



## **Bilingualizing our Provincial Parks : A *Plan for Parks* Inclusive of Alberta's Francophonie**

Brief submitted by the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta ("ACFA"), Société historique francophone de l'Alberta ("SHFA"), and Parallèle Alberta to the Ministry of Forestry and Parks as part of the engagement on the development of a new *Plan for Parks*

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## **Summary of recommendations**

***Recommendation #1: The Ministry of Forestry and Parks should designate certain provincial parks as bilingual, particularly those located near municipalities with a high concentration of Francophones, after consultation with Alberta's Francophonie, and consider the tourism benefits of bilingualizing parks located in major tourist areas.***

***Recommendation #2: In accordance with Section 3 of the Provincial Parks Act, and to preserve Francophone history and culture in historically Francophone areas, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks should:***

- a) work with the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women to designate Dunvegan Provincial Park as bilingual and review the service offer at Historic Dunvegan;***
- b) rename a provincial park in honour of the Francophonie, in consultation with the Société historique francophone de l'Alberta;***
- c) seize future park creation opportunities to name new parks after key figures or events in Alberta's Francophonie.***

***Recommendation #3: In accordance with Section 3 of the Provincial Parks Act and Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks should ensure that students in Francophone schools have access to school programming in French and equivalent to that currently available in English. In addition, while Section 23 does not apply to French immersion students, they would also benefit from access to French-language school programming to support their learning.***

***Recommendation #4: Parallèle Alberta should be a partner of choice for Alberta Parks to expand its reach into the Canadian and international Francophone market, increase visitation to Alberta's provincial parks, and support the province's Francophone tourism businesses.***

## Introduction

[1] The Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta ("ACFA"), Société historique francophone de l'Alberta ("SHFA"), and Parallèle Alberta are submitting a brief to the Ministry of Forestry and Parks as part of the development of a new *Plan for Parks*. ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta wish to bring to the Ministry's attention considerations specific to Alberta's Francophonie in developing its French-language services and programs. In particular, the comments are in keeping with the principles of **equitable access, increasing access, and educational experiences** envisioned by the Ministry during its online engagement with the Alberta public.

[2] Founded in 1926, nearly 100 years ago, the ACFA is the spokes organization for Alberta's Francophonie. Its mandate is to represent Alberta's French-speaking population; promote their physical, intellectual, economic, cultural, and social well-being; and encourage, facilitate, and promote French-language learning and Alberta's Francophonie at large. In 1964, the Government of Alberta formally recognized the ACFA and passed *The A.C.F.A Act*<sup>1</sup> to incorporate the organization. Since the Government of Alberta adopted its *French Policy* in 2017, the ACFA has also been identified as one of two stakeholders to be consulted to establish priorities.<sup>2</sup>

[3] Founded in 2012, the SHFA is the leading organization in the heritage and history sector within Alberta's Francophonie. The SHFA ensures the protection and promotion of Francophone heritage and history in Alberta by fostering dialogue and liaison between practitioners and consumers in the sector. The SHFA contributes to the identification, preservation, promotion and dissemination of Alberta's Francophone historical heritage. Recognized by the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women as a credible stakeholder, the SHFA is designated as a Provincial Heritage Organization ("PHO").

[4] Founded in 2024, Parallèle Alberta is the leading Francophone economic development organization in Alberta, based on three main pillars: entrepreneurship, employability, and community economic development. The organization was created through the merger of the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, founded in 1997, and Accès Emploi Alberta, founded in 2002.

[5] In this brief, ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta present the following elements:

- a) The **status of French in Alberta** by (1) drawing a demographic portrait of Alberta's Francophonie and (2) raising four legislative texts supporting the offer of services in French and the recognition of the Francophonie in the province;
- b) **Elements to consider and recommendations**, mainly based on existing literature, to ensure that the specificity of Alberta's Francophonie is considered when developing the province's *Plan for Parks*.

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<sup>1</sup> Province of Alberta. 1964. *An Act to Incorporate l'Association Canadienne Française de l'Alberta*. [https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1964\\_ACFA-Act.pdf](https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1964_ACFA-Act.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy: Enhancing Services in French to Support the Vitality of Alberta's French-Speaking Communities*, page 8. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/713b7d93-c164-496a-8da8-813a34066ec4/resource/e9a9be57-1625-4bb7-82fb-cdfdb84c83c2/download/cul-french-policy-2023-english.pdf>

## Status of French in Alberta

### *Demographic profile*

[6] Alberta's Francophonie is well-established in the province due to its history, demographics, and institutions.

