

# Lac La Biche County

## Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan



Final: June 28, 2019

June 28, 2019

Jana Rowe  
Tourism Marketing and Economic Development Coordinator  
Lac La Biche County  
Box 1679  
Lac La Biche, Alberta, T0A 2C0

Dear Ms. Rowe:

Please find enclosed the final Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan.

We have enjoyed working with you to develop this important document. It is an exciting time for the Region as you embark upon implementation of your bold new strategy for tourism development. The time is right for the Region to develop outstanding nature-based and cultural visitor experiences that highlight the beauty and uniqueness of the Region.

If you have any questions or require clarification on the attached report, please feel free to contact me at 780-266-7888.

Sincerely,



Justin Rousseau, Managing Director  
Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

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# Executive Summary



Kikino Silver Birch Resort  
Source: Travel Alberta

## Immense Opportunity for Tourism Development in the Lac La Biche Region

This strategy outlines a road map for tourism development in the Lac La Biche region and sets the stage for transformational growth in the local tourism industry over the next 10 years. The document begins by describing the current state of tourism in the region and then goes on to create a compelling vision supported by five strategic goals and a detailed action plan. The research outlined in this plan demonstrates that there is significant demand among highly attractive visitor markets for the types of experiences that the Lac La Biche region has to offer. As identified in the 10-year vision, the competitive advantage of the region is its “unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.” There is immense opportunity for the region to build tourism products that will excite visitors, engage residents and drive revenue for businesses. The region has a desire to significantly expand its market share and attract Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers to the destination. The plan outlines seven unique tourism product lines that should be developed in order to make this vision a reality. Significant investment in the tourism support system will be critical in the short term. In addition, there will be a concerted effort to reach out to cultural communities and businesses to develop visitor experiences. Investment in this strategy will be a long term commitment and implementation will take dedication, focus and fortitude. We believe the region can be successful in this endeavour if it works together collaboratively and maximizes resources through strong partnerships. If this is done, the tourism industry can yield steady returns for businesses, the community and the County for many years to come.

## Tourism in Lac La Biche County

Lac La Biche County has exceptional natural assets and unique cultural attractions that offer visitors the chance to create truly memorable experiences. The Lac La Biche region attracts thousands of campers, boaters, fishermen, history-buffs and other travellers every year. Located in northeastern Alberta, Lac La Biche County has over 150 lakes, attractive rural areas, and some of the best outdoor activities in the Province.

The region also boasts a rich heritage and strong links to history stemming from the diverse group of distinct cultures present in the region. The story of the region is the collective story of the many groups that call Lac La Biche County home, including European settlers, Indigenous groups, Métis, Lebanese, and others. Compelling cultural assets such as the Lac La Biche Mission, Plamondon Museum and Mini Parc Heritage Park, and the Museum of Aboriginal Peoples’ Art and Artifacts at Portage College invite visitors to learn about the history of the area’s people.

# Current State

## Visitor Analysis

Detailed analysis of visitor data was conducted to support the Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan. A summary of the key findings is provided below:

- The majority of visitors to northern Alberta originate from domestic markets (Alberta and other parts of Canada).
- Visiting friends and relatives is a primary driver of visitation to northern Alberta.
- Residents of northern Alberta, Edmonton and area, and central Alberta are highly engaged by the region's existing product offering.
- International visitors to the Northern Alberta Tourism Region represent 6% of total visits, although they are responsible for 25% of total tourism expenditures.
- International markets have expressed demand for nature-based experiences and authentic cultural experiences.
- The highest potential international markets are the U.S., United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, China and Japan.
- The Explorer Quotient profiles that best align with the region's product offering include No Hassle Travellers, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers.

## Resident Analysis

Residents of Lac La Biche County were surveyed to support the strategy. Key findings include:

- 80% of respondents would recommend the County to others as a place to visit.
- 72% of respondents indicated they are likely or very likely to invite their friends and/or family to visit the County in the next 2 years.
- The most common barrier preventing respondents from participating in activities when their friends and family visit was activity not offered.
- The top priority that would encourage more visitation to the region was developing more things to do.
- In terms of the quality of visitor services and amenities in Lac La Biche County, respondents highly rated accommodations, cleanliness of public spaces, customer service and parking.
- Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with safety and security, public washrooms, business hours and restaurants.

# Stakeholder Engagement

The Tourism Strategy and Product Development Strategy incorporated the goals and needs of a broad range of internal and external stakeholder groups. The figure below describes the stakeholder input that was utilized to develop this report.



22 unique groups participated in the process, including several Indigenous groups, neighbouring municipalities, Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Travel Alberta, local businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholder groups.

## Engagement Results

- Stakeholders have expressed interest to develop more market ready tourism products, particularly Indigenous experiences and other cultural experiences.
- Alberta Parks is an important partner in nature-based and cultural tourism product development. They have expressed a strong interest in working with the Tourism Strategy Task Force to further the goals of the strategy.
- Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism and Travel Alberta have expressed a desire to support the efforts of the region.
- Neighbouring Municipalities and other important stakeholders are enthusiastic about working collaboratively to promote tourism in the region.
- Residents have indicated a desire to grow tourism in the region.
- Existing visitors have strong brand loyalty and high repeat visitation.
- More needs to be done to engage the business community.
- Improving the health of Lac La Biche Lake is of high importance to residents, visitors and stakeholder groups.

# SWOT Analysis

The Lac La Biche region is poised to significantly grow year-round visitation, but the destination must first leverage its strengths and overcome some challenges. Although there are outstanding assets in the region, there is a lack of market-ready tourism products, the tourism promotion system is fragmented, and some key assets need to be improved (see below for the SWOT Analysis summary). The region must come together collaboratively and invest in development to maximize the attractive benefits that the tourism industry can bring to the community.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abundance of natural attractions and water-based recreation opportunities.</li> <li>• Strong supply of cultural attractions and cultural-focused events, including emerging Indigenous tourism experiences.</li> <li>• Strong supply of accommodation providers and campgrounds.</li> <li>• High-quality community and sports facilities.</li> <li>• Strong existing visitor markets.</li> <li>• Commitment to diversifying the local economy through tourism.</li> <li>• The County is in a strong financial position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of variety in terms of options for accommodations, food and beverage, and activities.</li> <li>• Lack of market-ready tourism products.</li> <li>• Lack of integration between tourism and other municipal planning.</li> <li>• Limited visitor information available.</li> <li>• Fragmented and underdeveloped tourism promotion system.</li> <li>• Lack of business engagement in tourism development.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing nature-based and cultural tourism offerings into market-ready products for visitors.</li> <li>• Leveraging strategic location and high-quality recreation facilities for sport tourism.</li> <li>• Strengthening collaborative tourism marketing and leveraging Travel Alberta cooperative marketing funds.</li> <li>• Linking tourism assets and recreation assets in order to improve financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Development of McArthur Park and downtown Lac La Biche into a key tourism asset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable economic circumstances due to variable commodity prices.</li> <li>• Balancing the needs of residents with the needs of visitors.</li> <li>• Labour shortages.</li> <li>• Negative perceptions of the community related to crime.</li> </ul>



*Haida Beaver by Bill Reid*  
 Source: Museum of Aboriginal Peoples' Art and Artifacts

# Vision for the Future

The Lac La Biche region is a special place. There are very few destinations in the world that possess the natural beauty of the region combined with the cultural diversity it offers. Over the past 150 years, the Lac La Biche region has not only managed to retain its cultural authenticity, it has built upon it with new cultures introduced throughout the decades. At a time in history where protectionism is gaining momentum, Lac La Biche is an oasis where residents can celebrate their cultural diversity and visitors can immerse themselves in it. It is time to celebrate everything Lac La Biche has to offer and it is time to invite the world!

## 10 Year Vision

*By 2029, the Lac La Biche region will be known to regional, Canadian and niche international markets as a place where visitors can immerse themselves in the destination's unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.*



## What will be happening by 2024?

At the half-way point of executing the strategy, the following will be happening:

- Visitors are excited about new and emerging visitor experiences available in the region.
- Tourism is recognized by key stakeholders as an important mechanism in diversifying the local economy and have committed to growing the sector.
- There is a clear framework, organizational structure and funding model in place to support tourism development.
- Compelling, on-brand tourism messages are being shared with key target markets in a coordinated way.
- Residents are ambassadors for tourism and are motivated to invite their friends and relatives to visit.

## What will be happening by 2029?

- The destination has expanded its market reach deeper (regionally) and wider (nationally and internationally).
- The region is becoming a provincial leader in cultural and nature-based tourism.
- The region's tourism development system is sustainable, and the industry is poised for future growth.
- Regional partners are being engaged in collaborative initiatives to achieve mutual tourism objectives.



*Canoeing on Lac La Biche Lake  
Source: Lac La Biche County*

# Goals

In order to achieve this bold new vision, the Lac La Biche region has established five overarching goals:



## 1. Organizational Development

*Goal: Build organizational capacity to ensure sound delivery and execution of the Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan.*



## 2. Product Development

*Goal: Improve the attractiveness of the County's tourism offering by developing new products and enhancing existing products into compelling visitor and market ready experiences.*

Top experiences for development include:

1. Outdoor Experiences
2. Cultural Tourism
3. Dark Sky/Northern Lights Viewing
4. Sport Tourism
5. Festivals and Events
6. Culinary Tourism
7. Lac La Biche as a Winter Destination

The top experiences for development were identified through detailed analysis of tourism assets in the region, demand from key visitor markets and corresponding product-market matches.



## 3. Asset and Facility Development

*Goal: Ensure the County's existing and future assets and facilities are planned, maintained and developed in a way that fully leverages them to support tourism development.*



## 4. Business Attraction and Retention

*Goal: Attract and retain tourism-related businesses in the County.*



## 5. Marketing and Promotional Development

*Goal: Entice travellers to visit the County by promoting the region's experiences to key target markets.*

# Target Markets for Lac La Biche County

Taking into account detailed visitor data found in this plan, and considering what inspires travel to Lac La Biche County, the following target markets have been identified for the strategy.

## Target Markets (Short-Medium Term)

1. *Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers from central and northern Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County to experience culturally connected nature-based tourism.*
2. *No Hassle Travellers from central and northern Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County to connect with nature and their family and friends through compelling outdoor experiences.*
3. *Sport teams and their supporters from Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County for high quality sporting competitions.*

## Target Markets (Medium-Long Term)

1. *Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers from Regional, Canadian and niche International markets who seek to immerse themselves in the destination's unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.*



*Bannock making with the Canadian Native Friendship Centre  
Source: Travel Alberta*

## Strategic Focus

Lac La Biche County will employ a product development strategy in the short-medium term and transition into a diversification strategy in the medium-long term.

### Short-Medium Term Product Development Strategy

This strategy includes the focussed development of highly engaging tourism experiences tailored to each of the existing market segments, including those visiting friends and relatives, visitors to local campgrounds and visitors to sporting events. The Lac La Biche region is in an advantageous position in that it has the benefit of a strong base of customers who are already “sold” on the destination. What we want to do now is entice visitors to extend their stays and participate in more activities. This will lead to increased visitor spending and encourage visitors to become brand ambassadors.

### Medium-Long Term Diversification Strategy

This strategy includes developing new products that will attract new markets regionally, from out of province and internationally. There will be considerable effort required to diversify; however, the rewards could be substantial. We know that international visitors spend twice as much as domestic visitors do during their trips. We also know that there is international demand for cultural and nature-based activities. Cultural experiences are an important driver for tourists visiting Canada and traveling within Canada. Young Canadians aged 18-34 rate culture in their top three reasons for visiting a destination, even going so far as stating their dream Canadian vacation would include experiencing culture. Additionally, participating in cultural experiences ranked in the top five most popular activities for domestic (Canada and Alberta) overnight visitors to Alberta.



*Water Tubing on Lac La Biche Lake  
Source: Lac La Biche County*



*Wake Boarding on Lac La Biche Lake  
Source: Lac La Biche County*



# Strategy Implementation Summary – The Way Forward

Implementation of the strategy has five main phases. Phase 1 will focus on developing the organizational structure required to support tourism in the community. Phase 2 will include the creation of new tourism experiences that will resonate with existing visitor markets. This phase is the cornerstone of the strategy as compelling new experiences will be needed to entice visitor markets to do more, stay longer and spend more. Phase 3 will see a push towards marketing new tourism experiences and developing a unified tourism brand that reflects the core offering of the destination. Phase 4 is when the region truly has an opportunity to “show it’s stuff” by proving to its visitors that it can consistently deliver high quality visitor experiences. The goal during this phase will be to turn existing customers into brand advocates. Phase 5 will see a shift toward market expansion through diversification (i.e. new products to new markets).



2019-2020	2019-2023	2022- 2023	2023-2029	2026-2029
Phase 1 Develop Capacity	Phase 2 Build Outstanding Experiences for Existing Markets	Phase 3 Develop and Promote the Brand	Phase 4 Execute on the Brand Promise	Phase 5 Diversify to New Markets
Approve and resource the strategy.	Develop experiences into visitor and market ready tourism products in the 7 priority product lines.	Align promotional activities.	Prove to visitors that the region can consistently deliver high quality visitor experiences. Turn existing customers into brand advocates.	Grow market share through diversification (i.e. developing new products for new niche markets regionally, nationally and internationally).
Establish a Destination Development Business Unit within the County’s Economic Development Department.	Develop a lake remediation plan for Lac La Biche.	Develop an annual marketing plan and tourism brand strategy that will promote the region’s tourism offering to key target markets.	Re-evaluate the tourism delivery structure and determine if there is a need to establish an arms length DMO.	Continue to deliver outstanding visitor experiences to core existing markets.
Engage industry through a Tourism Strategy Task Force.	Work with hotel operators to develop leisure traveller amenities.	Maximize use of Travel Alberta’s Cooperative Marketing Investment Program to leverage funds.	Implement a multi-pronged funding approach that would see revenue generation from the private and public sector to support tourism development.	
Reach out to each culture in the region to begin to develop unique cultural experiences.	Develop and launch a Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program.	Collect detailed visitor information for use in promotions.	Ensure tourism is considered in all long-term planning.	
Liaise with Alberta Parks and other partners in developing the region’s natural assets.	Create a multi-faceted Tourism Development Incentive Program.	Develop a tourism ambassador registry.	Measure performance and adjust to market conditions as required.	
Organize training workshops for local operators.	Begin development of McArthur Park and downtown Lac La Biche into a civic and cultural destination.	Develop compelling packages.		
	Enhance safety and security.	Develop experience toolkits.		
	Develop a sport tourism hosting plan.			

# Roles in Implementation

**Lac La Biche County** – Takes the lead role in ensuring the strategy is moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner. The County will establish a Destination Development Business Unit within the Economic Development Department that will take the lead role in destination management and marketing.

**Businesses and Entrepreneurs** – Local businesses will play a key role in growing tourism in Lac La Biche County. Businesses must be actively engaged in implementing the strategy and need to be far more involved in tourism development than they currently are.

**Tourism Strategy Task Force** – A multi-stakeholder group that acts as a forum for consistent communication, collaboration and idea sharing related to the development of the strategy.



*Floating Dock in Lac La Biche  
Source: Lac La Biche County*

# Measuring Success

The strategy outlines 18 key performance indicators (KPI's) that will help the region measure success in the future. The KPI's are assigned to 5 main focus areas for growth. Below is a brief synopsis of this measurement tool. For more information see Section 7.

1. Increased Experiences
  - 20% annual growth in experiential programming.
  - 75% of all tourism businesses trained in product development and marketing.
2. Increased Awareness
  - 20% annual growth in digital engagement.
  - 20% annual growth in new product awareness.
3. Increased Revenue
  - 10% annual growth in new tourism businesses/business tax revenue.
  - 10% annual growth in operational revenue from attractions, accommodations, tour operators, retail and restaurants.
4. Increased Visitation
  - 10% annual growth in visitation.
5. Increased Satisfaction
  - 85% great rating at attractions.
  - 85% great rating with the quality of visitor amenities.
  - 85% great rating of overall experience.
  - 20% increase in number of return visitors.



## Funding the Plan

The plan will be funded primarily through contributions from municipal and provincial sources, as well as fee-for-service from the private sector. The plan outlines several other long-term funding options that will be reviewed in the coming years.

## Conclusion

The Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan offers a strategic direction that will advance the region toward its bold vision to become a destination of choice for visitors seeking to immerse themselves in enriching cultural experiences in a stunning natural environment.

The strategy is an ambitious one that will require a high degree of collaboration and significant investment between multiple stakeholders to be successful. It is only through cooperation that Lac La Biche County will achieve its vision and build a sustainable and competitive destination in the long-term. The destination is in the early stages of development; however, the region is poised for impressive tourism growth. It is now time to invest in tourism and begin a new chapter of development in Lac La Biche County!



# 01 Project Overview



# Immense Opportunity for Tourism Development in the Lac La Biche Region

This strategy outlines a road map for tourism development in the Lac La Biche region and sets the stage for transformational growth in the local tourism industry over the next 10 years. The document begins by describing the current state of tourism in the region and then goes on to create a compelling vision supported by five strategic goals and a detailed action plan. The research outlined in this plan demonstrates that there is significant demand among highly attractive visitor markets for the types of experiences that the Lac La Biche region has to offer. As identified in the 10-year vision, the competitive advantage of the region is its “unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.” There is immense opportunity for the region to build tourism products that will excite visitors, engage residents and drive revenue for businesses. The region has a desire to significantly expand its market share and attract Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers to the destination. The plan outlines seven unique tourism product lines that should be developed in order to make this vision a reality. Significant investment in the tourism support system will be critical in the short term. In addition, there will be a concerted effort to reach out to cultural communities and businesses to develop visitor experiences. Investment in this strategy will be a long term commitment and implementation will take dedication, focus and fortitude. We believe the region can be successful in this endeavour if it works together collaboratively and maximizes resources through strong partnerships. If this is done, the tourism industry can yield steady returns for businesses, the community and the County for many years to come.



## Lac La Biche County Yesterday

Lac La Biche County is a region with a rich heritage and strong links to history stemming from the diverse group of distinct cultures present in the region. The story of the region is the collective story of the many groups that call Lac La Biche County home, including European settlers, Indigenous groups, Métis, Lebanese, and others.

The Lac La Biche region is home to some of the oldest archaeological sites discovered in Alberta, and the area has a documented history extending back thousands of years. The area was established as an important centre for the fur trade upon the arrival of the first European explorer in 1798, David Thompson, followed by the Hudson's Bay Company who built a fort in 1799. The region was situated in an ideal location for the fur trade based on the lake's access to the Churchill and Mackenzie River drainage basins, which made it an important centre for the booming industry.<sup>1</sup> The lake was named “Lac La Biche” as a French translation of a Cree phrase that means “Lake of the Elk.”<sup>2</sup> During the 19th century, a significant Métis community began to develop as more outposts were built. In 1844, a local voyager named Joseph Cardinal invited the Catholic missionary, Father Thibeault, to visit the community, and these regular visits continued until a full mission was established at Lac La Biche in 1853. The mission, named Notre Dame des Victories, became one of the Oblates' most important mission sites in the region, and it has now been recognized as a National Historic Site. Later settlers in the region were of Lebanese, Russian, Italian and Ukrainian origins, which highlights the diversity contained within the region.<sup>3</sup>

Lac La Biche County has demonstrated great resiliency over the past two centuries, surviving economic downturns and natural disasters. In 1915, a railroad was built that connected Lac La Biche with Edmonton, opening the region to a new form of transportation and the potential for increased tourism. In response to the predicted increase in visitors, the Lac La Biche Inn was opened for business in 1916 by J.D. McArthur. Unfortunately, the hotel only remained open for two years before being forced to close due in-part to a downturn in tourism during World War I. Shortly thereafter, the region experienced The Great Fire of 1919, whereby the Village of Lac La Biche was destroyed except for a few buildings.<sup>4</sup> The story of Lac La Biche County is a dynamic and complex one that defines the region's culture and heritage.



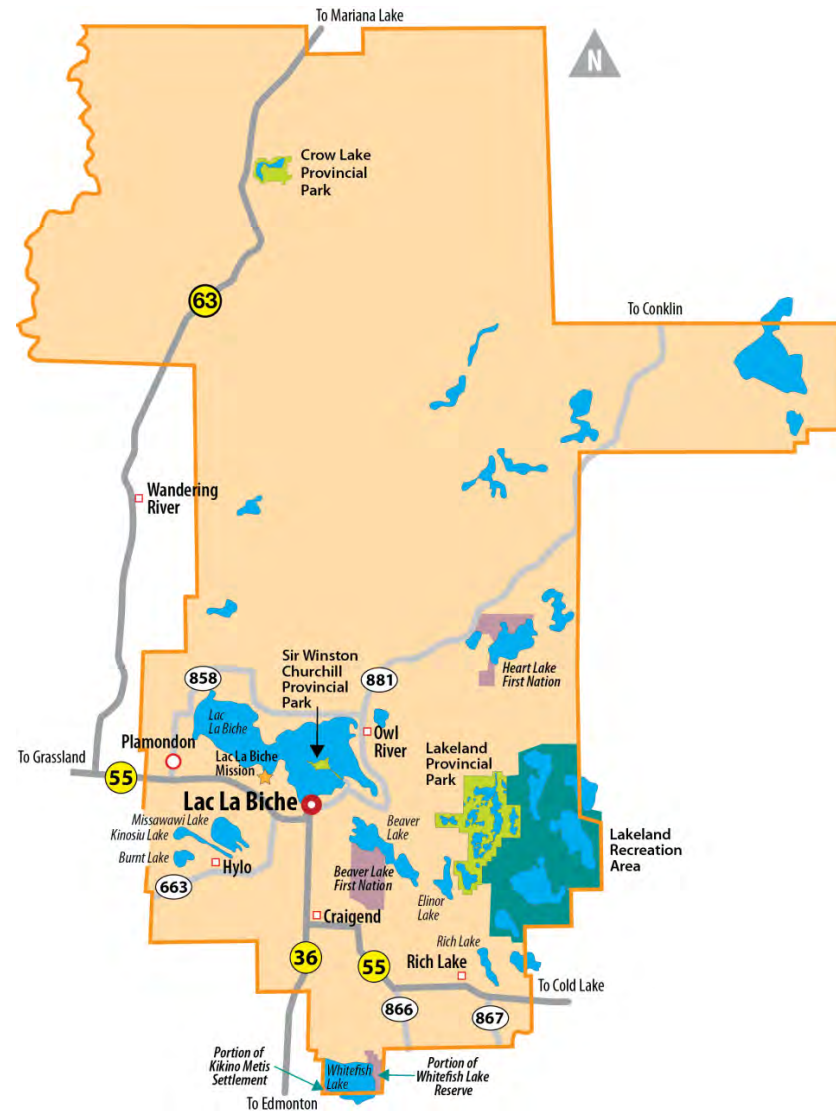
## Lac La Biche County Today

Since 1919, growth in the Lac La Biche region has been steady. With the opening of the new railway, commercial fishing, logging, agriculture and mink ranching became important regional activities. Over the last 40 years, tourism, forestry, and oil and gas development have resulted in significant growth. Lac La Biche County was created in 2007 through the amalgamation of the Town of Lac La Biche and Lakeland County. Lac La Biche County currently serves five hamlets, including Lac La Biche, Beaver Lake, Plamondon, Hylo and Venice, and the unincorporated community of Rich Lake.

## Tourism in the Region

Lac La Biche County has exceptional natural assets and unique cultural attractions that offer visitors the chance to create truly memorable experiences. The Lac La Biche region attracts thousands of campers, boaters, fishermen, history-buffs and other travellers every year. Located in northeastern Alberta, Lac La Biche County has over 150 lakes, attractive rural areas, and some of the best outdoor activities in the Province. Compelling cultural assets such as the Lac La Biche Mission, Plamondon Museum and Mini Parc Heritage Park, and the Museum of Aboriginal Peoples' Art and Artifacts at Portage College invite visitors to learn about the history of the area's people.

Tourism has been recognized by businesses, not-for-profit organizations, residents and governmental organizations as a powerful opportunity to diversify and grow the local economy. Tourism development in the County has historically occurred in a fragmented manner, and the industry is still in the early stages of development. However, the potential for tourism growth in Lac La Biche County is significant. Determined and focused efforts toward developing tourism product can bring valuable rewards to the community, which include generating visitor spending that has a high multiplier, encouraging new business creation and retention, and attracting new residents to the community.

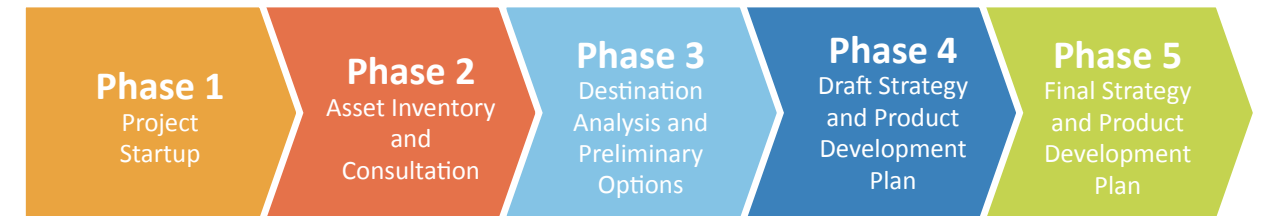


## Project Purpose

The purpose of the Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan is to identify, develop and communicate a comprehensive roadmap that will set the direction for tourism development within the County. The strategy will create a shared vision for the future that all stakeholders can rally behind.

