Prince Albert
National Park

Red Deer Campground Electrical Upgrades
Information for Waskesiu Partners and Businesses

1. Summary

Parks Canada is investing in the Red Deer Campground to ensure continued operation of the campground and the provision of reliable and safe services that meet code requirements and visitor expectations. We are committed to these infrastructure upgrades to ensure long-term function of this important campground that supports tourism and economic opportunities to Prince Albert National Park and area.

Red Deer Campground is a three-season campsite in Prince Albert National Park with 161 fully serviced campsites. It is a popular campground and sees many repeat visitors because of the fully serviced sites and its location in the Waskesiu townsite. However, the existing electrical infrastructure does not meet the current demands or code requirements.

Parks Canada was notified that the Red Deer Campground is not compliant with the Canadian Electrical Code and cannot continue to operate safely until it is brought into compliance. The current demands on the electrical system are a hazard and a safety risk to visitors.
Parks Canada continues to invest in front-country facilities to ensure the best possible visitor experience for people coming to heritage places. The electrical upgrade recently received funding from Parks Canada Agency's Central Investment Fund and is included in Prince Albert National Park's long-term capital plan. The proposed project will provide 50-amp service to all sites and includes relocation and standard placement of power, water and sewer utilities in 27 sites in Loops A, B, C. While there is no net increase in infrastructure, the project will improve visitor experience at the campground by providing safe and reliable electrical service that meets all relevant codes while improving campsite layout. The project construction is currently planned to begin in spring 2026 and is expected to take between two and four months.

Parks Canada recognizes that the short-term closure of the Red Deer Campground will impact visitors, residents and businesses in Prince Albert National Park. Parks Canada administered places are committed to providing visitors with high quality and meaningful experiences across the country. Delay in this project into autumn 2026 holds greater risk and could result in loss of funding, increased costs and longer closures of the campground. Infrastructure projects like these ensure the quality and reliability of visitor facilities so Canadians can continue to connect with Prince Albert National Park for many years to come.

2. Red Deer Campground

Red Deer campground is a fully serviced campground, popular with visitors with recreational vehicles (RVs) and camper trailers. Red Deer campground operates at almost full capacity in July and August. During the months of May (beginning May long weekend), June, September and October (to Thanksgiving weekend), the campground operates at partial capacity with an average of (over the years of 2021-2024): 40 sites occupied per night in May; 110 sites per night in June; 60 sites per night in September, and 8 sites per night in October. Approximately twice as many campers visit in May/June as compared to September/October. The funds generated from the campground are critical to the operation of Prince Albert National Park. The campground was last upgraded in 2010 when the roads were paved, 9 new sites added, and some electrical upgrades were made to ensure a consistent service offer across the campground.

Since 2010, the demands on the electrical services have increased. This demand is greater than what the system can safety and reliably provide. As such, Parks Canada identified the need for a capital investment in the electrical works in the campground. The current electrical issues have resulted in complaints from visitors, increased maintenance costs and increased staff time to address them.

3. Project Details

The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK) establishes and enforces the use of permits and inspections to ensure that installations, repairs and ongoing maintenance are certified, approved and comply with safety standards. In the May 2024 inspection, TSASK issued an electrical defect notice for the campground, stating that work necessary to bring the system into compliance must be completed by June 2025. Prince Albert National Park requested and received an extension on the compliance deadline to operate the campground in 2024 for the 2025 season with mitigations in place.

The May 2024 inspection identified that the conductors feeding campground loops A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H are severely overloaded. The Canadian Electrical Code permits three receptacles per 200-amp breaker but the Red Deep Campground has up to 152 sites feeding off a 200-amp breaker. This presents a significant fire hazard and public safety concern.

The electrical upgrade will ensure that Red Deer campground can provide reliable and safe services that meet code requirements and visitor expectations. To enable the work to be completed quickly and efficiently, it is necessary for the entire campground to be closed during construction.

4. Current Project: Timing, Plans and Recommendations

The project includes the administration, procurement, design and construction: Final approval and tender process (September – November); Design (winter 2025/26); Construction to begin as soon as possible (spring 2026) and will take two to four months to complete. The current plans will have the least impact on the visitor offer and local economy; it is not anticipated that this project will take long and the goal is to complete it by July 1, 2026.

The funding and capacity to carry out the project are available. The contracting phase that begins in autumn 2025 enables the construction to proceed quickly, taking advantage of an early spring if possible. The campground will be 100% operational as early as summer 2026 with fully supported electrical service at all campsites, safely providing full service to campers without limitations or mitigations.

It was not possible to expedite this project because the process for submitting proposals and approvals, and the funding cycle must be followed. Approval processes and funding are impacted by a variety of internal factors.

Delaying the project has financial, timing and practical implications.

Financial implications:

Delaying presents a risk to funding that is currently earmarked for this project, to capacity to manage and or carry out the work and could result in increased project cost. Unintended closure of the campground due to noncompliance or an extended construction window caused by the

delay to autumn would result in lost revenue to the Agency and to the local economy. Estimated costs may increase if the project is delayed an additional year; budget may not be sufficient; material and labour costs increase every year. Current funding is only approved for a finite period and moving funds to future fiscal years is not always possible. Additional and or future funding may not be available potentially resulting in further delay.

Timing (schedule) Implications:
Operating the campground with the current electrical system presents a safety hazard, requires ongoing maintenance and mitigation, and is concerning for campers who have been dealing with inadequate facilities for many years. Deferring the project to September 2026 may not be possible and if it were possible, it could result in extended closure into spring 2027. Many factors impact a construction season such as early winter, too much snow, late spring, a wet year, delays with the contractor and/or designer, delays with SaskPower. Any significant change to schedule or scope, and any increase in cost, requires a project amendment which is time consuming to carry out and could impact the availability of funding.

Practical Implications:
Project managers and or contractors may not be available if the project is delayed. TSASK has issued a notice of defect and may not grant another extension which would likely mean a full campground closure, or no electricity for most of the campground (some sites were previously upgraded, but most were not). With a design build contract, the intent is to move forward quickly. If the tender process proceeds in fall 2025 and the construction does not begin until fall 2027, the project may increase in cost, it may become more difficult to plan and purchase material, etc.

5. **Additional Notes**
   - Red Deer campground will not be included in the Parks Canada Reservation Service (PCRS) in January 2026. The campground opening will be promoted and included on the reservation system once the timelines for project completion are confirmed.
   - Beaver Glen campground will be included in the PCRS in January. The Narrows campground will remain first come first serve as it currently is.

6. **Information**
   Information about the project will be available on the park website and social media. The reopening will also be announced in the park electronic newsletter, reservation service website, and on local news media.

   Contact the visitor centre at 306 663 4522 or princealbertinfo@pc.gc.ca for information.