[7] The first francophone presence in Alberta dates back to the 18th century, well over 250 years ago. French was the first European language spoken in the territory that became Alberta. As early as the 19th century, several Métis communities, Franco-Catholic missions, and Francophone villages were established. Four (4) of these villages became officially bilingual: Beaumont, Legal, Falher and Plamondon.<sup>3</sup>

[8] Today, Alberta has the largest population with French as its first official language spoken and living in a minority setting in Canada after Ontario and New Brunswick.<sup>4</sup>

[9] According to Statistics Canada 2021 Census of population, 79,010 (1.9%) Albertans report French as their first official language spoken; 85,290 (2%) report French as their mother tongue; and 260,415 (6.2%) report knowledge of French.<sup>5</sup>

[10] French ranks 4th among mother tongues in Alberta, after English which ranks 1st (3,083,840), Tagalog 2nd (108,395), and Punjabi 3rd (91,070). However, French, ranks 2nd behind English in terms of knowledge of the language.<sup>6</sup>

[11] Among these people, Statistics Canada estimates that 119,690 are likely to require services in French, or 2.8% of Alberta's population.<sup>7</sup>

[12] Alberta also has the second-largest population of children eligible for minority language education in the country (excluding Quebec). There are 75 055 children, aged 0 to 18, with at least one right-holder parent.<sup>8</sup> Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* gives right-holders the right to have their children educated in the minority official language; in Alberta, this is French.

[13] It is also important to note that the median age of the Francophone population is 43, which is higher than the median age of the province's total population, which is 38. In fact, the Francophone population has a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (18%), compared to the proportion observed among the anglophone population (14%).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Alberta. <https://www.alberta.ca/fr-CA/francophone-heritage.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

<sup>5</sup> Sociopol. 2024. *Portrait démographique des communautés francophones de l'Alberta*. <https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Alberta-document-complet.pdf>, available in French only

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

<sup>7</sup> Sociopol. *Portrait démographique...* p.8.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. 2024. *Study on the Underclassification of Children Eligible for Instruction in the Minority Official Language in the 2021 Census*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-26-0008/982600082021001-eng.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Sociopol. *Portrait démographique...* p.22.

[14] Moreover, there has been an increase and diversification of the French-speaking population over the years.

[15] The number of Albertans with French as their first official language spoken increased by 35.9% over 20 years (2001-2021).<sup>10</sup> The number of Albertans with knowledge of French increased by 54.6% over 30 years (1991-2021).<sup>11</sup>

[16] Although many Francophones were born in Alberta, the majority came from across Canada and around the world. Among Albertans with French as their first official language spoken, about 24% were born in Alberta, 44% came from elsewhere in Canada (e.g. Quebec, New Brunswick, Ontario), and 32% came from elsewhere in the world, mainly from Africa.<sup>12</sup>

[17] A closer look at the 2021 census data reveals that 3,120 (4%) of Francophones have an Indigenous identity, mainly Métis (74%).<sup>13</sup>

[18] In terms of ethnocultural diversity, 22,935 (29%) of Francophones belong to a visible minority group. Of these, 11,480 (15%) identify themselves as Black, 4,340 (6%) as Asian, 3,845 (5%) as Arab, and 2,665 (3%) as Latin American.<sup>14</sup>

[19] The percentage of Albertans with an immigrant background within Alberta's Francophone population is also higher than within Alberta's total population, which stands at 23%. Africa is the birthplace of 50% of Francophone immigrants, a significant difference from Alberta's total immigrant population, 57% of whom come from Asia.<sup>15</sup>

[20] Moreover, the French-speaking population is scattered throughout the province, as Francophone communities have historically been established across the province. About one-third of the French-speaking population lives in Calgary, one-third in Edmonton, and the remaining third is scattered among medium-sized cities (Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge), towns with federal services such as national parks (Jasper, Banff) and military bases (Wainwright, Cold Lake), more traditional rural communities (Peace River region, St. Paul, Bonnyville, Legal, Morinville, Beaumont, Plamondon), and newer communities (Edmonton and Calgary Metropolitan regions, Brooks).

[21] Here is a table summarizing the Francophonie's presence in these municipalities<sup>16</sup> :

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<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada. 2019. *The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures*.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/fr/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019016-fra.pdf?st=xgAyz9SW>; Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada. 2019. *The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures*.; Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.; *Census Profile, 1991 Census of Population, Alberta*.; *Census Profile, 1996 Census of Population, Alberta*.

<sup>12</sup> Sociopol. *Portrait démographique*... p.27.

<sup>13</sup> Sociopol *Portrait démographique*... p.32.

<sup>14</sup> Sociopol *Portrait démographique*... p.33.

<sup>15</sup> Sociopol *Portrait démographique*... p.27.

<sup>16</sup> Sociopol *Portrait démographique*...