## Process

The Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan had five, interconnected phases as described below.



## Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was established for the purpose of providing input and direction to the project. Below is a list of Steering Committee representatives.

Project Steering Committee	
Jana Rowe	Tourism Marketing and Economic Development Coordinator
Shadia Amblie	Chief Administrative Officer
Darrell Lessmeister	Senior Manager, Recreation and Community Enhancement
Brian Shapka	Senior Manager, Public Works
Clayton Kittlitz	Senior Manager, Planning and Development
Staci Lattimer	Manager, Recreation
Gary Harman	Manager, Parks and Facilities
Alex Fuller	Coordinator, Communications
Consultant Team (Lead Firm – Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.)	
Justin Rousseau	Managing Director, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.
Maxwell Harrison	Associate, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.
Graham Anderson	Associate, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.
Breanna Hives	Associate, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.
Megan Turnock	Senior Associate, Lees+Associates

## Overview of Research

A variety of primary and secondary research activities were conducted to develop this report. Primary research was gathered through two separate surveys (Resident and Visitor), multiple Tourism Cafés and pop-up booths in the community, and interviews with stakeholders. Secondary research was gathered from municipal, provincial and national data sources, information requests of the Client, a review of relevant literature and an online review. Please see below for a list of primary research activities completed to support the project.

### 1. Meetings Conducted:

- a. Onsite Visitor Survey Administration and Visitor Interviews  
Dates: August 3 and 4, 2018
- b. Committee Meetings  
Dates: August 15, 2018; February 21, 2019; May 9, 2019
- c. Tourism Cafés – Public Meetings  
Dates: October 10 and 11, 2018 in Lac La Biche and Plamondon
- d. Trade Show Booth  
Date: October 12, 2018
- e. Public Input Meetings – Review Draft Plan  
Date: June 11, 2019 in Lac La Biche and Plamondon
- f. Presentations to Council  
Dates: December 11, 2018; June 4, 2019; July 9, 2019

### 2. Surveys Administered:

- a. Lac La Biche County Resident Survey (N = 177)
- b. Lac La Biche County Visitor Survey (N = 187)

### 3. Stakeholders Consulted (through interviews or tourism cafés):

- a. An opportunity was provided for all stakeholders in the community to provide input. 22 unique stakeholder groups participated, including local tourism operators and representatives of the following organizations:
  - i. Lac La Biche County
  - ii. Lac La Biche and District Chamber of Commerce
  - iii. Beaver Lake First Nation
  - iv. Canadian Native Friendship Centre
  - v. Mayhill Campground
  - vi. Portage College
  - vii. Lac La Biche Lions Club
  - viii. Lac La Biche Historical Society
  - ix. Kikino Silver Birch Resort (invited)
  - x. Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement (invited)
  - xi. Heart Lake First Nation (invited)
  - xii. Region One Aboriginal Business Association (invited)
  - xiii. Municipal District of Bonnyville

- xiv. Go East of Edmonton
- xv. Plamondon Co-op
- xvi. Plamondon Whitesands Resort
- xvii. Servus Credit Union
- xviii. Conseil de Development Economique de L'Alberta
- xix. Indigenous Tourism Alberta
- xx. Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism
- xxi. Alberta Environment and Parks
- xxii. Travel Alberta

## Why Invest in Tourism?

Investing in tourism development can bring a multitude of benefits to a community. The following discussion describes the main benefits and outlines a case for pursuing tourism development in Lac La Biche County.

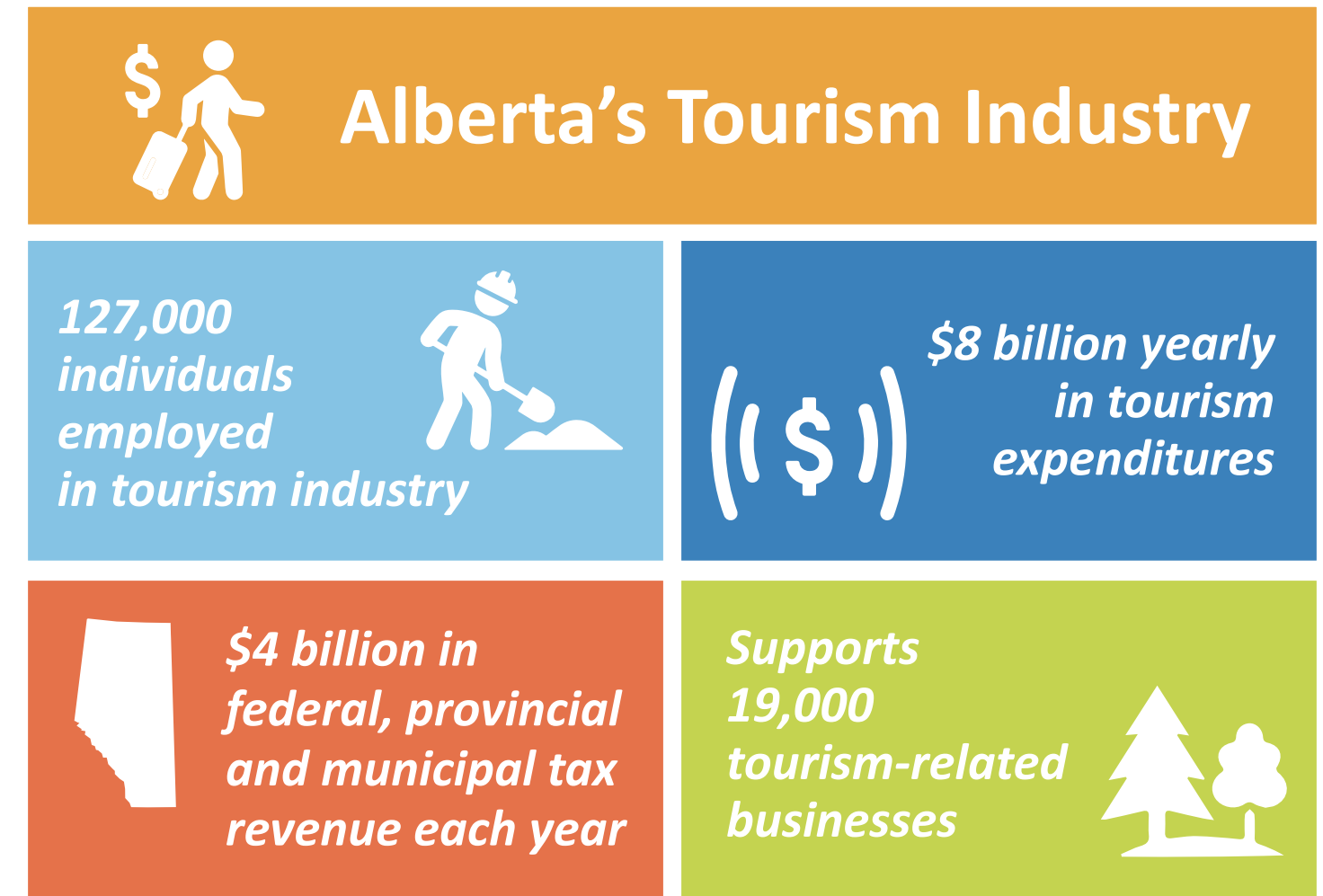
The County is positioned as the gateway to the South Athabasca Oil Sands and a major distribution hub for companies operating in Cold Lake, Wabasca and Conklin. With three major arterial roads (Highways 36, 55 and 881), a municipal airport, and northeastern Alberta's only rail line, Lac La Biche County is well positioned to grow as an economic service centre for industrial activity in the region. However, the current economic situation in the province has curtailed investment and income in the energy sector. This has led Lac La Biche County, business owners and residents to look to other industries for opportunity. Tourism is identified as a growth sector for the province and Lac La Biche County is well positioned to capitalize on growth in the tourism sector.

Tourism brings the following value to Lac La Biche County:

- **Tourism supports jobs** – Visitors spend money at campgrounds, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, and rental and retail stores in Lac La Biche County. This is new money to small businesses that create jobs for residents.
- **Tourism has a ripple effect** – Every dollar spent by a visitor circulates within the economy with spin off effects to industries such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, retail, financial services, and real estate.
- **Tourism builds community** – Tourism can foster pride in place and improving civic pride can motivate locals to share their community with others.
- **Tourism drives infrastructure** – Tourism can be the catalyst needed to invest in the built infrastructure that makes for great places to live and visit, such as parks, pathways, public art, signage and other amenities.

## Benefits of Tourism

Tourism development has many known community benefits when it is carried out in a responsible and sustainable manner. Moreover, tourism can provide a significant boost in funding for recreational and parks services within a municipality by improving the cost recovery structure of individual facilities. In the Province of Alberta, the tourism industry generates \$8 billion every year in tourism expenditures and supports 19,000 tourism-related businesses. The revenue generated in this industry generates roughly \$4 billion in federal, provincial and municipal tax revenue. The tourism industry also provides significant employment opportunities, with 127,000 individuals employed within the industry in Alberta.



# 02 Destination Analysis



## Destination Analysis

This section provides the key findings from the destination analysis. Additional information can be found in the Appendix.

## SWOT Analysis

A high-level analysis of the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was completed to support the strategy and product development plan. The key findings from this analysis are provided below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abundance of natural attractions and water-based recreation opportunities.</li> <li>• Strong supply of cultural attractions and cultural-focused events, including emerging Indigenous tourism experiences.</li> <li>• Strong supply of accommodation providers and campgrounds.</li> <li>• High-quality community and sports facilities.</li> <li>• Strong existing visitor markets.</li> <li>• Commitment to diversifying the local economy through tourism.</li> <li>• The County is in a strong financial position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of variety in terms of options for accommodations, food and beverage, and activities.</li> <li>• Lack of market-ready tourism products.</li> <li>• Lack of integration between tourism and other municipal planning.</li> <li>• Limited visitor information available.</li> <li>• Fragmented and underdeveloped tourism promotion system.</li> <li>• Lack of business engagement in tourism development.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing nature-based and cultural tourism offerings into market-ready products for visitors.</li> <li>• Leveraging strategic location and high-quality recreation facilities for sport tourism.</li> <li>• Strengthening collaborative tourism marketing and leveraging Travel Alberta cooperative marketing funds.</li> <li>• Linking tourism assets and recreation assets in order to improve financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Development of McArthur Park and downtown Lac La Biche into a key tourism asset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable economic circumstances due to variable commodity prices.</li> <li>• Balancing the needs of residents with the needs of visitors.</li> <li>• Labour shortages.</li> <li>• Negative perceptions of the community related to crime.</li> </ul>



## Current State

Research conducted during this study has led to the following observations about the challenges facing tourism in Lac La Biche County and opportunities for change.<sup>5,6</sup>

### From Studies to Action

Utilizing tourism as a tool for economic diversification is not a new concept to Lac La Biche County. The role tourism can play has been identified in various studies commissioned by the province and municipality over the past decade. What is needed now is tangible action that will further tourism goals.

### Need for a Unifying Vision

There is strong support among stakeholders for one strategy that can rally the community behind a unified vision for tourism. A unified vision can help improve a community's perception of itself and motivate locals to share their community with others (e.g. visiting friends and relatives). Residents who are proud of their community become tourism ambassadors, contributing to pride of place and civic morale.

### Organization and Collaboration

At the present time, there are multiple organizations that take the lead on various components of destination development. No one organization provides leadership or coordinates collective efforts. Various organizations have worked to implement actions identified in past studies; however, they are limited by funds and capacity. There are also issues with burnout and clarity of roles and mandates.

### Multiple Players in Tourism Marketing

For a number of years, Community Futures Lac La Biche led tourism marketing for the Lac La Biche region under an agreement with the County. However, a recent shift in responsibilities to the County led to the closure of the County's primary tourism website (laclabicheregion.com). Travel Lakeland is a regional destination marketing organization that markets the region to potential visitors; however, the County does not feel it is getting full value from its investments in this organization.

### Health of Lac La Biche Lake

Lac La Biche Lake is one of the County's primary attractions. The onset of blue-green algae blooms poses a serious risk to long-term tourism growth. Water quality, clean beaches, and angling opportunities are all vital to keeping Lac La Biche County a competitive destination.

### Downtown Revitalization Needed

According to stakeholders, a number of years ago, downtown Lac La Biche was more inviting to visitors. Stakeholder consultation and findings from the Visitor Friendly Assessment and Action Plan (2018) indicate that enhancements are now needed. Improvements to visual appeal, wayfinding, visitor amenities and safety are required to revitalize downtown and should be a focus of future tourism development efforts.

## Lack of Visitor and Market Ready Tourism Product

There is a strong supply of culture- and nature-based attractions, campgrounds, brand name hotel properties, and community sports facilities in the County. However, the region lacks a critical mass of easily consumable experiences, packages and itineraries, attractions, and accommodations that will allow it to compete with other destinations. Overall, there is a limited supply of visitor and market ready experiences, and tourism operators face challenges with human resources, seasonality and funding, which all contribute to this situation. Additional tourism operators will be needed to develop the compelling, market ready experiences that will ultimately contribute to increasing visitation to the region. Additional camping may also be required to meet peak demand.

## Labour Challenges

The tourism industry in Lac La Biche County is challenged by high wages and a low supply of workers. These challenges become particularly acute during boom times in the oil and gas industry as workers are drawn to that sector by high paying work. The available tourism labour force is also limited in its knowledge of tourism and hospitality standards and best practices. Customer service has been identified as a key issue in the County, which will hamper tourism growth unless action is taken to improve.



# Tourism Asset Inventory

Lac La Biche County’s tourism assets were inventoried as part of this project. The following discussion summarizes the key findings. For a full description of the methodology and findings, see the full report available at this [link](#).

The Tourism Asset Inventory recorded 169 assets across 10 tourism product categories. For each asset, the inventory identified the following information (where available):

- Asset Name
- Location (including street address, community, postal code, and accompanying directions)
- Description of the Product Offering

The number of assets recorded for each category is shown in Figure 1. To view the full asset inventory, see Appendix A.

**Figure 1. Number of Assets per Category**

Asset Inventory Category	Number of Assets Identified
Accommodations	17 (627 rooms)
Campgrounds	26 (1,300 sites)
Community and Sports Facilities	14
Cultural Attractions	12
Events	Small/Local (36) Large/Regional (9)
Natural Attractions	18
Rentals	5
Restaurants and Culinary Attractions	26
Tour Operators	3
Visitor Information	3
<b>Total Number of Assets</b>	<b>169</b>

As a result of the asset inventory process, we have identified strengths and gaps in the tourism product offering that is currently available to visitors and residents.

## Tourism Product Strengths:

- Cultural Attractions and Events – Lac La Biche County has a strong supply of cultural attractions and cultural-focused events, including the Mission Site, Aboriginal Peoples’ Art and Artifacts Museum, Spirit Creation Store at the Native Friendship Centre, Lakeland Country Fair and several Pow Wows. The unique offerings of these attractions and events can be leveraged for tourism growth.
- Natural Attractions – The County is full of natural attractions like lakes, beaches, parks, and backcountry areas. These assets make the County an excellent destination for outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy activities like fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, skiing, hunting, biking, and using OHVs.
- Accommodations and Campgrounds – There is a strong supply of accommodation providers and campgrounds in Lac La Biche County. Many of these businesses are established brands who can offer market ready services to visitors (e.g. hotel groups, Provincial Parks).
- Community and Sports Facilities – There are numerous high-quality community and sports facilities that can be further leveraged to attract visitors. In particular, the indoor and outdoor amenities at the Bold Center and the new indoor archery facility are ideal for hosting sports tournaments and other events.

## Tourism Product Gaps:

- Tour Operators – While there are some local businesses who provide tours, there is currently a lack of market ready tourism operators. Existing tours are frequently conducted on an ad hoc basis, rather than following set schedules and pricing.
- Tourism-Related Programming and Experiences – The County currently lacks tourism-related programming and experiences. There is an opportunity to develop itineraries and other tourism-related programming that will leverage existing assets such as Cultural Attractions, Natural Attractions and Events.
- Specialty Accommodations, Resorts and B&B’s – There is a lack of diversity in accommodations throughout the study area. There are some unique B&B’s and fishing lodges identified in the inventory, however there are no high-end/luxury accommodations, wilderness resorts, or eco-lodges.
- Entertainment Facilities – There is a lack of entertainment facilities in the County (e.g. movie theatres, performing arts, etc.).
- Visitor Information – There is a lack of online information regarding tourism assets within Lac La Biche County. There is also no central authority for tourism information, which makes trip planning more challenging for visitors.



## Visitor Market Analysis

The Alberta government publishes visitor statistics for the Province and its six tourism regions, including northern Alberta. The consultant team used these reports and more recent PRIZM data to provide the following analysis of visitor markets for Lac La Biche County.

### Domestic Tourism in Alberta North Tourism Region

In 2016, 1.87 million visits were made by residents of Alberta and other parts of Canada to destinations in the Alberta North Tourism Region.<sup>7</sup> Albertans accounted for 1.6 million (85.2%) of these visits, with 277,000 person-visits (14.8%) by other Canadians.

Residents of northern Alberta often travelled in their region, comprising 39% of the visits. Edmonton and area residents accounted for 18%, followed by central Alberta with 13%. Approximately 45% of all visits included at least one overnight stop, primarily by residents of Edmonton and area (31%), central Alberta (22%), and northern Alberta (18%).

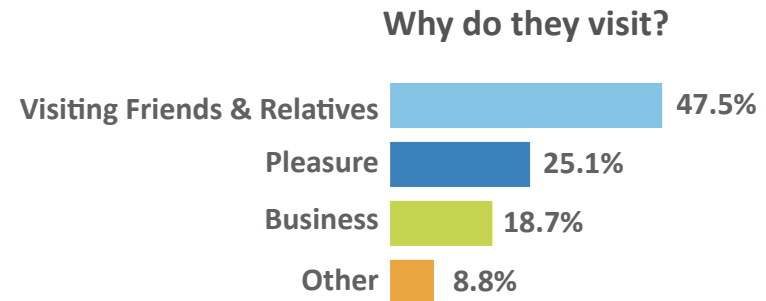
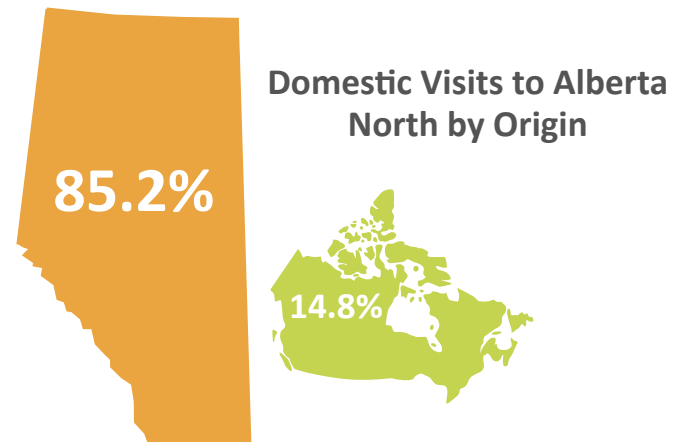
The main purpose of overnight visits was for friends and family (47.5%), pleasure (25.1%), and business (18.7%). 7 in 10 nights were spent in the homes of family and friends, followed by campgrounds and RV parks (11%), and hotels, motels and other roofed accommodation (18%). Visitors tended to stay an average of 3.4 nights.

Traveling to visit family and friends is a significant driver for travel to northern Alberta. In fact, “Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) represents a considerable share of all tourism in Alberta.”<sup>8</sup> The VFR market accounts for 45% of all in-province trips by Albertans, and VFR is the main reason for more than half of Canadians traveling to Alberta from other provinces.

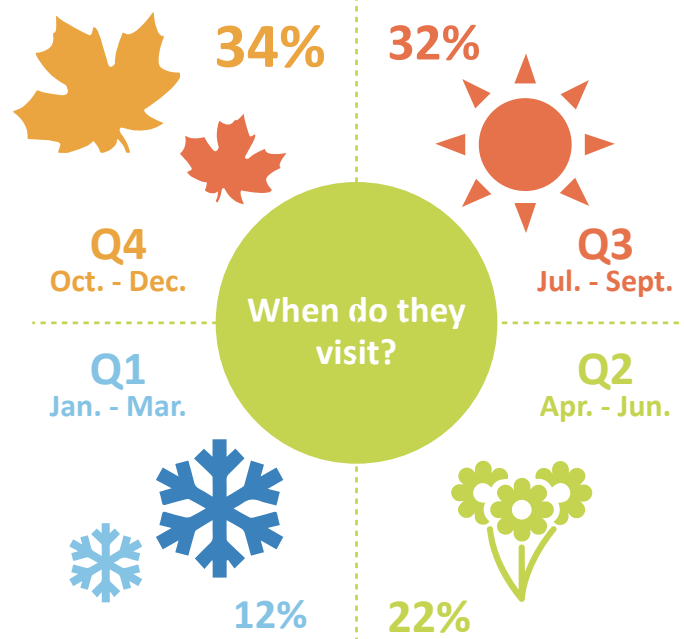
Research on the VFR market in Alberta indicates that residents use their personal experience to determine what to do when friends and family visit from out of town. Planning is typically a joint effort between the hosting resident and their guests. While most hosts are involved in trip planning (80%), very few hosts plan activities in advance of their guests’ arrival (15%). More often plans are made once guests arrive (23%) or both before and after guests arrive (41%).<sup>9</sup> Given that planning happens in the destination and is relatively spontaneous, resident hosts rely on personal experience to inform decisions on where to go and what to do with guests.<sup>10</sup>

Residents of Alberta primarily visited from July to September (33%) and October to December (31%), followed by April to June (22%) and January to March (12%). This differs from residents from other parts of Canada who primarily visited from October to December (45%), followed by July to September (24%), April to June (15%) and January to March (15%). Important visitor information is illustrated in the following infographics.

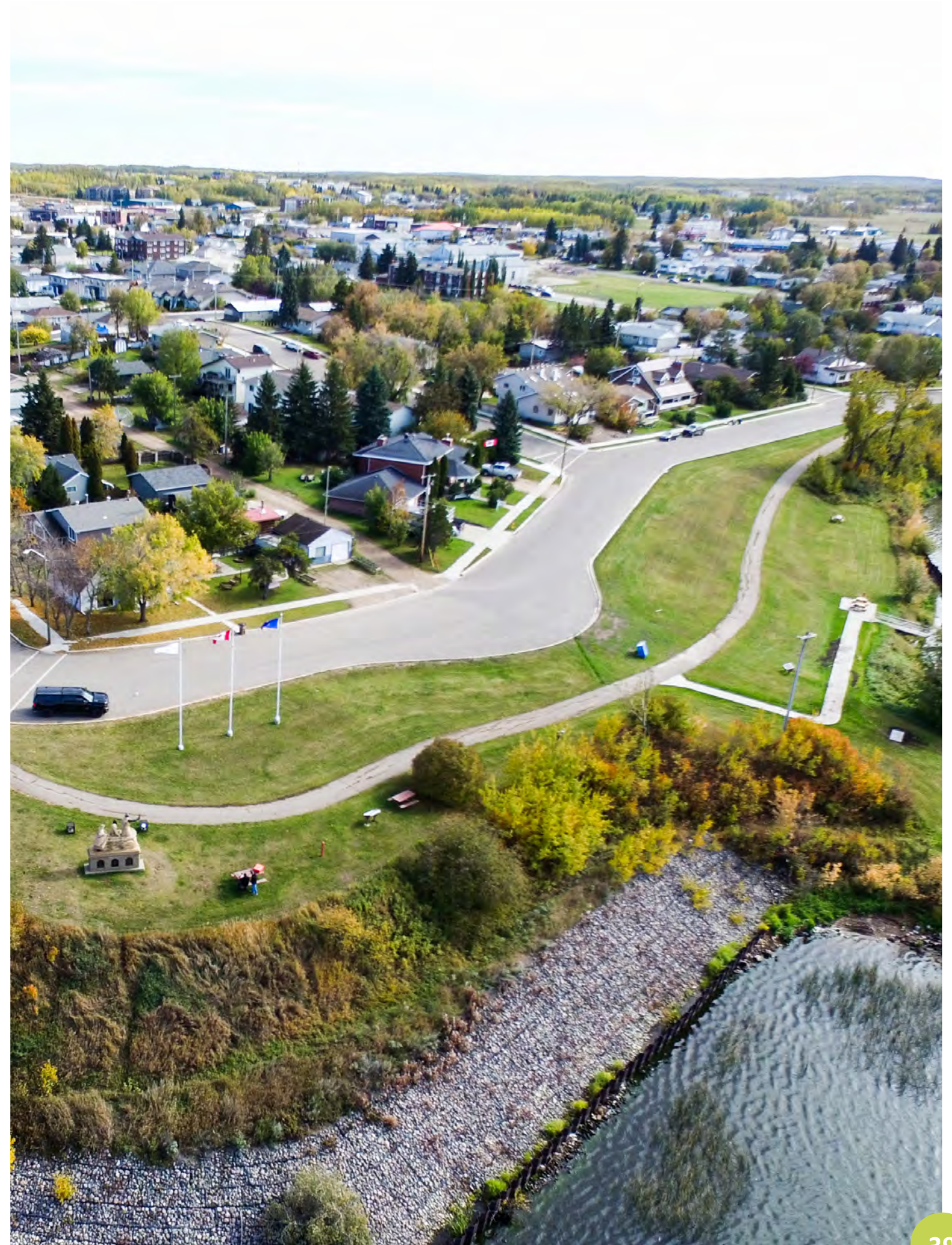
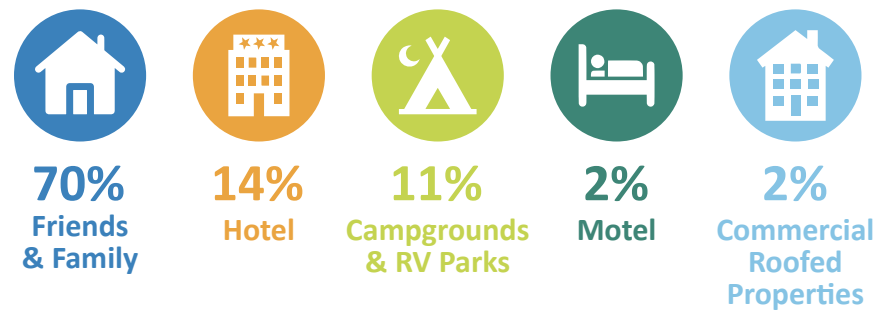
# Understanding Northern Alberta's Visitation



Average Length of Stay (All Domestic Overnight Visits)



**Where do they overnight?**



# Visitor Markets by Geography

The Lac La Biche region attracts visitors from across Alberta, Canada and even internationally. Domestic markets are by far the largest in terms of total numbers of visitors. Internationally, the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, China and Japan are markets that may be most attractive to engage in the future.



