

**Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes  
Stewardship (ACCESS)**

**Castle Parks Designated Open Camping  
Proposal**

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Prepared by:

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Recreational users of the Castle area have expressed concern about the Castle Management Plan's exclusion of open camping. ACCESS volunteers contributed to an online editable map to identify camp site locations and estimate the capacity of each site in terms of number of recreation vehicles (RVs). In total, 229 camp sites were identified, which provide an estimated capacity for over 1,000 RVs. The proposed designated rustic group camping sites identified in the Draft Castle Management Plan will provide for a capacity of 24 camp sites, which is far below the estimated usage of the area for random camping. Furthermore, open camping provides for a more flexible camping opportunity in terms of site selection, individual site layout, and timing with no reservations required. A significant number of campers who have previously visited and camped in the Castle area have indicated that they would no longer visit the area were they not able to open camp.

The Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes Stewardship (ACCESS) has prepared this proposal for a model of open camping within the Castle Parks area. This proposal is designed to address the existing demand for open (random) access camping within the Castle Parks area in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner to providing the diverse camping experiences Albertans currently engage in.

This proposal has been prepared on desk-top information only. The mapping of existing campsites was prepared by a group of volunteers using a citizen science approach and available satellite imagery. As such, the plan would benefit from ground-truthing of individual site locations and conditions. In other jurisdictions, site specific evaluations of biophysical conditions can support more specific campsite planning. ACCESS is committed to working with Alberta Parks in implementing this plan, and is willing to commit volunteer input and support to further refine the existing camp site delineation and evaluation of conditions.

The Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes (ACCESS) believes that open camping can be sustainably maintained in designated areas in the Castle Parks. Furthermore, ACCESS strongly believes that designating and implementing an open camping policy in the park will enhance visitor experiences, providing the flexibility that visitors desire, as well as addressing barriers to accessing nature relating to the inability of visitors to reserve sites or find sites with flexible set-ups for smaller family or friend groups.

## **2.0 CAMPING IN CASTLE AREA**

Previously, Castle Special Management Area provided a variety of camping experiences for an estimated 1,435 units in the 1,005 km<sup>2</sup> of area. These included both formal designated group and traditional campsite facilities, as well as informal open (random) access camping.

### **2.1 EXISTING FORMAL CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES**

Formal camping opportunities within the Castle Parks area included a number of designated campgrounds, as well as two group camp sites as summarized in Table 1 below.

**Figure 1: Existing Formal Camping Opportunities in Castle Parks**

<b>PRA Camping Sites</b>	<b>RV Capacity</b>	<b>OHV Accessible</b>	<b>Castle Area Location</b>	<b>Trail Access</b>
Lynx Creek Campground	18	No	Central	Yes
Castle River Bridge Campground	32	No	South East	No
Castle Falls Campground	45	No	East Central	No
Syncline Group A Site	15	No	South East	Limited
Syncline Group B Site	15	No	South East	Limited
Beaver Mines Lake Campground	15	No	South East	No

## 2.2 PROPOSED NEW RUSTIC GROUP SITES

The current Draft Castle Parks Management Plan (March 2017) proposes limited additional camping opportunities, which are envisioned as 'rustic' group camping sites with low capacities (6 RV units each). The proposed designated rustic group camping sites are summarized in Table 2 below. The combined majority capacity for motorized camping will be in the South East of Castle Provincial Park, significantly limiting users' accessibility to their recreational activities elsewhere in the park.

**Figure 2: Proposed Draft Castle Parks Management Plan Additional Camping Opportunities**

<b>New Rustic Sites</b>	<b>RV Capacity</b>	<b>OHV Accessible</b>	<b>Castle Area Location</b>	<b>Trail Access</b>
O'Hagen Junction	0 (Tent Only)	Yes	South East	No
Carbondale Hill	6	Yes	South East	No
Maverick Hill	6	Yes	East Central	Limited
Cherry Hill	6	Yes	West Central	Yes
Willoughby Ridge	6	Yes	Central North	Yes
Beaver Mines	Unspecified	No	Central	Limited
North-Kootenay Pass	0 (Tent Only)			

## 2.3 EXISTING OPEN CAMPING SITES

ACCESS volunteers contributed to an online editable map to identify camp site locations and estimate the capacity of each site in terms of number of recreation vehicles (RVs). In total, 229 camp sites were identified, which combined provide an estimated capacity for over 1,000 RVs. This mapping likely represents an underestimation of open camping opportunities within the Castle area. Of these, 195 campsites (85%) are located within the Castle Provincial Park. Twenty-two (10%) are located within the Wildland Provincial Park and 13 (5 %) are located on Public Lands adjacent to the Castle Parks areas.

## 2.4 ANTICIPATED CAMPING OPPORTUNITY SHORTFALL

The existing and proposed campsite facilities capacities, as identified by the Government of Alberta's current Draft Castle Parks Management Plan, are summarized in Table 3. With the proposed elimination of open (random access) camping, the management plan proposes a significant reduction in the overall capacity of the Castle Parks area with a net loss of 1,184 camping sites.

**Figure 3: Summary of Existing and Proposed Campsite Facilities**

	Existing Camping Capacity	Proposed New Capacity	Net Change
Provincial Recreation Area Campgrounds / Group Sites	221	221	0
New Rustic Campsite Facilities	0	30	+30
Open (Random) Campsites	1,214	0	-1,214
Subtotal	1,435	251	-1,184

## 2.5 OPEN CAMPING EXPERIENCE

Random camping is identified as providing a means to connect with nature, test outdoor skills and experience freedom, and as providing a unique camping experience. To gain a better understanding of why people choose random camping vs formal campgrounds, a survey conducted by ACCESS polled users who frequent Castle area.

Most participants view random camping on public land as a basic right of Albertans and an important cultural tradition. Both our study and others confirm that managed and unmanaged (random) camping opportunities provide unique experiences not found in formal campgrounds.

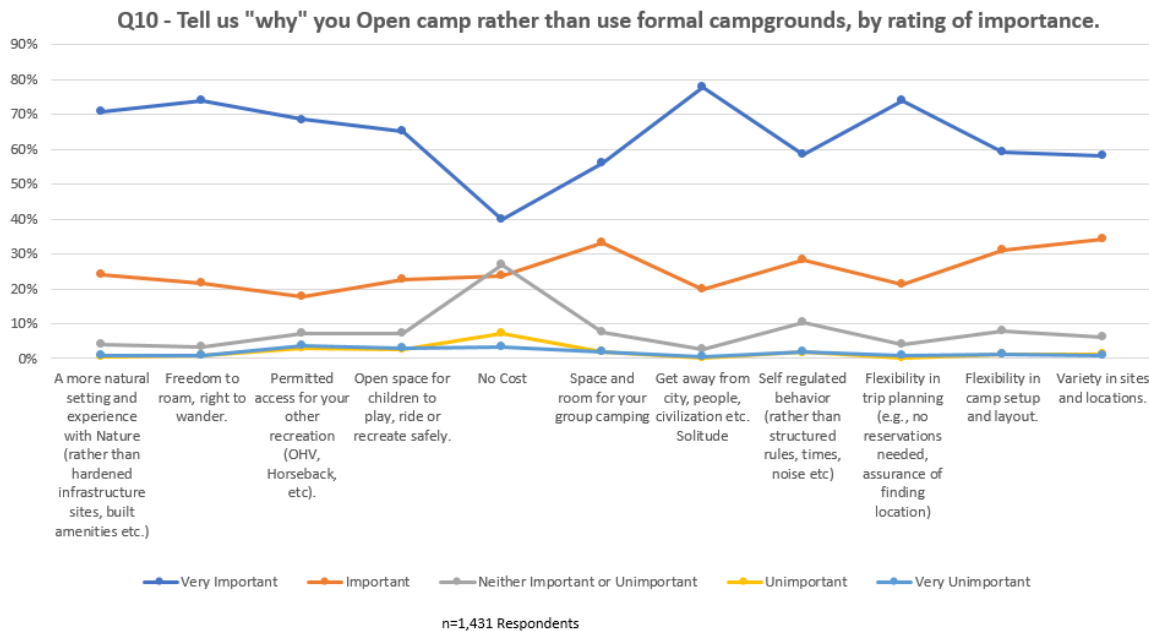
There is a fundamental desire for many Alberta families to get back to the basics. Open camping gives the opportunity for families to enjoy the most primitive of areas with no reminders of a busy, commercialized, daily life. A place where they can watch their children play, recreate and explore nature within immediate proximity of their site. It is a rustic experience to test their skills and survivorship in nature, and provide the sense of freedom and distance from civilization. While many campers enjoy the challenge and hardships of camping without the comforts of home, our survey found 77% camped with a motorized recreational vehicle such as a trailer or motor home.

Random camping is considered a traditional activity and use of land to many Albertans, and provides proximity and access to their intended recreational activities. Our survey provided data illustrating that this activity is not limited by age, profession or income – but provided insight that this experience is enjoyed by the diversity of people that Alberta represents.

Open camping enables thousands to enjoy the most basic of needs, re-connecting with nature and our environment.

