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Mar. 20, 2024
2:15 PM

Parks, Culture and Sport 24-3423

NEW INVESTMENTS IN PARKS AND RECREATION BENEFIT SASKATCHEWAN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Saskatchewan's provincial and regional parks will benefit from funding increases in the 2024-25 Provincial Budget through investments in capital improvements and ongoing maintenance.

"As Saskatchewan's population grows, we continue to invest in the places and experiences that help make our province the best place to live, work and raise a family," Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Laura Ross said. "Our provincial and regional parks offer an affordable getaway right here in our beautiful province. Families appreciate the chance to explore nature, disconnect, relax and spend time with loved ones.

"These ongoing investments will make sure our parks continue to be enjoyed by Saskatchewan people today and well into the future."

Budget 2024-25 provides:

- \$1.2 million for the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association, a lift of \$615,000 from 2023-24. These funds will help pay for improvements and preventative maintenance in regional parks, which house campgrounds, cottages, and recreation areas that serve local communities and tourists.
- \$15.0 million for capital and infrastructure improvements in Saskatchewan provincial parks.
- \$13.3 million for capital projects, an increase of \$1.1 million from 2023-24, that include:
 - A new service centre at Nut Point Campground in Lac La Ronge Provincial Park.
 - Bike trail development and multi-use trail improvements at Buffalo Pound Provincial Park.
 - Major road improvements and resurfacing at Pike Lake Provincial Park.
 - Water system upgrades at Narrow Hills Provincial Park and Moose Mountain Provincial Park.
 - \$1.7 million for preventative maintenance.

In addition to these new projects, several facilities will be completed for the summer 2024 camping season, including:

- A new Visitor Reception Centre at Crooked Lake Provincial Park.
- A new group pavilion at Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park for large gatherings.
- A play-structure development at Pine Hill Campground in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park.

"2024 promises to be another great year for Saskatchewan's provincial parks," Ross said. "We are looking forward to welcoming visitors for another season and providing our first-time guests with the opportunity to discover and experience our beautiful parks."

Building on these community-minded investments, the Community Initiatives Fund will see a significant increase for the second year in a row, with a total of \$8.5 million in 2024-25. This is up \$2.1 million, or 33.2 per cent, from the previous year.

The Community Initiatives Fund receives a portion of the net revenues from Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw and uses the funds to provide grants to community-based organizations throughout Saskatchewan.

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For more information, contact:

Maryann Anderson
Parks, Culture, and Sport
Regina
Phone: 306-533-5535
Email: maryann.anderson@gov.sk.ca