## Visitation to Alberta

In 2016, 34.8 million person-visits were made to destinations in Alberta. Visitors came primarily from within Alberta (83.8%), followed by other parts of Canada (10.6%), overseas countries (3.0%), or the United States (2.6%). Alberta-based visitors were responsible for the majority of person-visits; however, this market was only responsible for 54.1% of total tourism expenditures. Other Canada (21.0%), overseas countries (14.8%) and the United States (10.2%) were responsible for almost half of the total tourism expenditures made in the province. Key sources of overnight inbound travel to Alberta include neighbouring provinces, the U.S. and major European and Asian markets.<sup>11</sup>



## Domestic Visitor Markets (Alberta and Canada)

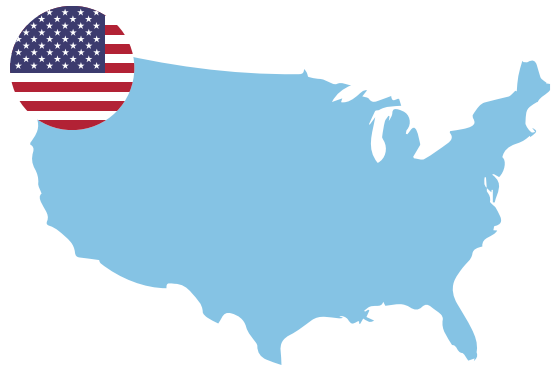
Canadian postal codes collected by Alberta Parks and applied to PRIZM data by Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism offers insights into domestic visitor markets that are important for Lac La Biche County. The postal codes required for this analysis were collected from overnight visitors to Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park and the Beaver Lake Recreation Area in 2018, so they represent existing customers of the County and are a valuable input into the strategic planning process. Key findings from the PRIZM analysis are as follows:

In 2018, 97.4% of Canadian visitors were from Alberta. The remaining 2.6% were from other provinces in Canada, primarily British Columbia (0.97%), Saskatchewan (0.81%), and Ontario (0.43%).

Residents of the City of Edmonton accounted for 33.5% of Canadian visitors to the two parks. The greater Edmonton Metropolitan Region, which includes the surrounding counties and municipalities, accounted for 51% of visitors.<sup>12</sup> This finding indicates that the capital region is a key market for Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park and the Beaver Lake Recreation Area.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo borders Lac La Biche County to the north and accounted for 11.6% of Canadian visitors to the two parks in 2018. Residents of Lac La Biche County represented only 7.5% of campground visitors. Locals are likely more inclined to visit the parks on day trips given the proximity of both Parks to their homes.

Residents of Calgary and area accounted for 4.4% of Canadian visitors. Only 0.75% of campground visitors were from the City Red Deer and there was little to no representation by other central Alberta communities. This is likely due to competition from other lake destinations that are closer to residents of central Alberta (e.g. Sylvan Lake).



### United States

- The United States is an established market in Canada that is still growing.
- Perception of Canada’s safety and dollar value guides their decisions to stay longer.
- The beauty and diversity of Albertan landscapes are attracting visitors, as well as, adventure, culture, history and culinary tourism.<sup>13</sup>
- The US is Alberta’s largest international market according to Travel Alberta’s analysis of the 2015 Stats Canada data.

### United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom is Alberta’s largest overseas market. In 2015, there were 151,600 overnight visits by U.K. travellers to Alberta, totalling \$197.3 million in tourism expenditures.<sup>14</sup>
- Awareness of northern Alberta is low; however, Lac La Biche has experiences that may resonate with this market.
- Residents of the U.K. are keen to travel and tend to stay longer and spend more than other markets.<sup>15</sup>

### Germany

- German leisure travellers perceive Canada as a top travel destination offering authentic and relevant travel experiences.
- About half of German holiday trips to Canada are into B.C., Alberta and/ or the Yukon.
- Three quarters of these trips are for pleasure or to visit friends and relatives.
- In 2015, there were 117,100 overnight visits by German travellers to Alberta, totalling \$121.5 million in tourism expenditures.
- Cultural experiences tend to resonate strongly with German travellers. This is particularly true for First Nations experiences.

### Australia

- Australian travel to Canada shows steady, gradual growth. In 2015, there were 92,300 overnight visits by Australians to Alberta, totalling \$133.5 million in tourism expenditures.<sup>16</sup>
- Canada is well perceived by Australians, and the majority of their trips to Canada are for pleasure or to visit friends and relatives (86%).
- Most visitors travel independently (nearly 60%), with only 18% choosing an escorted tour.

### China

- Visitation from China has steadily increased since Canada received Approved Destination Status in 2010.
- In 2015, there were 85,300 overnight visits to Alberta from Chinese travellers, totalling \$75.8 million in tourism expenditures.
- While the traditional escorted tour group remains popular, Chinese travellers are increasingly interested in niche experiences, including ski, winter, RV, self-drive, photography and golf.<sup>17</sup>
- Independent, middle-class, affluent and youthful (20 to 45 years old) are characteristics that define the fastest growing segment of Chinese traveller.
- Recent political tensions with China may affect travel in the future.

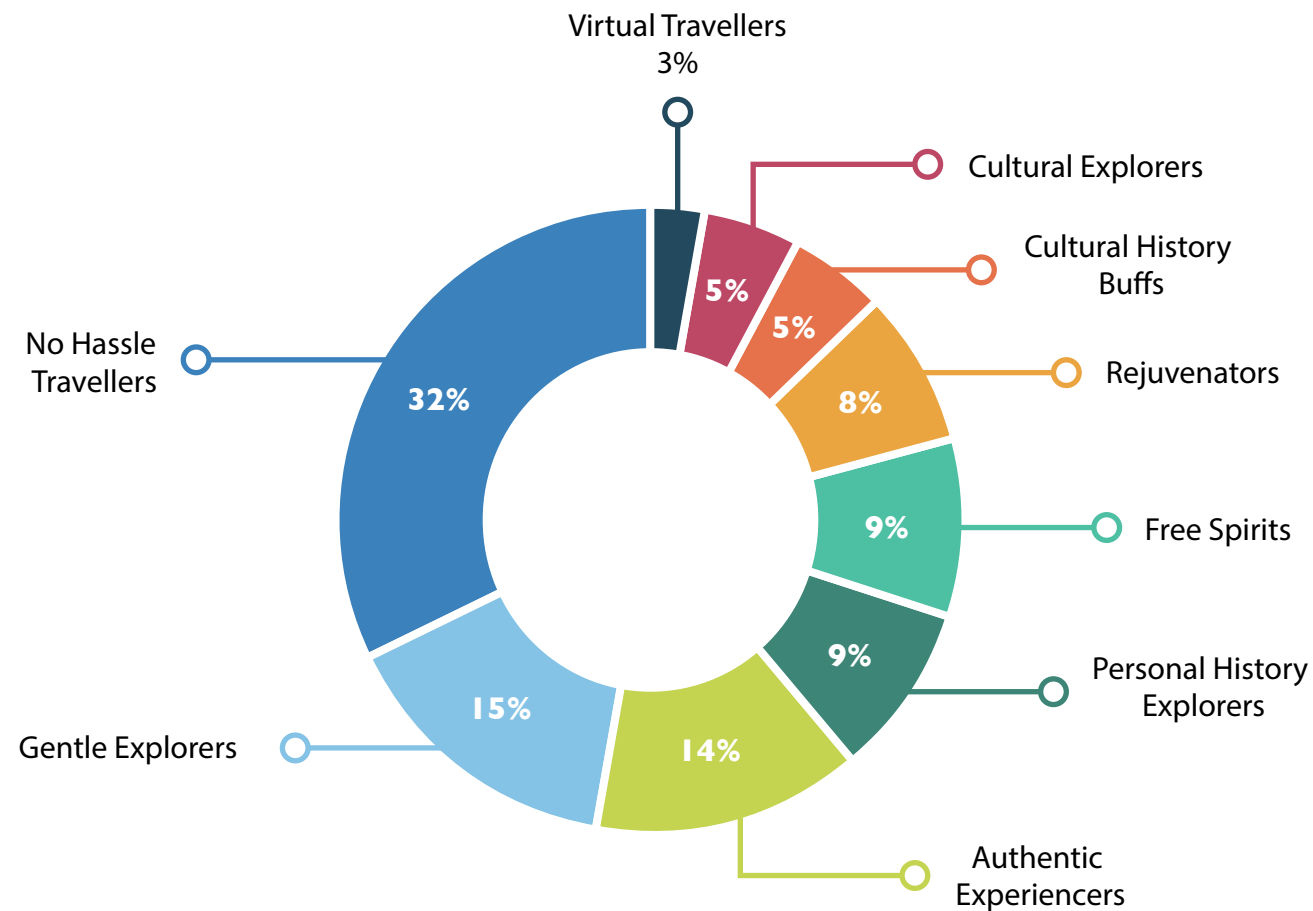
### Japan

- Travel from Japan to Canada is slowly recovering after more than a decade of general decline (50% from 2002 to 2010).
- In 2015, there were 60,100 overnight visits by Japanese travellers, totalling \$67.3 in tourism expenditures.
- While time and affordability are cited as barriers to a Canadian holiday, Japanese travellers feel Canada offers good value for money and is among their top five destinations to consider.
- Older travellers aged 55+ represent the largest segment of potential travellers from Japan, followed by travellers aged 18 to 34.
- The trend is toward more independent travel, but packaged tours booked through travel agents remain standard.<sup>18</sup>

## Existing Visitor Markets by Explorer Quotient

Explorer Quotient is a market segmentation tool developed by Destination Canada and utilized by Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism to help destinations identify their best Traveller Types. PRIZM data on Canadian campground visitors to Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park and the Beaver Lake Recreation Area in 2018 offers deeper insights to EQ Traveller Types that are important for Lac La Biche County. The distribution of EQ types are shown in Figure 2 below.

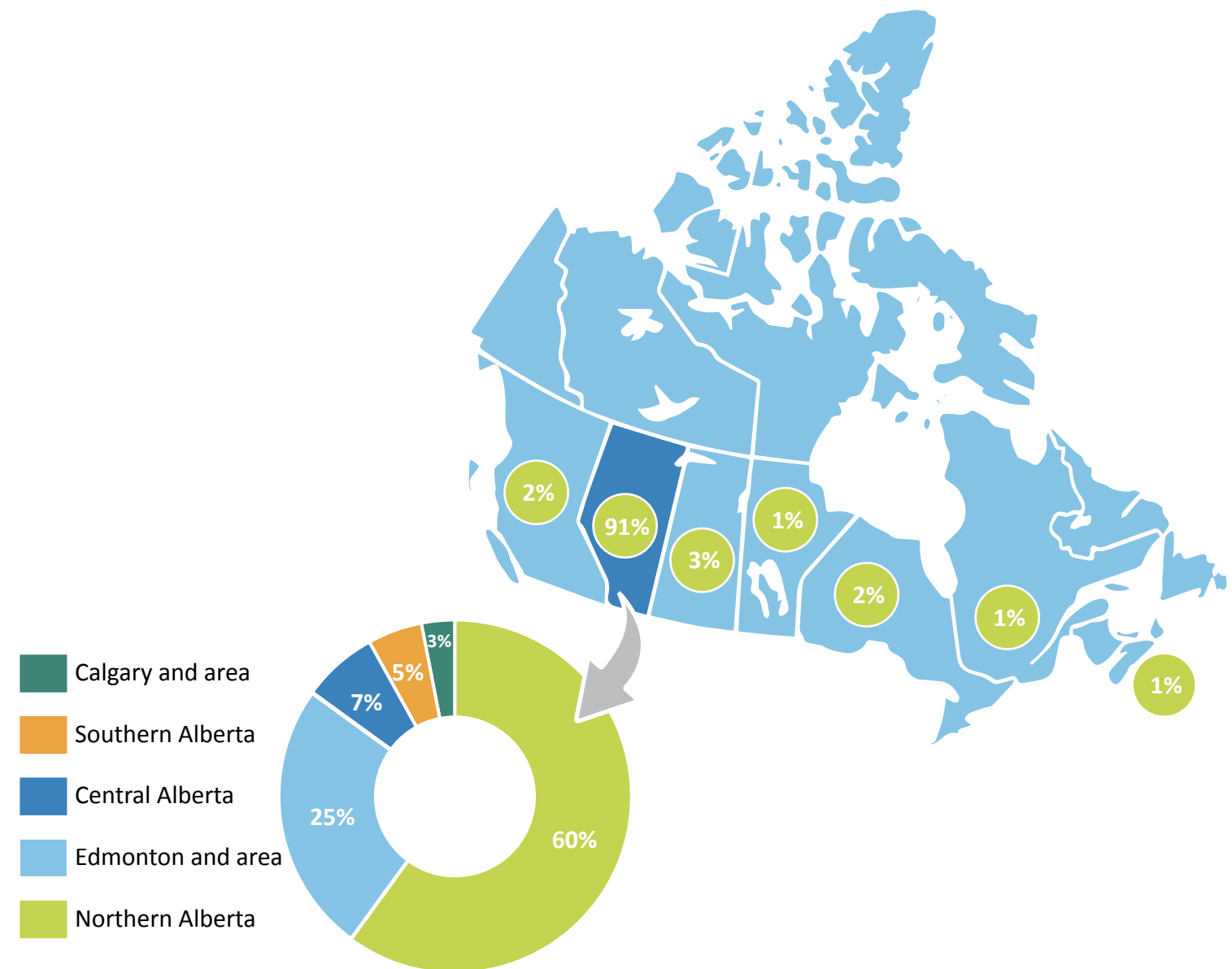
**Figure 2. Existing Domestic Overnight Traveller EQs for Lac La Biche County Provincial Parks**



## Visitor Survey Summary

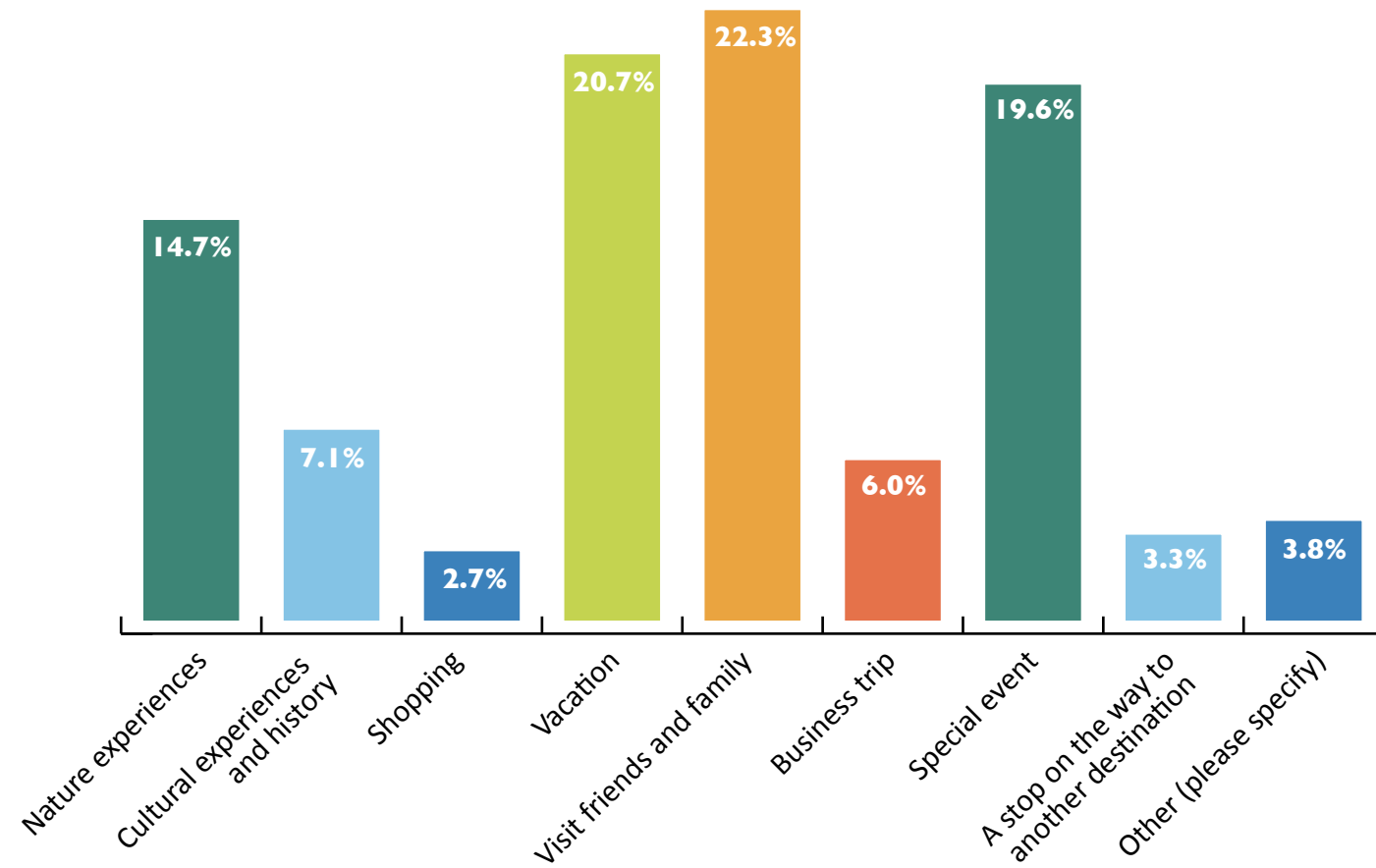
The consultant team conducted a visitor survey from August 2 to September 3, 2018 to gather information from recent travellers to Lac La Biche County. The survey was conducted online and in-person at attractions and businesses. In total, 187 responses were collected. It should be noted that in-person survey collection took place during the August long weekend when several events were happening. Next is a brief summary of the findings.

Respondents were primarily from Alberta (91%), of which most self-identified as being from northern Alberta (60%) followed by Edmonton and area (25%), central Alberta (7%), southern Alberta (5%), and Calgary and area (3%). Only 9% of all respondents were from other provinces, including Saskatchewan (3%), Ontario (2%), British Columbia (2%), and Quebec, Manitoba and Nova Scotia (1% each). No respondents indicated they were from the U.S. or overseas.



When asked which statement best describes the MAIN reason respondents visited, visit friends and family was the first choice (22.3%). This was followed by vacation (20.7%), special event (19.6%), nature experiences (14.7%), and cultural experiences and history (7.1%). Only 3.3% of respondents indicated Lac La Biche County was a stop on the way to another destination; and only 2.7% identified shopping.

**Question: Which statement best describes the MAIN reason you visited?**



Other key findings from the visitor survey include:

- Nearly half of respondents had visited Lac La Biche County more than three times (47.3%) and 21.5% had visited two to three times.
- Respondents rated their experience in Lac La Biche County very positively (63.4% “Great!” and 33.9% “OK”). Only 2.7% said they had a “Poor” experience.
- Respondents highly rated Parking (93.6% Great or OK), Cleanliness of Public Spaces (92.9% Great or OK), Customer Service (92.9% Great or OK), Accommodations (86% Great or OK), and Directional Signage (84.9% Great or OK).
- Respondents were less satisfied with Restaurants (13.2% Poor), Public Washrooms (12.1% Poor), Safety and Security (10.5% Poor) and Business Hours (9.3% Poor).
- The vast majority of respondents learned about Lac La Biche County through Word of Mouth (76.2%).
- Respondents indicated a strong willingness to spend money in the County with 49.2% saying they planned to spend over \$200 and 28.7% saying they planned to spend between \$100 and \$200.



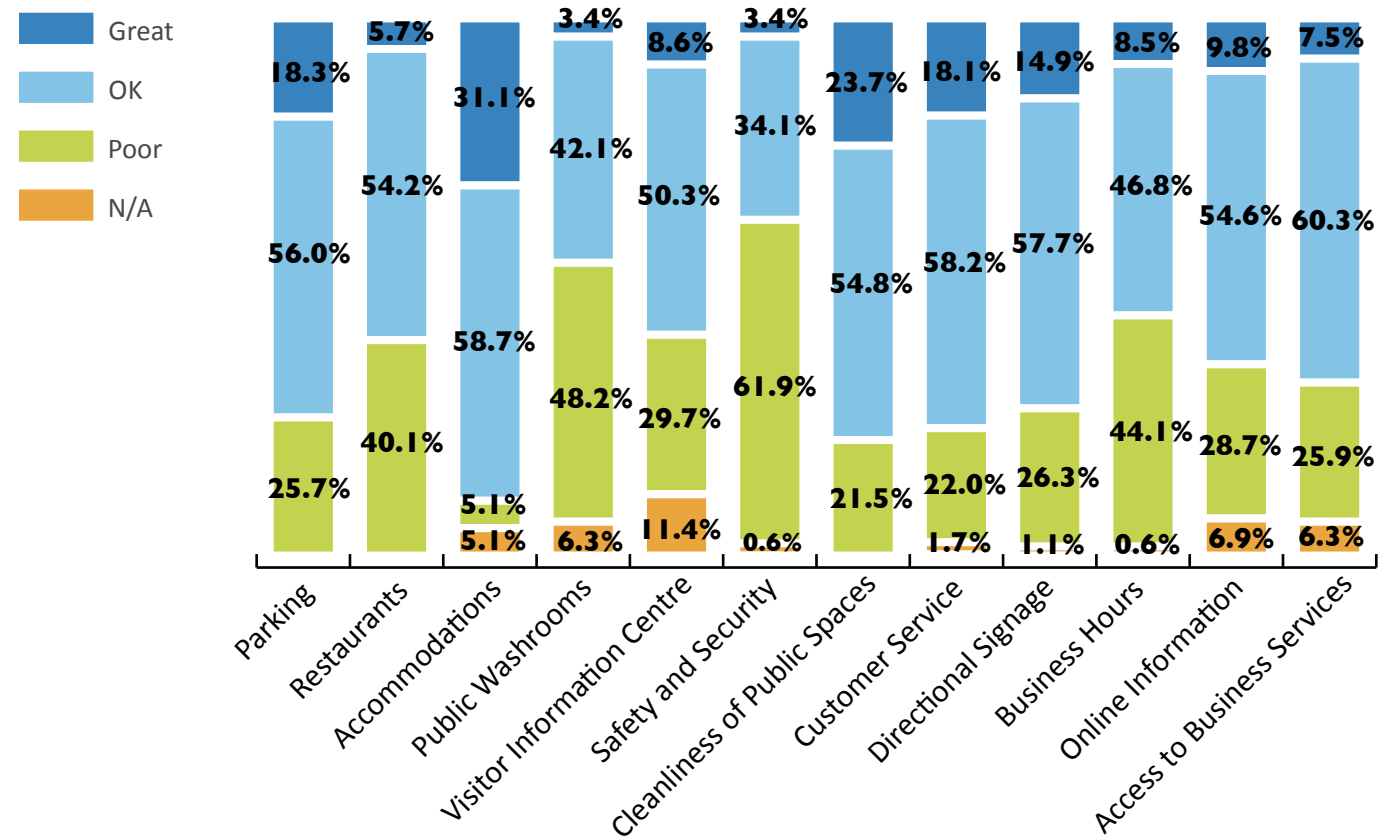


# Resident Survey Summary

The consultant team conducted an online resident survey from September 25 to October 28, 2018. In total, 177 responses were collected. A majority of the respondents were from Lac La Biche (60%). Respondents from localities were also represented on the survey (17%), as were respondents from Plamondon (16%).

In terms of the quality of visitor services and amenities in Lac La Biche County, respondents highly rated Accommodations (89.8% Great or OK), Cleanliness of Public Spaces (78.5% Great or OK), Customer Service (76.3% Great or OK) and Parking (74.3% Great or OK). Respondents expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction (i.e. greater than 25% Poor rating) with a number of services and amenities in Lac La Biche County. The lowest rated categories included Safety and Security (61.9% Poor), Public Washrooms (48.2% Poor), Business Hours (44.1% Poor) and Restaurants (40.1% Poor).

Question: Please rate the following visitor services and amenities in Lac La Biche County.



# Similarities and Differences Between Visitor and Resident Surveys

Both residents and visitors are in agreement in terms of the strengths and growth areas of the County. This agreement provides a strong mandate to improve the visitor services and amenities that received lower ratings on both surveys.