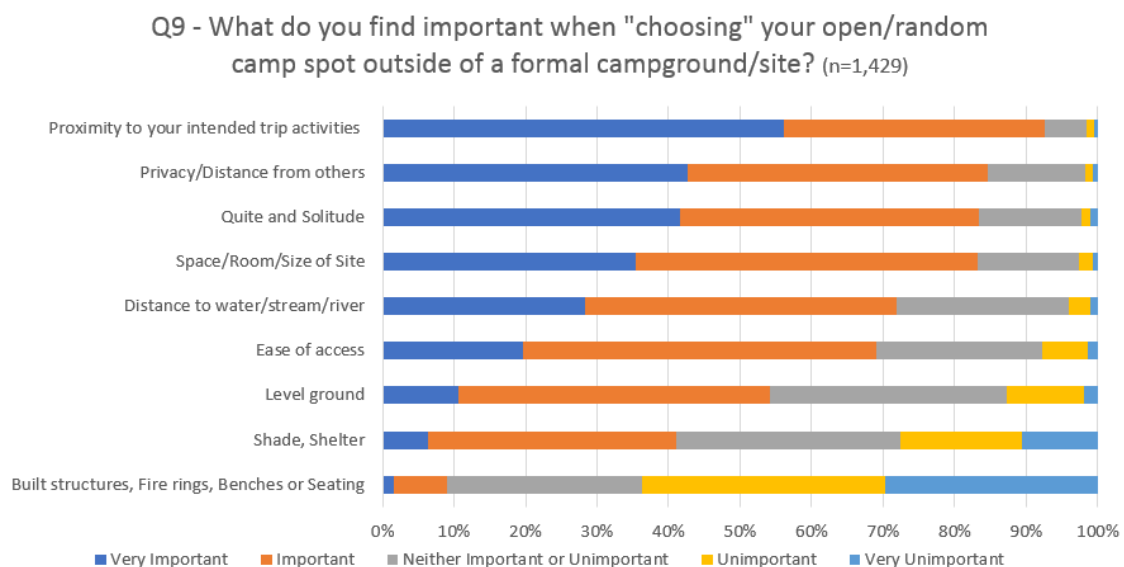
When we asked users in our survey why they choose to open camp (Q10), > 95% of respondents indicated that camping at random sites provided flexibility in trip planning (e.g., no reservations needed and assurance of finding a location upon arriving). It also captured the desire for a more primitive experience getting away from city and formal structure, as well as fulfill their freedom to roam and right to wander. Other important factors were the open spaces for their children to ride or recreate safely, as well as the more natural setting and experience to enjoy nature.

**Figure 4: Summary of Reasons Why Campers Choose to Open Camp**



For choosing their location (Q9), most respondents (93%) found it very important to be in close proximity to their intended trip activities (fishing locations, trail access etc). Other major factors were privacy from others, quite and solitude, and the size or room of the site.

**Figure 5: Factors Important to Campers Who Choose to Open Camp**



## 2.6 NEED AND DESIRE FOR OPEN CAMPING

Previous studies have identified that a large percentage of Albertans who participate in recreational camping, do so with preference to random camping opportunities over formal campgrounds. This would serve to identify that providing a range of camping opportunities is an important element in addressing campers' desires in Alberta.

**Figure 6: Sunpine Forest Random Camping Trips**

**Table 7. Camping trips in or near Sunpine Forest Management Agreement area since May 1999**

Camping area	% taking at least one trip <sup>a</sup>			Mean no. of trips taken by respondents who took at least one trip			
	Random	PRA's	CLPP	Random	PRA's	CLPP	<i>p</i> value <sup>b</sup>
Random sites	71.6	26.2	11.5	6.6	4.3	4.6	0.014
PRA's	33.1	51.2	28.2	3.2	3.7	2.9	0.196
Jasper or Banff	22.8	31.9	31.6	2.2	2.0	2.6	0.151
Private <sup>c</sup>	10.8	15.8	22.4	1.4	2.7	2.4	0.790
CLPP	4.8	9.9	28.2	2.3	1.5	2.0	0.166

<sup>a</sup> Distributions were significantly different at  $p < 0.001$  according to a  $\chi^2$  test of independence.

<sup>b</sup> Analysis of variance.

<sup>c</sup> River Valley or David Thompson Resort campgrounds.

Note: PRA's = provincial recreation areas, CLPP = Crimson Lake Provincial Park.

In terms of the camping experiences sought by respondents, most campers (79.8%) preferred rustic campgrounds such as those provided at the PRA's, 55.8% preferred random or "bush" camping, and only 19.2% preferred "minimalist" or light camping (Table 9). Only 27.0% preferred campgrounds with a full range of services. In terms of potential conflict with other forest users, most campers preferred to avoid all signs of industrial activity (57.2%), most did not avoid other campers (68.6%), and most did not mind camping where OHVs are allowed (55.3%).

An important consideration in the management of random camping is that campers may not perceive a need to manage the activity. Campers in this study did not share the perception among land managers that random camping, if left unmanaged, could have a substantial negative impact on the environment and could result in conflicts among recreational users.

Most campers did not perceive random camping as posing any serious environmental impacts. Indeed, random camping was perceived as an important tradition for Albertans and as providing a unique camping opportunity. Thus, any efforts to change the random camping opportunity might be perceived as unwarranted and might meet with opposition from campers. Campers may not support management changes in random camping as a means to reduce the impact of OHVs.

ACCESS understands that recognizing and addressing this lack of perception by random campers that their activities have a potential to result in negative environmental impacts is fundamental to developing a open camping proposal that will be successful. As such, ACCESS proposes to collaborate with Alberta Parks as a representative stakeholder, in providing assistance in both designation and management recommendations to support this recreation for our growing population.

As currently proposed, the Draft Management Plan will not provide sufficient camping opportunities relative to the intended recreational activities. Firstly, the proposed camping opportunities will have a shortfall of available camping locations when the existing demand for open camping is accounted for. More importantly, the proposed camping opportunities do not represent meaningful and suitable access and staging points for the desired recreational pursuits without requiring significant travel distances. The existing Provincial Recreation Areas (Beaver Mines Lake, Castle Falls, Castle Bridge) are all concentrated along the Hwy 774 corridor. The proposed rustic sites, although somewhat addressing this concern, only partially capture these demands. Permitting open camping will provide for camping opportunities and staging which is located closer to the intended recreational activities.

### **3.0 APPROACH**

Managing open camping (also known as dispersed camping, random access camping in literature reviewed) is not a new topic. In general, when planning for management of open camping within public land use zones and recreation areas, managers typically follow this basic approach:

- 1) Delineate / identify existing camp sites and review individual camp sites for condition;
- 2) Identify management objectives;
- 3) Constraints and opportunities evaluation to classify sites for retention and site for decommissioning or relocation;
- 4) Identify suite of general and site specific built and non-built mitigation measures, including barriers, signage, education and enforcement.

#### **3.1 STEP 1: DELINEATE EXISTING CAMP SITES**

ACCESS has previously developed a mapping of existing open access campsites through a volunteer citizen science approach. This mapping serves as a suitable baseline data set from which existing demand and usage of the areas for open camping can be quantified. The second step (Step 2) where individual camp site condition is evaluated could not be completed by ACCESS due to time constraints and seasonality. However, this step can be conducted in the summer and information derived from individual sites can be utilized to further refine the open camping facility zones and for individual site mitigation (if required).

#### **3.2 STEP 2: IDENTIFY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

In the case of the proposed Castle Provincial and Wildland Park Areas, the stated objective (from the current Draft Castle Management Plan), for Camping is:

*Providing camping facilities is one of the cornerstones of facilitating a multi-day experience in the Castle region. Camping opportunities are tailored to reflect the character and intent of the landscapes and zones in which they are planned (See Section 8.0). Facilities for camping are planned to enhance the nature-based experiences that are aligned with the protected status of the Castle parks, and support a range of recreation types that are compatible with each other and appropriate to their surroundings.*

This is clarified further when discussing front country camping, as follows. Open Camping (random access) is considered a type of front country camping, as it is generally associated with good road



access, campers typically utilize a vehicle to directly access the camp sites (as compared to hike-in camping such as backcountry camping experience).

*Automobile accessible front country campsites are offered primarily in the provincial park. Front country camping may include a wide range of facilities such as campsites with power and/or water, amenities such as showers and laundry facilities and various visitor services and commercial services (e.g. retail stores). Sites can include pads for tents and recreational vehicles, as well as options for fixed-roof accommodation such as “comfort-camping” (e.g. canvas-walled tents, yurts, small cabins or acceptable variations of these).*

### **3.3 STEP 3: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES EVALUATION**

A first critical step in planning for a facility zone or designated area of recreational usage on a landscape is to undertake a constraints and opportunities identification and evaluation. This enables planners to identify opportunities for co-location of similar and compatible uses, and areas which camping sites can facilitate access to other desired recreational opportunities, as well as the converse, planning for separation of incompatible uses. In addition, this incorporates a method to identify key environmental concerns or potential negative interactions of the recreational use and sensitive ecosystems, and allows for planning of uses in areas where these potential negative interactions can be minimized. A variety of constraints and opportunities were identified and considered in the delineation of proposed open camping facility zones, and are summarized below:

#### **Opportunities:**

- Increase available camping sites to address demand
- Higher variety in camping experiences
- Flexibility in campsite set-up
- Flexibility in trip planning (where no reservations required, assured site upon arrival)
- Access / staging from within the park to provide for more day-use access into Wildland Park
- Co-location of activities to concentrate area of impacts (e.g., adjacent to roads with traffic/noise effects, proximal to other campgrounds)

#### **Constraints:**

- Conflicts with other adjacent land uses (e.g., noise impacts of larger RV units with generators to nearby designated tent camping sites)
- Difficulty in managing / enforcing
- Negative perception detracts from other visitors experience
- Environmental concerns
  - Proximity to water bodies.
  - Potential fire hazard (where rings not provided)
  - Localized damage to vegetation

### **3.4 STEP 4: IDENTIFY GENERAL AND SITE SPECIFIC MITIGATION MEASURES**

The final step in the process of developing this proposal for open camping was to conduct a review of available information to identify appropriate complementary mitigation measures and standards which, in addition to the designation of open camping designated areas, would be required to permit of open camping within the Castle Parks areas. These include standard guidelines and rules (e.g., length of stay, registration requirements), design measures to influence camper behaviour (e.g., limit fire ring relocation to reduce migration and expansion).