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>French as their first official language spoken (FOLS)</b>	<b>Knowledge of French</b>	<b>Potential demand for French-language services</b>	<b>Aboriginal identity within FOLS</b>	<b>Ethnocultural diversity within FOLS</b>
Airdrie	1 525 (2.1%)	5 410 (7.3%)	2 460 (3.3%)	40 (2.6%)	455 (29.8%)
Banff	265 (3.9%)	880 (12.8%)	845 (10.2%)	0 (0%)	20 (7.5%)
Beaumont	790 (3.8%)	2 030 (14.5%)	1 265 (6.15%)	40 (5%)	130 (16.5%)
Bonnyville and surroundings	865 (4.4%)	2 265 (11.6%)	1 380 (7%)	70 (8.1%)	10 (1.2%)
Brooks	390 (2.7%)	540 (3.7%)	385 (2.6%)	0 (0%)	285 (73%)
Calgary	23 590 (1.8%)	86 140 (6.7%)	34 640 (2.7%)	695 (2.9%)	8 370 (36%)
Camrose and surroundings	235 (0.8%)	1 035 (3.6%)	425 (1.5%)	15 (6.4%)	15 (6.4%)
Canmore and surroundings	920 (5.4%)	3 180 (18.6%)	1 395 (8%)	0 (0%)	40 (4.3%)
Chestermere	300 (1.4%)	925 (4.2%)	390 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	100 (33.3%)
Cochrane	790 (2.5%)	2 880 (9.2%)	1 150 (3.6%)	10 (1.2%)	25 (3.1%)
Cold Lake	815 (5.3%)	1 930 (12.6%)	1 100 (7.1%)	50 (6.1%)	45 (5.5%)
Crowsnest Pass and surroundings	125 (1%)	500 (4.1%)	250 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Edmonton	23 205 (2.3%)	67 175 (6.7%)	33 165 (3.3%)	600 (2.6%)	10 750 (46.3%)
Falher and surroundings	1 240 (25.3%)	1 815 (37.1%)	1 610 (29.5%)	30 (2.4%)	20 (1.6%)
Fort Saskatchewan	420 (1.6%)	1 495 (5.6%)	735 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	70 (16.9%)
Grande Prairie	1 575 (2.5%)	4 890 (7.7%)	2 315 (3.6%)	150 (9.5%)	250 (15.9%)
Grande Prairie County and surroundings	410 (1.4%)	1 470 (5%)	675 (2.3%)	35 (8.5%)	20 (4.8%)
High Prairie, Slave Lake and surroundings	365 (2.2%)	625 (3.7%)	675 (4%)	0 (0%)	35 (9.9%)
Hinton, Edson and	575 (2%)	1 825 (6.5%)	855 (3%)	55 (9.6%)	35 (6.3%)

Yellowhead County					
Jasper	175 (4.5%)	765 (19.5%)	465 (10%)	25 (13.9%)	10 (5.6%)
Lac La Biche County and surroundings	410 (5.4%)	895 (11.8%)	580 (7.7%)	35 (8.5%)	10 (2.4%)
Lacombe and surroundings	330 (0.9%)	1 530 (4%)	655 (1.7%)	15 (4.8%)	10 (3.1%)
Leduc and surroundings	990 (1.9%)	2 990 (5.7%)	1 395 (2.7%)	70 (7.3%)	100 (10.2%)
Legal and surroundings	1 400 (2.8%)	3 610 (7.3%)	2 245 (4.4%)	50 (3.6%)	35 (2.5%)
Lethbridge	920 (1%)	5 060 (5.3%)	1 795 (1.8%)	15 (1.6%)	275 (29.9%)
Lloydminster	185 (1%)	935 (4.9%)	345 (1.8%)	15 (8.1%)	30 (16.2%)
Medicine Hat	475 (0.8%)	2 210 (3.6%)	1 035 (1.7%)	25 (5.3%)	60 (12.8%)
Okotoks and surroundings	1 120 (1.5%)	4 425 (6.1%)	1 685 (2.3%)	75 (6.8%)	65 (5.9%)
Peace River and surroundings	605 (4.6%)	1 365 (10.4%)	850 (6.5%)	25 (4.2%)	50 (8.3%)
Red Deer	1 285 (1.3%)	5 315 (5.4%)	2 200 (2.2%)	60 (4.7%)	340 (26.5%)
Red Deer County and surroundings	500 (1%)	2 145 (4.4%)	840 (1.7%)	35 (6.8%)	10 (1.9%)
Rocky View County	395 (1%)	2 805 (6.9%)	865 (2.1%)	15 (3.8%)	55 (13.9%)
St. Albert	1 815 (2.7%)	7 115 (10.6%)	2 930 (4.3%)	75 (4.1%)	270 (14.8%)
St. Paul and surroundings	1 025 (7.8%)	2 145 (16.2%)	1 525 (11.4%)	55 (5.4%)	0 (0%)
Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and surroundings	1 250 (1.4%)	4 775 (5.4%)	2 400 (2.7%)	65 (5.2%)	145 (11.6%)
Strathcona County (including Sherwood Park)	1 660 (1.7%)	6 725 (6.9%)	2 725 (2.8%)	60 (3.6%)	245 (14.8%)
Wainwright	150 (2.4%)	340 (5.4%)	215 (3.4%)	30 (20%)	0 (0%)
Wood Buffalo (including Fort McMurray)	1 650 (2.3%)	4 380 (6.1%)	2 485 (3.4%)	120 (7.3%)	385 (23.3%)