When asked what activities have the greatest potential to be developed to encourage visitation, respondents to the resident survey diverged from respondents to the visitor survey regarding a particular amenity. 44.1% of resident respondents identified Marina Development as a top priority to encourage visitation, while only two visitor respondents mentioned a marina when asked the same question in their surveys (>1%). Caution should be exercised when interpreting these results as it is a limited sample. Further study is needed to determine the cost/benefit of a marina for tourism development.

# Competitor Analysis

Competitive destinations with similar product offerings and visitor markets were analyzed to identify what makes Lac La Biche County unique. The key findings from the competitor analysis are provided below. For expanded descriptions of each competitive destination, see Appendix B.

Figure 3. Competitive Destination Summary

Destination	Strengths/Core Product Offering	Distance to an International Airport
Lac La Biche County (AB)	Water-based and outdoor activities. Multi-cultural history.	250 km (Edmonton)
City of Cold Lake (AB)	Water-based and outdoor activities. Good water quality.	330 km (Edmonton)
Town of Bonnyville (AB)	Water-based activities. Wildlife viewing.	277 km (Edmonton)
City of Meadow Lake (SK)	Water-based activities. Large provincial park. Good water quality.	295 km (Saskatoon) 456 km (Edmonton)
Town of Sylvan Lake (AB)	Water-based activities. Developed waterfront district. Good water quality.	136 km (Edmonton)

## Competitive Advantage

Lac La Biche County has more than 150 lakes spread over 12,572km<sup>2</sup> of pristine wilderness areas, making it a favoured destination for visitors seeking outdoor and water-based experiences in northern Alberta. The County also has a long and storied multi-cultural history, which other northern destinations cannot match. The quality of Lac La Biche County's outdoor offering and its cultural offering gives the County a competitive advantage over other regions of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

## Weakness in Relation to Competitors

It is important to note that many other destinations have better water quality, which is of critical importance to visitors who value water-based activities.

## Best Practices

Best practices from these competitive destinations and other successful tourism communities are provided below:

- Clearly identified tourism offering and core market focus.
- Collaborative relationships exist between private and public sector partners to develop tourism product, access funding and market the destination.
- Sophisticated online presence with appropriate visitor information and planning support.
- The destination invests in infrastructure that makes the community appealing to residents, vacation property owners, and visitors (e.g. parks, pathways, docks, etc.).
- The destination commits to supporting tourism-related entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- The destination commits staff and resources to programs and services that make the community vibrant and engaging for residents and visitors (e.g. festivals, sporting events, etc.).



# 03 Product Opportunity Analysis



This section describes seven tourism product development opportunities in Lac La Biche County. These opportunities were identified through detailed analysis of tourism assets in the region, demand from key visitor markets and corresponding product-market matches.

## Outdoor Experiences

The outdoor experiences available in the region are a major driver of visitation to the County. Lac La Biche County's nature-based asset mix offers a compelling reason to visit. Activities planned around these features will add value to the visitor experience and keep visitors in the region longer. Comparable regions have embraced their unique and natural assets by developing and promoting them in categories, by season and with supporting infrastructure and packaging. Therefore, opportunities to develop these experiences and improve access to natural assets, while maintaining their integrity, should be pursued. The region should collaborate with Alberta Parks to further leverage their new and unique nature-based and cultural tourism offerings.

It should be noted that Lac La Biche County is situated within the jurisdiction of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP). LARP describes the attractive potential for tourism development in the region and encourages further investment in the tourism sector to diversify the economy. Furthermore, LARP established public land areas for recreation and tourism purposes (PLARTs). The nearest PLART to Lac La Biche County is the House River PLART (located 230km north of Lac La Biche). The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan has set the stage for further tourism development in the region. Future land use planning should be tailored to strengthen the potential of the product opportunities listed in Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan.

### Market Insights:<sup>19</sup>

- a. Alberta is the one of the top three most popular locations to visit in Canada by domestic travellers, with hiking and wildlife viewing stated as two of the top three most popular activities.<sup>20</sup>
- b. Younger travelers (under 55 years) particularly enjoy adventurous and active pursuits, such as climbing, camping, fishing, hunting, and skiing.<sup>21</sup>
- c. The United States continues to be Canada's largest source of visitors with 13.9 million Americans visiting in 2016, which generated approximately 48% of Canada's total international tourism revenues. 24% of these visitors were drawn to Canada because of the scenery and natural beauty.
- d. Alberta's tourism products are in high demand in all regional, domestic and international markets, particularly summer outdoor recreation/adventure tourism in the northern region.<sup>22</sup> This presents an attractive opportunity to enhance this type of product in the region.
- e. Hunting and fishing in Alberta is encouraged by Alberta Environment and Parks, as these activities are proven to promote responsible stewardship of Alberta's natural resources, provide economic, environmental and social benefits for Albertans.<sup>23</sup> In 2016, there were nearly 300,000 sport fishing licenses and 127,000 hunting licenses sold in Alberta.<sup>24</sup>
- f. Providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism and appreciation of Alberta's heritage is one of Alberta's park system's top three goals.<sup>25</sup>



## Cultural Tourism

As described earlier, the Lac La Biche region is filled with unique cultures and has a long and compelling history. Residents have maintained strong links to their Indigenous, fur trade, missionary, and multicultural settlement histories. The people of Lac La Biche County are proud of their heritage and want to share their stories with visitors.<sup>26</sup>

Cultural tourism has emerged as a growing trend over the past decade. Tourists are seeking Cultural Enrichment Travel whereby they seek out experiences that fully immerse them in local cultures so they can leave educated and inspired.<sup>27</sup> People from all over the world are now travelling to seek meaningful connections to the places they visit. This presents an opportunity to develop visitor-facing programming focused on the culture of the region that will help achieve tourism goals.

There is particular opportunity in the short term to develop aspects of the region’s Indigenous and French cultures into market-ready tourism products, as these cultures already have some programming and assets in place. For example, Plamondon has a French radio station, an active community development society, the Festival Centre, unique heritage assets like the Mini Parc Heritage Park and the Plamondon & District Museum, and has a Bilingual Community Designation. Additionally, the County has many Indigenous-related assets and events, including but not limited to, the Aboriginal Peoples’ Art and Artifacts Museum, Spirit Creation Store at the Native Friendship Centre, Beaver Lake Cree Nation Pow Wow, Kikino Silver Birch Rodeo and Celebration Days, Buffalo Lake Culture Week, Hide-a-way Adventures, and the Tipis at Churchill Provincial Park. These established and emerging products present distinct opportunities for tourism growth.

Northeast Alberta also has compelling cultural attractions located nearby to Lac La Biche County that could be leveraged for product clustering (e.g. Metis Crossing). There is opportunity here to develop and promote these attractions as a cluster to draw additional visitation.

## Market Insights:

- a. International travel markets are most interested in the following types of experiences:<sup>28</sup>
  - Enriching, engaged, immersive experiences with culture;
  - Experiences that are related to nature and learning;
  - Authenticity;
  - Seeking benefits of ‘discoveries’ and ‘adventures’;
  - Connection to nature and Indigenous way of life in context of spirituality and culture traditions;
- b. Cultural experiences are an important driver for people visiting Canada and traveling within Canada. Young Canadians aged 18-34 rate culture in their top three reasons for visiting a destination, even going so far as stating their dream Canadian vacation would include experiencing culture.<sup>29</sup> There is an opportunity for the region to leverage its cultural and artistic experiences to attract this market segment to visit.
- c. Participating in cultural experiences ranked in the top five most popular activities for domestic (Canada and Alberta) visitors to Alberta.<sup>30</sup>
- d. According to a 2013 study on potential demand for rural vacation experiences in Alberta by residents of Alberta, participants indicated that culture and heritage-related experiences would be an ideal activity on a same-day trip (67%) or an overnight trip (66%).<sup>31</sup>
- e. Improvements in cultural tourism, such as better advertising, higher quality attractions and more unique festivals and events would encourage visitation to Alberta’s rural areas.<sup>32</sup>
- f. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada states that Indigenous tourism opportunities are normally sought out while on trips, as opposed to during the pre-trip destination selection process.<sup>33</sup> This positions Indigenous tourism products well to complement and be packaged with other tourism offerings in the region, such as northern lights viewing, natural attractions and features, etc.
- g. Indigenous tourism has potential to become a significant value added cultural product.<sup>34</sup> With regards to prospective visitors to Canada in 2007, 82% of French travellers, 72% of German travellers, and 46% of British travellers expressed a high level of interest in Indigenous experiences.<sup>35</sup>
- h. Travellers from the United States are looking to be actively involved through one-on-one interactions in unique Indigenous experiences.<sup>36</sup>



## Dark Sky/Northern Lights Viewing

Dark skies and the Northern Lights are a spectacular natural wonder that attracts visitors from all around the world, and Northern Canada is among the best places to catch a glimpse of this unique sky display. This experience offering could be developed by identifying the best locations within the region for viewing dark sky and developing infrastructure and programming to enhance the overall experience for visitors.<sup>37</sup> Lakeland Provincial Park is Alberta’s newest Dark Sky Preserve, which provides an excellent opportunity to leverage this asset for northern lights viewing.<sup>38</sup>

Aurora viewing in Northern Canada has increased significantly over the past five years.<sup>39</sup> This presents an opportunity for the region to further leverage this asset to drive visitation. However, competition exists from other aurora viewing destinations (e.g. NWT, Yukon, Alaska, Iceland and Scandinavian countries). Aurora travel remains a primary focus for the Yukon and NWT tourism industries.<sup>40,41</sup> In order to compete, the region will need to develop infrastructure, a variety of high quality tours and multi-day packages with the support of day-time complementary activities.<sup>42</sup>

## Market Insights:

- a. Travel Alberta targets Cultural Explorers, whose top 10 most appealing activities include visiting national and provincial parks to view wildlife and surrounding nature (6th), and viewing Northern Lights (8th).<sup>43</sup>
- b. Aurora viewing is responsible for 41% of all leisure travel to the NWT, making it the number one travel motivation for their visitors.<sup>44</sup> From 2012 to 2017, visitation for aurora viewing has grown by nearly 100% (from 15,700 visits in 2012/13 to 29,800 visits in 2016/17). During this same time period, visitor spending related to aurora viewing has increased by more than 300% (from \$15.2M in 2012/13 to \$48.7M in 2016/17). The NWT's primary tourism markets include Canada, United States, Japan, Germany and China.<sup>45</sup> Their secondary markets include South Korea, Australia, and Switzerland.
- c. The United States is Alberta's largest international tourism market by visitation, and a 2012 study of American travel patterns found that Alberta appealed to more than a quarter (26.7%) of American outbound travellers.<sup>46</sup> This represented an estimated market size of 23.4 million persons. For this market, seeing unique natural wonders was a primary motivator of travel (90.6%). Unique characteristics of this market included high education levels, higher than average household incomes, mature ages, and a propensity to being in committed relationships.
- d. Albertans represented 85.2% of all visitation to the Northern Alberta Tourism Region in 2014, followed by Other Canada (10.9%), United States (2.5%) and Overseas (1.4%).<sup>47</sup> Due to the high proportion of visitation from the provincial market, tourism operators should also be catering their experiences to appeal to Albertan travellers.
- e. Aurora viewing in Northern Canada is listed as a top experience for the Japanese tourism market by Destination Canada.<sup>48</sup> Visitation from Japan to Canada has been increasing in recent years, and Alberta's share of the visitation was 28%, or 72,000 visits, in 2015 (3rd place behind Ontario and British Columbia). Northern Canada also captures a significant share of Japanese travel with 7% of total visitors. Based on these findings, Japan represents a strong existing market for northern lights viewing with opportunity for the region to increase its market share.
- f. The Fully Independent Traveller (FIT) market is growing rapidly in China and they are looking for experiences away from major tourism icons. Aurora viewing in Northern Canada is listed as one such experience that appeals to this market.<sup>49</sup> In 2015, Alberta captured an 18% share of visitation to Canada, or 86,000 visits (3rd place behind Ontario and British Columbia). The growth of the Chinese FIT and their interest in aurora viewing makes them a strong market to focus on.
- g. Aurora viewing in Northern Canada is listed as a top experience for South Korean travellers by Destination Canada.<sup>50</sup> Alberta received a 17% share of visitation, or 31,000 visits, from this market in 2015 (3rd place behind Ontario and British Columbia). Visitation from South Korea is trending towards growth, making this country an important market to capitalize on.
- h. The top tourism experiences for the German traveller market includes visiting national parks and Canada's North (e.g. Yukon) and viewing wildlife.<sup>51</sup> In 2015, Alberta captured a 29% share of visitation to Canada, or 93,000 visits (3rd place behind Ontario and British Columbia). Due to Alberta's popularity as a destination among German travellers, and their interest in the region's product offerings, there is opportunity to increase the region's market share of German visitors.



## Sport Tourism

Being roughly equidistance from Edmonton, Slave Lake, Fort McMurray and Cold Lake, the County is strategically located and well positioned to become a tournament hub for northeastern Alberta. Sport tourism has the potential for significant spin off effects for local businesses as the athletes, coaching staff and family members who attend tournaments will need accommodation, food and beverage, and other entertainment options during the course of the sporting events. A comprehensive Sport Tourism Hosting Plan should be developed with key partners to attract tournaments and events.

## Market Insights:

- a. Sport tourism is a \$5.2 billion industry in Canada, and is one of Canada's fastest growing tourism sectors.<sup>52</sup>
- b. The provincial government is dedicated to growing this tourism segment through the development of the Alberta Sport Connection. This organization is mandated to assist organizations, communities and provincial sport organizations in sport development, high performance sport and the delivery of sport events.<sup>53</sup>
- c. The Canadian Sport Hosting Program offered by the Government of Canada provides \$20 million dollars annually to communities in hosting world class sport events.<sup>54</sup> The region can capitalize on the availability of these funds to grow this emerging sector.
- d. Supports are currently in place and organizations are actively working to develop sport tourism as a leading economic driver in the national tourism industry. The Canadian Sport Tourism Association partners with communities to position Canada as a world leader in bidding for and hosting major international sport events. The Association also markets Canada as a preferred host destination, builds capacity through education and skill development, and helps build investment in communities.<sup>55</sup>
- e. Destination Canada has indicated two of Canada's strengths in attracting millennial tourists include the wide range of major sports events, and exciting sport/outdoor activities.<sup>56</sup> This presents an opportunity for the region to draw an increasing number of sport events to specifically target the millennial generation who tend to stay longer spend more on visiting local tourist attraction and eating and drinking.<sup>57</sup>
- f. The positive economic impacts of sport tourism is well documented in studies conducted by Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, as well as in municipalities across the Province.



## Festivals and Events

Festivals and events have been proven to increase the visibility and reputation of a destination.<sup>58</sup> Lac La Biche County currently attracts visitors by offering well-known events, such as the Lac La Biche Pow Wow Days & Fish Derby, Winter Festival of Speed, Plamondon Mud Bogs, etc., in addition to producing unique 1-time events like the 3-D World Archery Championship and concerts by famous musicians. Leveraging the region's event hosting capacity to produce more festivals and events that appeal to key target markets is an opportunity to drive increased visitation to the County.



## Market Insights:

- a. Millennials are a major audience for events as 75% of these individuals state they value experiences over things. Over half of millennials (53%) are parents and are attending more daytime, family-friendly events on the weekends.<sup>59</sup>
- b. Cultural Explorers are Travel Alberta's secondary target market, whose top 10 most appealing activities include attending festivals, events and spectator sports.
- c. 54% of long haul travellers from the United States enjoy entertainment experiences, and attending food/wine festivals and events.
- d. Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has invested in growing festival and event tourism product throughout the province as it allows communities to showcase local talent, share the community's heritage, celebrate community identity and spirit, and attract tourists into Alberta communities.<sup>60</sup>
- e. 64% of Canadian pleasure travellers who visited Alberta indicated they attended a festival or fair while visiting the province.<sup>61</sup>
- f. The Canadian Festivals Coalition found 12 million people attended 15 of Canada's largest festivals and events contributing \$650 million in GDP to local economic and supporting 15,000 full time jobs nationally. The coalition also found approximately \$260 million in tax revenue is generated for all three levels of government.<sup>62</sup>



## Culinary Tourism

Culinary tourism is big business in Alberta and the sector has been chosen as an area of focus for further development by the Government of Alberta.<sup>63</sup> More than simply eating at local restaurants, culinary tourism adds value to the visitor experience by connecting producers and chefs; by featuring local culinary talent; and by creating new and memorable experiences that enable visitors to see, touch, smell, hear and taste the destination.<sup>64</sup>

The tourism asset inventory identified promising assets related to culinary tourism (e.g. Fat Unicorn Brewery); however, there is not a critical mass of culinary experiences available in the region. That said, good food and drink are central to high quality visitor experiences. Therefore, culinary experiences should be woven in to all of the product opportunities as they are developed. For example, a festival celebrating the region's unique cultures could have a culinary experience component incorporated into the programming (e.g. similar to the Edmonton Heritage Festival). Local chefs can be tapped to deliver experiences that incorporate traditional foods and ingredients. As visitor expectations for culinary experiences increase, the region will have to meet and exceed them to stay competitive.

There are a number of organizations with programs and resources currently available to help Lac La Biche County grow its culinary tourism offerings. Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has developed a publicly available Culinary Tourism Event Handbook and can help operators participate in Alberta Open Farm Days; an annual two day ag-tourism showcase featuring farm-to-fork culinary events and open houses across the province. The Alberta Culinary Tourism Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to growing culinary tourism across the Province. They offer services and resources that Lac La Biche County could take advantage of, including the Culinary Adventure Trip Planner, postings on their website and events calendar, and participating in events like Cook It Raw. Lastly, the Alberta Small Brewers Association is a non-profit organization that is committed

to promoting craft Alberta beer. They have dedicated a whole week in October to celebrating Alberta's craft breweries. This festival is known as Alberta Beer Week, and the Lac La Biche region could develop its own unique events in collaboration with local craft breweries to draw visitors.

### Market Insights:

- a. Visitor spending on food and beverage accounts for a quarter of all tourism expenditures in the Alberta North tourism region annually.<sup>65</sup>
- b. Culinary offerings are a top driver of domestic travel for 18 – 34 year olds. Eating and drinking local food is among the most popular activities for this travel segment when visiting a destination.<sup>66</sup>
- c. Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients is one of the top 10 travel activities most appealing for Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers.<sup>67</sup>



## Lac La Biche as a Winter Destination

As residents well know, Lac La Biche can provide striking vistas during the winter season, yet the majority of visitation to the region occurs during the summer months. Therefore, there is a desire among tourism stakeholders to build additional product and drive visitation during the winter season.<sup>68</sup> The development of amenities and activities that can be used in the winter by visitors (and residents) will contribute to this goal (e.g. ice-skating trails in McArthur Park, animation of the waterfront in winter, events to celebrate the winter season, etc.).



## Market Insights:

- a. Visitation to northern Alberta is lowest in Quarter 1 (January – March) at 12% of total domestic visitation.<sup>69</sup> Growing visitation during this need period would expand the benefits of tourism and contribute to increasing the viability of tourism businesses.
- b. Data from the Potential Demand for Rural Vacation Experiences in Alberta by Residents of Alberta suggests that there is greater potential demand for travel in the first four months of the calendar year than actually occurs at present.<sup>70</sup>
- c. Young adult-only households are more likely than other life stages to travel during the winter season.<sup>71</sup>
- d. Winter activities with the highest potential demand in rural destinations include ice fishing, dog sledding, cross-country skiing and sleigh rides.<sup>72</sup>
- e. Communities across Alberta are embracing the winter season and developing product to attract visitors (e.g. Sylvan Lake, Jasper, Edmonton).
- f. Increasing winter season visitation is a goal of Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism and Travel Alberta.



# 04 *Vision for the Future*



## Vision for the Future

The Lac La Biche region is a special place. There are very few destinations in the world that possess the natural beauty of the region combined with the cultural diversity it offers. Over the past 150 years, the Lac La Biche region has not only managed to retain its cultural authenticity, it has built upon it with new cultures introduced throughout the decades. At a time in history where protectionism is gaining momentum, Lac La Biche is an oasis where residents can celebrate their cultural diversity and visitors can immerse themselves in it. It is time to celebrate everything Lac La Biche has to offer and it is time to invite the world!

### *An Oasis for Cultural Celebration*

*At a time in history where protectionism is gaining momentum, Lac La Biche is an oasis where residents can celebrate their cultural diversity and visitors can immerse themselves in it.*

*It's time to celebrate everything Lac La Biche has to offer ...*

**AND IT'S TIME TO INVITE THE WORLD!**

## 10 Year Vision

*By 2029, the Lac La Biche region will be known to regional, Canadian and niche international markets as a place where visitors can immerse themselves in the destination's unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.*

### What will be happening by 2024?

At the half-way point of executing the strategy, the following will be happening:

- Visitors are excited about new and emerging visitor experiences available in the region.
- Tourism is recognized by key stakeholders as an important mechanism in diversifying the local economy and have committed to growing the sector.
- There is a clear framework, organizational structure and funding model in place to support tourism development.
- Compelling, on-brand tourism messages are being shared with key target markets in a coordinated way.
- Residents are ambassadors for tourism and are motivated to invite their friends and relatives to visit.

### What will be happening by 2029?

- The destination has expanded its market reach deeper (regionally) and wider (nationally and internationally).
- The region is becoming a provincial leader in cultural and nature-based tourism.
- The region's tourism development system is sustainable, and the industry is poised for future growth.
- Regional partners are being engaged in collaborative initiatives to achieve mutual tourism objectives.

# 05 Lac La Biche County Target Markets and Tourism Strategy



# Target Markets for Lac La Biche County

Considering the visitor data described previously, and taking into account what inspires travel to Lac La Biche County, the following target markets have been identified for the strategy.

## Target Markets (Short-Medium Term)

Alberta-based visitors are already highly engaged by the product offering in Lac La Biche County. The region's natural attractions and cultural experiences are what draws these visitors in. Creating deeper connections with this customer base will be important. The following three visitor markets will be targeted in the short-medium term.

1. *Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers from central and northern Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County to experience culturally connected nature-based tourism.*
2. *No Hassle Travellers from central and northern Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County to connect with nature and their family and friends through compelling outdoor experiences.*
3. *Sport teams and their supporters from Alberta drawn to Lac La Biche County for high quality sporting competitions.*

## Target Markets (Medium-Long Term)\*

Lac La Biche County is home to a range of varied cultures and has a strong supply of cultural attractions and cultural-focused events. These different cultures thrive through their co-existence and maintenance of their authenticity. Leveraging this unique situation to grow culture-based products, which are in demand from niche international markets that are used to travelling "off the beaten path," is a significant opportunity.

1. *Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers from Regional, Canadian and niche International markets who seek to immerse themselves in the destination's unique fusion of enriching cultural exploration and stunning nature-based tourism.*

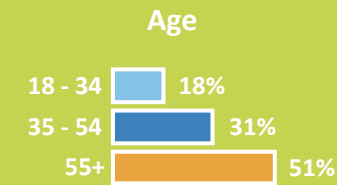
\*Note: existing markets (#2 and #3 above) will continue to be important core markets in the medium to long term; however, it is anticipated that the focus will shift toward diversification during this time period with more attention being placed on developing new products for new markets.

## Authentic Experiencers

Authentic Experiencers look for authentic, tangible engagement with the destinations they seek, with a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit. They see travel as a way to experience other people and places. Authentic Experiencers enjoy spontaneity and prefer to do their own thing rather than travel in a group. They are happy to live like a local and do not feel the need to seek out familiar brands or luxury, high-end experiences.



### Authentic Experiencers

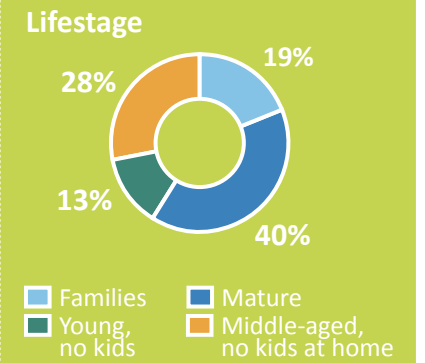


**Gender:**  
51% male, 49% female

**Education:** Higher than average

**Employment:**  
FT, higher than avg. are retired

**Household Income:**  
Average

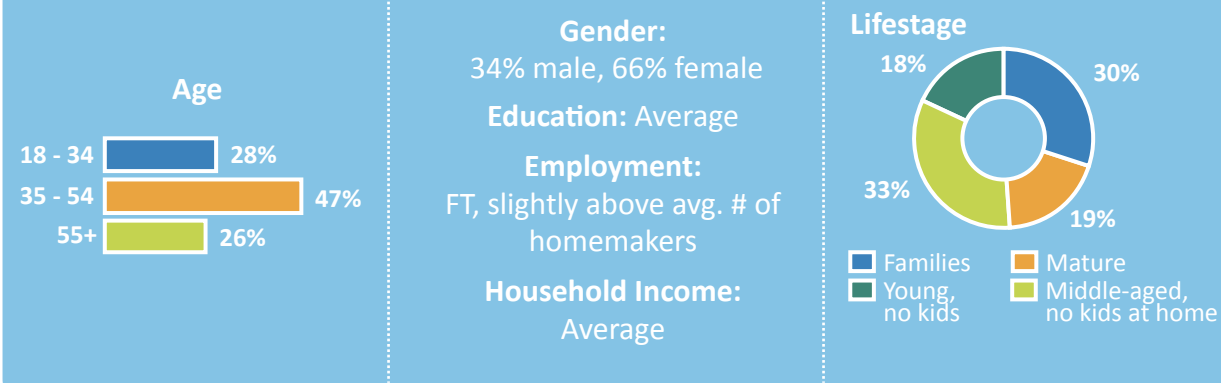


## Cultural Explorers

Cultural Explorers are defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the culture, people and settings of the places they visit. They love to learn about and absorb themselves in the ancient history, as well as the modern cultures of the places they visit. Cultural Explorers seek out active vacations and enjoy nature and water-based activities that are shared with others. Cultural Explorers enjoy hands-on learning experiences and interacting with local people.