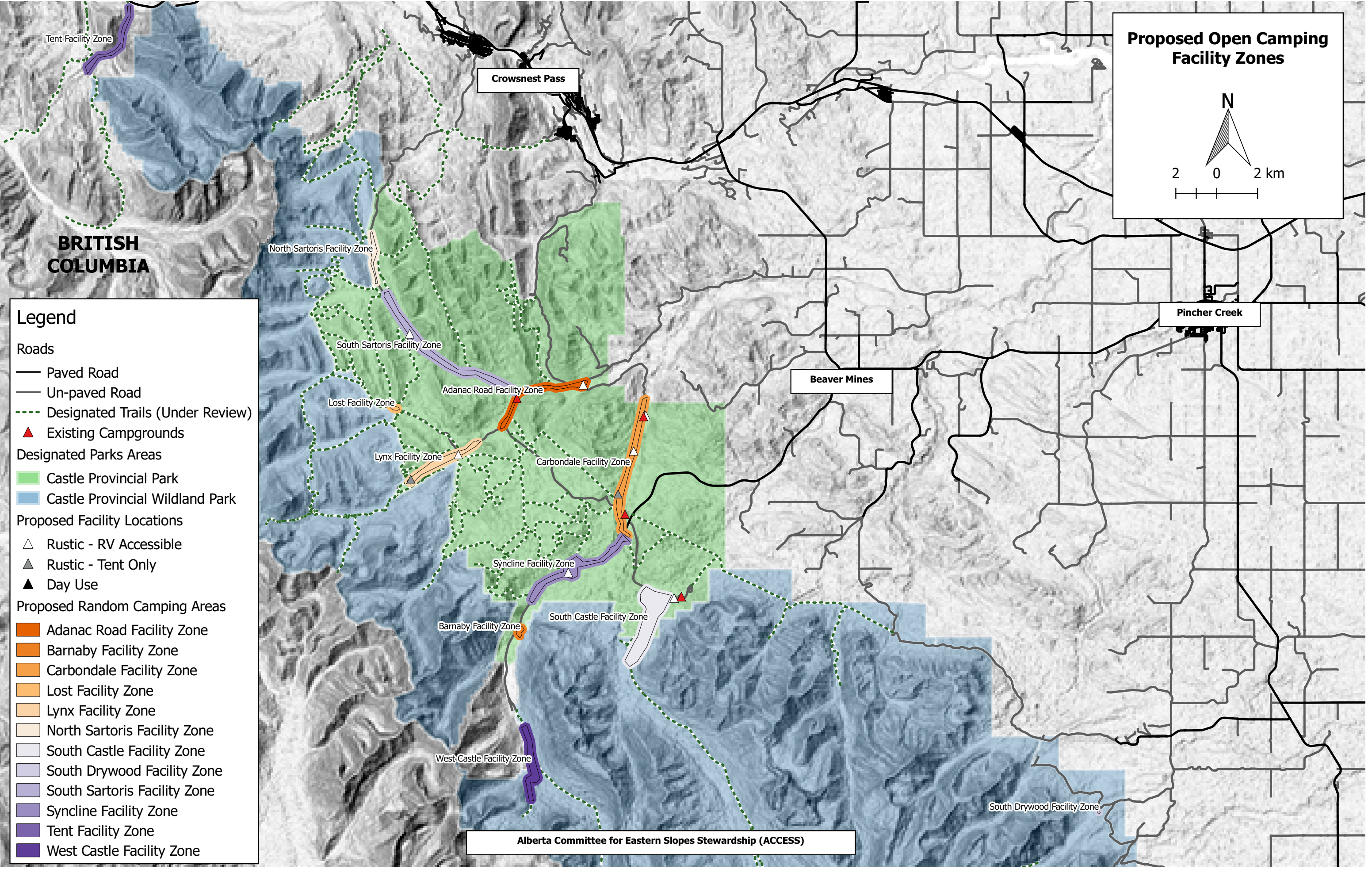
### **4.0 DESIGNATED OPEN CAMPING PROPOSAL**

ACCESS is proposing that open access camping be managed through a designated facility zone which consists of 12 areas where open camping would be permitted, termed “Open Camping Facility Zones”, in conjunction with a suite of built and non-built mitigation measures, which include enforceable standards of leave no trace camping, design, registration, and monitoring.

#### **4.1 OPEN CAMPING FACILITY ZONES**

Within the Open Camping Facility Zones, camping can remain relatively informal, with minimal infrastructure improvements, to retain the desired open camping experience and flexibility of individual group campsite set-up. Campers would register at the park facility center or unmanned kiosks as per traditional structured campsites. Based on the existing delineated campsites identified during the volunteer mapping exercise conducted by ACCESS, twelve Open Camping Facility Zones are proposed, summarized in Table 5 and on Figure 1. Detailed maps and summary information for individual Open Camping Facility Zones are provided in Appendix A.

The open camping proposed presented herein will provide for a total of 214 individual camp sites with an estimated capacity of 1,106 RV units. This represents a reduction in the total number of sites which were available under an unmanaged scenario.



**Figure 8: Summary of Proposed Open Camping Areas**

Proposed Open Camping Facility Zone	Existing Campsites Captured	Estimated Capacity	Administrative Location	Description	Opportunities	Constraints	Recommendations for Management Interventions
Adanac	35	138	Castle Provincial Park	Located along the Lynx Creek Road (locally known as Tappas Road), from approximately 1.5 km east of the intersection with the Adanac Road, to the intersection with the Carbondale Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes</li> <li>Fishing opportunities on Carbondale River and Lynx Creek</li> <li>O'Hagan and Carbondale Trailheads accessible from sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some sites may be within 20 m of Carbondale River</li> <li>Some sites highly visible from road/dusty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Site specific review for sites noted to be close to river</li> <li>Site specific review and possible relocation for sites which are highly visible from road</li> </ul>
Barnaby	6	18	Castle Provincial Park	Located along Hwy 774, before the Ski Hill and near the University of Lethbridge research station. Well off the highway, these sites are adjacent to the Castle River and near trailheads for Barnaby Ridge and Syncline Drainage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hidden from road, well shaded and treed</li> <li>Access to fishing on West Castle River</li> <li>Staging for Barnaby Ridge (Southfork Lakes) Hiking Trail Head; Syncline trail system; Syncline brook and</li> <li>Staging for hiking, berry picking, hunting further in Wildland Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some sites may be within 20 m of Castle River</li> <li>Proximity to University of Lethbridge Research Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pedestrian Bridge on West Castle River to provide trail access for Barnaby Ridge</li> <li>Site specific review for erosion/river access, relocate if necessary</li> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Information signage re: U of L research station</li> </ul>
Carbondale / Castle	30	251	Castle Provincial Park	Located along Castle Falls Road (RR 3-3), open camping would be permitted between the Carbondale Road and Castle Falls and the area of sites located on east side of Hwy 774 from turn off to Castle Falls Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes</li> <li>Proximity to designated camping areas (Castle Falls, Castle Bridge campgrounds); provides for co-location of camping facilities and concentration of use on the landscape</li> <li>Fishing opportunities on the West Castle River</li> <li>Carbondale Trail Heads available from these sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some sites may be within 20 m of Carbondale River</li> <li>Some sites highly visible from road/dusty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Evaluate sites CR-13 for proximity to river</li> <li>Close sites CR-22 through CR-25 as too close to road and river, sign/barricade sites with woody debris</li> </ul>

Proposed Open Camping Facility Zone	Existing Campsites Captured	Estimated Capacity	Administrative Location	Description	Opportunities	Constraints	Recommendations for Management Interventions
Lost	3	15	Castle Provincial Park	Located at the end of the Lost Creek Road, the open area provides for three campsites. More suitable for lighter / smaller camping units; campers looking for more remote front-camping experience (e.g., truck/tent units, truck-campers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staging for further access into Lost drainage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity of creek to site LT-3</li> <li>Further / rougher road access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Evaluate sites LT-1 for proximity to river</li> </ul>
Lynx	30	154	Castle Provincial Park	Located at the end of Lynx Creek Road, extending from approx. 1.5 km east of the Lost Creek turn-off to the existing warm-up cabin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staging for further access into the Lynx Creek drainage</li> <li>Access for fishing on Lynx Creek</li> <li>Good access to trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity to proposed Rustic Tent Facility with sites LX-24 to LX-30</li> <li>Some sites appear to be within 20 m of Lynx Creek</li> <li>Some sites proximal to road; highly visible and may be dusty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Evaluate sites for proximity to river and relocate as necessary</li> <li>Relocate proposed Rustic Tent Facility farther west to minimize conflict.</li> </ul>
North Sartoris	8	19	Castle Provincial Park	Located on the north end of the Sartoris (Lynx Creek) Road in the vicinity of the northernmost crossing of Lynx Creek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access for fishing on Lynx Creek</li> <li>Closer proximity to Crowsnest Pass</li> <li>Good staging / access to trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some sites appear to be within 20 m of Lynx Creek</li> <li>Some sites proximal to road; highly visible and may be dusty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Evaluate sites for proximity to river and relocate as necessary</li> <li>Monitor for potential conflict with proposed rustic group site</li> </ul>
South Castle	25	117	Castle Provincial Park	Located from the north end of the South Castle Road (where it intersects the Beaver Mines Road) to approximately 5 km south.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes and configuration</li> <li>Most sites well obscured from Beaver Mines Road</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to South Castle Road</li> <li>Fishing Opportunities South Castle River and Beaver Mines Lake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many sites adjacent to dry creek bed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider timing of permitted camping to avoid spring when the dry creek may be flowing</li> </ul>

