



**Push to Open Nature in Alberta Parks: Fostering outdoor recreation for all through access, inclusion, and collaboration.**

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**Situation:** A priority action of the Government of Alberta's Plan for Parks is to implement a province-wide inclusion strategy to increase opportunities for, and invite full participation of, all Albertans in provincial park experiences.

**Processes:** Since 2008, Alberta Parks has invited the inclusion of persons of all abilities through a network of individuals, volunteers, agencies, and partners within the Push to Open Nature pilot program. We are proving that adaptation, teamwork, and commitment can make it possible for anyone to climb mountains, paddle lakes, and deeply connect with nature. Push to Open Nature has been key to developing the Alberta Parks Inclusion Plan: "Everyone Belongs Outside." More than just a plan to remove barriers, this initiative supports people through a continuum of engagement with nature - from visitors to participants, leaders to partners.

**Results:** Inclusion has transformed the way Alberta Parks views park experiences and generated new approaches to removing barriers, like the Alberta Parks-funded "Park Explorer" adaptive wheelchair. Inclusion has also driven social research on effects of nature on persons with disabilities, caregivers, volunteers, parks staff, and the public. This session will generate ideas for local applications through Alberta Parks' experiences in fostering access, inclusion, and collaboration.