### Cultural Explorers

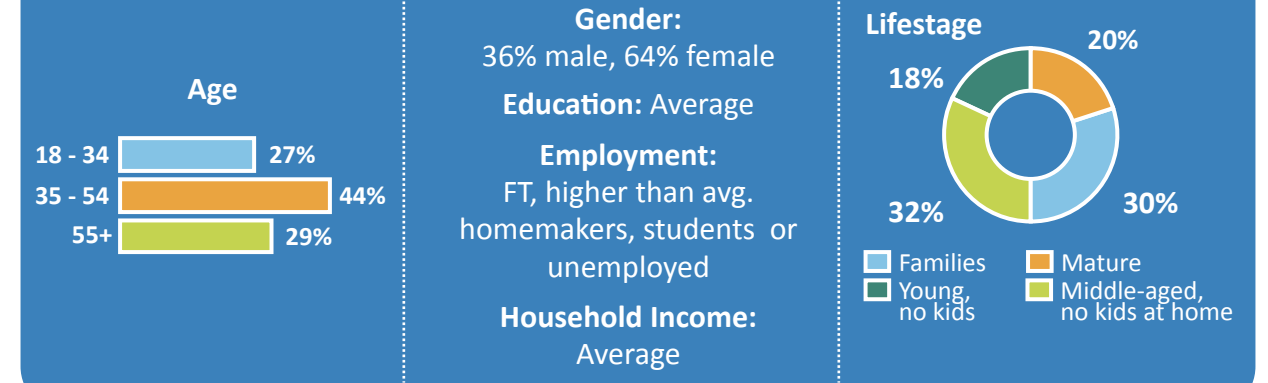


## No Hassle Travellers

No Hassle Travellers see a vacation as a break from responsibilities and everyday life. They seek relaxation and simplicity and enjoy a little pampering. They prefer to know what they will be doing throughout a trip as spontaneity is outside of their comfort zone. They seek value for money and do not need luxury experiences. They particularly enjoy smaller-scale operations and natural wonders.



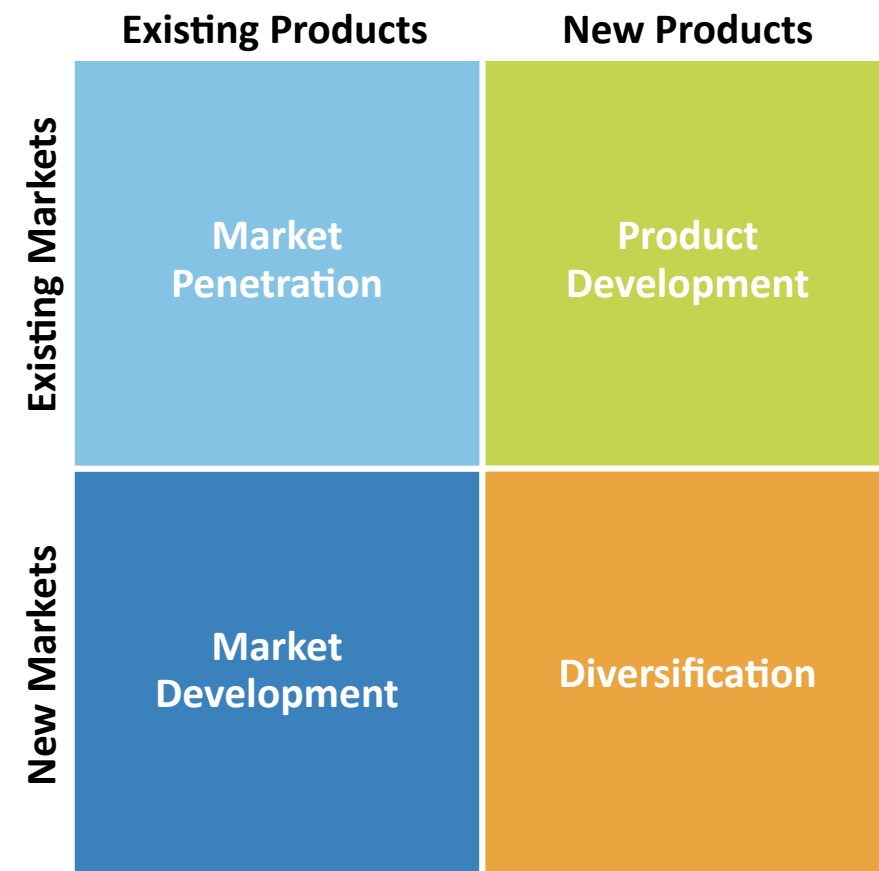
### No Hassle Travellers



# Strategy for Tourism Development

Ansoff's Product/Mission Mix was utilized to develop Lac La Biche County's strategy for tourism development. This model helps frame what direction tourism development should take. Ansoff's Matrix identifies four different options for a strategic direction, which are shown in the chart below (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Ansoff's Product/Mission Mix





## Strategic Focus

Lac La Biche County will employ a product development strategy in the short-medium term and transition into a diversification strategy in the medium-long term.

### Short-Medium Term Product Development Strategy

This strategy includes the focussed development of highly engaging tourism experiences tailored to each of the existing market segments. The Lac La Biche region is in an advantageous position in that it has the benefit of a strong base of customers who are already “sold” on the destination. What we want to do now is entice visitors to extend their stays and participate in more activities. This will lead to increased visitor spending and encourage visitors to become brand ambassadors.

*The Lac La Biche region is in an advantageous position in that it has the benefit of a strong base of customers who are already “sold” on the destination. What we want to do now is entice visitors to extend their stays and participate in more activities. This will lead to increased visitor spending and encourage visitors to become brand ambassadors.*

### Target Market Segments in the Short – Medium Term

*Our Focus - entice existing customers to stay longer, do more, spend more and become brand ambassadors.*

#### Marketing Tactics:

1. Further understand the unique needs of each segment.
2. Develop highly engaging experiences that will motivate segments to purchase.
3. Package experiences and promote to customer segments.



## Visiting Friends and Relatives

VFR is already a significant driver of visitation to Lac La Biche County. Developing products and resources to make it easier for residents to host friends and relatives will encourage longer stays and higher spending.

### Market Characteristics

- 47.5% of visitors to northern Alberta are VFR.
- 72% of County residents are likely to invite their friends and/or family to visit in next 2 years.
- These visitors want more activities to do in the region.
- Planning is typically a joint effort between hosts (residents) and their guests (visitors).
- The Explorer Quotient makeup of this group is unknown and needs to be better understood (see action item 5.C.1 on pg. 121).

## Visitors to Local Campgrounds

These visitors are already highly engaged by Lac La Biche County's product offering. They seek relaxation, familiarity and value for money. Encouraging campers to stay longer and do more in the region is a priority.

### Market Characteristics

- There are 1,300 campsites in the region and most are at capacity during peak season.
- Camping is one of the most popular leisure activities in Alberta. More than 40% of Albertan households camp.
- 32% No Hassle Travellers
- 15% Gentle Explorers
- 14% Authentic Experiencers
- 5% Cultural Explorers
- A high percentage of these visitors are RVers (greater than 50%).
- Value outdoor experiences in a relaxing, controlled environment.
- Enjoy smaller-scale operations and natural wonders.





## Visitors to Sporting Events

Sporting events bring in athletes, coaching staff and friends and family. Capitalizing on Lac La Biche County's high-quality sport venues to attract these visitors is an opportunity.

### Market Characteristics

- The majority of these visitors come from Alberta.
- Sport tourists are attracted to Lac La Biche County because of its high quality sport venues and large supply of accommodations.
- Lac La Biche County is in a good north/central location to draw regional events.
- The Explorer Quotient makeup of this group is unknown and needs to be better understood (see action item 5.C.1 on pg. 121).

## Medium-Long Term Diversification Strategy

This strategy includes developing new products that will attract new markets regionally, from out of province and internationally. There will be considerable effort required to diversify; however, the rewards could be substantial. We know that international visitors spend twice as much as domestic visitors do during their trips. We also know that there is international demand for cultural and nature-based activities. Cultural experiences are an important driver for tourists visiting Canada and traveling within Canada. Young Canadians aged 18-34 rate culture in their top three reasons for visiting a destination, even going so far as stating their dream Canadian vacation would include experiencing culture.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, participating in cultural experiences ranked in the top five most popular activities for domestic (Canada and Alberta) overnight visitors to Alberta.<sup>74</sup>

*We know that international visitors spend twice as much as domestic visitors do during their trips. We also know that there is international demand for cultural and nature-based activities.*





## Tactical Approach for New Customer Segments

*Our Focus – attract new customers through highly engaging and immersive cultural and nature-based experiences.*

### Marketing Tactics:

1. Further understand each segments' needs.
2. Develop niche-based products for each segment.
3. Promote product with a targeted approach to each segment.

### New Customer Segments:

We will develop more niche-based products that will attract authentic experiencers and cultural explorers regionally, nationally and from around the world. These visitor markets are seeking immersive experiences with authentic cultures when they travel. These visitors also prefer destinations that connect them to nature, which gives the Lac La Biche region an advantage.

In terms of regional markets, Edmonton and Calgary have vibrant cultural scenes that the Lac La Biche region can plug into to help build and promote product. Edmonton and Calgary also have universities, which presents the opportunity to offer guided learning experiences for students and faculty in Lac La Biche County.

### Target Markets

1. Culture and nature enthusiasts from Edmonton, Calgary and other parts of Alberta.
2. Culture and nature enthusiasts from the United States.
3. Culture and nature enthusiasts from Germany and the United Kingdom.

### Important Note

Product development (short-medium term) and diversification (medium-long term) are the strategic priorities and the majority of implementation activities should generally fall within these focuses. However, it is important to note that Lac La Biche County should not limit itself exclusively to this approach. If attractive opportunities arise that fall within the focus areas of market penetration or market development, they should be considered on a case by case basis.

# 06 Strategic Goals



# Strategic Goals

This section describes five key goals developed to support the strategic direction. Detailed action items stemming from the goals are provided in Section 8 – Implementation Plan.



## 1. Organizational Development

*Goal: Build organizational capacity to ensure sound delivery and execution of the Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan.*



## 2. Product Development

*Goal: Improve the attractiveness of the County's tourism offering by developing new products and enhancing existing products into compelling visitor and market ready experiences.*



## 3. Asset and Facility Development

*Goal: Ensure the County's existing and future assets and facilities are planned, maintained and developed in a way that fully leverages them to support tourism development.*



## 4. Business Attraction and Retention

*Goal: Attract and retain tourism-related businesses in the County.*



## 5. Marketing and Promotional Development

*Goal: Entice travellers to visit the County by promoting the region's experiences to key target markets.*



## 1. Organizational Development

This section describes initiatives to achieve Goal #1, which is to:

*Build organizational capacity to ensure sound delivery and execution of the Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan.*

For the detailed implementation plan, see action items 1.A.1 – 1.D.2 in Section 8.

## Organize and Collaborate for Tourism Development

### Destination Development Business Unit

It is recommended that Lac La Biche County executes the functions of a typical Destination Management Organization (DMO) through the establishment of a Destination Development Business Unit within the Economic Development Department. By taking on this role, the County will take the lead on implementing the Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan, as well as fulfill the role of a DMO.

### Typical Role of a DMO

DMO's play a key role in the long-term development of a destination. For visitors, DMO's are often the first point of contact they have with a destination. Therefore, DMO's formulate campaigns to attract target markets and serve as the primary source for tourist information (e.g. attractions, experiences, packages, accommodations, restaurants, etc.). They also take a lead role in advocating for and developing the tourism industry in their community. For further information regarding the functions of a DMO, see Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Typical Functions of a DMO (and proposed functions of the Destination Development Business Unit)**

Destination Development	Marketing and Communications	Finance and Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business engagement</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan implementation</li> <li>• Partnership development</li> <li>• Grant acquisition</li> <li>• Sponsorship</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• New business creation and lead generation</li> <li>• Product development</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• VIC management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop/execute marketing plan including collaborative marketing campaigns leveraged by Travel AB</li> <li>• Social media engagement and content management</li> <li>• Website management</li> <li>• Media relations</li> <li>• Trade shows</li> <li>• Member events (e.g. AGM, member mixers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Office management</li> <li>• HR management</li> <li>• Policy development</li> <li>• IT management</li> <li>• Data analytics and reporting</li> <li>• Contract and grant administration</li> <li>• Sales administration (e.g. operator buy-in opportunities for campaigns)</li> </ul>

In order to effectively function as a DMO, the County will need to invest in a department that can complete the destination management functions described in Figure 5. Since one of the primary goals of tourism is economic development, it is recommended that the new business unit be housed under the economic development department at the County. In the future, the County should evaluate the opportunity to develop an arm's length DMO outside of County administration that would have strong industry representation and leadership (see action item 1.B.4).

### Destination Development Business Unit Staffing (within Economic Development Department)

In order to effectively deliver the DMO functions described previously, the County will need to invest in additional staff and/or contracted resources. To establish the business unit, the following positions are recommended:

Position	# of FTE	Estimated Annual Cost
Economic Development Manager*	0.5 for tourism function	\$50,000
Economic Development Coordinator**	1	(position currently exists)
Tourism BRE Program and Product Development Coordinator (top priority position)	1	\$80,000
Tourism Marketing and Product Development Coordinator***	1	\$80,000
Administrative Assistant***	1	\$65,000
<b>Total Additional Annual Cost to Staff the Destination Development Business Unit</b>		<b>\$275,000</b>

\*Given the small initial size of the Destination Development Business Unit, the manager position could dedicate half of their time to other economic development initiatives in the first few years.

\*\*This position currently exists under the name of Tourism Marketing and Economic Development Coordinator. We suggest transferring the marketing duties of the existing position to the proposed new position of Tourism Marketing and Product Development Coordinator. The Economic Development Coordinator would have economic development responsibilities as well as contribute to tourism-related initiatives.

\*\*\*These positions could be phased in depending on how assertive the County wants to be in moving initiatives forward.

### Opportunity for Regional Collaboration in Northeast Alberta

Destinations in northeastern Alberta stand to benefit by cooperating to attract visitors to the region as a whole. Although these destinations may compete at the local level for visitors, it is important for them to cooperate to draw visitors to the region. Therefore, there is an opportunity for a regional tourism marketing organization that leverages the resources of multiple partners to promote clusters of similar experiences. Lac La Biche County should work closely with their regional partners (e.g. Athabasca, Cold Lake) to further collaborate.

## Roles in Implementation

Concerted effort will be required from multiple stakeholders to achieve the goals put forward by the strategic plan. Each stakeholders' role in implementation is described below.

Organization	Role
<b>Lac La Biche County/ Destination Development Business Unit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes the lead role in ensuring the strategy is moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner.</li> <li>• Takes the lead role in destination management and marketing.</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Strategy Task Force</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-stakeholder group that acts as a forum for consistent communication, collaboration and idea sharing related to the development of the strategy. It is important that this group includes business representation.</li> </ul>
<b>Businesses and Entrepreneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The private sector provides many of the front-line services to visitors, such as accommodations, food and beverage, and experiences.</li> <li>• Local businesses will play a key role in growing tourism in Lac La Biche County through the development and delivery of high-quality experiences. Businesses must be actively engaged in implementing the strategy and need to be far more involved in tourism development than they currently are.</li> </ul>
<b>Residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passionate and dedicated community champions will need to be inspired to help implement the strategy and generate buy-in within the community. Making the opportunity to participate in task forces will be important.</li> </ul>
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chamber is a member-based organization that supports the business community in Lac La Biche County. It works with its members to promote a healthy economy and prosperous community. The Chamber is a key link to the business owners.</li> <li>• The Chamber should encourage members to participate in implementation of the strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Futures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Futures provides financial and business services to entrepreneurs and business owners in the Lac La Biche region. The organization will play a key role in supporting tourism businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism could be an important funding partner moving forward. The department also provides excellent resources, training and advice in implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>Travel Alberta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Alberta provides matching funding for promotion of tourism initiatives through its cooperative marketing investment fund. It is critical that the region works closely with Travel Alberta to benefit from its extensive knowledge and resources.</li> </ul>

<b>Alberta Environment and Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Environment and Parks manages the province's land base and natural resources through the Land-use Framework. All land-based activities are considered through this Framework, including tourism.</li> <li>• The Alberta Parks division manages provincial parks in the region which have important campgrounds (e.g. Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, Beaver Lake Provincial Recreation Area, Lakeland Provincial Park, and Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area).</li> <li>• Alberta Parks is an important partner in developing tourism product and assets in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous Tourism Alberta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Tourism Alberta's mandate is to lead the development of Alberta Indigenous tourism industry. Having been established in 2018, the organization is still ramping up its operations. ITA could be a future partner in the development of Indigenous-related tourism offerings in Lac La Biche County.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbouring Municipalities and Indigenous Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is potential to partner with neighbouring municipalities and Indigenous communities on regional tourism initiatives (especially product development, packaging and collaborative marketing).</li> </ul>
<b>Other DMO's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are opportunities to partner with other DMO's on initiatives that support tourism development (e.g. Edmonton Tourism, Fort McMurray Tourism).</li> </ul>



## Allocate Resources to Tourism Development

Successful tourism development will require time, energy and resources to accomplish. Therefore, a sustainable funding model and resourcing structure is needed to ensure initiatives move forward and momentum is maintained. The following list outlines the funding opportunities available to support tourism development. For an expanded description of each funding opportunity, see Appendix C.

- Municipal Funding
- Fee for Service
- Destination Management Funds
- Provincial Funding
- Membership Fees
- Stakeholder Contributions
- Corporate Partnerships
- Increase in Business Activity and Tax Base

Since the County has been selected as the DMO, it is recommended that municipal funding be allocated to implement the strategy in the short term combined with fee for service and provincial grants. In the medium-term, the possibility of creating a DMF should be explored with stakeholders in the region. It should be noted that the most sustainable tourism development organizations receive funding and support from private and public sector sources. Therefore, it is recommended that over the long-term, a multi-pronged funding approach that generates revenue from private and public sources be developed.



## 2. Product Development

This section describes initiatives to achieve Goal #2, which is to:

*Improve the attractiveness of the County's tourism offering by developing new products and enhancing existing products into compelling visitor and market ready experiences.*

For the detailed implementation plan, see action items 2.A.1 – 2.H.2 in Section 8.

As described in Section 3, there are seven product development opportunities that show the greatest potential for development into market ready products in the foreseeable future. They are as follows. See Appendix D for a description of market ready standards.



*Destination Animation in Stratford, Ontario -  
Hidden quotes from Shakespeare magically appear on sidewalks and walls  
when it rains.*

### Destination Animation Program

In addition to the product opportunities described previously, it will be important for Lac La Biche to employ a broader destination animation program. Destination animation can be a powerful attractor; surprising and delighting visitors to keep them coming back again and again. Destination animation can be defined as:

***“Smaller performances, interactive displays or experiences that take place repeatedly, mostly in the heart of a town, and help enliven the visitor’s or local’s experience.”***<sup>75</sup>

Lac La Biche County can increase its attractiveness to visitors by supplying compelling destination animation in urban areas, particularly during events and on peak weekends. The County can accomplish this by developing a destination animation partnership program. This program will engage the business community by providing matching funding to help them bring their animation ideas to life. A program like this would allow the community to tap into the creative genius of its entrepreneurs for the benefit of the entire community. The program would fund new experiences and would also provide support to develop those experiences into ongoing tourism product.

Stratford, Ontario has successfully implemented a destination animation partnership program, and is well known for its ongoing animation. Jasper, Alberta is another good example of a community that has engaged local business owners in developing unique and interesting experiences that help bring the destination to life.

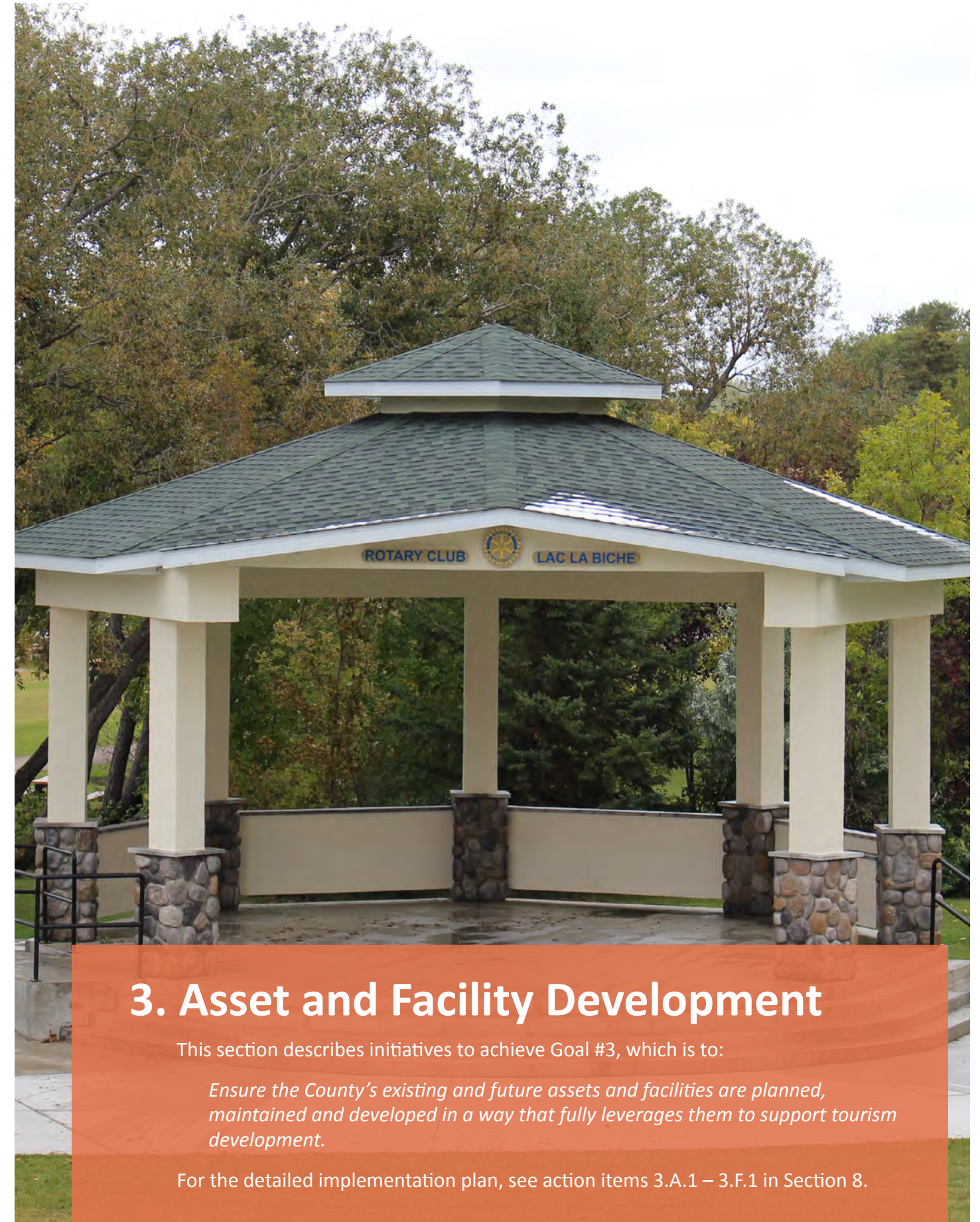
**Examples of destination animation could include:**

1. Public interpretation programs at the McArthur Park Gazebo, downtown or at other locations.
2. Local eateries, tour operators or other businesses provide unique experiences that link to the brand;
3. A camp fire in a central area with smores, local stories and hot chocolate;
4. Unique and interesting art installations and experiences in public spaces (e.g. light installations);
5. Performances;
6. Other unique and interesting experiences that Lac La Biche County wants to share with visitors.



***Symphony Under the Sky produced by the Fairmont Jasper Lodge to support the Jasper Dark Sky Festival.***

***(An example of a destination that has successfully engaged businesses in product development)***



### 3. Asset and Facility Development

This section describes initiatives to achieve Goal #3, which is to:

*Ensure the County's existing and future assets and facilities are planned, maintained and developed in a way that fully leverages them to support tourism development.*

For the detailed implementation plan, see action items 3.A.1 – 3.F.1 in Section 8.

## Developing McArthur Park into a Civic and Cultural Destination

Developing McArthur Park into a civic and cultural destination for residents and visitors could be an important piece to the Lac La Biche tourism development puzzle. A vision for the site is to tie Main Street to the lakeshore by creating a central focal point and gathering place for residents and visitors in Lac La Biche County; showcasing the region's history and cultures, and supporting economic growth.<sup>76</sup> If appropriately developed, McArthur Park could become a keystone tourism attraction in the County that brings in visitors and encourages further economic development.