Proposed Open Camping Facility Zone	Existing Campsites Captured	Estimated Capacity	Administrative Location	Description	Opportunities	Constraints	Recommendations for Management Interventions
South Drywood	2	11	Castle Wildland Provincial Park	Located just inside the Wildland Park, small open field camping areas near an unnamed (suspect human made) pond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal camping opportunities proposed for front drainages</li> <li>Screened from road; good shade and low dust</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to South Drywood Creek and Bovin Lake (Fishing, Hunting, Hiking, Berry Picking) as well as other front range drainages and Butcher Lake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Furthest from proposed Hwy 774 visitor center</li> <li>Small area which may not be able to accommodate demand from other campsites along front ranges (e.g., Whitney Creek) which are lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at this location (adding sites) or consider designating additional sites near Whitney Creek</li> </ul>
South Sartoris	25	67	Castle Provincial Park	Located along the Sartoris Road, starting from the intersection with the Lynx Creek Road and extending to the proposed Willoughby Ridge rustic site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes and configuration, particularly small sites for individual camping experience</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to Willoughby Ridge and west into Lost / Lynx.</li> <li>Good access to fishing on Lynx Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available locations limited by steeper topography of Willoughby Ridge and steep creek valley / canyons to west</li> <li>Sites adjacent to proposed rustic site (SS-1 through SS-4) may have potential for conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at Willoughby Ridge proposed rustic site (adding capacity) and closing SS-1 through SS-4</li> </ul>
Syncline	37	236	Castle Provincial Park	Located along the Sartoris Road, starting from the intersection with the Lynx Creek Road and extending to the proposed Willoughby Ridge rustic site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes and configuration, particularly small sites for individual camping experience</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to Willoughby Ridge and west into Lost / Lynx.</li> <li>Good access to fishing on Lynx Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available locations limited by steeper topography of Willoughby Ridge and steep creek valley / canyons to west</li> <li>Sites adjacent to proposed rustic site (SS-1 through SS-4) may have potential for conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at Willoughby Ridge proposed rustic site (adding capacity) and closing SS-1 through SS-4</li> </ul>

Proposed Open Camping Facility Zone	Existing Campsites Captured	Estimated Capacity	Administrative Location	Description	Opportunities	Constraints	Recommendations for Management Interventions
Tent	8	38	Livingstone Public Land Use Zone	Located along the Tent Road, from Hwy 3 to the access gate to Tent Mountain Cola Mine. Located just outside of the Wildland Park Boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staging / access to trail heads for Ptolemy Plateau (caving and hiking) as well as OHV trails</li> <li>Proximity to lake fishing (Emerald Lake, Crowsnest Lake)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few sites available along road, most sites located near each other near the resource road gate</li> <li>Some sites only tent accessible (e.g., TN-2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> </ul>
West Castle	5	42	Castle Wildland Provincial Park	Located along the West Castle Road beyond the Castle Ski Hill. Traditional camping sites historically well used; more recent use limited when full size bridge replaced with OHV bridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staging / access to trail heads for Middle Kootenay Pass, includes access to Rainy Ridge Lakes, huckleberry picking, hunting</li> <li>Access to fishing on West Castle River</li> <li>Secluded sites with variety of sizes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access limited to off-highway vehicle use only with bridge replacement to OHV size bridge in 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> </ul>

## 4.2 INITIAL CAPITAL BUILT INVESTMENT

In addition to delineating facility zones for open camping, a suite of design, education, and enforcement measures would also be implemented. Table 4 below summarizes key built infrastructure that would be required to implement the plan. In addition, a simple online map or application could be built which individual campers can utilize to confirm that the location they are selecting is in fact available as an open camping site.

**Figure 9: Summary of Built Infrastructure Required for Open Camping Facilities**

Measure	Purpose	Application	Location Applied
Information Kiosks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate locations of permitted open camping and general rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kiosks placed at key locations near major intersections, park entrance</li> </ul>	Key locations near major intersections, park entrance
Site Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm to campers that they are choosing a permitted location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual wooden posts in vicinity of campsite displaying site identifiers (numbering) allows tracking of registration and payment (if fee collected)</li> </ul>	All Sites
Fixed Fire Rings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent fire ring migration and expansion of vegetation clearing around site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire ring anchored to post or anchored to cement plug buried in pit</li> </ul>	All Sites
Natural Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence camper choice/deter access to undesirable locations without using more natural materials than hard engineered (e.g., gates)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large woody debris / logs anchored at entrances to camp sites closed</li> <li>Logs/debris/plantings on trails/eroding banks along rivers</li> </ul>	Where determined based on site closures or review of informal trails
Online Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of users and areas frequented to provide statistical data on random camping, as well as potentially limit irresponsible behavior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the existing WIN system, with application of permit system for random camping trips to Castle Parks.</li> </ul>	Online, Mobile accessible.

## 4.3 COLLABORTIVE WORKING FRAMEWORK

ACCESS is proposing that the open camping would be managed in a collaborative stewardship framework, built from the historic frameworks that originally developed the Castle Advisory group and Crowsnest Forest Stewardship Society which participated in the original development of the Castle Access Management Plan. This framework would see ACCESS and affiliated user groups work collaboratively with Alberta Parks.



It is envisioned that some of the ways in which ACCESS and Alberta Parks can build a collaborative working partnership is through development of a responsibility framework:

	<b>Framework of Responsibility</b>	<b>GoA; AEP</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>
<b>1.</b>	Identification and Designation of Open Camping Facility Zones	S	S
<b>2.</b>	Define Setbacks and Requirements.	P	I
<b>3.</b>	Reclamation Of sites	P	I
<b>4.</b>	Capital & Infrastructure Build Items	P	I
<b>5.</b>	Maintenance of Open Camping Zones	S	S
<b>6.</b>	Information System (Surveys, Registration)	P	I
<b>7.</b>	Camper Education - Funding	S	S
<b>8.</b>	Camper Education - Implementation	S	S

Primary Responsibility – P

Input Required – I

Shared Responsibility – S

#### 4.4 ON-GOING STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING

It is further recognized that additional opportunities may be identified through further consultation with Alberta Parks, and ACCESS is committed to working with AEP in such areas as:

- **Further Refinement of Open Camping Facility Zones Designation:** ACCESS recognizes that the plan and areas identified herein may be considered preliminary and refinement and modification would come over time. ACCESS would be available for further discussion and refinement of the proposed facility locations for both the initial implementation as well as for on-going monitoring and evaluation in future years.
- **Leave No Trace Education:** Development and delivery of volunteer prepared education sessions speaking to ‘Leave no Trace’ practices, including, but not limited to, formal presentations at designated facility zones (e.g., visitor information center), site-to-site visits and pamphlet distribution.
- **Stewardship Programs:** Collaboratively work with clubs and associations to deliver community stewardship programs on random camping, to support positive experiences and to reduce and minimize damaging behavior. Partner with Fish & Game on initiatives to promote respectful use through education, as well as “Report a Poacher” for users to aid in enforcement.
- **Citizen Monitoring and Research:** using mobile applications with geographic information system capabilities and training core volunteers, delineation of existing camp sites and locations can be further refined and individual camp sites can be monitored for biophysical conditions year over year which can be used to evaluate overall environmental interactions of camping. Enabling campers to partake in this type of evaluation also serves as an educational component.

- **Visitor Experience Surveys:** which may include online or campsite to campsite surveys conducted by volunteers to continue to monitor user satisfaction and experience, as well as identify emerging trends and requirements.
- **Ed Gregor Day Stewardship Initiative:** continuation of early June general clean-up and special projects for bridge installations, trail maintenance (e.g., Table Mountain Trail reconstruction completed in 2014) which also serves as a great education opportunity.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes (ACCESS) believes that open camping can be sustainably permitted in designated areas in the Castle Parks. Furthermore, ACCESS strongly believes that developing and implementing an open camping policy in the park will enhance visitor experiences and support inclusivity and diversity of the camping experiences Albertans presently seek. It will provide for the flexibility that visitors desire, as well as address barriers to accessing nature relating to inability of visitors to reserve sites or find sites with flexible set-ups for smaller family or friend groups.

