

Campground Host Volunteer Information Package

Welcome

On behalf of Parks Canada, thank you for your interest in volunteering! With your help, we are able to warmly greet and welcome visitors to Wood Buffalo National Park!

Introduction to Parks Canada Agency

Parks Canada's protected places stretch across the country and include 47 National Parks, 171 National Historic Sites, and 4 National Marine Conservation Areas.

Parks Canada is responsible for protecting ecosystems and cultural resources, and managing them for visitors to understand, appreciate and enjoy. It is sometimes a delicate balance – we need to ensure that visitors don't compromise the natural and cultural features we are trying to take care of. One way we do this is by engaging curiosity and learning. The awareness of how intricate and fascinating our planet is, our histories, and our many traditions and cultures can encourage us all to conserve and protect what is important to us. Parks Canada encourages discovery and learning through its interpretation programs, whether via signage, personal programs and events or self-guided tours.

Introduction to Wood Buffalo National Park

Wood Buffalo National Park straddles the southwest Northwest Territories and Northern Alberta borders. At 44,741 sq km, it is the largest National Park in Canada and the largest Dark Sky Preserve in the world! The park was established in 1922 to protect the free-roaming bison herds of the area. Today, the park supports and protects many unique natural and cultural resources, from diverse ecosystems and rare species to the traditional activities of Indigenous residents. As a remote wilderness park and World Heritage Site, Wood Buffalo National Park attracts Canadian and international visitors who wish to experience and learn about the unique cultures, landscapes and wildlife of the boreal north.

Campground Hosts

Campground hosts provide a friendly, welcoming face to visitors to Wood Buffalo National Park's Pine Lake Campground. Whether it's recommending the best trail to hike, providing bear safety information or helping to contact park staff in an emergency, campground hosts help make visitors from around the world feel at home in Wood Buffalo.

As a campground host you will have a unique opportunity to discover Wood Buffalo National Park and the surrounding area. Enjoy a complimentary campsite for your tent or small RV and meet new people from across Canada and the world.

If you are an experienced camper interested in sharing your love of the outdoors and for Wood Buffalo National Park, please consider joining us this season. To apply, simply complete and submit the Pine Lake Campground Host Program Application.

What we look for:

Essential:

- Friendly, approachable, and welcoming personalities
- Contagious love of the outdoors, camping, and people
- Strong problem solving and interpersonal skills
- Camping experience in the type of equipment you plan to bring (tent, RV, trailer, etc.)

Assets:

- Knowledge of Wood Buffalo National Park and the surrounding area
- Hosting experience at other parks or sites
- First aid certification
- Ability to speak French or other languages commonly spoken by visitors

Arrival and Departure

Check-in:

- Arrive at the Wood Buffalo National Park Visitor Centre in Fort Smith.
- Pick up the campground hosts' bin and receive a training session.
- Set up on Campsite 3, the Campground Host Site (large enough for 25' foot long units (not pull-through)).
- Wood Buffalo staff will visit you at your site to provide an orientation of the campground and answer your questions.

Check-out:

- Leave a clean and welcoming site for the next Campground Hosts.
- Stop by the Wood Buffalo National Park Visitor Centre to drop off the campground hosts' bin.
- Submit the evaluation form with your recommendations, highlights of your stay, and whether you would like to participate in the program next year.

Please note: Campground hosts are responsible for supplying their own transportation, clothing, food, camping, and cooking equipment. Parks Canada does not reimburse out-of-pocket expenses.

Cancellation Policy

We depend on our hosts to make camping at Pine Lake a wonderful experience, however, we also know that sometimes unforeseen things happen. If you're unable to make it to your hosting session, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can invite another host for that time.

Legal Considerations

Insurance:

Parks Canada provides a Group Personal Accident Policy for volunteers under the age of 90 who sign a Parks Canada Volunteer Agreement Form. Parks Canada provides volunteers, excluding those who operate aircraft, with \$10,000,000 coverage for third-party (public) liability. Volunteers over the age of 90 are responsible for their own insurance coverage.

Liability:

The Government of Canada, Parks Canada and/or Parks Canada employees are not responsible for personal injury or any loss, theft or damage to the volunteer's property.