Summer activities in the park could include:

- Weekly craft and cultural markets at the VIC and adjacent plaza;
- Interpretive programs and community performances at McArthur Place Amphitheatre;
- Larger festivals using the main stage and great lawn;
- Family fun at the spray park, playground, picnic area, and adult fitness stations;
- Enjoyment of the lake through non-motorized boating, biking or walking along the waterfront, or picnicking at the beach.

Winter activities in the park could include:

- Outdoor skating on the plaza;
- Skiing or snowshoeing on the lake;
- Winter bonfires on the beach;
- Interpretive programs and indoor community events at McArthur Place and Jubilee Hall;
- Winter festivals/events at the VIC/museum and adjacent plaza.

Beach front improvements could include:

- Public fire pit/gathering space for small events or casual seating;
- Waterfront picnic sites;
- Viewpoints;
- Equipment rentals/washroom/concession open year-round, renting non-motorized boats in the summer and potentially snowshoes in the winter;
- Adventure play area located near the spray park and existing playground, catering to older children.

Signage and wayfinding improvements could include:

- On each corner intersection of the park, a piece of public art, installation, or landmark with ornamental planting and signage marks the two main entrances to the park and provides a sense of arrival;
- Signage and wayfinding placed throughout the park marking clear routes to major park amenities, including washrooms, Visitor Information Centre, Beachfront, McArthur Place, rentals, etc.;
- Signage and wayfinding could be located off site, at major intersections to indicate VIC and park area located nearby (this could also help with trail connection identification on the street level).

Additional aspects of the proposed McArthur Park concept could include:

- Removal of the existing curling rink building to open up views into the park and views to the lake;
- Improvement of the façade of Jubilee Hall and creation of a Visitor Information Centre, café, and area for keeping warm during winter outdoor activities in the park (i.e. outdoor skating);

- Addition of a plaza adjacent to Jubilee Hall that can host weekly markets, cultural celebrations and community events; this plaza could also become a leisure skating rink in the winter with opportunity for a warming station inside the building;
- Creation of a large, flexible central lawn with a perimeter path and stage at the north end for hosting larger events;
- New picnic tables and shelters along the beach and adjacent to the spray park and playground;
- Expansion of the play area to include “adventure play” that appeals to a wider range of ages;
- Enhancement of the park edges with boulevards of trees and wider pedestrian paths;
- Adding attractive park signage with plantings at the southwest and southeast corners;
- Creation of a small plaza with public art (or other focal feature) and seating at the southwest corner to create a sense of arrival and draw people into the park.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be considered in the conceptual design of the park and should be included in the detailed design and maintenance plans for the park in the future. The application of CPTED principles in McArthur Park will ensure residents and visitors feel safe and welcome in the park. The following are ways in which CPTED principles could be applied:

- Ensure that sightlines are kept open throughout the park with strategically placed murals, vegetation and buildings/structures on site;
- Ensure proper maintenance of the park vegetation and features. Plaza and built structures should be regularly maintained, repaired and cleared from debris/litter. Vegetation should be maintained to provide visual permeability for example by trimming shrubs regularly and keeping tree canopies lifted;
- Provide adequate lighting in strategic areas to create a safe park experience.

To support this vision, precedent images have been provided to help describe what McArthur Park could become (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Precedent Images



1. Stage + Open Space Can Host Events



5. Street Trees



2. Nature Play + Picnic Areas



4. Public Fire Pit



6. Group Picnic Shelter



3. Plaza with Decorative Paving and Public Art



7. Plaza for Events and Winter Skating



8. Park Signage



## Lake Access and Health

Lake health issues are complex, and it is unlikely that a single, easy solution can be found for the blue-green algae problem (for an expanded discussion regarding lake health, see Appendix E). A multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder approach will be needed to improve the health of Lac La Biche. Pigeon Lake provides a strong example of where such an approach has been successful. Recent improvements in lake health was in large part due to the efforts of the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association. This Association has valuable experience, connections and educational materials that could be of use to Lac La Biche and they are open to sharing their knowledge.<sup>77</sup>

There are currently various initiatives from groups in the County exploring solutions to these challenges. However, it will be important that solutions implemented to solve one challenge do not inadvertently cause other challenges or make an existing challenge worse. What is needed is a comprehensive watershed study to identify the key impacts and promising opportunities for improve water quality and the health of the lake. This should be followed up by a coordinated and well-researched lake remediation plan.

## Campgrounds

High demand for camping has been noted through discussions with stakeholders, local and regional planning documents, and in province-wide research. The majority of Alberta campers (77%) prefer to camp in designated campgrounds, and the number one reason for this is availability of amenities.<sup>78</sup> Studies further point out that there is not a lack of campgrounds in Alberta, but rather a lack of campgrounds that provide the amenities for today's campers.<sup>79</sup> Campers are looking for service buildings with showers and flush toilets, power and water hookups and sani-stations.

Alberta Parks operates excellent campgrounds within the County, including those at Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, Beaver Lake Provincial Recreation Area, Lakeland Provincial Park and the Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area. These campgrounds attract thousands of campers each year, which presents an opportunity to further engage visitors by developing tourism products in other parts of the County. These and other existing campgrounds should be encouraged to continue to invest in their amenities to meet the needs of today's campers. Additionally, an investment prospectus should be developed to gauge the demand for more campgrounds and attract private investment.

## Niche Accommodations

The availability of niche accommodation options was identified as a gap in Lac La Biche County.<sup>80</sup> Lakefront cabins are available at Whitesands Resort and comfort camping cabins and tipis have been recently developed in Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park; however, the supply is limited and may not be enough to meet demand. The opportunity to develop additional niche accommodation options (e.g. ecolodge, comfort camping) should be explored through an investment prospectus.



## 4. Business Attraction and Retention

This section describes initiatives to achieve Goal #4, which is to:

*Attract and retain tourism-related businesses in the County.*

For the detailed implementation plan, see action items 4.A.1 – 4.D.1 in Section 8.



### Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program

The establishment of a business retention and expansion program focused on the tourism sector would allow the County to do the following:

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of local tourism businesses' needs and challenges;
2. Help operators identify and solve current or potential issues;
3. Identify new tourism business development opportunities (gaps);
4. Gather and share information with tour operators;
5. Identify and build common capacity to grow tourism experiences through training, by connecting tour operators with one another, and through ongoing support by the DMO.<sup>81</sup>

### Incentivize Tourism Business Creation

Jurisdictions across Canada are taking a pro-active approach to encouraging tourism development in their communities by offering incentives to new and existing businesses. At the municipal level, these incentives typically include property tax abatements, fee waivers, loans and grants to encourage certain actions (e.g. beautification, redevelopment, product development, research, capacity building, heritage preservation, etc.).

The County could package multiple incentives together to develop a Tourism Development Incentive Program that promotes investment and attracts new businesses. There are multiple examples of successful incentive programs including East Hants, NS – Tourism Economic Development Fund; Medicine Hat, AB – Downtown Development Incentive Program; and Trail, BC – Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption Program.

Another way to incentivize tourism business creation would be to actively reduce or remove barriers to entry. Common barriers for tourism businesses include limited access to land and community facilities for tourism uses, high fixed costs (e.g. property, land, equipment), insurance requirements, and limited supporting infrastructure (e.g. cell service/internet, roads, access points, etc.). Some of these barriers are outside of the County's jurisdiction; however, the County can take an active role in advocating for reduced barriers for tourism businesses.

### Tourism Business Education and Training

Issues with customer service and a lack of tourism operators are hampering growth in the tourism sector. Undertaking focused efforts to increase the capacity of local entrepreneurs and grow the knowledge of service sector employees is needed. There are a wealth of programs that offer free and subsidized tourism education workshops through provincial agencies, including:

- Tourism Entrepreneurship Startup Seminar (AEDTT)
- Visitor Information Providers Program (AEDTT)
- SHiFT Program: Transforming Products to Experiences (TA)
- Getting to Know Your Best Customer (TA)
- Experience Essentials Workshop (TA)
- Global Ready – China (TA)

Lac La Biche County should seek to leverage these opportunities to increase the knowledge and capacity of their visitor economy.

## 5. Marketing and Promotional Development

This section describes initiatives to achieve Goal #5, which is to:

*Entice travellers to visit the County by promoting the region's experiences to key target markets.*

For the detailed implementation plan, see action items 5.A.1 – 5.F.2 in Section 8.



### Align Promotional Activities

Lac La Biche County's tourism products are not being promoted in a coordinated or easily consumable way. Community Futures has recently stopped hosting the County's travel website ([www.laclabicheregion.com](http://www.laclabicheregion.com)) and visitor information specific to the Lac La Biche region is minimal. There are currently critical gaps in the promotion of the County's tourism products. A single organization is needed to coordinate tourism marketing functions.

It is recommended that Lac La Biche County's Destination Development Business Unit fill this role. An annual marketing plan will need to be developed and implemented; the County's travel website needs to be reinstated; and Travel Alberta's cooperative marketing dollars should be leveraged.

### Understand the Visitor

Existing data provides strong insights into where visitors to the region are coming from and what motivates them to visit. However, data on visitor characteristics could be improved to develop more detailed profiles for target markets (particularly the VFR market). This information can be very valuable as tourism operators can tailor their experiences and marketing efforts to the unique tastes of their best customers. Partnerships with businesses and residents can be sought to enhance data collection methods.

### Tourism Ambassador Registry

Local people can play a vital role in enhancing the County's tourism products by connecting visitors with authentic and engaging experiences. This can be accomplished through a tourism ambassador registry. Through this program, interesting local people who have unique experiences that they are willing to share with visitors are identified and included in a registry.\* Each ambassador would then have a profile developed for them describing what makes them unique and which authentic experiences they offer. These profiles could then be promoted to visitors through available channels (e.g. online, VIC, local attractions/businesses) and easily packaged with other offerings.

\*A call for tourism ambassadors was sent out to the community during the development of this strategy and four residents have already registered to be included on the Tourism Ambassador Registry.



### Experience Toolbox

Developing experiences from scratch can be difficult, particularly for new operators. The creation of an Experience Toolbox is a way for the County to increase the amount of product available for visitors and encourage operators to build out and/or enhance their own experience offerings.

An Experience Toolbox is an easy to use resource for operators to augment their offerings and enhance visitor experiences. The Toolbox would contain multiple reference sheets for how to incorporate simple activities that would enhance the overall visitor experience (e.g. bannock making around an open fire with a short, historical story). Each reference sheet would be 1 to 2 pages in length and contain simple set up and delivery instructions, in addition to a list of required materials.

### Develop Compelling Packages

As tourism products in Lac La Biche County are developed into visitor and market ready experiences, the opportunity for packaging them together gets stronger. The current trend is towards visitors being able to choose experiences on an “a la carte” basis while in the destination. This requires experiences to be flexible and available on short notice. In order to meet the needs of visitors, experience providers and local businesses should collaborate to develop compelling experience packages and be ready to develop new, unique packages with limited notice. One of the keys to developing compelling packages is collaboration. For this reason, the County should facilitate an annual industry event to bring operators together.

# 07 *The Way Forward - Strategy Implementation Summary*



This section provides a summary of the implementation timeline, followed by measures of success. For the detailed action plan, see Section 8.

## The Way Forward

Implementation of the strategy has five main phases. Phase 1 will focus on developing the organizational structure required to support tourism in the community. Phase 2 will include the creation of new tourism experiences that will resonate with existing visitor markets. This phase is the cornerstone of the strategy as compelling new experiences will be needed to entice visitor markets to do more, stay longer and spend more. Phase 3 will see a push towards marketing new tourism experiences and developing a unified tourism brand that reflects the core offering of the destination. Phase 4 is when the region truly has an opportunity to “show it’s stuff” by proving to its visitors that it can consistently deliver high quality visitor experiences. The goal during this phase will be to turn existing customers into brand advocates. Phase 5 will see a shift toward market expansion through diversification (i.e. new products to new markets).



2019-2020	2019-2023	2022- 2023	2023-2029	2026-2029
Phase 1 Develop Capacity	Phase 2 Build Outstanding Experiences for Existing Markets	Phase 3 Develop and Promote the Brand	Phase 4 Execute on the Brand Promise	Phase 5 Diversify to New Markets
Approve and resource the strategy.	Develop experiences into visitor and market ready tourism products in the 7 priority product lines.	Align promotional activities.	Prove to visitors that the region can consistently deliver high quality visitor experiences. Turn existing customers into brand advocates.	Grow market share through diversification (i.e. developing new products for new niche markets regionally, nationally and internationally).
Establish a Destination Development Business Unit within the County’s Economic Development Department.	Develop a lake remediation plan for Lac La Biche.	Develop an annual marketing plan and tourism brand strategy that will promote the region’s tourism offering to key target markets.	Re-evaluate the tourism delivery structure and determine if there is a need to establish an arms length DMO.	Continue to deliver outstanding visitor experiences to core existing markets.
Engage industry through a Tourism Strategy Task Force.	Work with hotel operators to develop leisure traveller amenities.	Maximize use of Travel Alberta’s Cooperative Marketing Investment Program to leverage funds.	Implement a multi-pronged funding approach that would see revenue generation from the private and public sector to support tourism development.	
Reach out to each culture in the region to begin to develop unique cultural experiences.	Develop and launch a Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program.	Collect detailed visitor information for use in promotions.	Ensure tourism is considered in all long-term planning.	
Liaise with Alberta Parks and other partners in developing the region’s natural assets.	Create a multi-faceted Tourism Development Incentive Program.	Develop a tourism ambassador registry.	Measure performance and adjust to market conditions as required.	
Organize training workshops for local operators.	Begin development of McArthur Park and downtown Lac La Biche into a civic and cultural destination.	Develop compelling packages.		
	Enhance safety and security.	Develop experience toolkits.		
	Develop a sport tourism hosting plan.			

# Measuring Success

The following key performance indicators (KPI's) have been developed for the strategy. It is suggested that the KPI's are measured and evaluated on an annual basis.

Focus Area for Growth	KPI	Measurement Tool
1. Increased Experiences	1.1 20% annual growth in experiential programming destination wide (years 1-5).	Quarterly/annual reports
	1.2 75% of all businesses that are directly related to tourism trained in select Travel Alberta workshops (by year 5).	Quarterly/annual reports
2. Increased Awareness	2.1 20% annual growth in digital engagement with visitors (year 3 on).	Website Metrics
	2.2 20% annual growth in new product awareness by visitors (year 3 on).	Visitor Survey
	2.3 20% annual growth in new product awareness by residents (year 3 on).	Resident Survey
3. Increased Revenue	3.1 10% annual growth in new tourism businesses and associated increase in municipal business tax revenue.	Operational budgets
	3.2 10% annual growth in operational revenue at visitor attractions.	Operator Survey
	3.3 10% annual growth in leisure traveller accommodation receipts (year 3 on).	Operator Survey
	3.4 10% annual growth in tour operator receipts (year 3 on).	Operator Survey
	3.5 10% annual growth in retail and restaurant receipts during peak tourism periods (year 3 on).	Operator Survey

Focus Area for Growth	KPI	Measurement Tool
4. Increased Visitation	4.1 10% annual growth in number of visitors to attractions each year (year 3 on).	Visitor statistics from attractions
	4.2 10% annual growth in number of leisure traveller overnight stays each year (year 3 on).	Operator Survey
	4.3 10% annual growth in tour operator visitation (year 3 on).	Operator Survey
	4.4 10% annual growth in tourism event visitation (year 3 on).	Operator Survey
5. Increased Satisfaction	5.1 85% great rating at attractions (by year 5).	Visitor survey
	5.2 85% great rating with the quality of visitor amenities (by year 5).	Visitor survey
	5.3 85% great rating of overall experience in Lac La Biche County (by year 5).	Visitor survey
	5.4 20% increase in number of return visitors (by year 5).	Visitor survey

# 08 Implementation Plan



## Implementation Plan

This section provides a detailed plan for implementing the strategic goals identified for tourism in Lac La Biche County.

### Goals, Priority Areas and Action Items

The Action Plan is divided into goals, priority areas and action items. Priority areas are divided into the five goals identified in the previous section. Within each priority area, specific action items have been established that clearly describe the steps that should be taken to achieve the objective. The action items will also assist the County in evaluating the success of the plan moving forward. Each action item has been assigned a suggested priority rating, estimated cost, organizational lead and anticipated timeline for implementation.

#### Priority Criteria

- Low Priority (L)** There is considerable benefit to tourism, however; because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a lower priority **at this time**.
- Medium Priority (M)** There is a considerable benefit to tourism, however; because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a lower priority than high priority items **at this time**.
- High Priority (H)** There is a strong benefit to tourism, and because of phasing considerations, cost, organizational readiness, or relative importance in relation to other initiatives, these initiatives are deemed a high priority **at this time**.

#### Cost Criteria

- Low Cost (L)** Less than \$10,000
- Medium Cost (M)** \$10,000 - \$50,000
- High Cost (H)** More than \$50,000

#### Organizational Lead

The action plan identified organizations responsible for leading action items. It is expected that lead organizations will provide the resources necessary to implement their action items. Where appropriate, it is encouraged to seek partnerships with stakeholder groups, neighbouring municipalities, provincial ministries, the private sector and other applicable groups wherever possible to leverage available resources. Residents can also be engaged through task forces and committees to help contribute to implementation. Please see next for a list of these organizations.



Abbreviation	Organization
DDBU	Lac La Biche County (Destination Development Business Unit)
LLBC	Lac La Biche County (Other Departments)
TSTF	Tourism Strategy Task Force
AEDTT/TA/AP	Provincial Organizations (Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Travel Alberta, Alberta Parks)

## Implementation Timeline

Short Term (S)	Less than 2 years
Medium Term (M)	2 - 5 years
Long term (L)	More than 5 years

## Quick Wins



A blue star indicates that an action item is a “Quick Win.” Quick wins are actions that can be implemented within a year or two, have a high probability of success and have a relatively low cost.

## Highest Priority Items



An exclamation mark identifies items that should be considered the highest priority in the short term.

## Future Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting

A key component of the success of this document will be the evaluation of its initiatives. The action plan should be reviewed bi-annually, at which time priorities should be re-evaluated and a discussion of any variances should occur in reference to key performance indicators (KPI's). If new projects are added (or old projects removed) as the plan progresses, this should be done by weighing the relative priority of all projects in the plan. The action plan should be updated on a yearly basis; therefore, the third quarter evaluation period will set the stage for the updated version of the plan. In the fourth quarter, the updated plan should be formalized and a draft approved by the end of the year.

## Implementation Considerations

In total, the Action Plan identifies 69 action items, grouped into 28 separate priority areas. Attempting to complete all initiatives concurrently will stretch the resources and limit the focus of the County as it implements the plan. Therefore, it is recommended that implementation of the plan begin with the highest priority items (!).

# Action Plan

## 1. Organizational Development

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/Cost	Lead/Timeline
<b>A. Organize and Collaborate for Tourism Development</b> !	1.A.1 – Establish a Destination Development Business Unit within the County Economic Development Department. 1.A.2 – Recruit business representatives and other stakeholders for the Tourism Strategy Task Force and to participate in the implementation of the strategy. 1.A.3 – Collaborate with partners at multiple levels (municipally, regionally, provincially) on destination development and collaborative marketing activities.	H/H	DDBU/S
<b>B. Allocate Resources to Tourism Development</b> !	1.B.1 – Allocate municipal funding to implement the strategy. 1.B.2 – In the medium-term, determine the willingness of stakeholders to pursue the creation of a DMF as an additional funding source for tourism development. 1.B.3 – In the long-term, implement a multi-pronged funding approach that would see revenue generation from the private and public sector to support tourism development. 1.B.4 – In the long term, re-evaluate the tourism services delivery structure and determine if there is a need to establish an arms length DMO that would see enhanced business sector involvement.	H/H	DDBU + LLBC/S-L
<b>C. Ensure Tourism is Considered in all Future Long-Term Planning</b> ★	1.C.1 – Ensure the needs of the County’s tourism sector are brought to the attention of planners during the development of long-term strategies (across all functional areas including infrastructure, planning and development, recreation, parks and culture, economic development, social planning, etc.). 1.C.2 – Schedule bi-annual meetings between the Tourism Development Manager and senior recreation/parks officials to discuss priorities and opportunities to support each other. 1.C.3 – Schedule bi-annual meetings with Alberta Parks to share plans and build new product. 1.C.4 – Actively engage with ACT and TA in implementing the strategy.	M/L	DDBU/ongoing

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>D. Measure Performance</b>	<p>1.D.1 – Utilize the attached performance metrics and other measures as appropriate to measure performance on an annual basis.</p> <p>1.D.2 – Conduct a tourism economic impact assessment to benchmark the financial impact of the local tourism industry.</p>	M/M	DDBU/S

## 2. Product Development

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>A. Outdoor Experiences</b>	<p>2.A.1 – Develop outdoor experiences into visitor and market ready tourism products. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided outdoor tours;</li> <li>• Equipment rentals for outdoor adventures;</li> <li>• Canoe circuit tours;</li> <li>• OHV circuits;</li> <li>• Regional trail system with connections to major tourism attractions, campgrounds and communities;</li> <li>• High quality, passive use outdoor facilities in communities (e.g. McArthur Park).</li> </ul> <p>2.A.2 – Liaise with Alberta Parks and other provincial departments to coordinate the development and maintenance of the region’s natural assets.</p>	H/M	DDBU + TSTF/S
<b>B. Cultural Tourism</b>	<p>2.B.1 – Reach out to representatives from each culture in the region to begin to develop unique cultural programs in partnership with the DMO.</p> <p>2.B.2 – Work with hotel operators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a portion of their properties to become more focused on leisure traveller needs.</li> <li>• Develop complementary programming and packaging to support cultural tourism.</li> </ul> <p>2.B.3 – Develop cultural experiences into visitor and market ready tourism products. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided interpretive tours of museums, historic sites and art showcases;</li> </ul>	H/H	DDBU + LLBC + TSTF/M-L

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceremonies and rituals cultural groups are willing to share with visitors;</li> <li>• Teaching traditional techniques and ways of doing things (e.g. cooking, games, fire starting, etc.).</li> </ul> <p>2.B.4 – Explore opportunities to support Indigenous tourism product development through Indigenous Tourism Alberta.</p> <p>2.B.5 – Develop a cultural square at McArthur Park and significantly enhance programming of this facility (e.g. interpretive program, weekly cultural markets).*</p> <p>2.B.6 – Develop festivals, events and interpretive programming using McArthur Park as the core pillar.</p> <p>2.B.7 – Develop a program plan for the Lac La Biche Mission that will enhance the visitor experience and drive visitation.</p> <p>2.B.8 – In the long term, seek opportunities for product clustering with cultural attractions outside of Lac La Biche County (e.g. Metis Crossing).</p> <p>*See Developing McArthur Park into a Civic and Cultural Destination for the proposed concept.</p>		
<b>C. Dark Sky/ Northern Lights Viewing</b>	<p>2.C.1 – Develop dark sky/northern lights viewing experiences into visitor and market ready tourism products. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish indoor and outdoor viewing areas for the northern lights (there is opportunity to partner with Alberta Parks on this type of development);</li> <li>• Develop interpretive tours that incorporate northern lights viewing with entertainment, storytelling, and educational components;</li> <li>• Leverage Lakeland Provincial Park’s Dark Sky Preserve status to enhance northern lights viewing experiences;</li> <li>• Invest in dark sky presentation lighting.</li> </ul> <p>2.C.2 – Develop complementary day time and night time activities to enhance dark sky and aurora viewing experiences. Examples of complementary activities that could be developed in the County include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A northern lights festival with day and night time programming centered around northern lights viewing;</li> </ul>	M/M	DDBU + TSTF/M

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo tours and/or workshops with professional photographers to learn skills and techniques that will allow visitors to take their own stunning photographs of the aurora borealis;</li> <li>• Hands-on activities to explore the fascinating science of the aurora. Seek partnerships with the TELUS World of Science – Edmonton to provide fun, family activities related to northern lights viewing;</li> <li>• An aurora themed art exhibition that features local artists;</li> <li>• Work with Indigenous groups to complement programming with cultural stories that relate to the northern lights;</li> <li>• Offer a live video stream of aurora events in the region. Content from the stream can also be used to promote tourism. The City of Yellowknife has successfully partnered with the Canadian Space Agency, the University of Calgary and Astronomy North to set-up and operate their video stream, known as AuroraMAX.<sup>82</sup> A similar offering could be developed in Lac La Biche County.</li> </ul>		
<b>D. Sport Tourism</b>	<p>2.D.1 – Develop a Sport Tourism Hosting Plan in collaboration with the County’s recreation and parks department with the goal of attracting tournaments and sporting events to Lac La Biche County. At minimum, the plan should address the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situational Analysis of Sport Tourism in northeast Alberta</li> <li>• Opportunities and Challenges of Sport Tourism</li> <li>• Case for Investment in Sport Tourism</li> <li>• Target Events and Tournaments</li> <li>• Vision, Strategy, Goals</li> <li>• Technical Analysis of Facility Requirements to Host Tournaments</li> <li>• Organizational Analysis</li> <li>• Funding Opportunities</li> <li>• Action Plan/Implementation</li> <li>• Evaluation Procedures</li> </ul>	M/M	DDBU/M
<b>E. Festivals and Events</b>	<p>2.E.1 – Develop a Tourism Festival and Event Strategy for Lac La Biche County. Some preliminary ideas for festivals and events include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Heritage Festival in McArthur Park that celebrates local cultures.</li> </ul>	M/M	DDBU/M

