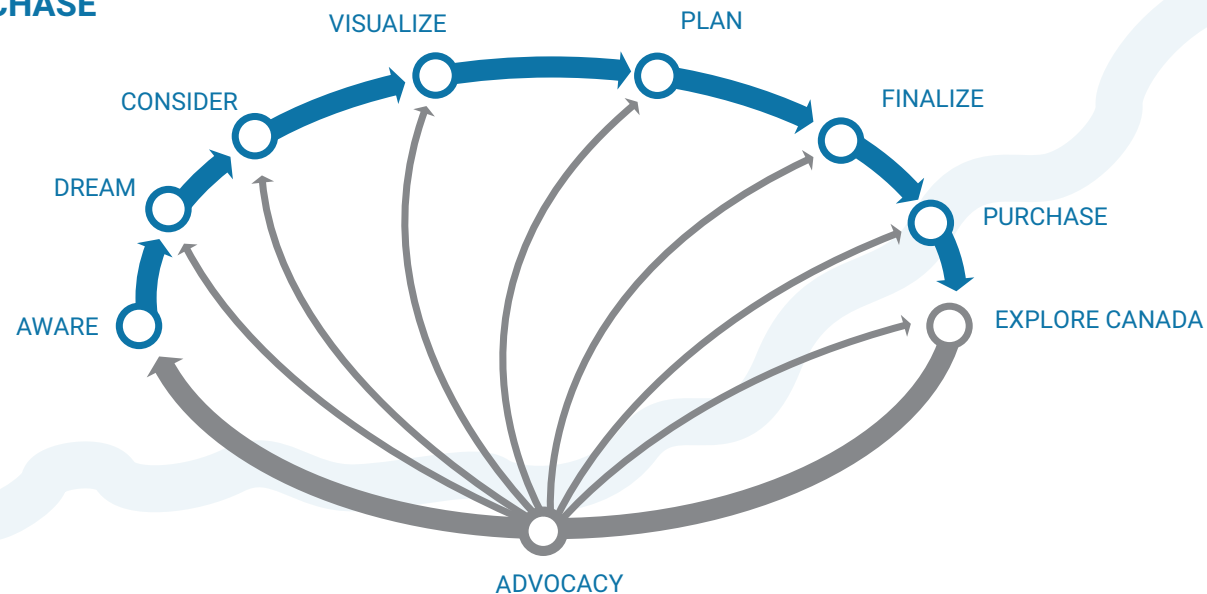


Figure 23 – Travel Alberta’s Path to Purchase (Source: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Travel Alberta, 2013)



## ACTIONS

1. Work with partners to build local, stakeholder and political awareness of and support for implementing this plan through briefings, presentations and partner meetings.
2. Develop a unique and visually powerful brand and identifier for the Peace River experience. Integrate this brand and identifier into all signage along the river, marketing channels and trip planning resources.
3. Work with Mighty Peace Tourism, tourism operators and other partners to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the river. Use the Pathway to Purchase to ensure that target markets are reached in each stage along their pathway to choosing a river experience. Emphasis should be placed on the following marketing tactics:
  - » From a marketing perspective, the best use of what are always hard-to-find funds would be the creation of a Peace River website. The new site would be linked to the [mightypeace.com](http://mightypeace.com) website. It would however, specifically speak to the things that make the river attractive including the history, flora and fauna, campsite infrastructure, multiple itinerary options, and off-river activities such as hiking, family-friendly current and ease of access/egress. It is interesting to note that there are very few rivers in western Canada, if any, who have specifically created a marketing plan aimed at this target audience. It would also speak to all the logistical questions that potential visitors might have including providing specific “river trip itineraries” that would provide 1-day, 2-day, 3-day and 7-day trip suggestions. It would answer all the potential questions a person might have about each option, including nearby accommodation, distances to major gateway cities/towns, emergency-related information such as local hospitals and search and rescue teams, grocery stores, retail equipment shops and restaurants. Information specific to paddling, such as rental companies, and jet-boating, such as local repair shops and fuel stations, would also be included. A large, colour map that is easily downloaded as a PDF and/or printed off and laminated that shows all of the camping spots and areas of historical and natural interest should be included as well.
4. Update tourism marketing materials and signage at major attractions such as Dunvegan Provincial Park to better promote both fully independent and guided river-based visitor experiences.
5. Regularly monitor visitor attitudes and sentiments toward the Peace River experience and respond accordingly.





### 7.3.11 GROW AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS, STEWARDSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers and volunteer organizations have made extensive contributions to the development and management of visitor infrastructure along the river. Partnerships, volunteering and stewardship will be equally, if not more, important as PVCRTS moves forward with implementing this plan. Implementation will be a team effort and PVCRTS will need to work with partners to support, grow and strengthen partnerships, volunteerism and stewardship. To do so, the following actions should be implemented.

#### ACTIONS

1. Undertake a review of the existing partnership model being used by each PVCRTS member municipalities to support the management and operations of campgrounds, boat launches and river access points. Work to standardize the partnership requirements. During the review, evaluate the pros, cons and feasibility of establishing a “Peace River Recreation Stewardship Group” that combines all current partnership organizations into an operationally focused cross-jurisdictional stewardship entity. Such an entity may be better positioned to achieve consistency in the visitor experiences, increase the political strength and voice for recreation in the river valley as well as increase resourcing, capacity and the success rate for grant pursuits.
2. Continue to maintain and support dedicated caretakers at each of the major campgrounds. Investigate the potential of establishing and supporting caretakers to steward the minor campgrounds and popular random camping sites along the river.
3. Work with partners to plan, support and host regular stewardship events along the river. Stewardship days would be focused on river clean-ups, campground, trails and boat launch improvements, visitor education and outreach etc.
4. Recognizing that the river extends well beyond the BC border to Town of Peace River study area, PVCRTS should engage neighbouring jurisdictions to discuss opportunities to prepare similar visitor experience plans and extend the connected visitor experience west and east.





### 7.3.12 STRENGTHEN THE PROFILE OF PVCRTS AND ENHANCE RESOURCING AND CAPACITY

The PVCRTS has existed for 31 years. Despite its long existence, the recognition and prominence of the organization has fluctuated during this period. Given the regional cross jurisdiction nature of the river, and recognizing that visitors do not recognize nor care about jurisdictional boundaries, there is a need to establish a clear and coordinated cross jurisdiction leadership structure to advance and ensure effective and consistent implementation of this plan. Implementing this plan and improving the recreation and tourism quality of the river will require dedicated resourcing and capacity from PVCRTS member municipalities, recreational clubs and other partners. Engagement participants were clear, capital and operational resourcing and capacity has not been enough nor has been consistently invested along the river. If this plan is to be implemented and the benefits realized, dedicated and secure capital and operational investments are required. These investments will serve as a stimulus that better enables the region and local communities to realize greater benefits from recreation and tourism.