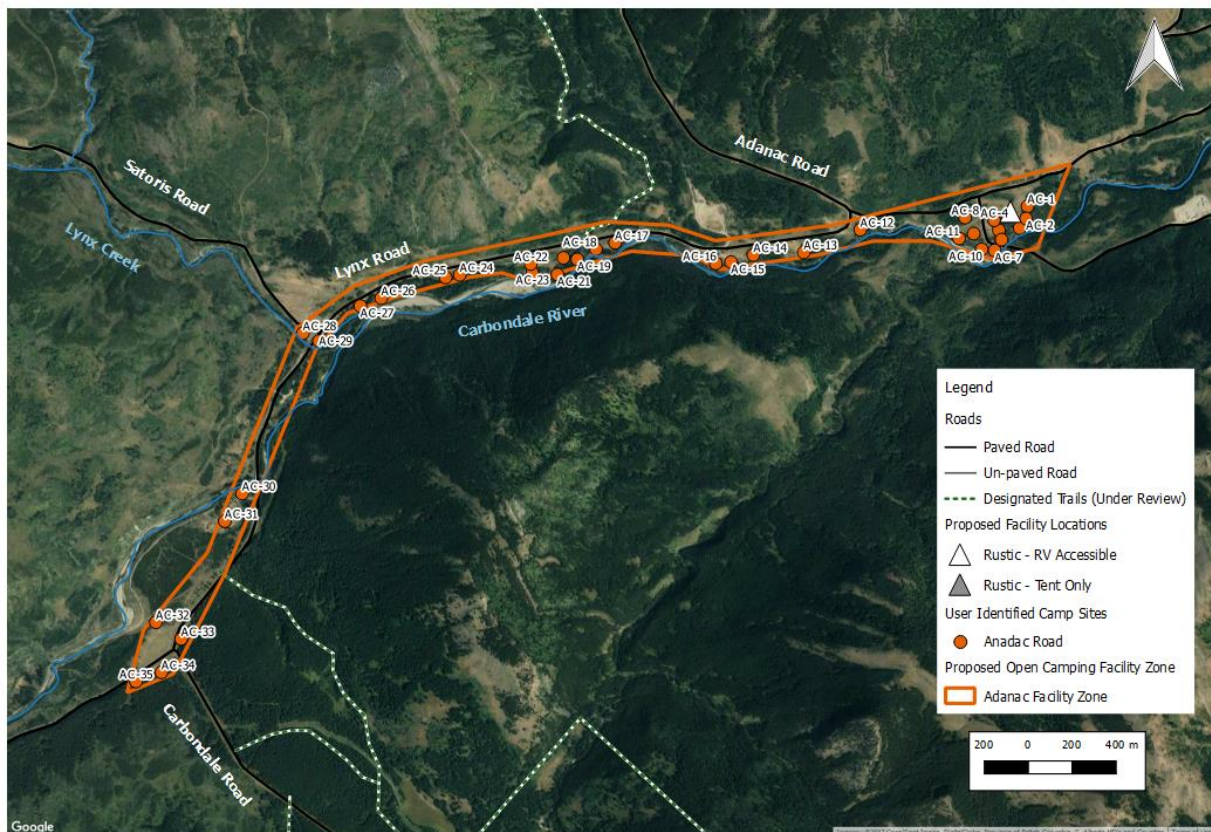
The Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes Stewardship (ACCESS) has prepared this proposal for a model of open camping within the Castle Parks area. This proposal is designed to address the existing demand for open (random) access camping within the Castle Parks area in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner, providing a high-quality visitor experience for all Albertans.

This proposal has been prepared on desk-top information only. The mapping of existing campsites was prepared by a group of volunteers using a citizen science approach and available satellite imagery. As such, the plan would benefit from ground-truthing of individual site locations and conditions. In other jurisdictions, site specific evaluations of biophysical conditions can support more specific campsite planning. ACCESS is committed to working with Alberta Parks in implementing this plan, and is willing to dedicate volunteer input and support to further refine the existing camp site delineation and evaluation of conditions.

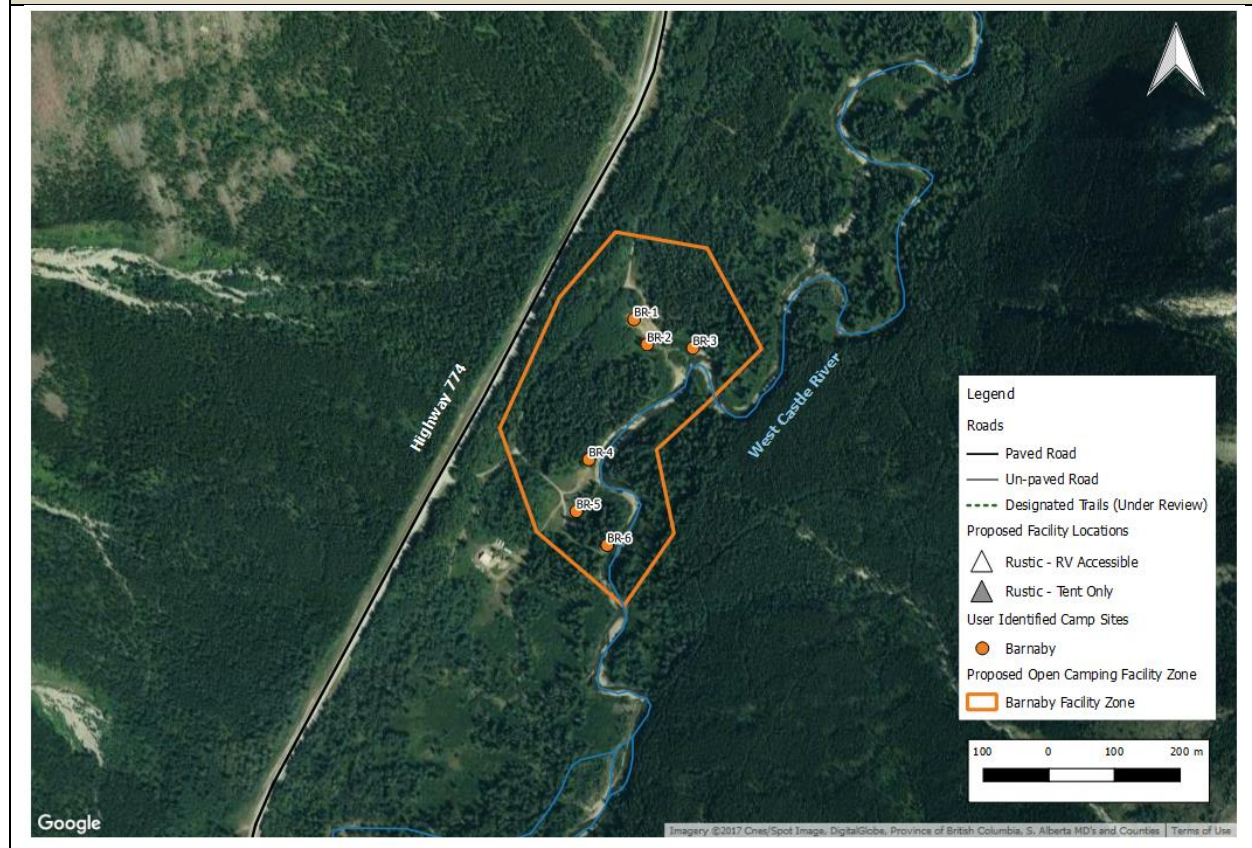
## **APPENDIX A**

### **Proposed Campsite Facility Zones Detailed Maps**

Adanac Open Camping Facility Zone				
Existing Campsites Captured:		35	Estimated Capacity:	138
Description:		Located along the Lynx Creek Road (locally known as Tappas Road), from approximately 1.5 km east of the intersection with the Adanac Road, to the intersection with the Carbondale Road.		
Opportunities:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of site sizes</li><li>• Fishing opportunities on Carbondale River and Lynx Creek</li><li>• O'Hagan and Carbondale Trailheads accessible from sites</li></ul>		
Constraints:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some sites may be within 20 m of Carbondale River</li><li>• Some sites highly visible from road/dusty (poor visitor experience)</li></ul>		
Management Interventions:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li><li>• Site specific review for sites noted to be close to river</li><li>• Site specific review and possible relocation for sites which are highly visible from road/dusty</li></ul>		