Pine Lake Campground

Pine Lake is one of the main recreational areas in Wood Buffalo National Park. It is made up of several sinkholes that have joined together, making it an uvala. The aquamarine colour of the lake often makes it look very tropical. The campground is adjacent to the lake and has 19 sites suitable for tenting or RV-ing, with fire rings, picnic tables, bear-proof storage lockers, playground, free firewood and flushable outhouses. The campground operates by self-registration on a first come-first serve basis. The campground does NOT have showers or hook-ups. The campground is open from May 15th to September 30th, 2020.

Pine Lake campground is located 60 km from the town of Fort Smith on Highway 58.

From mid-June to August, visitors can enjoy free interpretive campfire programs on bears, bats, and other natural wonders of the park as well as local culture.

A Day Use Area is also located close by the campground and many visitors as well as local residents will go spend the day with family. The day use area gets very busy during warm summer days. A kitchen shelter, picnic tables, fire rings, a beach area and flushable outhouses.

Rules & Regulations

A few rules regarding Pine Lake Campground:

- All national park and Pine Lake Campground regulations apply to the campground hosts.
- All food, garbage and any attractants (i.e. toiletries, pet food, dishes, and recyclables) MUST be stored inside the bear-resistant food lockers provided, or in your vehicle.
- All pets must be kept on leash in Wood Buffalo National Park.
- Quiet hours: from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- Please keep your campsite clean and orderly during your stay.

Hosts Do

- make themselves available to greet and assist campers
- provide information and brochures to campers and explain park regulations when necessary

- assist campers with self-registration
- encourage good camping practices including bear safety practices
- assist campers during an emergency by contacting Parks Canada staff
- walk through the campground twice per day
- keep records of activities and make recommendations for improving the host program at Pine Lake

Hosts Do Not

- collect camping or entry fees
- register guests
- reserve campsites
- issue campsite permits
- enforce park regulations
- perform maintenance or repairs

Schedule

The program runs from mid-May to end of August.

During your stay you would be on site 5 days a week for the following hours: (this schedule is flexible and can be amended)

8 am -3 pm: You are free to leave the site.

3 pm - 5 pm: Active Duty

- Please ensure the sandwich board is up during active and standby duty.
- Walk through the campground.
- Greet and assist arriving campers with registration and finding a site.
- Answer any campground related questions.

5 pm - 7 pm – On Standby in case you are needed by visitors:

- Feel free to spend time in your RV and find other ways to relax and enjoy your site, while still being available to visitors.

7 pm - 9 pm - Active duty:

- Meet and greet campers.
- Walk through the campground.
- Record and report to staff any potential visitor infractions or issues, and provide friendly reminders that 11 pm is quiet time.

9 pm -11 pm: On Standby in case you are needed by visitors.

- Call Parks Canada Dispatch and park staff if you anticipate any incidents that may warrant intervention by staff or law enforcement.

How to be a Successful Host

In brief, the two most important things you need to know:

Be willing to **LEARN**:

L – **Listen** to the visitor's concern

E – **Empathize** with the visitor

A – **Acknowledge** that you have heard and understand

R – **Resolve** the issue, if possible

N – **Notify** Parks Canada Staff

Be ready to thank visitors for taking the time to give us feedback, whether good or bad.

Other tips to be successful:

Be a Park Ambassador:

Visitors have different perspectives and different needs. It is important to ask questions to find out what visitors are looking for in their experience and offer them choices to best suit their needs. For example, what is a good hike for you may not be the best hike for a family with small children.

And remember, your professionalism will help you to better engage visitors:

- Always wear identifiers (i.e., volunteer t-shirts and name tags) while on duty.
- Be familiar with Wood Buffalo National Park and local area and be able to answer questions about recreational opportunities, local attractions, local events, park events, and interpretive programs.
- Have a basic understanding of other Parks Canada places in the system and the mandate and purpose of Parks Canada Agency (PCA).
- Provide park-approved pamphlets and brochures.
- Show campers how to register at the self-registration kiosk.

Observe and Report:

- Advise staff ASAP of any potential harm/ safety concerns, including people and resources.
- Record in your weekly log sheet any facility defects, safety incidents, friendly reminders given, wildlife encounters, and any other significant actions you have taken (Gave first aid, called 911, called Parks Canada dispatch, etc).
- Assist campers during an emergency by contacting Parks Canada staff and/or emergency personnel.
- If you are trained in First Aid and feel comfortable doing so, provide assistance to an injured party to the best of your ability, but never compromise your own safety or that of others.
- If you are comfortable giving a visitor a friendly reminder to prevent an incident, then do so.
- Never attempt to enforce park regulations beyond a friendly reminder. Record the incidents and share with the Park staff during their rounds.