To strengthen the profile of the PVCRTS and to enhance resourcing and capacity, the following actions should be implemented.

#### ACTIONS

1. Undertake a review of the mandate, objectives and governance structure of the PVCRTS to confirm the organization's mandate and governance supports the implementation of this plan and its role in implementing this plan. During the review, consideration should be given to the involvement of Alberta Environment and Parks (Parks and Public Lands) in the organizational structure. Given that the current organizational structure is primarily senior administrators and elected officials or recreation board members from member municipalities and given the interests in strengthening collaboration, the review should determine how recreation organizations, representative recreational users, tourism industry and other partners can be better involved to contribute to, inform and influence the organization.
2. Recognizing that the river is a regionally valued recreational asset that is enjoyed by residents of many municipalities and understanding that investment in visitor infrastructure is investment in the tourism industry and supports strengthening and diversifying the regional economy, PVCRTS members should establish a regional cost sharing formula and cost sharing agreement to ensure a dedicated base level of capital and operational funding is available to support partners with the development and maintenance of boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds and attractions.
3. Pursue federal, provincial and local government and other grants to support the development, upgrade and operation of visitor infrastructure.
4. Investigate opportunities to develop a "River Enhancement Fund" that can accept donations, corporate contributions and other financial contributions and be used to develop, upgrade and operate visitor infrastructure.
5. Establish a list of priority projects and promote these projects to corporate and other organizations who are seeking opportunities to make in-kind contributions to the enhancement of the river.

### 7.3.13 CELEBRATE PROGRESS AND THE BENEFITS FROM RECREATION AND TOURISM ALONG THE RIVER

Regularly reviewing progress made towards implementing this plan increases accountability and provides an opportunity for PVCRTS and partners to review what has been achieved, understand what wasn't achieved and why and set priorities for the future. Sharing implementation successes and progress towards achieving the desired outcomes will help to build and maintain stakeholder and elected official support for recreation and tourism along the rivers. Celebrating these successes and sharing the benefits can inspire partners and volunteers to get involved while also providing valuable insights that can increase interest from potential funders and grant programs. To celebrate progress made on implementing the plan and the benefits that are being realized by local communities, the following actions should be implemented.

#### ACTIONS

1. Design and regularly implement a statistically reliable visitor use study to understand visitor:
  - a. Origins
  - b. Timing of travel (day, week, month, season)
  - c. Demographics
  - d. Group size and composition
  - e. Length of trip by time period (weekday, weekend, long-weekend)
  - f. Activities
  - g. Motivations
  - h. Spending
  - i. Satisfaction
  - j. Mode of access to the river
  - k. Start and end of trip locations
  - l. Other attractions and activities in the region the visitor had or plans to experience

2. Design and regular undertake and economic impact study to evaluate and monitor change in the direct, indirect and induced economic impacts of recreation and tourism along the river.
3. Work with Mighty Peace Tourism and partners to develop and distribute a state of Experience the Peace River report every two years to summarize and celebrate the progress made on implementation of the plan, visitation statistics, length of stay, visitor spending, direct / indirect and induced economic benefits, businesses expanded / created, employment, visitor satisfaction and success stories.



## 7.4 IMPLICATIONS OF FUTURE INDUSTRIAL USE ON RECREATION & TOURISM

The Peace River and its valley are a multi-use land base. Current and future land uses such as hydro electric development, forestry, grazing, oil and gas, residential development etc. can have implications on recreation use as well as tourism potential of the river.

The development of the Site C dam and the proposed Amisk hold the most significant potential to affect current recreational use and infrastructure along the river. If built, Amisk will flood numerous boat launches and campgrounds up river of the dam and have potential to alter / limit / prevent access to the river, alter the recreation and tourism setting, change the visual appeal in some locations and further alter the river's flow regime and water quality. Rapid changes in water levels will continue to pose safety risks to visitors (boats and canoe tie-ups, navigation) and changes to winter flow regimes and increases in potential flows have, and are likely to continue, to impact boat launches and shoreline recreation infrastructure. Changes such as these will be detrimental to the current and future recreation and tourism potential of the river. At the same time, the Amisk project may create reservoirs that could become recreation and tourism attractions for an entirely different visitor.

Other land uses such as forestry (though not permitted below the break of bank), residential development and grazing have the potential to alter the visual appeal of the valley, alter the recreation and tourism setting, limit or prevent access to shoreline and can result in growing user conflicts. Careful management of overlapping land uses, scenic resources and the recreation and tourism setting is needed if the recreation and tourism potential of the river is to be realized.



## 7.5 TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

The following implementation plan will guide the general timing of implementing the identified actions. The descriptions of each action have been abbreviated in the implementation table. The description of each actions should be reviewed in the plan for full details.

Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
Enhance Existing Boat Launches and River Access Points			
1. Maintain a network of well distributed boat launches that provide reasonable access to the north and south sides of the river. The network should allow at least 75% of PVCRTS member municipalities to reach at least one boat launch within a 60-minute drive	PVCRTS, Recreation Organizations	AB Transportation, AB Environment & Parks	Ongoing
2. Upgrade and improve the quality and condition of existing boat launches and ensure amenities and signage are consistently provided.	PVCRTS Municipalities, Recreation Organizations		Short-term
3. Work collaboratively with the Peace River Regional District and encourage them to implement the Blackfoot Regional Park Plan to enhance the park and to identify a new boat launch location within or near Blackfoot Regional Park.	PVCRTS		Short-term
4. Work with the appropriate land managers to establish the following sites as formal non-motorized river access points: » Dunvegan Provincial Park » Paul’s Market Garden » Kieyho Park » Tangent Park » Strong Creek	PVCRTS	AB Environment & Parks	Short-term
Enhance and Diversify Overnight Experiences			
1. Maintain a network of major campgrounds that are accessible from both the river and by vehicles, are appropriately distributed and meet or exceed visitor expectations.	Campground Operators, PVCRTS		Ongoing
2. Evaluate the feasibility and undertake designs for the development of a network of minor campgrounds.	PVCRTS	AB Environment & Parks	Short-term
3. Undertake a campsite optimization study should be undertaken to determine the optimal number of campsites that need to be provided at each campground to meet current and anticipated peak period demands of both river and vehicle based overnight visitors.	PVCRTS, Campground Operators		Catalyst



Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
4. Following completion of the campsite optimization study, undertake general campsite maintenance in the Carters Camp Campground and Strong Creek Campground to improve the visitor experience.	Campground Operators, PVCRTS		Short-term
5. Undertake a review of the current functionality and design of Carter's Campground to determine the pros, cons and feasibility of decommissioning the campground loop north of Montney Creek and consolidating those campsites into an expanded area south of Montney Creek.	Campground Operators, PVCRTS	AB Environment & Parks	Mid-term
6. De-regulate and decommission the existing drive in campground at Elk Island Park.	MD of Peace	AB Environment & Parks	Catalyst
7. Undertake a feasibility study to determine the viability of developing a network of publicly accessible and primitive comfort camping units along the river including the cabin at Kieyho Park.	PVCRTS	Tourism Operators, Mighty Peace Tourism	Mid-term
8. Confirm the suitability of identified potential random campsites and determine at what water levels the campsites will be available. Once confirmed, potential random campsite locations should be incorporated into trip planning information, mobile device application, maps etc.	PVCRTS	Recreation Clubs	Catalyst
9. As campground amenities such as day use shelters, bandstands and stages, playgrounds and horseshoe pits reach the end of their lifecycle, thoroughly evaluate the need and appropriateness of replacing these assets.	PVCRTS, Campground Operators		Ongoing
<b>Improve and Consistently Provide Visitor Comfort and Convenience Amenities</b>			
1. Work with municipal and recreation partners to develop a comfort and convenience amenities design standard manual.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations, Tourism Operators, Mighty Peace Tourism	Catalyst
2. Work to ensure all boat launches, river access points, campgrounds and attractions contain the necessary comfort and convenience amenities as specified in the manual. Existing amenities will be replaced with the new standardized amenities in line with lifecycle replacement scheduling and as resource are available.	PVCRTS, Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations		Ongoing

Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
Enhance Signage			
1. Prepare signage design guidelines that provide a consistent and powerful visual aesthetic that enhances their experience.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations, Tourism Operators, Mighty Peace Tourism	Catalyst
2. Upon completion of the signage design manual, and as resources are available, the PVCRTs and its partners will work to install appropriate signage at all boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds and attractions.	PVCRTS, Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations		Ongoing
3. As existing signage reaches the end of its lifecycle, it will be replaced with new signage that meets the Peace River signage design standards.	PVCRTS, Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations		Ongoing
Connect Visitor to On and Off-River Activities and Attractions			
1. Work with appropriate land managers to enhance the supply of land-based hiking trails that are accessible from the river and from major campgrounds and boat launches.	PVCRTS, Recreation Organizations	AB Environment & Parks	Mid-term
2. Identify and promote the location of the best on-river and nearby (within short hike from the river) visitor attractions.	PVCRTS, Mighty Peace Tourism	Tourism Operators	Short-term
3. Package and promote unique and market ready off-river attractions, which are beyond walking distance from the river, in visitor itineraries and guided experiences.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst
Make it Easier for Visitors to Experience the River			
1. Develop and launch an “Experience the Peace River” website.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst
2. Work with partners to develop and maintain a mobile device-based river guide app that provides essential trip planning information for visitors, on-river navigation showing the location boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds, potential random campsites by water level, emergency cabins, water sources, river hazards etc. Using geo-fences, the app should also integrate the self-guide interpretive experiences and other features that enhance the visitor’s experience and understanding and appreciation of the river.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst
3. Work with partners to develop and maintain a high quality and accurate hard copy trip planning and on-river navigation quality guidebook.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Mid-term
4. Work with partners to develop downloadable georeferenced and hard copy maps that enable confident navigation by visitors.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst



Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
5. As infrastructure and information actions in this plan are implemented, develop and promote a diversity of single and multi-day, single activity and multi-activity, visitor itineraries that appeal to visitors seeking easy to more adventurous excursions and every-thing in between.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst
<b>Animate the River Experience</b>			
1. Continue to support the delivery of existing river-focused events such as the Jet Boat Races, Many Islands Country Music Festival, Voyageur Canoe Brigade etc.	Mighty Peace Tourism, Recreation Organizations	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators	Ongoing
2. Encourage and support Mighty Peace Tourism, recreation clubs, tourism operators, partners and others to develop a coordinated schedule of community-based events on, or featuring, the river.	Mighty Peace Tourism, Recreation Organizations	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators	Mid-term
3. Encourage and support Mighty Peace Tourism, recreation clubs, tourism operators, partners and others to enhance the diversity of competitive events that are focused on or incorporate the river.	Mighty Peace Tourism, Recreation Organizations	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators	Mid-term
4. Work with partners to develop self-guided and themed (e.g. natural history, Indigenous, historical, industry etc.) interpretive experiences on the river. Utilize a combination of interpretive signage and mobile device visitor guide application to share these experiences.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators	Mid-term
<b>Encourage and Support the Development and / or Expansion of Businesses to Deliver and Support Visitor Experiences</b>			
1. Work with partners create an inventory and review of existing river-based visitor services (e.g. guiding, transportation, accommodations, equipment rentals, supplies etc.). Gaps in existing services such as transportation, retail, equipment rental, food and beverage, fuel and others should be identified and opportunities to address those gaps should be determined.	Mighty Peace Tourism, PVCRTS	Tourism Operators	Mid-term
2. Integrate local businesses and service providers into all marketing channels and trip planning resources and visitor itineraries.	Mighty Peace Tourism	Tourism Operators, Municipalities	Short-term
3. Develop and deliver information bulletins and educational sessions to local businesses to educate them on the potential business benefits of river based tourism, current visitation, target markets, their expectations, trends in river-based tourism and ways they can improve their services to maximize the business and deliver service excellence.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators	Mid-term

Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
Actively Manage Visitor Use, Impacts and Safety			
1. In accordance with the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council’s visitor use management framework, prepare a visitor use management plan for the river.	PVCRTS	Recreation Organizations, Tourism Operators, Mighty Peace Tourism	Long-term
2. Adopt and promote the Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics program (www.leavenotrace.ca) as the primary visitor education messaging for the river.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations, Mighty Peace Tourism, Tourism Operators	Short-term
3. Coordinate the delivery of Leave No Trace Awareness workshops.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations, Mighty Peace Tourism, Tourism Operators	Short-term
4. Work with partners to plan and deliver targeted education campaigns during peak season and special events to educate visitors on Leave No Trace practices.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations, Mighty Peace Tourism, Tourism Operators	Short-term
5. Develop partnerships with local RCMP, Fish and Wildlife Officers and Conservation Officers to provide a presence during special events, peak season periods and in high problem areas to address recurring compliance issues.	PVCRTS	AB Environment & Parks, RCMP	Mid-term
6. Inform and educate visitors about river conditions, the skills and equipment they should have to enjoy the river safely and risks and hazards that they may encounter while visiting the river.	Mighty Peace Tourism, PVCRTS	Recreation Organizations, Tourism Operators	Catalyst
7. Work with partners to develop an infrastructure inspection and documentation protocol including minimum infrastructure inspection periods to identify substandard conditions, hazards and maintenance requirements and procedures for documenting and filing inspection results and ensuing maintenance activities.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations	Short-term
8. Develop a means for visitors to report maintenance problems, hazardous conditions and injuries sustained.	Mighty Peace Tourism, PVCRTS		Short-term
9. Work with local first responders along the river to ensure emergency response protocols for rescuing visitors from the river are prepared. Work with STRAR’s air ambulance to identify, designate and communicate STARS landing sites.	PVCRTS		Short-term



Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
Motivate Target Markets to Experience the River & the Region to Support It			
1. Work with partners to build local, stakeholder and political awareness of and support for implementing this plan through briefings, presentations and partner meetings.	PVCRTS	Mighty Peace Tourism	Catalyst
2. Develop a unique and visually powerful brand and identifier for the Peace River experience. Integrate this brand and identifier into all signage along the river, marketing channels and trip planning resources.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Catalyst
3. Work with Mighty Peace Tourism, tourism operators and other partners to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the river. Use the Pathway to Purchase to ensure that target markets are reached in each stage along their pathway to choosing a river experience.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Short-term
4. Update tourism marketing materials and signage at major attractions such as Dunvegan Provincial Park to better promote both fully independent and guided river-based visitor experiences.	Mighty Peace Tourism, AB Environment & Parks		Catalyst
5. Regularly monitor visitor attitudes and sentiments toward the Peace River experience and respond accordingly.	Mighty Peace Tourism	Tourism Operators	Ongoing
Grow and Strengthen Partnerships, Stewardship and Volunteerism			
1. Undertake a review of the existing partnership model being used by each PVCRTS member municipalities to support the management and operations of campgrounds, boat launches and river access points. Work to standardize the partnership requirements. During the review, evaluate the pros, cons and feasibility of establishing a “Peace River Recreation Stewardship Group” that combines all current partnership organizations into an operationally focused cross-jurisdictional stewardship entity.	PVCRTS	Recreation Organizations, Campground Operators	Short-term
2. Continue to maintain and support dedicated caretakers at each of the major campgrounds. Investigate the potential of establishing and supporting caretakers to steward the minor campgrounds and popular random camping sites along the river.	PVCRTS	Campground Operators, Recreation Organizations	Mid-term
3. Work with partners to plan, support and host regular stewardship events along the river.	PVCRTS, Recreation Organizations	Mighty Peace Tourism, Tourism Operators	Mid-term
4. Recognizing that the river extends well beyond the BC border to Town of Peace River study area, PVCRTS should engage neighbouring jurisdictions to discuss opportunities to prepare similar visitor experience plans and extend the connected visitor experience west and east.	PVCRTS, Mighty Peace Tourism	Recreation Organizations, Tourism Operators	Mid-term

Strategies & Actions	Accountabilities		Priority
	Lead	Support	
Strengthen the Profile of PVCRTS and Enhance Resourcing and Capacity			
1. Undertake a review of the mandate, objectives and governance structure of the PVCRTS to confirm the organization's mandate and governance supports the implementation of this plan and its role in implementing this plan.	PVCRTS	Mighty Peace Tourism, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Short-term
2. Establish a regional cost sharing formula and cost sharing agreement to ensure a dedicated base level of capital and operational funding is available to support partners with the development and maintenance of boat launches, river access points, major and minor campgrounds and attractions.	PVCRTS	Urban Municipalities	Ongoing
3. Pursue federal, provincial and local government and other grants to support the development, upgrade and operation of visitor infrastructure.	PVCRTS, Recreation Organizations		Ongoing
4. Investigate opportunities to develop a "River Enhancement Fund".	PVCRTS	Mighty Peace Tourism	Long-term
5. Establish a list of priority projects and promote these projects to corporate and other organizations who are seeking opportunities to make in-kind contributions to the enhancement of the river.	PVRTS		Mid-term
Celebrate Progress and the Benefits from Recreation and Tourism Along the River			
1. Design and regularly implement a statistically reliable visitor use study.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Mid-term
2. Design and regularly undertake and economic impact study to evaluate and monitor change in the direct, indirect and induced economic impacts of recreation and tourism along the river.	Mighty Peace Tourism	PVCRTS, Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Mid-term
3. Work with Mighty Peace Tourism and partners to develop and distribute a state of Experience the Peace River report every two years to summarize and celebrate the progress made on implementation of the plan, visitation statistics, length of stay, visitor spending, direct / indirect and induced economic benefits, businesses expanded / created, employment, visitor satisfaction and success stories.	Mighty Peace Tourism, PVCRTS	Tourism Operators, Recreation Organizations	Mid-term



# Appendices

## A. ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON COMPARATOR RIVERS AND MARKET SEARCH

The internet searches did not look exhaustively into the back pages of the web results. This was done intentionally as very few potential visitors will be going past page two of any search they are completing. We are looking to see what results come up on the first and second pages of any search as this provides us with an idea of how well positioned and how popular that term/experience is.

### IMPRESSIONS / SUMMATION OF RESEARCH INTO COMPARATOR RIVERS AND PEACE RIVER

- The Yukon, McKenzie, North Saskatchewan, Athabasca and Peace Rivers were Googled using various search terms from the point of view of someone looking for information to plan a multi-day canoe or power boating trip.
- The Yukon River, by far, has the most information available from companies providing guided trips, to personal trip reports, to historical accounts, to territorial government destination marketing websites.
- The Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan and Athabasca River provide a similar amount of river paddling info – primarily the odd personal trip report/blog along with info on a local outfitter providing gear rental (often just one option available).

Examples of Search Terms Searched:

- "Paddling the Peace (Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Yukon) River"
- "Peace (Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan, Athabasca Yukon) River Canoe Trip"
- "Peace (Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Yukon) River Logistics"
- "Jet-boating the Peace (Mackenzie, North Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Yukon) River"

In general, the different search terms did not turn up vastly different information. In some cases, particular results linked to other websites that were reviewed for further info but in most cases, they were not a hidden treasure trove of information. After reviewing the information found using these search terms, the following generalities about visitors to these rivers can be made overall:

- The Yukon River Paddler is both a do-it-yourself and guided trip paddler and their knowledge of the river is likely tied to common knowledge because of its historical significance;
- The Mackenzie River Paddler is a do-it-yourself paddler seeking a long trip on a remote, non-technical river (solo, with a partner, with a family) and the historical significance does not seem to be the primary motivator rather its length, remoteness and non-technical nature seem to be the primary draws;
- The North Saskatchewan Paddler can be divided into two groups: Day Tripper (guided or unguided) and Multi-Day Tripper (guided or non-guided). The Day Trippers are centred around populated areas (Edmonton, Rocky Mountain House, Nordegg) and the Multi-Day Trippers are looking for a short to mid-length trip with road access (2 – 7 days or so) on a relatively non-technical river and again, the historical significance does not seem to play a huge factor in the decision to paddle it;
- The Athabasca River Paddler is mostly either a hard core whitewater enthusiast interested in the Slave Rapids or a long distance wilderness traveler;
- The Peace River paddler is generally a do-it-yourselfer looking for a short to mid length wilderness trip on a non-technical river with convenient road access and egress;
- For the Yukon, North Saskatchewan and Peace Rivers, "locals" make up a large percentage of the river travellers;
- The Yukon also attracts visitors from away (national and international); and
- The Mackenzie and Athabasca tend to attract visitors from away (national or international).