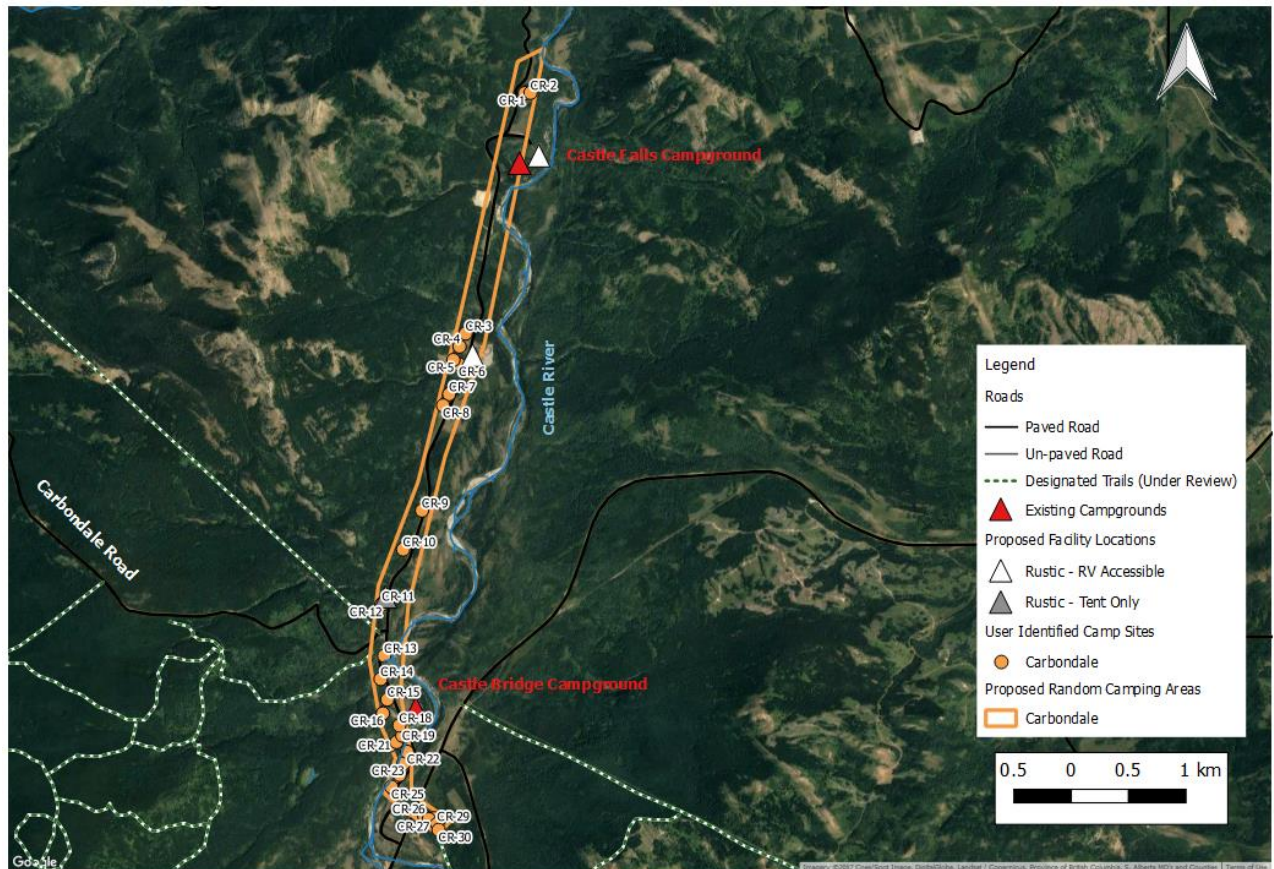


Barnaby Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>	6	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b>	18
<b>Description:</b>	Located along Hwy 774, before the Ski Hill and near the University of Lethbridge research station. Well off the highway, these sites are adjacent to the Castle River and near trailheads for Barnaby Ridge and Syncline Drainage.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hidden from road, well shaded and treed</li> <li>• Access to fishing on West Castle River</li> <li>• Staging for Barnaby Ridge (Southfork Lakes) Hiking Trail Head; Syncline trail system; Syncline brook and</li> <li>• Staging for hiking, berry picking, hunting further in Wildland Park</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some sites may be within 20 m of Castle River</li> <li>• Proximity to University of Lethbridge Research Center</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian Bridge on West Castle River to provide trail access for Barnaby Ridge</li> <li>• Site specific review for erosion/river access, relocate if necessary</li> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>• Information signage re: U of L research station</li> </ul>		

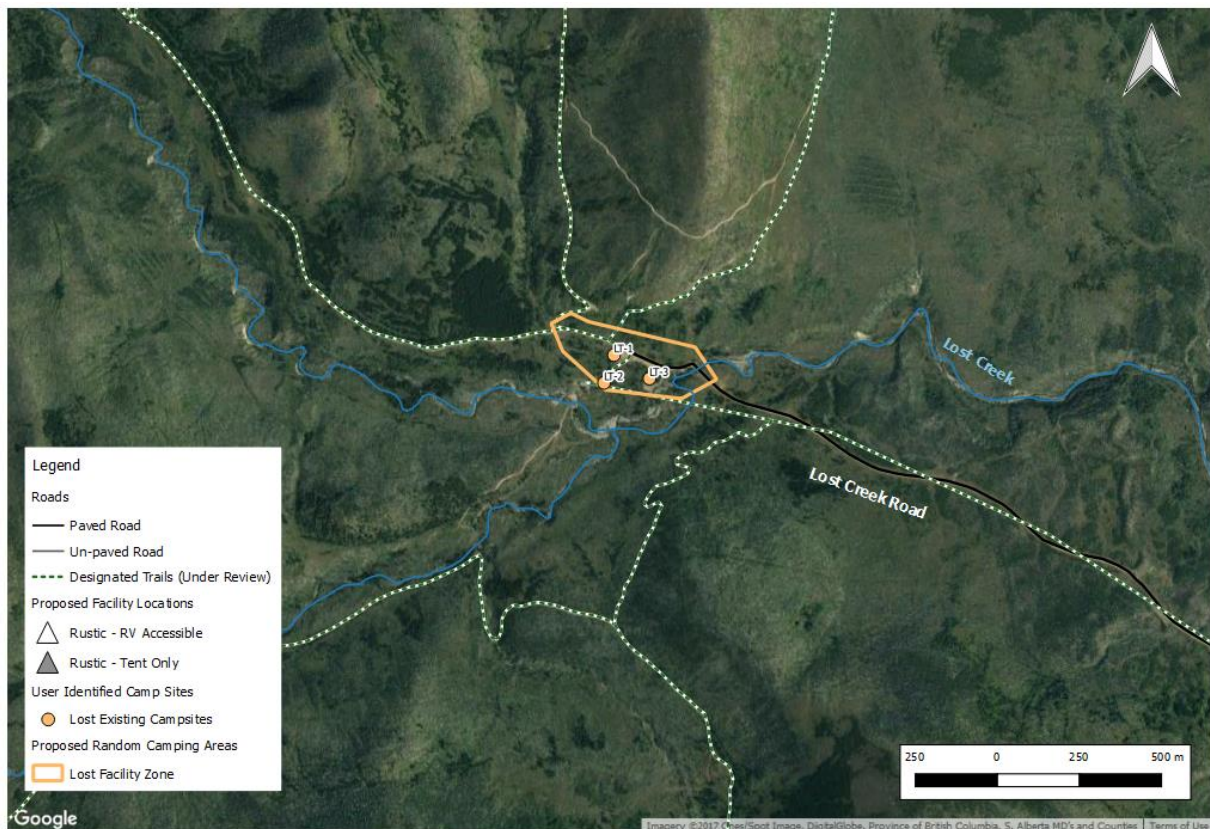




Carbondale / Castle Open Camping Facility Zone				
Existing Campsites Captured:		30	Estimated Capacity:	251
Description:	Located along Castle Falls Road (RR 3-3), open camping would be permitted between the Carbondale Road and Castle Falls and the area of sites located on east side of Hwy 774 from turn off to Castle Falls Road.			
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Variety of site sizes</li><li>• Proximity to designated camping areas (Castle Falls, Castle Bridge campgrounds); provides for co-location of camping facilities and concentration of use on the landscape</li><li>• Fishing opportunities on the West Castle River</li><li>• Carbondale OHV trail heads available from these sites</li></ul>			
Constraints:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some sites visible from Castle Falls Road</li><li>• Some sites close to river, but high steep banks limit encroachment</li></ul>			
Management Interventions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li><li>• Evaluate sites CR-13 for proximity to river</li><li>• Close sites CR-22 through CR-25 as too close to road and river, sign/barricade sites with woody debris</li></ul>			

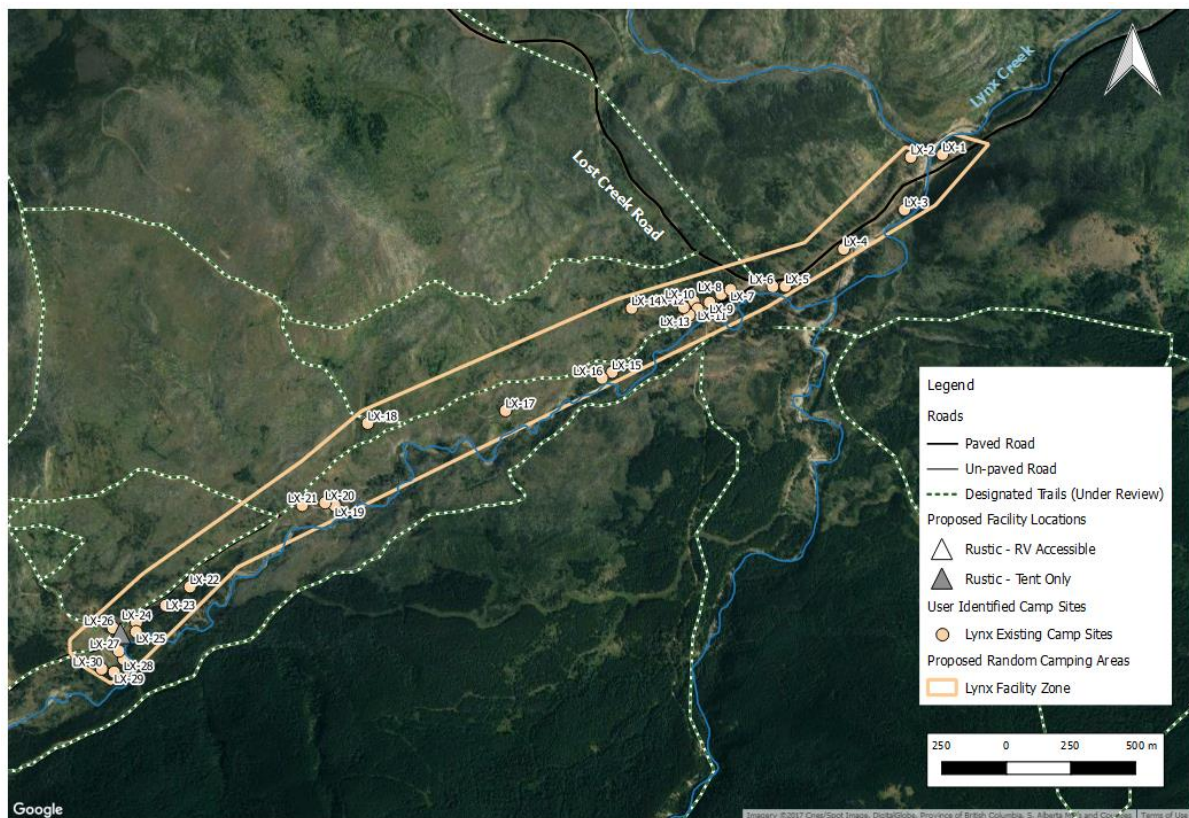


Lost Open Camping Facility Zone				
Existing Campsites Captured:		3	Estimated Capacity:	15
Description:	Located at the end of the Lost Creek Road, the open area provides for three campsites. More suitable for lighter / smaller camping units; campers looking for more remote front-camping experience (e.g., truck/tent units, truck-campers).			
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staging for further access into Lost drainage</li></ul>			
Constraints:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proximity of creek to site LT-3</li><li>Further / rougher road access</li></ul>			
Management Interventions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Registration and general regulation signage</li><li>Evaluate sites LT-1 for proximity to river and relocate if necessary</li></ul>			