[22] To provide services to this population, there are a number of organizations and institutions managed by Alberta's Francophonie, including four Francophone school boards (Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord; Conseil scolaire FrancoSud; Conseil scolaire Centre-Est; Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest), which administer 43 Francophone schools and nearly 40 daycare centres. There is also the ACFA and its 13 regional offices, as well as more than sixty community organisations. Other organisations and institutions are managed by the majority, but offer services in French, such as a French-language post-secondary institution (the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean), 215 schools offering French immersion programs, and numerous schools offering French as a second language courses.

### *Legislative framework*

[23] Four main pieces of legislation govern the provision of French-language services in Alberta and the recognition of Alberta's Francophonie: (1) the *Official Languages Act*, (2) the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, (3) the *French Policy*, and (4) Alberta's *Languages Act*.

[24] At the federal level, Alberta's Francophonie is recognized as an official language community in Canada under the *Official Languages Act*. Adopted in 1969, and modernized in 2023, this federal law recognizes French as one of the country's two official languages and guarantees access to French-language services in federal institutions, many of which are located in Alberta.

[25] In addition, Alberta has constitutional obligations regarding the provision of French-language services under Sections 19 and 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.<sup>17</sup> These sections respectively guarantee (1) the right to communicate in French in federal courts, and (2) the right to a Francophone education of equivalent quality to that offered to the Anglophone majority for all children of Canadian citizens whose mother tongue is French, who received their primary school instruction in French in Canada, or one of their children received primary or secondary school instruction in French in Canada, including school management.<sup>18</sup>

[26] At the provincial level, Alberta adopted its *French Policy* in 2017, which was revised in 2023, to develop its offer of French-language services and broaden its access to the federal government funds available for this purpose.<sup>19</sup>

[27] Through the *French Policy*, the "Government of Alberta acknowledges the past, present and continued social, cultural and economic contributions of the province's significant and diverse French-speaking population. Through meaningful engagement, dialogue and collaboration, the government is committed to enhancing services in French to support the vitality of the Francophonie in Alberta in a targeted and sustainable manner as resources allow."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy: enhancing services in French to support the vitality of Alberta's French-speaking communities*, page 5. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/713b7d93-c164-496a-8da8-813a34066ec4/resource/e9a9be57-1625-4bb7-82fb-cdfdb84c83c2/download/cul-french-policy-2023-english.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Government of Canada. "Section 23 –Minority Language Educational Rights." <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/art23.html>

<sup>19</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*.

<sup>20</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p.6.



[28] The *French Policy* "applies to all government of Alberta departments, agencies, boards and commissions, and to court services."<sup>21</sup>

[29] To support the implementation of the *French Policy*, the Government of Alberta released its *French Policy: 2024-2028 Action Plan* in May 2024.<sup>22</sup> This is the province's third action plan since the adoption of the *French Policy*.

[30] More specifically, in this action plan, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks has committed to one action, namely to "Develop and promote access to publications and web content in French on Alberta Parks."<sup>23</sup>

[31] Finally, Alberta's *Languages Act* also allows Albertans to use French in the province's courts, and members of the Legislative Assembly to use French in the Legislature.<sup>24</sup>

## Elements for Consideration and Recommendations

[32] The ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta believe that integrating a Francophone lens into the development of the ministry's strategic plan would be consistent with the Government of Alberta's priorities. Indeed, this would enable the government to implement its *French Policy*, and more specifically the principle of "vitality" mentioned in the policy statement.<sup>25</sup>

[33] From the perspective of Alberta's Francophonie, a strong understanding of the concept of vitality is fundamental to offering services in French that truly meet the needs of Francophone communities and are equivalent to those offered in English. By understanding what Alberta's Francophonie means by "vitality", the Ministry of Forestry and Parks will be able to better target its actions to implement the *French Policy*.

[34] The concept of community vitality, particularly in the case of Francophone minority communities, has been examined in numerous studies by Canadian researchers.

[35] The concept of a community's vitality is based on three "structural variables... (demographic, institutional and statutory) that ensure the group's maintenance or growth as a distinct entity."<sup>26</sup> The statutory variable is defined as the socio-economic and historical status of a linguistic group.<sup>27</sup> The demographic variable is defined as the distribution and number of people who identify with the

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<sup>21</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p.6.

<sup>22</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. *French Policy: 2024-2028 Action Plan*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/2b40e62c-9c60-4cbf-adb8-d8b9ec6041e0/resource/ffe50331-5dde-47e3-b6b1-e8e9d210ca52/download/acsw-french-policy-action-plan-2024-2028.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. *French Policy: 2024-2028 Action Plan*, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Alberta, 2023. *French Policy*, p.5.