- Google Search – “remote northern Canadian canoe trips”
  - » Page 1 revealed a couple of ‘best of’ lists (7 best and 12 best), a few outfitter websites, a Paddle Canada link and a Yukon Wild link (wilderness tourism association of Yukon marketing site).
    - The Mackenzie River made the top 12 list
    - None of the rivers made the top 7 list

a more detailed visitor profile using current information available on this river.

#### Overall Impressions on Marketing of the Four Comparator and Lower Athabasca River

- The Yukon River has, by far, the biggest digital presence combined with digital marketing support from its Territorial Government’s destination marketing and wilderness tourism industry association’s digital marketing programs.
- A designation as a Canadian Heritage River does not generate increased awareness of the river when doing an organic search of these rivers (only discovered what rivers had sections with this designation when the Canadian Heritage River site itself, was reviewed).
- The current digital presence of the other 3 comparator rivers is generally quite weak especially in terms of marketing the rivers as a go-to destination:
  - » It wouldn’t take much to raise the profile of the lower Athabasca River, if it is deemed to be worthy as a wilderness tripping destination, with a digital marketing plan; and
  - » Travel Yukon and Yukon Wild have purchased Google Ads that pop up on pages that are not Yukon-specific, suggesting that putting their sites in front of searchers interested in finding information on other rivers, is worthwhile for keeping their destination/rivers front of mind.

## THE BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### INFORMATION FOUND VIA BACKGROUND RESEARCH ONLINE INTO POSSIBLE COMPARATOR RIVERS

#### Yukon River

- WH – Dawson approx. 600 km
- Thirty Mile section is a Canadian Heritage River (from end of Lake Laberge to confluence with the Teslin River, 48 km stretch)
- Moving water with two rapids (five finger/rink – both runnable/skirtable)
- Multiple put-ins or take-outs (Marsh Lake Dam, Whitehorse, Burma Road, Lake Laberge, Little Salmon, Carmacks, Minto, Dawson)
- Day trips or multi-day
- Lake paddling – Lake Laberge 30+k long, can be wavy, headwinds or tailwinds
- Historic route
- Artifacts and abandoned settlements along river
- Some civilization (towns, homesteads, ferry crossings)
- Some fishing
- Boreal forest
- Low hills
- Granite cliffs
- Sandy cliffs
- Some wildlife – moose, bear, sheep
- Sections with islands/gravel bars for camping
- Guided Trips offered by: Terre Boreale (15 days), Sea to Sky (8 days), Timberwolf Tours (11, 14 or 22 days), Up North (19 days), Ruby Range (20 days), Yukon Wild (9 days)

#### Mackenzie River

- 1800 km, longest river in Canada
- Multiple towns to go through/put-ins and take outs
- Hay River to Inuvik 4 – 7 weeks, Hay River to Fort Providence 4 days – road access, Fort Providence to Fort Simpson 8-9 days (road access), Fort Simpson to Wrigley 5 days road access, Wrigley to Norman Wells 10-14 days no road access, Norman Wells to Inuvik 10 days no road access at start, Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk 4-7 days depending on wind

- Lake paddling – Great Slave Lake when starting in Hay River – can be wavy, headwinds or tailwinds
- Canadian shield, northern Rocky Mountains, Tundra, Boreal and Taiga forests,
- Moving water but variable
- No rapids
- hit and miss fishing
- Bird viewing
- Sections of islands for camping
- Width as great as a few miles in places

#### North Saskatchewan River

- 1200 km from Columbia Icefield to the AB-SK boundary
- historic fur trade route
- eastern slopes of Rockies, foothills (hilly and rough with forest and muskeg), plains-parkland divide with occasional stretches of prairie, Edmonton, prairie – river is wide and shallow, PA to SR Forks has many rapids and much more tree cover
- Nordegg to Rocky Mountain House – mix of class I and II rapids – easily avoided if required – about 100 km
- Road access points
- Nordegg to Drayton Valley – class I and II, foothills and forested valleys
- DV to Devon – class I – log jams, sweepers, semi-wilderness and pastoral scenery, good fishing and wildlife
- Devon to Edmonton – class I
- Edmonton to Saskatchewan Boundary – class I

#### Athabasca River (Upper and Lower)

- Part of the Trans Canada Trail Arctic Water Route
- Total Length 1232 km
- Significant historical values, used by David Thomson to open up western trade route
- Lake Athabasca Delta largest freshwater delta in the world
- The river is not yet recognized by current or “would be” visitors as a major recreation resource or tourism attraction.
- The river is seen by trip organizers as “hard to travel and hard to access”.

- Visitation replicates the overall visitation to Northern Alberta – local and regional visitors remain the largest segments followed by the long-haul domestic, US and international visitors in that order.
- Jet boating is the most popular activity on the river.
- Paddling on the river is limited, sporadic and often occurs as an organized, local paddling trip or training program.
- Long distance river expeditions do occur but are limited in number.
- 15 rapids interspersed on Upper section require intermediate to advanced skills
- Lower River described as slow and buggy with few good camping spots

## EXAMPLES OF FURTHER DIGITAL INVESTIGATION – COMPARATOR RIVER RESEARCH

### YUKON RIVER

#### Google Search Term – “paddling the Yukon River”

- Multiple pages of information from outfitters pages for guided and non-guided trips, rental packages to several personal trip reports/accounts/tips etc. for single and multi-day options;
- Very easy for a visitor to gain enough knowledge to plan a day trip or multi-day trip / guided or unguided with their own or rented gear – very user friendly;
- Travel Yukon (Territorial Gov’t Tourism Department’s Destination Marketing URL) <http://www.travelyukon.com/Plan/Itineraries/Wilderness-Wildlife/Classic-Yukon-Paddling> (sponsored Google Ad); and
- Yukon Wild (Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon’s marketing arm) <http://www.yukonwild.com/canoeing/>.