Lynx Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>		30	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b> 154
<b>Description:</b>	Located at the end of Lynx Creek Road, extending from approx. 1.5 km east of the Lost Creek turn-off to the existing warm-up cabin.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staging for further access into the Lynx Creek drainage</li> <li>• Access for fishing on Lynx Creek</li> <li>• Good access to trails</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to proposed Rustic Tent Facility with sites LX-24 to LX-30</li> <li>• Some sites appear to be within 20 m of Lynx Creek</li> <li>• Some sites proximal to road; highly visible and may be dusty</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>• Evaluate sites for proximity to river and relocate as necessary</li> <li>• Relocation on the proposed Rustic Tent Only site farther west, as to provide the camping experiences for those users and minimize user conflict.</li> </ul>		

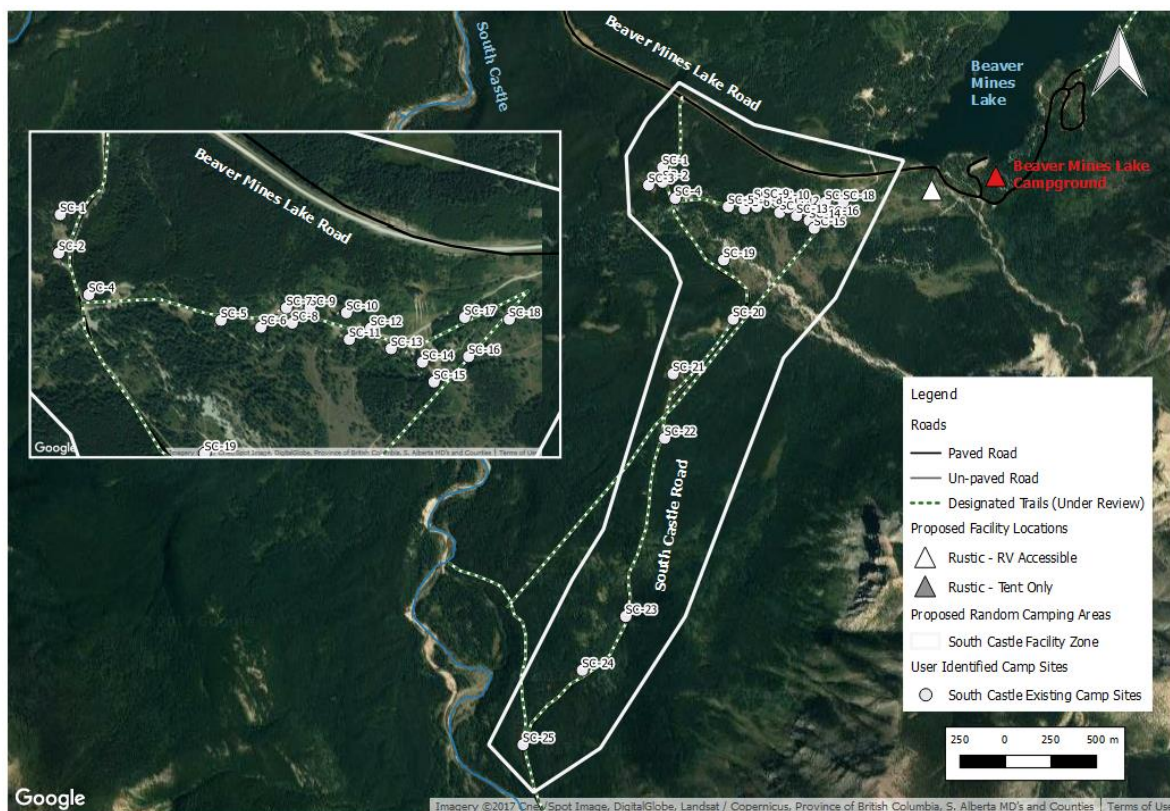




North Sartoris Open Camping Facility Zone			
Existing Campsites Captured:		8	Estimated Capacity: 19
<b>Description:</b>	Located on the north end of the Sartoris (Lynx Creek) Road in the vicinity of the road near the northernmost crossing of Lynx Creek.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for fishing on Lynx Creek</li> <li>• Closer proximity to Crowsnest Pass</li> <li>• Good staging / access to trails</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some sites appear to be within 20 m of Lynx Creek</li> <li>• Some sites proximal to road; highly visible and may be dusty</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>• Evaluate sites for proximity to river and relocate as necessary</li> <li>• Monitor for potential conflict with proposed rustic group site</li> </ul>		

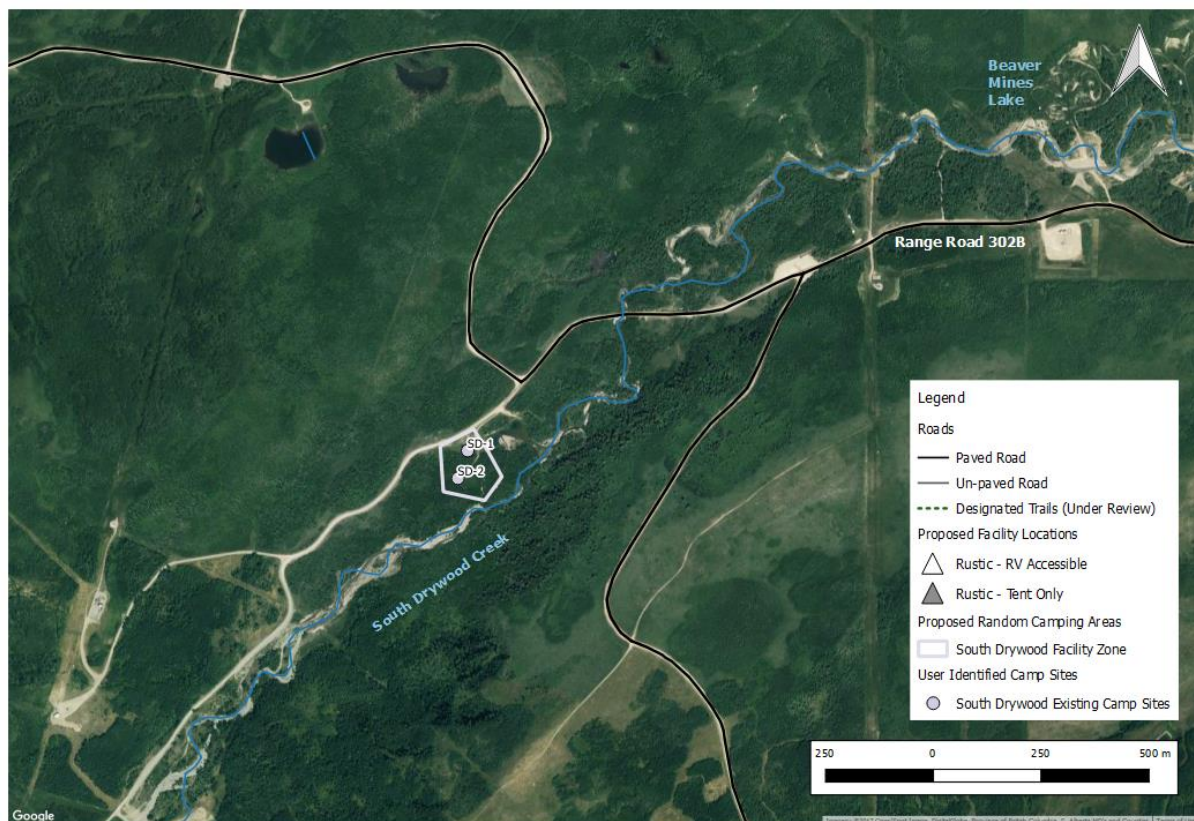


South Castle Open Camping Facility Zone			
Existing Campsites Captured:		25	Estimated Capacity: 117
<b>Description:</b>	Located from the north end of the South Castle Road (where it intersects the Beaver Mines Road) to approximately 5 km south.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of site sizes and configuration</li> <li>• Most sites well obscured from Beaver Mines Road</li> <li>• Staging for trail/road access to South Castle Road</li> <li>• Fishing Opportunities South Castle River and Beaver Mines Lake</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many sites adjacent to dry creek bed</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>• Consider timing of permitted camping to avoid spring when the dry creek may be flowing</li> </ul>		





South Drywood Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>		2	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b> 11
<b>Description:</b>	Located just inside the Wildland Park, small open field camping areas near an unnamed (suspect human made) pond.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal camping opportunities proposed for front drainages</li> <li>Screened from road; good shade and low dust</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to South Drywood Creek and Bovin Lake (e.g., fishing, hunting, berry picking, hiking) as well as other front range drainages and Butcher Lake</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Furthest from proposed Hwy 774 visitor center</li> <li>Small area which may not be able to accommodate demand from other campsites along front ranges (e.g., Whiteney Creek) which are lost</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at this location (adding sites) or consider designating additional sites near Whitney Creek</li> </ul>		

