

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Peter Lougheed Provincial Park

Highwood Meadows Day Use Area

Where is the project occurring?

Parking lot formalization construction is occurring at Highwood Meadows Day Use Area within Peter Lougheed Provincial Park (PLPP), approximately 67 km south of the Trans-Canada Highway on Highway 40.

What is the project?

As part of the project Alberta Forestry and Parks plans to:

- Establish and formalize a new Highwood Meadows parking lot.
- Expand and formalize the Hwy 40-Highwood Meadows Day Use Area intersection.
- Construct an additional washroom facility to current Alberta Forestry and Parks standards.
- Implement site features including kiosks and waste collection to current Alberta Forestry and Parks standards.
- Upgrade wayfinding and information signage.
- Reconfigure line painting to accommodate future transit opportunities and oversized vehicle parking in the existing Highwood Meadows parking lot.
- Achieve operational and maintenance efficiencies.

Why is Alberta Forestry and Parks completing this project?

Visitation has increased substantially within the Highwood Meadows area, resulting in site degradation, public safety issues (i.e., emergency access), parking congestion, ineffective visitor flow, and waste management challenges. The existing parking lot, built in the 1980s, is sized for approximately 60 vehicles, with deteriorating facilities. Recent assessments revealed that the existing parking lot (and the area to the south) is in an avalanche zone. The new parking lot location was chosen to provide a safe parking option to minimize early and late season avalanche risk.

To provide additional parking and formalize trailhead facilities, Forestry and Parks will be constructing an adjacent parking area, reconfiguring the existing parking area and completing an intersection improvement on Hwy 40 at Highwood Meadows Day Use Area. Visitor use management strategies, such as prioritized enforcement of no parking on the road adjacent the day use area and additional trip planning information to redirect visitors to other sites during high use periods, will be employed. Additional visitor use management strategies will be implemented through adaptive management.

What does the area closure include?

The closure area includes:
The new adjoining parking area north of the existing Highwood Meadows Day Use Area.

Forestry and Parks is enacting an intermittent area closure to support the Highwood Meadows Day Use Construction Project.

Can I access trails from other parking lots or on foot?

The following trails which are access to the west of the existing Highwood Meadows Day Use Area will be closed:

- Highwood Meadows Interpretive Trail
- Pocaterra Cirque and Ridge Routes

Ptarmigan Cirque trail will be closed as needed to manage construction activities. Conservation Officers will enforce the area closure under the *Provincial Parks Act*.

What measures are in place to minimize impacts to the environment?

Rare plant surveys and wildlife assessments have been completed as part of the planning and design phase and will also occur again prior to work beginning to ensure wildlife in the park and critical habitats are not impacted.

How long will construction take?

Construction is tentatively scheduled to start at the beginning of July and may take until November 2025. Forestry and Parks will update the final schedule on www.albertaparks.ca/advisories.

What happens if I get caught in the closure?

Conservation Officers will enforce any area closures under the *Provincial Parks Act*. To support completing this project in 2025, keep safe and stay out of the closure areas and let the contractor finish the project without getting in their way.

Why can't this work be done in the spring instead of the busy summer and fall seasons?

In the Rocky Mountains both spring and fall are characterized by cold overnight temperatures and an increase in inclement weather. The ground stays frozen until late into the spring and sleet storms are common. This region can often receive a large volume of snow and below freezing temperatures in early September and October due to the high elevation. These factors adversely impact construction work and often result in delays, unsafe working conditions and a reduction in the quality of work. Working in the mountains means a short window for construction.

We planning to go hiking on trails in the Highwood Meadows area. Where should we go instead?

There are numerous options that highlight the beauty of the Rockies and offer family-friendly experiences.

Our recommendations:

- Rawson Lake
- Troll Falls
- Heart Creek
- Grotto Canyon
- Grassi Lakes
- Wedge Pond (short hike)

During larch season, consider: Chester Lake,

I purchased a Kananaskis Conservation Pass specifically to use these sites. Can I get a refund now that the sites are closed?

Kananaskis Conservation Pass (KCP) provides access to over 25 campgrounds, 85 day use areas, hundreds of kilometers of trails and many other amazing features like creeks, canyons and lakes to discover and explore. Please visit <https://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/kananaskis> or call the Kananaskis Information Line at 403-678-0760 to find many other options that will interest you.