#### Google Search Term – “Yukon river canoe trip”

- As above, much information can be found that is very helpful for potential visitors including multiple river outfitter options

#### Google Search Term – “Yukon river power boating”

- No relevant information. Yukon River Quest (paddling race) and the history of paddle wheelers and steamboats most mentioned

#### Google Search Term – “Yukon river jet-boating”

- Only relevant information found was Fairbanks Jet Boat Adventures an Alaskan outfitter operating on the Yukon River in AK



## MACKENZIE RIVER

Google Search Term 1 – “paddling the Mackenzie River”

The first page of results is the most relevant and even then, paid ad sites for other rivers pop up (Yukon River primarily).

- No guided trip options;
- Self guided/rental information from Canoe North ([www.canoenorth.ca](http://www.canoenorth.ca)) - great reviews for this service on Trip Advisor, good PDF document on what to expect when paddling the river, easy for someone to plan a trip using their services;
- News pieces (cbc, outsideonline);
- Guide books – The Mackenzie River Guide ([mackenzieriverguide.ca](http://mackenzieriverguide.ca));
- A few personal trip reports;
- Dehcho Paddlers Association ([www.paddlemackenzie.org](http://www.paddlemackenzie.org)) advertises itself as providing all the information you need to plan a Mackenzie River paddling trip, but it is actually a little light on info. Does provide contacts for Canoe North and notes the series of 1:250,000 topo maps required, several trip reports from other paddlers, some info on food preparation, bear awareness, and a book list of relevant reading; and
- Spectacular NWT (Territorial Gov't Tourism Dept's Destination Marketing URL) comes up on page 1 with a link to this PDF document: [http://spectacularnwt.com/sites/default/files/mackriver\\_0.pdf](http://spectacularnwt.com/sites/default/files/mackriver_0.pdf). However, when looking at [spectacularnwt.com](http://spectacularnwt.com) itself, the Mackenzie River is not one of the promoted rivers noted in the paddling section, nor does this pdf come up when Mackenzie River is entered as a search term on [spectacularnwt.com](http://spectacularnwt.com).

Google Search Term – “Mackenzie river canoe trip”

- As above

Google Search Term – “Mackenzie River Power Boating”

- NorthStar Adventures website. Outfitter out of Yellowknife that provides jet-boat tours on the Mackenzie [www.northstaradventures.ca](http://www.northstaradventures.ca)
- [www.spectacularnwt.com](http://www.spectacularnwt.com) NWT Tourism website that speaks to “pleasure boating” on NWT rivers and lakes.

Google Search Term – “Mackenzie River Jet-Boating”

- North Nahanni Naturalist Lodge website. Lodge provides jet-boat tours on the Mackenzie [www.northnahannilodge.com](http://www.northnahannilodge.com)
- North Star Adventures – as listed above.

## NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER

Google Search – “paddling the North Saskatchewan river”

- Lots of references (primary and secondary) to Mark Lund's Guide for Alberta Paddlers book;
- First page of results provides a mix of relevant info: guided, unguided, rental info, trip reports;
- [www.canoehheads.com](http://www.canoehheads.com) - canoe rental/shuttle service out of Edmonton for self-guided day trips on North Saskatchewan;
- Canadian Canoe Routes, My CCR website ([www.mycrr.com/content/north-saskatchewan-river-basin](http://www.mycrr.com/content/north-saskatchewan-river-basin)) has several broken links listed under North Saskatchewan River so not much help on this page;
- This page is better: <http://www.mycrr.com/phpbbforum/viewtopic.php?f=109&t=31720>
  - » North Saskatchewan River, Reach #1:  
Ramparts Creek to Preacher's Point  
52 km  
2 days (or two 1-day paddles)  
Tripping river for intermediate paddlers; portage required  
Great mountain scenery, very pleasant river paddling
  - » North Saskatchewan River, Reach #2:  
Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House  
106 km  
3 to 4 days  
Whitewater & tripping river for intermediate paddlers  
Alberta's premier whitewater (season-long), long-weekend camping run
  - » North Saskatchewan River, Reach #3:  
Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley  
133 km  
2 to 3 days  
Intermediate tripping river, but with log jams and sweepers  
Good camping, modest whitewater; fur-trade history
  - » North Saskatchewan River, Reach #4:  
Drayton Valley to Devon  
130 km  
Half day to 5 days  
Novice tripping river

Camping, semi-wilderness, pastoral scenery, good fishing. Wildlife  
[http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/NSask ... oDevon.pdf](http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/NSask...oDevon.pdf) or <http://www.paddlealberta.org/pdf/trips/NSaskDraytonToDevon.pdf> - good pdf with lots of info (map details, distances, camping info, rental/shuttle info)

» North Saskatchewan River, Reach #5:

Devon to Capilano Park, Edmonton  
50 km

Half day to 2 days

Tripping river for intermediate paddlers at high flow rates, novice at low

Wonderful day trips, great vistas or river valley, city skyline

[http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/devon ... monton.pdf](http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/devon...monton.pdf) or <http://www.paddlealberta.org/pdf/trips/devontocapilanoparkedmonton.pdf>

(map details, distances, camping info, rental/shuttle info)

» North Saskatchewan River, Reach #6:

Edmonton to the SK border

330 km

6 to 10 days

Novice tripping river

Scenic pastoral vistas; good wildlife and birding opportunities; history

[http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/nsask ... undary.pdf](http://members.shaw.ca/marksguide/nsask...undary.pdf) or <http://www.paddlealberta.org/pdf/trips/nsaskedmtosaskboundary.pdf> (map details,

distances, camping info, rental/shuttle info)

- [www.cwexpeditions.net](http://www.cwexpeditions.net) - Canadian Wilderness Expeditions guided 5-day trips Nordegg to Rocky Mountain House;
- [www.edmontoncanoe.com](http://www.edmontoncanoe.com) - Edmonton Canoe offers day trips on the North Sask in Edmonton;
- Page 2 of this Google search offers a little more info – mostly about paddling the river in Edmonton;
- [www.travelalberta.com](http://www.travelalberta.com) (Destination Marketing URL for province) does not come up in this google search.

Typing North Saskatchewan River into the search bar on [travelalberta.com](http://travelalberta.com) does bring up some hits including a short description of the river and some day trip options for paddling the river in Edmonton; and

- [www.paddlealberta.org](http://www.paddlealberta.org) does come up – a non-profit association with the mandate to support recreational paddling in the province. Some info on rivers available, mostly links to Mark Lund's Guide for Alberta Paddlers 2nd Ed – all of which are broken.