<sup>25</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Rodrigue Landry. 2021. "Loi sur les langues officielles et vitalité des minorités : mission impossible ou œuvre inachevée?" *Minorités linguistiques et société/Linguistic Minorities and Society*, (17), p. 132. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1084703ar>. (Translated from French)

<sup>27</sup> Jake Harwood, Howard Giles et Richard Y. Bourhis. 1994. "The genesis of vitality theory: historical patterns and discorsal dimensions." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, (108), 167-206. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1994.108.167>

language group.<sup>28</sup> As for the institutional variable, it is the most dependent on the willingness and ability to develop institutions (e.g., schools, organizations, hospitals, etc.).<sup>29</sup>

[36] The consensus among researchers is that the overall vitality of a linguistic community is the result of the interaction of these three variables.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, when there are weaknesses within any of these three variables, the overall vitality of the community suffers. That's why it's crucial for the Government of Alberta to support the development of services in French within government and Francophone community institutions.

[37] The Ministry of Forestry and Parks is committed to improving its offer of services in French as part of the *French Policy: 2024-2028 Action Plan* through a specific action: "Develop and promote access to publications and web content in French on Alberta Parks."<sup>31</sup>

[38] While this action is commendable for increasing access to documentation in French for French-speaking Albertans, it does not enhance the vitality of Alberta's Francophonie. As previously mentioned, vitality depends on the recognition of the status of Alberta's Francophonie and the development of institutions to support it.

[39] The Ministry of Forestry and Parks should take advantage of its process of modernizing the *Plan for Parks* to propose additional initiatives that would strengthen the vitality of Alberta's Francophone communities. ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta propose four (4) recommendations to the Ministry in this regard.

***Recommendation #1: The Ministry of Forestry and Parks should designate certain provincial parks as bilingual, particularly those located near municipalities with a high concentration of Francophones, after consultation with Alberta's Francophonie, and consider the tourism benefits of bilingualizing parks located in major tourist areas.***

[40] Designating provincial parks as bilingual is a priority for French-speaking Albertans. In 2021 and 2022, the ACFA conducted a rigorous engagement process to develop the *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028 ("FRAB Action Plan")*.<sup>32</sup> In all, 200 community leaders, representing more than 40 community organizations and institutions, and 520 French-speaking Albertans took part in the engagement via interviews, focus groups, and a survey. The data collected was used to draft the *FRAB Action Plan*, which was officially unveiled in October 2022.

[41] The *FRAB Action Plan* proposes the following action, among others: « Identify potential sites (e.g., parks, heritage sites, museums) to be designated bilingual French/English in collaboration with Alberta's Francophonie stakeholders."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Jake Harwood, Howard Giles et Richard Y. Bourhis. 1994. "The genesis of vitality theory..."

<sup>29</sup> Jake Harwood, Howard Giles et Richard Y. Bourhis. 1994. "The genesis of vitality theory..."

<sup>30</sup> Anne Gilbert et al. 2005. "L'environnement et la vitalité communautaire des minorités francophones : vers un modèle conceptuel." *Francophonie d'Amérique*, (20), p. 52-53. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1005336ar>. Translated from French

<sup>31</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. *French Policy : 2024-2028 Action Plan*, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> ACFA. 2022. *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028*. [https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Version-officielle\\_Plan-daction-FRAB\\_EN.pdf](https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Version-officielle_Plan-daction-FRAB_EN.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> ACFA. 2022. *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie...*, p. 15.

[42] This practice of bilingual designations is already in force in other Canadian provinces, as part of the implementation of their French-language services legislation or policies. In Manitoba, for example, the government offers services “in both official languages in those areas where the French-speaking population is concentrated.”<sup>34</sup> This approach makes it possible to concentrate French-language service delivery efforts in bilingual regions, guaranteeing a better return on the investment of resources.

[43] The ACFA, with the financial support of the Francophone Secretariat, commissioned a demographic profile of Alberta's Francophonie based on Statistics Canada's 2021 census data. The data from this demographic profile, presented above in paragraph 21 of the document, make it possible to identify regions in Alberta where there is a high concentration of the French-speaking population and where the potential demand for French-language services is significant (over 6% of the population).

- Falher and surroundings (29.5%)
- St. Paul and surroundings (11.4%)
- Banff (10.2%)
- Jasper (10%)
- Canmore and surroundings (8%)
- Lac La Biche County and surroundings (7.7%)
- Cold Lake (7.1%)
- Bonnyville and surroundings (7%)
- Peace River and surroundings (6.5%)
- Beaumont (6.2%)

[44] Edmonton and Calgary are also home to the largest number of Francophones, with a potential demand for services of 33,165 and 34,640 respectively.