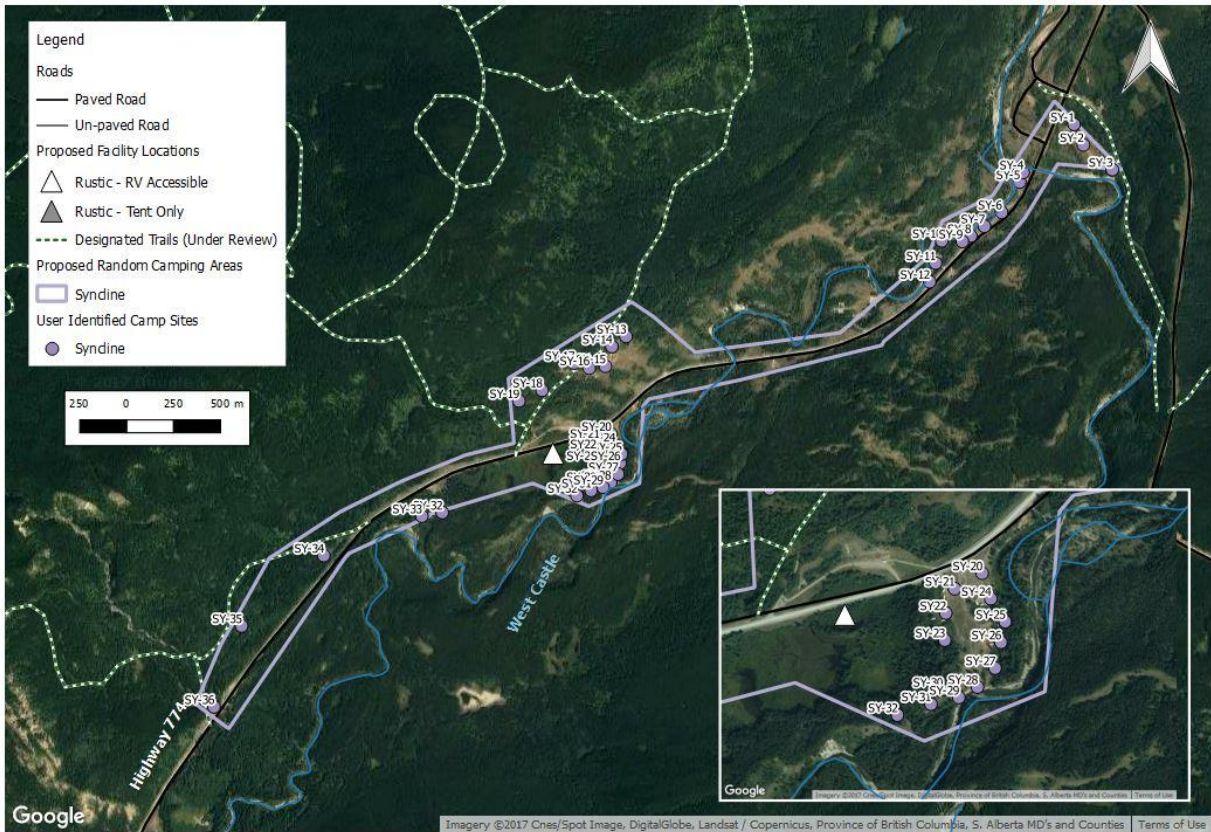


South Sartoris Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>		25	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b> 67
<b>Description:</b>	Located along the Sartoris Road, starting from the intersection with the Lynx Creek Road and extending to the proposed Willoughby Ridge rustic site.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of site sizes and configuration, particularly small sites for individual camping experience</li> <li>• Staging for trail/road access to Willoughby Ridge and west into Lost / Lynx.</li> <li>• Good access to fishing on Lynx Creek</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available locations limited by steeper topography of Willoughby Ridge and steep creek valley / canyons to west</li> <li>• Sites adjacent to proposed rustic site (SS-1 through SS-4) have high potential for conflict</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>• Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at Willoughby Ridge proposed rustic site (adding capacity) and closing SS-1 through SS-4</li> </ul>		

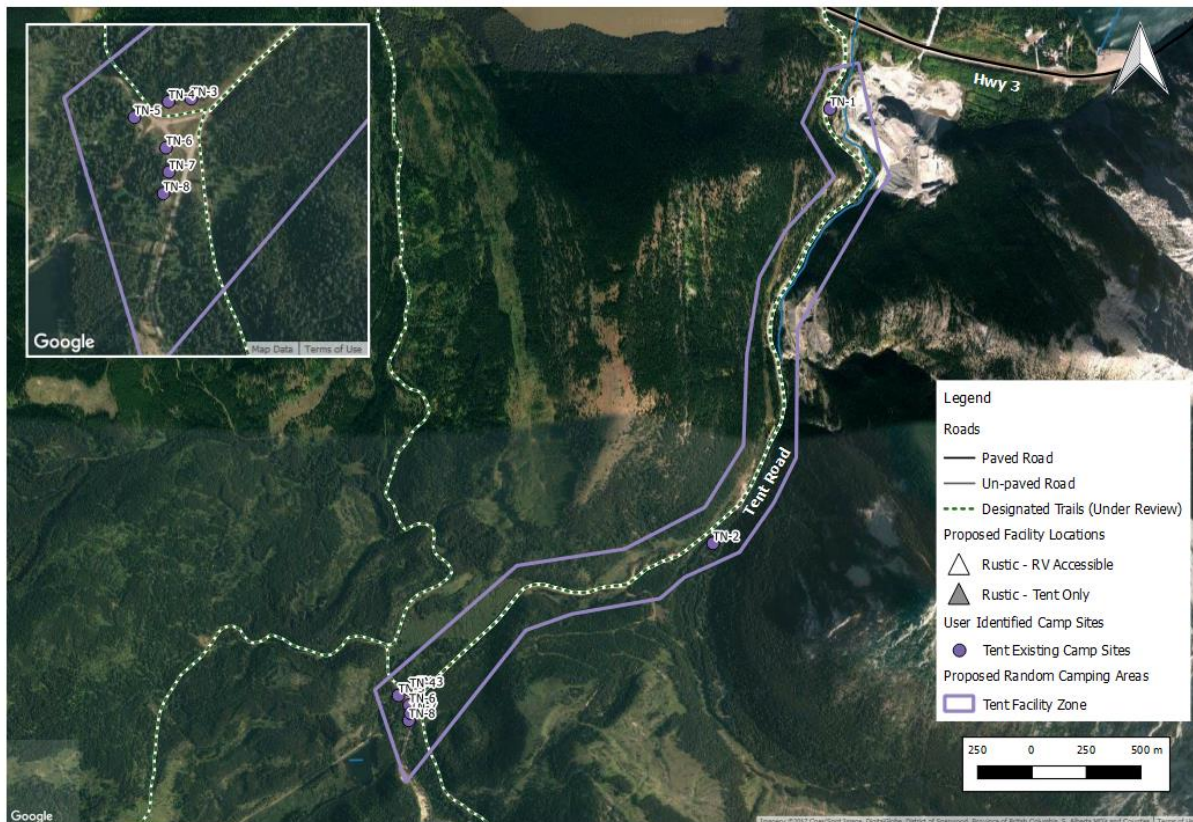




Syncline Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>		25	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b> 236
<b>Description:</b>	Located along the Sartoris Road, starting from the intersection with the Lynx Creek Road and extending to the proposed Willoughby Ridge rustic site.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of site sizes and configuration, particularly small sites for individual camping experience</li> <li>Staging for trail/road access to Willoughby Ridge and west into Lost / Lynx.</li> <li>Good access to fishing on Lynx Creek</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available locations limited by steeper topography of Willoughby Ridge and steep creek valley / canyons to west</li> <li>Sites adjacent to proposed rustic site (SS-1 through SS-4) have high potential for conflict</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> <li>Consider augmenting available camping opportunities at Willoughby Ridge proposed rustic site (adding capacity) and closing SS-1 through SS-4</li> </ul>		



Tent Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>		8	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b> 38-50
<b>Description:</b>	Located along the Tent Road, from Hwy 3 to the access gate to Tent Mountain Cola Mine. Located just outside of the Wildland Park Boundary.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staging / access to trail heads for Ptolemy Plateau (caving and hiking) as well as OHV trails</li> <li>Proximity to lake fishing (Emerald Lake, Crowsnest Lake)</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few sites available along road, most sites located near each other near the resource road gate</li> <li>Some sites only tent accessible (e.g., TN-2)</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration and general regulation signage</li> </ul>		





West Castle Open Camping Facility Zone			
<b>Existing Campsites Captured:</b>	5	<b>Estimated Capacity:</b>	42
<b>Description:</b>	Located along the West Castle Road beyond the Castle Ski Hill. Traditional camping sites historically well used; more recent use limited when full size bridge replaced with OHV bridge.		
<b>Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staging / access to trail heads for Middle Kootenay Pass, includes access to Rainy Ridge Lakes, huckleberry picking, hunting</li> <li>• Access to fishing on West Castle River</li> <li>• Secluded sites with variety of sizes</li> </ul>		
<b>Constraints:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access limited to off-highway vehicle use only with bridge replacement to OHV size bridge in 2016</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Interventions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration and general regulation signage</li> </ul>		