Google Search Term – “North Saskatchewan river canoe trip”

- No new info revealed

Google Search Term – “North Saskatchewan River Power Boating”

- <https://riderswestmag.com>>watersports Article in the digital magazine Riders West about a couple who enjoy power boating on the North Saskatchewan River.
- <https://epcor.com>>Learn & Explore>North Saskatchewan River Article on Epcor (Edmonton based utility Co.) website about the North Saskatchewan River as a great river to boat for recreation.

Google Search Term – “North Saskatchewan River Jet-Boating”

- [www.northsaskatchewanriverguide.com](http://www.northsaskatchewanriverguide.com) Website for commercial river guide Shane Hansen wh runs jet-boat tours and fishing trips on the North Saskatchewan River.
- [www.blackgoldrivertours.ca](http://www.blackgoldrivertours.ca) Website for jet-boat tour company based in Devon, Alberta.

Of Note: The 48 km section of the river from its headwaters in Banff National Park is a Canadian Heritage River and yet, the link to the CHR website does not come up in the first 5 pages of the Google search (only looked up to page 5).

## ATHABASCA RIVER

Google Search “Athabasca River Canoe Trip

- links to [www.mycr.com](http://www.mycr.com) fairly useless – links to what look like trip reports for this section of the river are all broken;
- Michelle Swallow, author of the Mackenzie River Guide has paddled the entire Athabasca with the initial plan to do a similar guidebook, but due to the very distinct sections of the Athabasca, she has put book plans on hold and is deciding how to share her info on the different sections of the river (<https://norj.ca/2013/10/river-guide-author-explores-athabasca-and-slave/>) ; and
- No other valuable links on page 1, 2 or 3.

Google Search “Athabasca River Paddling Logistics”

- Page 2 <http://oilsandswitness.blogspot.ca/2014/05/>
  - » <http://oilsandswitness.blogspot.ca/2015/>
  - » no updates after trip was finished



Google Search "Borealis Canoe Club" <https://sites.google.com/site/borealiscanoe/about>

- links to info on Athabasca broken
- serves paddlers interested in the lower Athabasca River and its tributaries

Google Search "Lower Athabasca River Paddling Logistics"

- nothing

Google Search "Upper Athabasca River Paddling Logistics"

- nothing

Google Search "Lower Athabasca River"

- no relevant paddling reports or info – all environmental, water related

Google Search "Upper Athabasca River"

- no relevant paddling reports or info – all environmental, water related

Google Search "Lower Athabasca River Paddle"

- <http://www.clippercanoes.com/fort-chipewyan-and-up-the-athabasca-river/> - upriver trip report from 2004.

Google Search "Slave River Paddling"

- page 1 contains a list of good links on paddling this well-known, among paddlers, whitewater section indicating that for those "in the know", information is easy to get to plan a trip to paddle this whitewater.

Google Search Term – "Athabasca River Power Boating"

- [www.athabasca-river.com](http://www.athabasca-river.com) Website for jet-boat operator located at Grand Rapids on the Upper Athabasca River at Grand Rapids. Accommodation and food services provided as well

Google Search Term – "Athabasca River Jet-Boating"

- [www.athabasca-river.com](http://www.athabasca-river.com) Website for jet-boat operator located at Grand Rapids on the Upper Athabasca River at Grand Rapids. Accommodation and food services provided as well.
- [www.visitathabasca.ca](http://www.visitathabasca.ca)>jet-boating athabasca river Athabasca Region website that shows attractions, event, and amenities of the area. Unfortunately this page had no actual information to share.

## B. UNDERSTANDING THE U.S. ADVENTURER TRAVELER



ADVENTURE TRAVEL  
TRADE ASSOCIATION

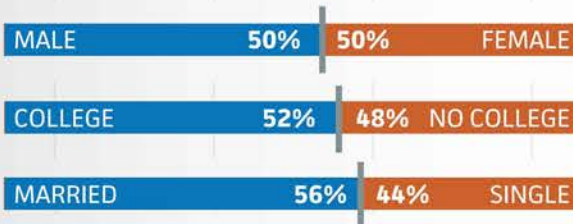
# UNDERSTANDING THE U.S. ADVENTURER TRAVELER

FROM THE ADVENTURE TRAVEL TRADE ASSOCIATION  
ADVENTURE PULSE RESEARCH OF TRAVELERS IN THE UNITED STATES

### ADVENTURE GRAZERS

**24% of U.S. Population**

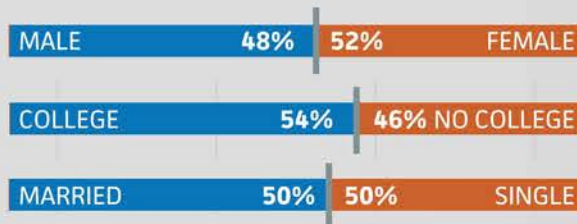
Novice and first-time participants of adventure activities, eager to sample and move through their 'bucket list.' Accept moderate risk.



### ADVENTURERS

**20% of U.S. Population**

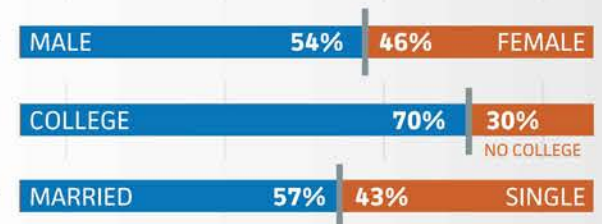
Intermediate, thrill-seeking repeat participants in a favorite adventure activity. Accept moderate risk.



### ADVENTURE ENTHUSIASTS

**8% of U.S. Population**

Advanced, skilled practitioners of a favorite adventure activity. Accept high risk.



## MEDIA USE PER DAY

NEW MEDIA (blogs, social media, etc)



TRADITIONAL MEDIA (newspapers, radio, etc)