- **After-Hours Presence:** Hosts are an extra set of eyes and ears in a campground where park staff are not on duty 24 hours a day.

Parks Canada's promise to you

Volunteers can expect to:

- Be welcomed and respected by Parks Canada employees.
- Participate in an activity that is worthwhile, challenging and provides learning and growth.
- Be informed about details of the activity and impact of your contributions.
- Receive orientation, support and all necessary equipment and materials to complete the activity safely.
- Perform volunteer activities in a safe environment.
- Receive advice and support from a designated supervisor.
- Receive appropriate recognition.
- Receive a complementary campsite and firewood during their stay.

Nearby Communities

Fort Smith

Fort Smith, NT is the nearest community to the campground and is the gateway to Wood Buffalo National Park. If there's an item on your list that you've forgotten you'll find it in Fort Smith. For a small community of 2500, it has pretty much everything that you need. There are several gas stations, two grocery stores, two hardware stores, a liquor store, a laundromat, a carwash, and a few restaurants to serve you. There is also a lot going on in Fort Smith in terms of community events and celebrations that you may want to enjoy. www.fortsmith.ca

Weather and Safety

Rugged and Remote

Wood Buffalo National Park is spectacular. It is also a remote, rugged place where rescues could take time. Remember: you are responsible for your own safety. Ensure you have suitable health coverage.

Temperatures and Monthly Rainfall

Wood Buffalo National Park typically has warm and sunny summer days, perfect for exploring by bike, hike or canoe. However, you do need to be ready for anything. Pack your rain gear, warm sweaters, bathing suit and mosquito repellent.

Average temperatures:

Month	Low	High
May	2°C/36°F	15°C/59°F
June	8°C/46°F	21°C/70°F
July	11°C/52°F	24°C/75°F
August	9°C/48°F	21°C/70°F
September	4°C/39°F	14°C/57°F

Sunrise and Sunset Times

Worried about having enough time? While technically the sun is just below the horizon by midnight, there's plenty of sunshine north of 60 all summer long.

Date	Sunrise	Sunset
May 21st:	4:36 a.m.	10:13 p.m.
June 21st:	4:03 am	10:55 pm
July 21st:	4:43 am	10:23 pm
August 21st:	5:56 am	9:03 pm
September 21st:	7:09 am	7:30 pm

Bears

Black bears live in Wood Buffalo National Park, and are often seen around Pine Lake Campground. Bear-proof food lockers are available to store food overnight. When you arrive, Parks Canada staff will provide you with training and explain what to do if you encounter a bear or hear reports of a bear in the campground. They will also provide you with bear safety equipment (bear spray and air horn).

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Parks Canada provide firewood for campground hosts?

Yes, it's free for the duration of their hosting stay (but please use it safely and in moderation).

Where can I purchase propane?

Propane is not provided as part of the Campground Host program. It can be purchased at gas stations in Fort Smith.

Where is the RV dumping station?

A sewage dumping station is located at the Pine Lake Campground.

Where can I fill my RV's water tank?

If you have a hose, you can fill up your RV at the potable water station at the campground or check with park staff to see if there are other options in Fort Smith.

Where can I purchase ice?

At the grocery stores and gas stations in Fort Smith.

Where can I do my laundry?

The closest Laundromat is in Fort Smith at Rapid Services – 372 Calder Ave. You will need coins (toonies and loonies) to operate it.

Where can I fish?

Fishing is permitted in Wood Buffalo National Park with an Angling Permit that can be purchased at the Visitor Centre in Fort Smith. Please note, however, that there are no fish in Pine Lake and fishing in general is poor in the park.

Can I drink the water?

The water that is provided in the portable water station at the Pine Lake campground is hauled from Fort Smith and is potable.

Information

Wood Buffalo National Park

PO Box 750

Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0

Tel: 1-867-872-7960

Fax: 1-867-872-3910

E-mail: pc.woodbuffaloinfo-infowoodbuffalo.pc@canada.ca

Web: www.parkscanada.gc.ca/woodbuffalo