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrating the season in Lac La Biche County (e.g. Harvest Culinary Festival, Winter Village, Spring Music Festival).</li> <li>• Attracting the meetings, incentives, conventions and events (MICE) market.</li> <li>• Animating the destination throughout the year (e.g. art installations, street performances, seasonal programming).</li> </ul>		
<b>F. Culinary Tourism</b>	<p>2.F.1 – Incorporate culinary experiences into visitor and market ready experiences in all other product categories.</p> <p>2.F.2 – Develop a Taste of the Region event at McArthur Park each weekend during the summer.</p> <p>2.F.3 – Provide training opportunities for local chefs to enhance culinary experiences in the community.</p> <p>2.F.4 – Invite well known celebrity chefs to special events to provide enhanced culinary experiences.</p> <p>2.F.5 – Host culinary challenges or competitions that will push the boundaries of the current culinary offering and delight visitors.</p>	M/M	DDBU/ ongoing
<b>G. Lac La Biche as a Winter Destination</b>	<p>2.G.1 – Develop winter-themed programming and assets that will contribute to establishing Lac La Biche as a winter destination. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided tours in winter;</li> <li>• Ice skating trails in proximity to visually appealing areas (e.g. McArthur Park, Waterfronts);</li> <li>• Snowmobile circuits;</li> <li>• Host winter-themed events, such as ice carving competitions, ice canoe racing, snowball fights, Christmas light festival, ice fishing tournaments, etc.;</li> <li>• Winter equipment rentals at key visitor locations (e.g. snowshoes, ice fishing gear, sleds);</li> <li>• Heaters and/or fireplaces near event spaces and attractions for visitors to warm up;</li> <li>• Improved lighting of sidewalks, parks and trails to extend their hours of usability.</li> </ul>	M/H	DDBU + LLBC/M

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>H. Destination Animation Program</b>	2.H.1 – Host a one-day idea generation workshop to brainstorm destination animation ideas. 2.H.2 – Develop a destination animation partnership program that would encourage the development of new experiences, particularly during planned events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear application and selection process;</li> <li>• Development of an adjudication committee and criteria for idea selection;</li> <li>• Provision of matching funds to businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals to implement new destination animation initiatives;</li> <li>• Provide support to organizations to help them build ongoing tourism product;</li> <li>• Develop clear evaluation and performance measures and monitor success.</li> </ul>	M/M	DDBU/M

### 3. Asset and Facility Development

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>A. Developing McArthur Park into a Civic and Cultural Destination</b>	3.A.1 – Develop a detailed conceptual design for the redevelopment of McArthur Park into a civic and cultural hub and review with the public. The program elements and design considerations identified in Section 6 should be considered as a starting point. 3.A.2 – As approvals and funding allows, redevelop McArthur Park into a civic and cultural destination.	H/H	LLBC/S
<b>B. Lake Access and Health</b>	3.B.1 – Provide support to the Watershed Management Committee as they update the Watershed Management Plan from 2009. Ensure tourism is “at the table” when strategies are developed and implemented. 3.B.2 – Develop a lake remediation plan for Lac La Biche that will improve the water quality issues that currently restrict lake access and usage.	H/H	DDBU/S

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
	3.B.3 – Conduct a needs assessment and feasibility analysis to determine the costs, benefits and optimal development and operating model for a potential marina in Lac La Biche.		
<b>C. Enhance Safety and Security</b>	3.C.1 – Develop pride of place initiatives and opportunities to celebrate the good things about the community to improve residents’ perceptions of Lac La Biche County. 3.C.2 – Advocate for programs that will improve the safety and security of the County. 3.C.3 – Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design guidelines in future facility planning in the County. 3.C.4 – Ensure tourism is “at the table” when crime prevention initiatives are developed so that solutions that consider the visitor experience can be advocated for.	H/L	DDBU + LLBC/ ongoing
<b>D. Downtown Revitalization</b>	3.D.1 – Support the downtown revitalization plan currently underway. Consider action items identified in the Lac La Biche County Visitor Friendly Assessment and Action Plan (2018). A destination animation program could be included as part of a broader plan to revitalize downtown Lac La Biche (see Action Item 2.H.2).	H/H	DDBU + LLBC/S
<b>E. Campgrounds</b>	3.E.1 – Encourage existing campgrounds to continue to invest in their amenities and services to better meet the needs of today’s campers. 3.E.2 – Develop an investment prospectus for the development of additional campgrounds in the County.	M/M	DDBU/S
<b>F. Niche Accommodations</b>	3.F.1 – Complete an investment prospectus to encourage the development of niche accommodation options in Lac La Biche County (e.g. ecolodges, comfort camping).	M/M	DDBU/M

## 4. Business Attraction and Retention

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>A. Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program</b> !	4.A.1 – Develop and launch a Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program. Funding support may be available through the Tourism Industry Business Retention and Expansion Project: <a href="https://www.alberta.ca/tourism-industry-business-retention-expansion-project.aspx">https://www.alberta.ca/tourism-industry-business-retention-expansion-project.aspx</a> .	H/M	DDBU/S
<b>B. Incentivize Tourism Business Creation</b> !	4.B.1 – Explore the feasibility of developing a multi-faceted Tourism Development Incentive Program that will encourage the creation of new tourism businesses and the expansion of existing tourism businesses. 4.B.2 – Identify barriers for local tourism operators and work to reduce and/or remove them wherever feasible.	H/H	DDBU/S
<b>C. Tourism Business Education and Training</b>	4.C.1 – Work with Travel Alberta and Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism to organize training workshops for local operators and organizations. Examples of tourism training programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Entrepreneurship Startup Seminar (ACT)</li> <li>• Visitor Information Providers Program (ACT)</li> <li>• SHiFT Program: Transforming Products to Experiences (TA)</li> <li>• Getting to Know Your Best Customer (TA)</li> <li>• Experience Essentials Workshop (TA)</li> <li>• Global Ready – China (TA)</li> </ul> 4.C.2 – Explore the opportunity for Portage College to deliver service sector training and educational tourism programs that will address the human resource issues hampering growth.	M/L	DDBU + AEDTT + TA/M
<b>D. Business Engagement</b> ★	4.D.1 – Develop an “industry” portal on the DMO website where businesses can learn about start-up supports, engage with each other and share information/resources/ideas.	H/L	DDBU/S

## 5. Marketing and Promotional Development

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
<b>A. Align Promotional Activities</b> !	5.A.1 – Align promotional activities within the County to the new Destination Development Business Unit to ensure the region’s tourism industry is promoted in a consistent and effective manner. 5.A.2 – Develop an annual marketing plan that will promote the region’s tourism offering to key target markets. 5.A.3 – Develop a tourism brand strategy for Lac La Biche County and develop supporting materials (e.g. logo, tagline, media, brand toolkit, advertisements, visitor information, etc.). 5.A.4 – Re-activate <a href="http://www.laclabicheregion.com">www.laclabicheregion.com</a> and position it to be the first point of digital contact between Lac La Biche County and its visitors. Consider enhancements to the website that follow current best practices for visitor-focused tourism websites (see <a href="http://TravelDrumheller.com">TravelDrumheller.com</a> or <a href="http://DavidThompsonCountry.ca">DavidThompsonCountry.ca</a> for examples). 5.A.5 – Maximize the use of Travel Alberta’s Cooperative Marketing Investment Program to achieve a higher leverage on tourism marketing funds.	H/H	DDBU/S-L
<b>B. Attract the VFR Market</b> ★	5.B.1 – Encourage visitation from the VFR market. This can be accomplished through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing resources, training and other supports to make it easier for residents to host VFR (e.g. trip planning tools, ambassador programs, VFR packages, how to host tip sheets, etc.).</li> <li>• Encourage experience providers to offer host incentives, such as discounts when residents bring visitors with them.</li> <li>• Encourage residents to invite their friends and relatives to experience Lac La Biche County’s unique product offerings.</li> </ul>	M/L	DDBU + TSTF/S
<b>C. Understand the Visitor</b> ★	5.C.1 – Develop and implement methodologies to collect detailed visitor information (e.g. visitor surveys, in-person intercepts, focus groups, etc.). Partner with businesses and residents to collect and share visitor data wherever possible (e.g. e-mail databases of VFRs).	H/M	DDBU/S

Priority Areas	Action Items	Priority/ Cost	Lead/ Timeline
	5.C.2 – Complete a PRIZM analysis using postal codes from fixed-roof accommodation providers in Lac La Biche County (fully sponsored program available through ACT).		
<b>D. Tourism Ambassador Registry</b>	★ 5.D.1 – Develop a Tourism Ambassador Registry and recruit interesting local people to join the Registry. 5.D.2 – Create short, engaging profiles for each Ambassador that describes their authentic experience offering. 5.D.3 – Promote Lac La Biche County’s Tourism Ambassadors online, at the VIC and in other local businesses/attractions, and actively match Tourism Ambassadors with visitors.	M/L	DDBU/S
<b>E. Experience Toolbox</b>	★ 5.E.1 – Create experience reference sheets to build out the Experience Toolbox. 5.E.2 – Make the Experience Toolbox available to all local operators and encourage them to use the Toolbox to enhance their experiences.	M/L	DDBU/S
<b>F. Develop Compelling Packages</b>	★ 5.F.1 – Encourage experience providers and local businesses to package their experiences together into compelling offerings for visitors. 5.F.2 – Host an annual forum where operators can collaborate on package development.	M/L	DDBU + TSTF/ ongoing

# 09 Conclusion



## Conclusion

The Lac La Biche County Tourism Strategy and Product Development Plan offers a strategic direction that will advance the region toward its bold vision to become a destination of choice for visitors seeking to immerse themselves in enriching cultural experiences in a stunning natural environment.

The strategy is an ambitious one that will require a high degree of collaboration and significant investment between multiple stakeholders to be successful. It is only through cooperation that Lac La Biche County will achieve its vision and build a sustainable and competitive destination in the long-term. The destination is in the early stages of development; however, the region is poised for impressive tourism growth. It is now time to invest in tourism and begin a new chapter of development in Lac La Biche County!

## Appendices



# Appendix A: Tourism Asset Inventory

## Group 1 Assets

Group 1 assets are those that are likely to draw visitors or be commonly used during a visit. They are the main reason for visiting and are likely to be tours, large events, accommodations, and event planners/concierge. Rentals are also significant as they allow visitors to participate in otherwise inaccessible activities. These assets allow for tourism to occur.

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Accommodations	Almac Motor Hotel	(75 rooms) Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	BCMI Inns	(100 rooms) Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Beaver Lake Bed & Breakfast	(4 rooms) Lac La Biche-Bed and Breakfast
Accommodations	Canalta Hotel	(76 rooms) Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Chez Nous	(17 rooms) Plamondon-Hotel
Accommodations	Cornerstone Ranch	Rural-Privately Owned cabins
Accommodations	Dew Drop Inn Bed & Breakfast	(2 rooms) Rural-Bed and Breakfast
Accommodations	Elinor Lake Resort	(5 units) Rural-Bare land Condominium with Cabin Rentals
Accommodations	Diseil Owl Hoot Cabins	
Accommodations	Lac La Biche Inn	(210 rooms) Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Lakeside Lodges	(5 units) Lac La Biche- Privately Owned Cabins
Accommodations	Parkland 1	Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Parkland 2	Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Pelican Hotel	Plamondon-Hotel
Accommodations	Ramada Inn & Suites	(83 rooms) Lac La Biche-Hotel
Accommodations	Winefred Lake Lodge	(8 rooms, 2 cabins, 40 bed lodge) Rural-Lodge and Cabin-Privately Owned
Accommodations	Grist Haven Lodge	
Campground	Beaver Lake Provincial Park Campground	(27 unserviced, 62 with power) Lac La Biche-Campground-Provincial 5 Sites with water and power
Campground	Camp 3F Plamondon	Plamondon-Camping Facility owned by non for profit association

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Campground	Chump Lake	(53 sites)
Campground	Crow Lake Provincial Park	(30 sites) Rural-Campground-Provincial
Campground	Fork Lake Campground	(43 sites) Rural-Campground-Municipally Owned Lac La Biche County
Campground	Heart Lake Campground	(10 sites) Rural-Campground (on Heart Lake Reserve)
Campground	Kikino Silver Birch Resort	Rural-Campground-On Metis Settlement
Campground	North Buck Lake	(95 unserviced, 30 power)
Campground	Plamondon WhiteSands Resort	(157 serviced sites) Plamondon-Campground-Privately Owned
Campground	Sir Winston Churchill Park	(72 powered sites) Lac La Biche-Campground-Provincial
Campground	Spruce Point Resort	(20 Sites) Rural-Campground-Owned by Beaver Lake Reserve
Campground	Young's Beach Camp Ground	(85 serviced Sites) Lac La Biche-Campground-Privately Owned
Campground	Kirby Lake Random Camping	Backcountry
Campground	Pinehurst Lake	(63 unserviced)
Campground	Seibert Lake	(43 unserviced)
Campground	Touchwood Lake	(87 unserviced)
Campground	Helena Lake South Camp Site	
Campground	Mile 10 Camp Site	
Campground	Dabbs Lake Camp Site	
Campground	Blackett East Island Camp Site	
Campground	Diesel Owl Hoot Campground	
Campground	Jackson Lake Peninsula Camp Site	
Campground	Spencer West Campground	
Campground	Plamondon Bay Cabins	
Campground	Plamondon Bay Campground	



Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Campground	Lakeland Backcountry Campground	(38 unserviced) Backcountry
Community and Sports Facilities	Bold Center Multiplex	Offers two NHL sized arenas, twin fieldhouses, a four sheet curling rink, a fitness and wellness centre with activity space for children, and a 200 metre indoor running track. The community hall features seating for 400 people.
Community and Sports Facilities	Festival Centre - Plamondon	The main hall features seating for 550 to 750 (concert seating), a 1500 sq. foot dance floor, sound system and corner stage. This center has 2 boardrooms, state of the art kitchen, ample RV parking (no utility hook ups), projector and dinnerware rental available for formal occasions. Also featuring an outdoor stage and mini-theatre to host musical performances.
Community and Sports Facilities	Hylo/Venice Rec & Ag Society	This facility features seating for 500 people, a modern kitchen and a curling rink attached to the hall. It also features a seniors center that can be rented out separately. Includes RV parking (no utility hook ups)
Community and Sports Facilities	Portage Pool	Salt water community pool
Community and Sports Facilities	Lakeland Agricom Hall	The hall has a maximum capacity of 250 people, modern kitchen, meeting room and rodeo grounds.
Community and Sports Facilities	McArthur Room - McArthur Place	Accommodates up to 200 guests, kitchen/bar, patio with views of Lac La Biche Lake
Community and Sports Facilities	Normandeau Recreation	
Community and Sports Facilities	Owl River Rec Centre	This facility features seating for 150-200 people, a modern kitchen, ice maker, BBQ, bar and an exercise room. RV parking (no utility hook ups)
Community and Sports Facilities	Public Dock- Lac La Biche	Large public dock with benches and births to accommodate 8 boats.
Community and Sports Facilities	Rich Lake Rec & Ag Society	
Community and Sports Facilities	Rich Lake Riding Arena and Community Centre	Large Riding Facility with community hall still under construction. Will be available for bookings once completed

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Community and Sports Facilities	Lac La Biche Golf and County Club	18 hole golf course and clubhouse and pro shop located 5 mins from Lac La Biche with scenic view
Community and Sports Facilities	Craigend Agricultural Hall	The main hall features seating for 350 people, modern kitchen, paved parking lot, with additional parking across the street. The seniors center attached to the hall seats 80 people, has a games room with pool table and separate kitchen. Includes RV parking (no utility hook ups)
Community and Sports Facilities	Stuart McPherson Public Library	
Culinary Attraction	Sand Spring Ranch	
Culinary Attraction	Wild Rose Apiaries	Honey farm with pollen for sale.
Culinary Attraction	Siberian Meat Dumplings	Makes meat dumplings in Plamondon.
Cultural Attraction	Al Kareem Mosque	
Cultural Attraction	David Thompson Monument	
Cultural Attraction	Lac La Biche Mission	Historic Site with period-style buildings, gift shop, tours, interpretive centre
Cultural Attraction	Lac La Biche Regional Museum and Discovery Centre	Museum with displays about local history
Cultural Attraction	Plamondon Museum	
Cultural Attraction	Portage College Museum of Aboriginal Art and Artifacts	
Cultural Attraction	Rich Lake and District Pioneer Museum	
Cultural Attraction	Former Hudson's Bay Post	
Cultural Attraction	Louisson Fossineue Historical Residence	
Cultural Attraction	Lac La Biche Mission Sawmill Historical Site	
Cultural Attraction	Historical Chappelle Church	
Cultural Attraction	Pelican Settlement	

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Event	Family Day Festival	Snowshoeing and ice fishing (gear provided), skating and sledding and other winter activities with a hot lunch Put on by Alberta Parks
Event	ACTWS Conference & AGM	Members of the Alberta Chapter of the wildlife society meet at the Bold Centre. Sessions on numerous environmental issues.
Event	Alberta Open Farm Days	This event is collaborative province wide, two day event on participating farms giving Albertans a chance to experience the farm and where their food comes from.
Event	Alberta Parks Annual Zombie Run	A trail run/walk through the woods at Sir Winston Churchill Park with scares from zombies along the way. Costume contest, treats, crafts and activities at the Group use area.
Event	Alberta Parks Day	A day for Albertans to connect with nature. Provincial parks host activities for the whole family. Sandcastle building competition, bear safety, scavenger hunt and camp fire.
Event	Annual Heart Ride Hoof-A-Thon	A fundraiser that brings horseback riders & wagon teams for a trail ride starting at the Atmore Community Hall.
Event	Beaver Lake Cree Nation Pow Wow	This is a must experience event. Part of the traditional Pow Wow competition is the grand entry. You'll see and experience the drums beating, the traditional dances and the hand made costumes.
Event	Boreal Bush Bash	Family motorcycle rally and rock concert at Plamondon festival centre and grounds. Show & Shine, stunt rider, ride for sight, poker run, motorcycle rodeo, adult combat games, burn out put, beer garden, pig roast. Camping available.
Event	Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement Rodeo	Professional riders and ropers, chuck wagon and chariot races. Talent show and a slo-pitch ball tournament.
Event	Christmas at the Mission	Experience a traditional way to celebrate Christmas. Hay rides, bake and craft sale and all family friendly activities.
Event	Christmas Festival de Noel and Christmas Market	Fun activities for the whole family to start the Christmas season. Christmas market as well.

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Event	Culture Days	Lac La Biche and Plamondon partner with artists, musicians and the aboriginal community to present free family friendly, culturally significant events and activities that honour the area's heritage.
Event	Family Day Weekend & Free Fishing Weekend	Free fishing for any person who does not have a fishing license.
Event	Festival of Trees	An annual event kicking of the holiday season. Variety of trees decorated by community organizations and raffled off as a fundraiser for local community organizations in need. Craft sale as well.
Event	Free Family Fun In The Snow	Cultural activities, music, sleigh rides, ice fishing, bannock and jam, wiener roast and warming hut.
Event	Free Fishing Weekend	Any person may fish without an Alberta Sport fishing license on these dates. Alberta sport fishing regulations still apply.
Event	Heart Lake First Nation Pow Wow	Experience the traditional dancing and drumming with more than 34 dance categories. Kids activities, hand games, and concession.
Event	Hockey party in Plamondon/ Hockey en fete a Plamondon	A francophone Hockey tournament that brings local and provincial teams together. Francophone and bilingual entertainment during the entire weekend.
Event	Hylo Annual Quad Rally	Quad rally in Hylo that will have you riding through some snow and mud.
Event	Hylo/Venice Harvest Days	A fun filled festival to wrap up the summer with square bale tossing, a pig catch and horticultural show off.
Event	JAWS Pow Wow Volleyball Tournament	J.A Williams high school volleyball annual tournament with more than 40 teams competing in Lac La Biche for the annual title
Event	Kikino Quad Rally	Starting at Kikino Silver Birch Resort. Quadding through the marked trails across rolling hills and boreal forest of the Lac La Biche region.
Event	Kikino Silver Birch Rodeo	Kikino metis settlement biggest event: chuck wagon races, kids' activities, bingo, nightly steak suppers, all wrapped up with a huge firework display over whitefish lake.
Event	Kikino Triple R Triathlon	A traditional triathlon with youth and adult categories for solo and team competitors. Running, riding and canoe rowing.

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Event	Kinsmen on the Pond Hockey Tournament	Hockey tournament on Lac La Biche lake along with concessions, 50/50 draws and quad raffle
Event	Lac La Biche Annual Pow Wow Days	Activities for the whole weekend for the whole family. Midway, Indian village, pancake breakfasts, talent shows, beer gardens and a fish fry.
Event	Lac La Biche Community Safety Night	Fun and interactive safety activities for the whole family's everyone can stay safe and healthy. Learn about emergency & disaster services and if necessary how to survive for 72 hours in an emergency.
Event	Lac La Biche Farmers Market	Fresh fruit, vegetables, homemade delights and local hand crafted collectibles. Every Friday 3-5:30 at the Agricrom.
Event	Lac La Biche Mission Canada Day Celebration	Free party that begins with a pancake breakfast! The day is jammed packed with children's activities, artisans, craft vendors, caricature artist and on-site concession. Culture takes stage with singing, dancing, and fiddling. With a steak supper to follow and fireworks.
Event	Lac La Biche Seniors Week	Show appreciation for the seniors of Lac La Biche and all they contribute to our quality of life. Activities in the past have included meet and greets and art walks. Check in at the Lac La Biche heritage society for more information.
Event	Lac La Biche Summer Solstice Half Marathon, 10 K and 5 K	An annual fundraising race that encourages families and the community to be active and healthy together.
Event	Lakeland Country Fair and Rodeo	World class arts, crafts, produce, plants and preserves, bouncy houses, petting zoo. Music on the porch! Rodeo for both days: Bareback, saddle bronc, bull riding, ladies roping and fun events.
Event	Metis Week	Annual celebration for Metis people, their culture and contributions. Flag raising starts at Portage College and events and activities. Followed by commemorating the November 16th an anniversary of Louis Riel's death.
Event	National Aboriginal Day	Celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples in Canada. These groups share many similarities, but they each have their own distinct heritage, language and cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Event	Oilmen's Bonspiel	More than 25 teams compete for top prizes. Saturday night social in Lac La Biche includes a dinner, variety show, live entertainment and audience games.
Event	Plamondon Heritage Days	Join the community as they celebrate their French culture.
Event	Plamondon Jamboree	Join in for some foot tapping, hand clapping and a good time. The jamboree brings in musicians from across western Canada. All that classic country music just might make you grab a partner and head to the dance floor
Event	Plamondon Mud Bogs	Annual mud bog competition. This CMRO sanctioned event has high octane races. Food vendors all weekend, kids activities, bouncy houses, monster bus rides and onsite camping. Friday night mud event will be followed by a triple band stand concert. Saturday mud races followed by Celtic band dance at the festival centre.
Event	Portage Lac La Biche Rendezvous	Go back in time with the voyageur canoe. Brought to you by the Lac La Biche Regional Museum and Discovery Centre, Lac La Biche Mission and the Antique Society. 3 days of adventure. Pancake breakfast, voyageur canoe send off, paddling the shores of Lac La Biche to the trading post, blacksmithing, games, cultural food and BBQ dinner. Also includes a Father's Day show and shine.
Event	Rich Lake Family Trail Ride	The ride starts at the Fork Lake 4H camp and winds along the banks of the Beaver River.
Event	Santa Clause Parade & Light Up The Night	Main street parade with hot chocolate and lightning up the big Christmas tree on main street
Event	Sugar Shack in Plamondon	A sweet celebration for the end of winter. Flag raising ceremonies, multicultural gatherings and educational activities to and celebrate French cultures.
Event	Terri Clark Concert	Country Music Singer Terri Clark performance
Event	Venice Picnic	Chicken and Spaghetti, fun & games for the whole family.
Event	Winter Festival of Speed	Ice racing on Lac La Biche lake: Cars, snowmobiles, motorcycles and ATV's. Aircraft fly-in, snowmobile trail rally. Family friendly
Natural Attraction	Ironwood Lake	Contains some camping

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Natural Attraction	Steepbank Lake	Contains some camping
Natural Attraction	Missawawi Lake	Contains some camping
Natural Attraction	Mile Seven Lake	Contains some camping
Natural Attraction	Lakeland Canoe Circuit	Contains some camping
Natural Attraction	McGriffin Lake Camp Site	Contains some camping
Natural Attraction	100 Lakes	
Natural Attraction	Beaver Lake Day Use Beaches	Public Beach
Natural Attraction	Bird Sanctuary	Pelican viewpoint at Sir Winston Churchill Park
Natural Attraction	Eagle's Haunt Cabin	
Natural Attraction	Fork Lake Beach	Public Beach
Natural Attraction	Lac La Biche Lake	Large Lake within close proximity to Lac La Biche and Plamondon. Provides Fishing and recreational boating opportunities
Natural Attraction	Lakeland Provincial Recreation Area and Lakeland Provincial Park	Provincial Recreation Area located 20 minutes away from Lac La Biche providing a wide variety of outdoor activity options, including hiking, hunting, fishing, quadding, wildlife viewing
Natural Attraction	Northern Lights	
Natural Attraction	Plamondon Whitesands main beach	Public Beach
Natural Attraction	Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park	Provincial Park with fully serviced sites located 10 minutes away from town. Also has public beach.
Natural Attraction	Touchwood Beach	Public Beach
Natural Attraction	Lagoon Lake Archaeological Site	
Rentals	Lakeland Expeditions	Outdoor equipment rentals (camping, fishing, boats)
Rentals	Lakeland RV Rentals	RV Rentals
Rentals	Sir Winston Churchill Park	Canoe, Kayak, Stand Up Paddle Board Rentals
Rentals	The Haven	Boat Rentals
Rentals	Young's Beach-Boat Rentals	Boat Rentals
Restaurant	A&W	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Bills Burger Baron	Lac La Biche-Fast Food

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Restaurant	Booster Juice (inside Bold Center Multiplex)	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Boston Pizza	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Eats & Sweets Café	Lac La Biche-Café
Restaurant	Eddie's Mart	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Ginger House Family Restaurant	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Jiggers Pub	Lac La Biche-Bar
Restaurant	Joe's Grill (at Corner Gas at Highway 881 Junction)	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	KFC/Taco Bell	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Lac La Biche Golf & County Club (Pelican Grill)	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Lucky 15 Restaurant	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Mac's Grill (Almac Hotel)	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Mo's Billiards	Lac La Biche-Bar and Restaurant
Restaurant	Pelican Grille and Restaurant Bar	Plamondon-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Rocky's Pizza & Labones Sports Pub	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Subway	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Tara's Pizza	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Toms Pizza & Steakhouse	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	Top Shelf Grill	Grill in the Plamondon Arena
Restaurant	Truckers Saloon	Lac La Biche-Full Service Restaurant
Restaurant	V&H Drive-In	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Restaurant	Voyageur Grill	Lac La Biche-Fast Food
Tour Operator	Fat Unicorn Brewery	Beer brewery providing tours to visitors
Tour Operator	Lac La Biche Boat Tours	Guided Boat Tour on Lac La Biche Lake
Tour Operator	Winefred Lake Outfitter	Hunting and Fishing Outfitter-Guided, Trapping excursions along with accommodations (see accommodations tab)

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Visitor Information	Lac La Biche Region Website (through Community Futures)	Online activity guide and tourist information
Visitor Information	Visitor Information Centre-Plamondon	Run by ACFA Plamondon
Visitor Information	Visitor Information Centre-LLB	Run by Lac La Biche Interpretive Society

## Group 2 Assets

Group 2 assets are those that support tourism. This is not to say they are not important. These companies and organizations are essential to the tourism industry and Lac La Biche as a whole. They can support directly such as gas stations, liquor, and grocery stores, or indirectly such as providing utilities or construction.