[45] Based on the concentration of the population in these regions, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks could designate the following provincial parks as bilingual:

- Banff, Canmore and surroundings – **Bow Valley Provincial Park** and **Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park**
- Beaumont – **Miquelon Lake Provincial Park**
- Bonnyville and surroundings – **Moose Lake Provincial Park**
- Calgary – **Fish Creek Provincial Park** and **Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park**
- Cold Lake – **Cold Lake Provincial Park**
- Edmonton – **Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park** and **Strathcona Science Provincial Park**
- Falher and surroundings – **Winagami Lake Provincial Park**
- Jasper – **William A Switzer Provincial Park**
- Lac La Biche County and surroundings – **Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park** and **Lakeland Provincial Park**
- Peace River and surroundings – **Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park**
- St. Paul and surroundings – **Garner Lake Provincial Park**

[46] It should be noted that the regions of Banff and Jasper have national parks that are legally required to be designated bilingual under the *Official Languages Act*. These national parks already attract a significant number of French-speaking and/or bilingual workers, as well as tourists.

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<sup>34</sup> Government of Manitoba. 1998. *Chartier Rapport : Above All, Common Sense. Report and Recommendations on French Language Services Within the Government of Manitoba*. <https://www.gov.mb.ca/fils-slf/report/pdf/toc.fr.html>

[47] The return-on-investment potential of designating bilingual provincial parks near major tourist attractions, including UNESCO World Heritage sites, is very high, and would be consistent with practices already in place. Here are a few examples of additional provincial parks to those mentioned above that could be considered:

- Canadian Rockies - **Kananaskis Country (including Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, Sheep River Provincial Park and Spray Valley Provincial Park)**
- Badlands - **Cypress Hills Provincial Park, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park and Midland Provincial Park**

[48] This designation would also be aligned with an action prioritized by French-speaking Albertans and found in *FRAB Action Plan*: "Encourage the development of tourism in French in the southern part of the province (e.g., thematic tours, signs)."<sup>35</sup>

[49] Such a bilingual designation brings with it requirements in terms of human resources and communications, both of which are essential if we are to offer services in French that are equivalent to those available in English.<sup>36</sup>

[50] The Ministry of Forestry and Parks could begin by identifying its current French-speaking staff, and create a dedicated bilingual position in each park to be designated and that is staffed. This practice of having dedicated bilingual positions is in place elsewhere in the Government of Alberta and could be expanded. For example, the Provincial Archives of Alberta employs a French-speaking archivist to better orient organizations and community members wishing to make donations or conduct research in the archives' holdings.

[51] In addition, the *FRAB Action Plan* proposes the following actions:

- "Identify French-speaking employees and develop a bilingual French-English staff directory for all ministries.";
- "Identify positions within the various ministries where speaking French would be a necessary skill, with a view to having an active offer of services in French.";
- "Assign a person of contact in each ministry to liaise with Alberta's Francophonie, so that these officials can support stakeholders (e.g., answer questions related to the *French Policy*; find French-language resources)."<sup>37</sup>

[52] The Ministry of Forestry and Parks could also include an official bilingual name, bilingual signage, resource materials available in French, and bilingual cultural programming.

[53] To implement this recommendation, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks could explore the creation of a multi-stakeholder committee, made up of government officials and Francophone community organizations, to guide this process and identify best practices. Such committees have been identified in the *French Policy* as a best practice in priority areas for Alberta's Francophonie.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> ACFA. 2022. *Action plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Government of Manitoba. 1998. *Chartier Rapport...*

<sup>37</sup> ACFA. 2022. *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028*, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p.10.

**Recommendation #2: In accordance with Section 3 of the Provincial Parks Act, and to preserve Francophone history and culture in historically Francophone areas, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks should:**

- a) work with the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women to designate Dunvegan Provincial Park as bilingual and review the service offer at Historic Dunvegan;**
- b) rename a provincial park in honour of the Francophonie, in consultation with the Société historique francophone de l'Alberta;**
- c) seize future park creation opportunities to name new parks after key figures or events in Alberta's Francophonie.**

[54] The *Provincial Parks Act* is one of the oldest pieces of park legislation in Canada, passed in 1930 and last amended in 2000. This legislation and its associated regulations affect the development and management of parks. Section 3 of the *Act* defines the objectives of parks and states that:<sup>39</sup>

*"Parks are established, and are to be maintained,*

*(c) for the preservation of specified areas, landscapes and natural features and objects in them that are of geological, **cultural, historical, archeological, anthropological, ethnological,** ecological or other scientific interest or importance,*

*(d) to facilitate their use and enjoyment for outdoor recreation, **education** and the appreciation and experiencing of Alberta's natural heritage, and*

*(e) to ensure their lasting protection for the benefit of **present and future generations**"*

[55] Culture and history play a central role in provincial parks, which is of particular importance to Alberta's Francophonie because of their impact on the vitality of Francophone communities.

