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Tourism and Recreation Opportunities in The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Both residents of and visitors to the Wood Buffalo region have the opportunity to participate in recreational activities in both summer and winter. Some of the many tourism and recreation opportunities available in the region include the following:

- **Downhill skiing and snowboarding**, at Vista Ridge All Seasons Park, located just outside Fort McMurray.
- **Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing**, on maintained trails or in the wilderness. Snowshoes have been used for millennia by First Nations people, and both traditional and lightweight, modern snowshoes can be used to explore the winter landscape. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing also provide opportunities for wildlife viewing and the identification of wildlife tracks in the snow.
- **Fishing and hunting**, part of a traditional way of life for many people in northern Alberta as well as recreational activities for others. A variety of sport fish and game live in the region and can be legally harvested.
- **Canoeing and boating** on the Athabasca River, its tributaries, or nearby lakes.
- **ATVing** (riding All Terrain Vehicles) to explore remote parts of the boreal forest that can't be accessed by road.
- **Dog sledding**, a traditional method of winter transportation.
- **Snowmobiling**, a more modern method of winter transportation and a popular recreational activity, with over 200 km of trails maintained by the local snowmobiling club.
- **Camping**, widely available in both summer and winter at formal and informal sites. Campsites can be used as a base for many other recreational activities, including swimming, fishing, hiking, berry-picking, and wildlife viewing.
- **Hiking** on trails maintained in Wood Buffalo National Park and other trail networks. Hiking in the boreal forest can be limited due to the wet and boggy nature of the landscape and its inaccessibility.
- **Wilderness, wildlife viewing, and birdwatching** in the unique boreal ecosystems, including stunted black spruce bogs, upland mixed wood boreal forest, karst topography, the world's largest freshwater delta ([Peace-Athabasca delta](#)), the Precambrian shield with some of the oldest rocks on earth, and the Athabasca River. The Wood Buffalo region is home to approximately 40 species of mammals, 150 species of birds, and 25 species of butterflies as well as wildflowers and shrubs found only in the boreal region.
- **Watching the Aurora Borealis** on cold, clear evenings from October to March. The northern lights display attracts visitors from as far away as Europe and Asia.
- **Touring the oil sands projects** on guided tours provided by oil sands operators.



Source: Stuart Masterman
(click to enlarge)



Source: Clarence West
(click to enlarge)



Pattern of wing prints left by an owl. Source: Susan Barstow

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