NEW MEDIA



TRADITIONAL MEDIA



NEW MEDIA



TRADITIONAL MEDIA



## TOP MOTIVATIONS



FAMILY TIME



EXPLORING NEW PLACES



RELAXATION



EXPLORING NEW PLACES



EXPLORING NEW PLACES



EXCITING NEW ACTIVITIES



BOOKED WITH A TOUR OPERATOR OR TRAVEL ADVISOR\*

GRAZERS

36%



ENTHUSIASTS

48%

ADVENTURERS

37%

\* AT LEAST PART OF THE TRIP

## REASON FOR USING A TOUR OPERATOR OR TRAVEL ADVISOR



SAVE TIME ON LOGISTICS



DESTINATION KNOWLEDGE

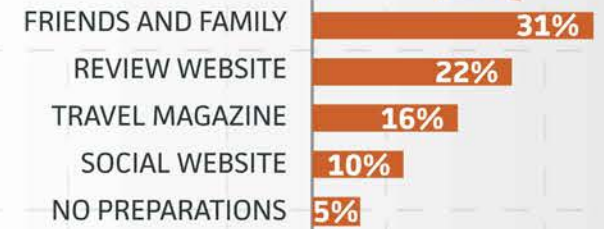
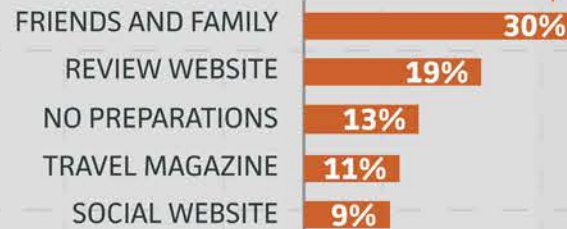
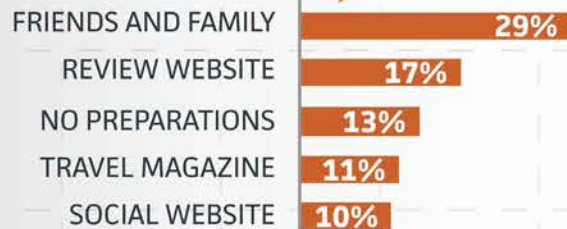


DESTINATION KNOWLEDGE

## TOOLS TO PREPARE FOR TRIP

#1 tool  
for all profiles

Family & Friends



\* MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE

ANNUAL SPENDING ON GEAR

\$418

\$393

\$638

## TOP GEAR BRANDS

→ for all profiles



Columbia

L.L.Bean

patagonia

Timberland



EDDIE BAUER

GORE-TEX<sup>®</sup>  
PRODUCTS

MERRELL

SWISS ARMY  
Victorinox



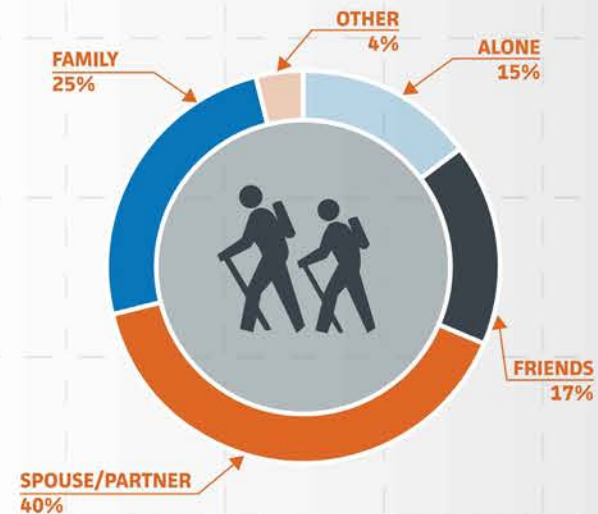
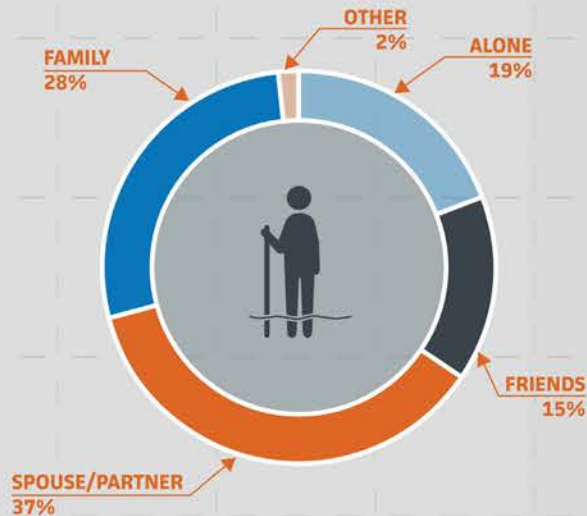
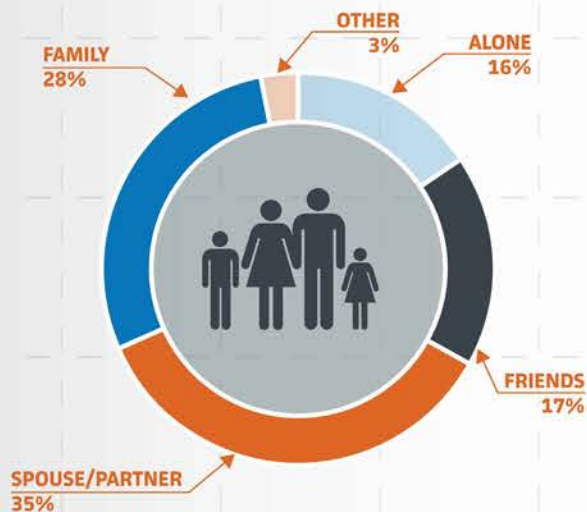
QUIKSILVER



Teva



## TRAVEL COMPANION



## TRIP DURATION AND PRICE



\* EXCLUDING TRAVEL TO AND FROM HOME  
\*\* PRICE PER DAY

## LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND A SIMILAR TRIP TO A FRIEND\*

Over 80 percent!



TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY **41%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, DURING **21%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, AFTER **18%**  
 TRAVEL WEBSITE **11%**



\* FOR TRAVELERS USING A TOUR OPERATOR OR TRAVEL ADVISOR

TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY **42%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, DURING **19%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, AFTER **21%**  
 TRAVEL WEBSITE **13%**

\* PREFERRED METHOD TO RECOMMEND.  
 MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE.



TELL FRIENDS AND FAMILY **39%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, DURING **19%**  
 SOCIAL SHARING, AFTER **15%**  
 TRAVEL WEBSITE **18%**

## THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

The 2014 Adventure Traveler Pulse offers a fresh perspective on U.S. adventure travelers based on their travel history. The ATTA is using these three adventurer profiles in a series of deep dives. Learn how each type of adventurer relates to travel brands and gear or how each plans trips from dream phase to booking. To sponsor a deep dive or tell us what you'd like to see us do with the Adventure Pulse data, get in touch with [info@adventuretravel.biz](mailto:info@adventuretravel.biz).

## SURVEY METHOD

Data for the Adventure Pulse was gathered from an electronic survey conducted from February - March, 2014. Survey respondents were 1,700 travelers age 18 and older from 11 major U.S. urban areas: Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Miami, Chicago, Austin, Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Seattle.



# UNDERSTANDING THE U.S. ADVENTURER TRAVELER

FROM THE ADVENTURE TRAVEL TRADE ASSOCIATION  
ADVENTURE PULSE RESEARCH REPORT OF TRAVELERS IN THE UNITED STATES