[56] In fact, Canadian researchers point out that "heritage is of particular importance to minority communities, whose heritage may have been erased or devalued by dominant cultures. It can help minorities assert their presence and value in society, counter negative stereotypes and promote greater diversity."<sup>40</sup>

[57] Alain Roy, former historian and policy analyst at Library and Archives Canada, has developed the concept of memorial vitality, describing a community's collective memory as an ecosystem comprising reminders of the past in the present, thanks to a heritage that encompasses tangible, intangible or documentary traces. Memorial vitality refers to the strength and diversity of these reminders of the past,

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<sup>39</sup> Government of Alberta. 2000. "Provincial Parks Act." [https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=p35.cfm&leg\\_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779843381](https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=p35.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779843381)

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Donovan et al. 2023. "Introduction. Patrimoine, mémoire et vitalité des communautés linguistiques en situation minoritaire." *Minorités linguistiques et société* (21), page 5. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1097632ar> Translated from French

and can be observed in the various aspects of a community's collective life. It testifies to the community bond that ensures the vitality of memory and helps to strengthen it.<sup>41</sup>

[58] The commemoration of historic places, people and events is essential to the identity and vitality of Francophone minority communities. It recognizes the community's contributions to history and culture, preserves collective memory, reinforces a sense of belonging, reaffirms cultural identity and raises public awareness of issues and challenges. The vitality of memory is therefore crucial to its survival.<sup>42</sup>

[59] One feature of this "ecosystem" is the concept of the "cultural landscape", which can be defined as "traces of the past in the community's landscape."<sup>43</sup> These traces can manifest themselves in various forms, such as buildings, place names and plaques.

[60] It's undeniable that early French-speaking settlers played a significant role in shaping Alberta as it is today. In fact, Alberta has several historically French-speaking regions, stemming from its French-speaking history dating back to the 18th century, the era of exploration and the fur trade. A number of French place names, such as Grande Prairie, bear witness to the presence of the French-speaking community even back then.<sup>44</sup>

[61] Later, in the second half of the 19th century, several Métis communities and Franco-Catholic missions were established. These included the missions of Lac Sainte-Anne, Lac La Biche, Saint-Joachim (Edmonton), Grouard-Athabasca, Notre Dame de la Paix (Calgary), St-Augustin (Peace River), Saint-Albert, Saint-Paul-des-Métis (St. Paul), and Duhamel.<sup>45</sup>

[62] In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many settlers moved into the northeastern region and founded a number of villages, including Lafond, Foisy, St. Lina, Thérien, St. Vincent, La Corey, Brièreville, Saint-Édouard, Mallaig, St. Paul, Plamondon, Bonnyville and Normandeau. In Central and Southern Alberta, French-speaking settlers established the villages of Legal, Lamoureux, Morinville, Beaumont, Rouleauville (now Calgary), and Trochu. In the Northwest region, the villages of Falher, Donnelly, Guy, Girouxville, Tangent, Dréau, Marie-Reine, and Saint-Isidore were founded in response to requests from Francophones.<sup>46</sup>

[63] The Government of Alberta owns numerous historic sites, interpretation centers, museums, and archives. Among these is the Father Lacombe Chapel, located in St. Albert. Built in 1861, this chapel is

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<sup>41</sup> Alain Roy, 2023, "De la vitalité à la vitalité mémorielle, ou comment appréhender l'inscription dans le temps des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire (CLOSM)." *Minorités linguistiques et société / Linguistic Minorities and Society*, (21). <https://doi.org/10.7202/1097634ar> Translated from French

<sup>42</sup> Alain Roy, 2023. "De la vitalité à la vitalité mémorielle..."

<sup>43</sup> Alain Roy, 2023. "De la vitalité à la vitalité mémorielle..."

<sup>44</sup> Government of Alberta, 2018. "The Francophonie in Alberta: Strong and Vibrant." <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56de91f7-c69e-4fac-8e82-a3b8c9025f25/resource/f4bf7d7f-cda2-4910-9b8e-daeb496553e9/download/albertasfrancophonecommunitiesstrongandvibrant.pdf>; Heritage Community Foundation. "Alberta's Francophone Heritage." <https://wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101208161909/http://www.abheritage.ca/francophone/en/background/introduction.html>

<sup>45</sup> Government of Alberta, 2018. "The Francophonie in Alberta: Strong and Vibrant."; Heritage Community Foundation. "Alberta's Francophone Heritage."

<sup>46</sup> Government of Alberta, 2018. "The Francophonie in Alberta: Strong and Vibrant."; Heritage Community Foundation. "Alberta's Francophone Heritage."

often considered Alberta's oldest building, and was the anchor for the Francophone and Métis communities at the time.<sup>47</sup> Guided tours are offered in English and French.

[64] However, other sites also have links to the Francophone community, such as Historic Dunvegan.<sup>48</sup> Documents from the Provincial Archives of Alberta highlight the contribution of Francophones such as Adrien Clément La Rivière, and the creation of the Saint-Charles mission at Fort Dunvegan.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the Father Lacombe Chapel, Historic Dunvegan does not offer French-language programming, and its links with Alberta's Francophonie are not emphasized.