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Advertising & Media	AB Web Services	
Advertising & Media	Lac La Biche Post - division of Great West newspapers	
Advertising & Media	Newcap Radio (boom 103.5)	
Advertising & Media	Sunshine Promotions O/A 1255570 AB Ltd	
Advertising & Media	The Stitchin' Man	
Airport	Lac La Biche Airport	Airport Services
Automotive & Marine	Fountain Tire	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Grant Miller Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd	
Automotive & Marine	Innovative Collision Centre Lac La Biche	
Automotive & Marine	Integrity Movers Ltd	
Automotive & Marine	Lac La Biche Ford-Quicklane	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Lac La Biche Truck & Trailer Repair	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Lac La Biche-Tirecraft	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Automotive & Marine	Larry's Autobody & Refinishing	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Marczak's Auto Repair	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Minx Autobody & Refinishing	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Monkey's RV & ATV	
Automotive & Marine	Oasis Sales & Service Ltd	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	OK Tire	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Sapphire Auto Inc	
Automotive & Marine	Signature Tire (CS Auto)	Plamondon-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	SMR Diesel (Stephane's Mobile Repair)	
Automotive & Marine	Tarrabain Motor Products	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Ted's Automotive	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Automotive & Marine	Zee's Auto Care	Lac La Biche-Garage-Auto Servicing
Ball Diamonds	Aurora School	
Ball Diamonds	Diamond 1 baseball field	115 meters home plate to fence. Shale infield, full dugouts, bleachers & announcer stand
Ball Diamonds	Diamond 2 & 3 softball fields	77 meters from home plate to fence. Shale infields, fenced dugouts, bleachers
Ball Diamonds	Plamondon Festival Centre Grounds 1 & 2	shale infield, dugouts, fully fenced
Boat Launches	Alberta Parks on Beaver Lake	
Boat Launches	Bayview Beach	Class C (small only)
Boat Launches	Beaver Lake - Holowachuk	Class A (all types)
Boat Launches	Beaver Lake - Youngs Beach	Class A (all types)
Boat Launches	Blais Resort	Class B (small/med boats)
Boat Launches	Elinor Lake	Class A (all types)
Boat Launches	Fork Lake	Class B (small/med boats)
Boat Launches	Golden Sands	Class B (small/med boats)
Boat Launches	Lac La Biche Main launch	Class A (all types), floating dock, limited parking
Boat Launches	Maccagno Point	Class A (all types)

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Boat Launches	North Shore	Class A (all types)
Boat Launches	Old Trail	Class A (all types), washrooms, parking, lights, etc.
Boat Launches	Provincial Boat Launch - Churchill	Class A (all types), outhouses, parking
Boat Launches	Square Lake	Class A (all types)
Boat Launches	Sunset Bay	Class C (small only)
Bus Service	Lac La Biche Greyhound	Bus Services
Car Rental	Budget Lac La Biche-Car Rentals	Lac La Biche- Car Rental
Computers & Telecom	Lac La Biche Stationers Ltd	
Computers & Telecom	Screenshot Computers & Supplies Ltd.	
Computers & Telecom	TwinTel Communications Ltd	
Curling Rinks	Bold Center	4 sheets, lounge, washrooms, office, viewing area above
Curling Rinks	Hylo	
Curling Rinks	Old Curling Rink (used for archery)	Concrete pad, lounge/kitchen, washrooms
Curling Rinks	Plamondon	
Fitness Centers/ Facilities	Bold Center - Cenovus Fitness Centre	10,000 sq ft fitness/cardio centre, 3 studios, steam rooms off dressing rooms, boxing ring/training area, 3 lane track (225 meters), circuit training centre, spin bikes
Fitness Centers/ Facilities	Iron Gym (privately owned)	Fitness centre with cardio equipment, free weights/ machine weights - key fob
Fitness Centers/ Facilities	Keywatin Bible School	Gymnasium used for Gymnastics club currently
Fitness Centers/ Facilities	Plamondon Gym (privately owned)	Small, cardio equipment, machine & free weights
Fitness Centers/ Facilities	Portage College	Fitness centre, spin bikes, squash/racquetball court, climbing wall
Football Fields	Aurora School	1 multi-field with standards
Football Fields	Plamondon (behind Ecole St Beausejour)	1 full size football field with 4 lane shale track around perimeter

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Gas Station	Cougar Fuels (Petro Canada Cardlock Station)	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Esso 881 Corner Gas	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Esso- TAGS	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Fas Gas- Squirrely's	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Independent Gas Bar	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Lac La Biche UFA Petroleum	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Petro Canada	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Gas Station	Plamondon Coop Gas Station	Plamondon-Gas Station
Gas Station	Tempo-Fiddler's Food & Gas	Lac La Biche-Gas Service Station
Hockey Arenas	Bold Center	2 NHL sized rinks, sound system, spectators stands, 9 dressing rooms, 2 ref rooms
Hockey Arenas	Plamondon	1 NHL sized rink, sound system, stands, ___ dressing rooms, concession, mezzanine
Outdoor Rinks	Craigend Rink	350 sq meters, lights & changeroom
Outdoor Rinks	Dumasfield Rink	730 sq meters, lights. Updated 2014
Outdoor Rinks	Holowachuk Rink	350 sq meters, lights.
Outdoor Rinks	Hylo Rink	1,140 sq meters, lights & changeroom
Outdoor Rinks	Lakeview Estates Rink	350 sq meters, lights.
Outdoor Rinks	Owl River Rink	350 sq meters, lights
Outdoor Rinks	Rich Lake Rink	350 sq meters, lights.
Playgrounds	Craigend	___ playground at hall
Playgrounds	Dumasfield	playground, b-ball hoop and skatepark
Playgrounds	Holowachuk	playground & b-ball hoops
Playgrounds	Jubilee	playground
Playgrounds	Spray Park and Playground	Spray park and Playground located in Downtown Lac La Biche on the lake. Ideal location for family day trips and picnics
Playgrounds	Lakeview Estates	playground
Playgrounds	McArthur Park	0-12 accessible playground, spray park & adult fitness park

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Playgrounds	Mission Village	playground
Playgrounds	Plamondon	0-12 playground at Festival Centre grounds
Playgrounds	Sunset Bay	playground
Pool	Portage Pool (located at college)	25 meter, 5 lane main pool, wading pool, hot tub, steam room
Retail Store	A1 Fitness & Health	Lac La Biche-Nutrition and Supplement Store
Retail Store	Creative Edge	Clothing store in Plamondon
Retail Store	Great Canadian Liquor Store	Lac La Biche-Liquor Store
Retail Store	IGA	Lac La Biche-Grocery Store
Retail Store	Independent Grocers	Lac La Biche-Grocery Store
Retail Store	Kut & Kurl	Lac La Biche-Salon
Retail Store	Lac Biche Inn Liquor Store	Lac La Biche-Liquor Store
Retail Store	Lac La Biche Registries	Lac La Biche-Registry Officer
Retail Store	Lac La Biche Sporting Goods	Lac La Biche-Sports Department Store
Retail Store	Lac La Biche Wine & Liquor Spirits	Lac La Biche-Liquor Store
Retail Store	Lasting Impressions Home Furnishing & Décor	Lac La Biche-Home Décor
Retail Store	Mane Attraction	Lac La Biche-Salon
Retail Store	Marzaks ACE Hardware	Lac La Biche-Hardware Store
Retail Store	Mystic Thrift	Lac La Biche-Thrift Store
Retail Store	Plamondon Co-Op	Plamondon-Grocery Store
Retail Store	Reminiscence	Lac La Biche-Gift Store, Flowers
Retail Store	RONA Lac La Biche	Lac La Biche-Hardware Store
Retail Store	Royal Pawn	Lac La Biche-Pawn Shop
Retail Store	The Liquor Stop	Lac La Biche-Liquor Store
Retail Store	Twintel Communications	Lac La Biche-Telephone Store
Retail Store	Universal Video	Lac La Biche-Movie Rentals
Retail Store	Venture Home Hardware	Lac La Biche-Hardware Store
Retail Store	Vitality Centre Health Food	Lac La Biche-Health Food Store

Tourism Category	Asset Name	Description
Schools	Ecole Beausejour	
Schools	Ecole Conseil (french school)	
Schools	Ecole Plamondon	0-12 playground
Schools	Light of Christ Catholic School	Playground
Schools	Portage College	Large college facility headquartered in Lac La Biche offering a variety of programs
Schools	Vera M. Welsh Elementary/ Aurora	0-12 accessible playground
Soccer Fields	Aurora School	1 multi-field
Soccer Fields	Kinsmen (KC) Grounds	6 mini-fields (U6 to U8)
Soccer Fields	Lac La Biche	3 U10/U12 fields, 4 U12/U14 fields, 1 U16/U18
Taxi Service	Big Bay Taxi Services	Taxi Service
Taxi Service	Dan O's Taxi and Chauffeur Service	Taxi Service
Taxi Service	La Biche Taxi	Taxi Service
Tennis Courts	Bold Center - outdoor courts	2 full sized tennis courts, 1 with backstop
Tennis Courts	Lac La Biche (behind Catholic school)	
Tennis Courts	Plamondon - outdoor court	1 court (between Ecole Plamondon & Servus Credit Union)
Medical Facilities	William J. Cadzow Healthcare Centre	

## Appendix B: Expanded Competitor Analysis

Residents of northern Alberta and the Edmonton capital region have other options for lake destinations. Lac La Biche County competes for these visitors with other communities that have accessible lakes. This section provides an analysis of four competitor destinations. Competitors were chosen based on their similarities to Lac La Biche County in terms of their product offerings and target markets.

### Cold Lake (AB)

The City of Cold Lake (pop. 14,961) in northeast Alberta attracts visitors looking for water-based and outdoor experiences. It is situated on the shores of Cold Lake, one of Alberta's largest and deepest lakes. The lake is situated on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border and supports a relatively large number of fish species, including lake trout which is a game fish uncommon in most Alberta lakes. The City of Cold Lake is further from key markets (300 km from Edmonton and 425 km from Fort McMurray). However, for anglers, boaters and beach go-ers it is well worth the drive. The beach, marina and downtown amenities give the City a distinct lake destination feel. The size of the lake is attractive for motor boating, sailing, waterskiing, and paddling, and the fishing is excellent in summer and winter seasons. Cold Lake Provincial Park has lake access and recreation opportunities year-round. Water quality sets Cold Lake apart -- it is typically clean and clear. Unfortunately, this is at risk with a blue-green algae advisory issued in August 2018 for the first time in recent years. Visitors can also access the lake and its shores from provincial parks and recreation areas managed by Alberta Parks.

### Bonnyville and Moose Lake (AB)

The Town of Bonnyville (pop. 6,422) is situated on Jessie Lake, 240 km northeast of Edmonton and 50 km southwest of Cold Lake. Jessie Lake is a shallow kettle lake that is an important staging area for shorebirds and waterfowl. The Jessie Lake trail and shoreline park is a key feature of the community; although, visitors looking for water-based recreation head 3.5 km west to Moose Lake. The sandy beaches and good fishing attract day visitors, campers, and cabin owners. Much of the lake's shoreline is extensively developed with campgrounds, day use areas, summer villages (Bonnyville Beach and Pelican Narrows), residential camps, and a golf course. Moose Lake Provincial Park and Franchere Bay Provincial Recreation Area are popular points to access the lake. Blue-green algae at Moose Lake is an annual concern and a threat to summer visitation. The surrounding Municipal District of Bonnyville (pop. 13,575) has a total of 15 lakes in the M.D., most of which have quality boat launches and lake access.

### Meadow Lake (SK)

The City of Meadow Lake (pop. 5,344) is located adjacent to Meadow Lake and is 429 km northeast of Edmonton and 149 km southeast of Cold Lake. Meadow Lake is considered the "gateway to the north" and is just a short drive away from Meadow Lake Provincial Park.<sup>83</sup> Meadow Lake Provincial Park spans more than 1,600 km and features access to more than 20 lakes, rivers and streams.<sup>84</sup> The park offers excellent fishing, sandy beaches and water-based opportunities making it a favourite destination for many vacationers. Another main attraction to the area is the Meadow Lake Museum, which features items of interest from the early pioneer period and a look at the development of the forestry industry.

### Sylvan Lake (AB)

The Town of Sylvan Lake (pop. 14,816) in central Alberta is approximately 150 km southwest of Edmonton. The Town's location and its appeal as a lakeside community has resulted in strong population growth, estimated to increase to nearly 20,000 by 2022. The municipality and business owners recognize tourism as a key economic driver for Sylvan Lake. It is an established destination that is working towards attracting year-round visitation. An estimated 761,000 people visit in the summer months alone, contributing \$75 million to the local economy.<sup>85</sup> The large, spring-fed lake is the key attraction and the waterfront district gives Sylvan Lake a resort-town feel. Visitors can walk from the lakeshore to restaurants, cafes and specialty stores in the waterfront district. They can rent boats, paddle boats, kayaks, paddle boards, and 4-person bikes, and take in unique experiences such as flyboard lessons and the Aqua Splash water playground. The Town has numerous annual festivals and events, and the new \$33 million NexSource Centre is set to attract tradeshow and sport tourism events. There are a number of summer villages, RV Parks and campgrounds around the lake, including Jarvis Bay Provincial Park 7 km from the community. The capacity and quality of accommodation and the lack of a free public boat launch in Town are recognized as ongoing constraints to tourism growth. A definite strength is water quality -- Sylvan Lake is one of the few lakes that is not at great risk of blue-green algae.



# Appendix C: Tourism Development Funding Opportunities

## Municipal Funding

Municipalities across Alberta invest funds in initiatives that support their local tourism industries. Examples of funding support include resources for staff, service contracts and special project funding.

## Fee for Service

Fee for service is a “pay to play” option for tourism organizations to meet specific industry needs and generate revenue. Charging a fee for a website listing or for trade show representation are both examples of fee-for-service offerings. Providing a-la-carte products and services (vs. an all-inclusive membership fee) provides more choice for potential members and allows them to invest in customized services. Conversely, this approach has the potential to significantly increase the number of sales transactions per year, therefore this risk must be managed through the development of efficient administrative processes.

## Destination Management Fund

Destination Management Funds (DMF) are a proven method to provide core funds for tourism development and marketing. DMF’s involve voluntary participation by operators who agree to charge an extra fee on their services (usually 2-3%). This extra charge is then contributed to the DMF for collective marketing and destination management purposes. In order for a DMF to achieve a sustainable scale it must reach a critical mass of participants. DMF’s can be challenging to develop and maintain, but there are many examples of successful organizations that utilize DMFs in Alberta.

### DMF Revenue Analysis for Lac La Biche County

In Lac La Biche County there are approximately 600 hotel/motel rooms. According to the Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism’s Market Monitor, average daily rates (ADR) in Alberta (excluding Edmonton, Calgary and Resorts) in 2017 were \$118.31/per night and occupancy was at 47.6%.<sup>86</sup> Assuming a 50% participation rate in the program and a 3% contribution rate, it is estimated that there is a potential annual revenue source of \$184,997 for the DMF.

**Figure 7. DMF Revenue Breakdown (assuming 50% participation)**

# Rooms	Occupancy Rate	# Days	ADR	Room Revenue/yr.	Participation Rate	DMF %	Total for DMF/yr.
600	0.476	365	\$118.31	\$12,333,107	0.5	0.03	\$184,997

## Opportunities in Implementing the DMF

A DMF could provide much need core funds for marketing that could be leveraged with contributions from Travel Alberta and others. It is recommended that tourism product development is also considered as an acceptable expenditure of funds (in addition to promotions). A DMF can help create engagement from the business community as they will have “skin in the game.” This could in turn result in increased communication and partnerships (e.g. packaging of tourism experiences).

Given the recent economic downturn, accommodation providers across the province are beginning to realize that tourism is a good investment in the long-term sustainability of their business. Tourism is seen as a stable source of revenue that is less susceptible to the ebbs and flows of energy prices.

## Challenges in Implementing the DMF

The primary challenge is the task of selling the benefit of collaborative marketing to business owners. Businesses will not want to participate in the DMF unless there is a reasonable expectation of a return on their investment. There will need to be a strong business case that supports investment in collaborative marketing. For this reason, the County must be strategic when it moves forward with its partners in pursuing and DMF. It may be best to wait until the Destination Development Business Unit is fully established and more product is available.

The development of a DMF will require a significant amount of analysis, selling, negotiation and relationship building in order to make it a reality. It is expected that it will take several years to come to fruition should the community embark upon this initiative.

## Membership Fees

Membership fees are a traditional revenue stream, providing revenue on an annual basis. These fees can be structured as a flat rate for all members, or in a scaled fashion whereby smaller organization pay less. In return, members receive a package of services. Many tourism organizations in Alberta and across the globe utilize membership fees for a portion of their budgets.

## Provincial Funding

The Government of Alberta and Travel Alberta invest funds in provincial, regional and local tourism initiatives through programs such as Travel Alberta’s Cooperative Marketing Investment Program and provincial services in product and destination development, investment, research and visitor services.

Funding support is also available from the province through other programs. For example, the Community Initiatives Program funds initiatives (up to \$75,000) that enhance and enrich communities across Alberta. This program empowers local citizens and community organizations to work together towards the betterment of their communities. A brief overview of available provincial funding programs is provided in Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Provincial Funding Programs**

Organization	Program	Available funding
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Tourism Growth Innovation Fund	Up to \$75,000
Travel Alberta	Cooperative Marketing Program	Under and over \$100,000 categories
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Major Cultural and Sport Events	\$250,000 maximum
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Visitor Friendly Alberta	Approximately \$20,000 (depending on project)
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Community Facility Enhancement Program	\$125,000/year (small) \$1,000,000/year (large)
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Heritage Awareness Grants	\$15,000
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Historic Resource Conservation Grants	Grants range from \$5,000 - \$100,000
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Tourism Entrepreneurship Startup Seminar	Seminars are free to attend
Travel Alberta	Tourism Training Programs	100% of approved training costs
Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism	Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES)	\$10,000 minimum
Alberta Labour	Summer Temporary Employment Program	\$10,000,000 annually (province-wide)

## Stakeholder Contributions

This document identifies several stakeholder groups that could be contributors to the strategy as it moves forward into the implementation stage. These organizations may choose to fund various initiatives based on the mandate of their organization. It is expected that some organizations will participate to a greater degree (financially) than others. It should be noted, however, that gifts in kind and other forms of collaborative support are also valuable contributions during implementation. It will be critical to have all stakeholders participate in the development of key initiatives in the strategy regardless of their financial contribution.

## Corporate Partnerships

International research indicates that tourism organizations look to sponsorships and partnerships as key to building revenue. Building new partnerships is about creating value by connecting destination and partner brands, customers and networks. Once the plan begins to take shape it will be important to identify companies and organizations that identify with, or have branded themselves along similar lines to, the region's tourism offering.

## Increase in Business Activity and Tax Base

One of the objectives of the plan is to develop tourism initiatives that will result in increased economic activity that will result from spending by tourists who come from outside the community. If businesses and governments see a return on investment, it is expected that further investment will be warranted from a range of stakeholders.

# Appendix D: Market Ready Standards

Market Ready Standards are broken down into 3-categories of “readiness” to assist tourism-related businesses in progressively increasing the quality and professionalism of their operation.<sup>87</sup>

## Visitor Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “visitor ready” product to consumers.

**Visitor Ready:** Refers to a business which has all of their licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally.

### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “visitor ready”. The business must:

- Maintain good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance, and legislative requirements.
- Maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours.
- Provide a contact telephone number or email contact year-round. If closed for season, provide automated response through voicemail and or email.
- Have branded on-site signage.

## Market Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “market ready” product to consumers.

**Market Ready:** Refers to a business that markets to potential visitors; communicates with potential visitors year-round, and is ready to accept advanced reservations.

### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “market ready”. The business must meet visitor ready criteria plus:

- Provide a published pricing policy.
- Have a published consumer billing, payment, and cancellation policy.
- Have marketing materials such as brochure, rack card or website.
- Have site based parking in close proximity.
- During operating season, maintain a 24-48 hour response time; or less, to inquiries and a 24 hour response time to reservation/booking requests.
- Be prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax and/or e-mail and provide same day confirmation of booking arrangements.
- Have high resolution images and video footage for promotional and training purposes.
- Have frontline staff who are trained in customer service (such as **WorldHost**® or equivalent customer training program)
- Be an active stakeholder or eligible to become a stakeholder of your local tourism association.

## Export Ready

These criteria are used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer “export ready” product to international markets.

**Export Ready:** Refers to a business that markets to and through travel trade distribution sales channels, understands commission or net rate pricing, agrees to trade bookings and a cancellation policy.

### Criteria

The following criteria must be met if a business is to be classified as “export ready”. The business must meet “visitor and market ready” criteria plus:

- Be in business at least one year, with a proven track record for safe and professional operation.
- Demonstrate an adequate budget and marketing plan that includes international tourism operators.
- Understand the roles played by receptive tour operators, tour operators, travel wholesalers, and retail travel agents and understand rack or retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates at each level.
- Be willing to include receptive tour operators in your marketing and sales plan and provide contracted wholesale net rates to receptive tour operators.
- Provide detailed pricing and program information to tour operators and wholesalers at least one year in advance of selling season.
- Be prepared to set up billing arrangements with the tour operator, wholesale agency or receptive tour operator.
- If you plan to pursue group business, ensure you are able to accommodate and adapt to the needs of the market (e.g. tour bus access and parking, washroom facilities, maximum group size, group pricing, and frontline staff that speak the language of your target markets).
- Carry adequate insurance (discuss this with your receptive operator as sometimes they can add suppliers to their existing policies at nominal cost).
- Provide support (free or reduced rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.
- Offer currency exchange rates consistent with industry norms.

## Appendix E: Expanded Lake Health Discussion

Blue-green algae blooms are a natural phenomenon, but there are human induced factors that can exacerbate the problem. Excessive phosphorous is a key contributor to excessive algal growth. Runoff from urban and agricultural areas, septic field effluent, and wastewater treatment plants in urban areas are all significant sources of phosphorous. There are numerous point and non-point sources of phosphorous, and the entire watershed has impacts on Lac La Biche – not just areas adjacent to the lake. A variety of approaches are needed depending on the source type and the stakeholders involved. For example, a septic system maintenance and education program could help improve understanding of the impact that poorly functioning septic systems can have on lake water quality. Overall, a comprehensive strategy is needed to address excessive phosphorous in the entire watershed. The Bow River Phosphorus Management Plan is an example that can provide an idea of the scope of a watershed-wide strategy.

Another potential strategy that is promising is the addition of iron. As this is a relatively new strategy, it is recommended that the community engage with University of Alberta researchers to explore the potential to conduct a study and pilot project.

Use of booms to protect beaches and swimming areas from blue-green algae blooms have not shown conclusive results, but have potential depending on the location, lake shoreline and sediment type, and the long shore currents. Booms are most effective in deflecting floating debris and algae that forms dense scum on the water's surface. However, debris and algae that form within the boom system are then trapped; algae, bacteria, and other materials suspended in the water column are not controlled by boom systems (i.e. fecal coliform, used as an indicator of bacteria concentrations, would still be an issue). The booms also create an obstruction for launching of kayaks, canoes, and boats, so this is an additional consideration in terms of placement.

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