[65] The Ministry of Forestry and Parks, in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, could consider a bilingual designation for Dunvegan Provincial Park and review the services offered (e.g. plaques, programming, etc.) at Historic Dunvegan to reflect the contributions of Alberta's Francophonie and ensure its vitality.

[66] In addition, to honor the contribution of Francophones to the province, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks could also work with SHFA to identify a provincial park that could be renamed in honor of the province's Francophone heritage.

[67] This initiative would be aligned with the principles of the *Building Naming Policy*<sup>50</sup> adopted by the Government of Alberta. Although this policy is specific to building names, it could be used by the Ministry of Forestry and Parks as a starting point for naming provincial parks.

[68] This policy recognizes the importance of names and their links with the province's history: "The names we use to identify places reflect the heritage and values of our society, and serve as a medium to remember themes and events and to commemorate people whose accomplishments have importance to our collective values and experience."<sup>51</sup> In addition, the policy states that it is part of a set of measures aimed at the "ongoing implementation of... Alberta's *French Policy* as part of the broader recognition of Alberta's diverse heritage and unique history."<sup>52</sup>

[69] The policy also requires that "names should take into consideration geographical and/or thematic connections to a facility, and **communities affiliated with a facility's location**" and that "facilities can be named in one language or in more than one language if appropriate (e.g. English and French, or English and a First Nations language.)"<sup>53</sup>

[70] The policy also specifies, when it comes to engaging with the public on renaming or naming an establishment, that "If appropriate, in seeking public or relevant stakeholder and community input in

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<sup>47</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. "Father Lacombe Chapel: About." <https://fatherlacombechapel.ca/about>

<sup>48</sup> "Jamais de ne l'oublierai : The Francophone historical contribution to the development of the Province of Alberta." [https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssbi/pdf/francophonemapofalberta\\_bi.pdf](https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssbi/pdf/francophonemapofalberta_bi.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta. 2012. "Documenting Francophone Alberta : Collecting Francophone Records at the Provincial Archives, 1965-2010".

<sup>50</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *Building Naming Policy*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/26cf6898-0cea-49ac-a7c1-dddf82aa4955/resource/d2e9e2fc-9617-4017-888c-a9124988f8bb/download/acsw-building-naming-policy-2023-12.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *Building Naming Policy*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *Building Naming Policy*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *Building Naming Policy*, p. 5.

building naming the following process is suggested... engage cultural community stakeholders, if applicable.”<sup>54</sup>

[71] Therefore, the naming of a provincial park reflecting and promoting Alberta's Francophonie, in a historically Francophone region and in consultation with stakeholders within Alberta's Francophonie, would not only contribute to the implementation of the *French Policy*, but also recognize the importance of place names, as outlined in the principles of the *Building Naming Policy*.

**Recommendation #3: In accordance with Section 3 of the Provincial Parks Act and Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ministry of Forestry and Parks should ensure that students in Francophone schools have access to school programming in French and equivalent to that currently available in English. In addition, while Section 23 does not apply to French immersion students, they would also benefit from access to French-language school programming to support their learning.**

[72] As stated in Section 3 of the *Provincial Parks Act*, provincial parks have an educational function. Accordingly, the province offers English-language educational programs related to provincial parks. These programs are available in person, virtually and with online resources. In fact, these programs “assist teachers meet the demands of curriculum in engaging and dynamic ways.”<sup>55</sup>

[73] Currently, Alberta Parks offers no French-language educational programs or resources. This omission is considerable, given that there are currently 9,541 students enrolled in French-language schools<sup>56</sup> and the right to a Francophone education equivalent to that of the Anglophone majority.

[74] Indeed, as explained above, Section 23 of the Charter guarantees Francophone education in the province for the children of rights-holder parents. Since the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v British Columbia*, it is now understood that Section 23 not only guarantees education in the minority official language, but that this education must be of “substantive equality” to that of the majority.<sup>57</sup>

[75] Certainly, in addition to making French-language resources available, the creation of these resources for Francophone schools should be done in consultation with Francophone school boards to consider the specificities of Alberta's Francophonie. Simply translating resources into French would not be sufficient to meet the specific needs of Francophone education.

[76] In addition to Francophone education, there are more than 215 schools offering French immersion programs, which also benefit from French-language educational programs and resources. According to the 2021 Census, 70,395 children were in or had been enrolled in French immersion

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<sup>54</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *Building Naming Policy*, p.6.

<sup>55</sup> Alberta Parks. 2021. “School Programs.” <https://albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/learning/school-programs/>.

<sup>56</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. “Student population statistics.” <https://www.alberta.ca/student-population-statistics>

<sup>57</sup> Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v. British Columbia, 2020 CSC 13, [2020] 1 R.C.S. 678. <https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/18390/index.do>



programs in the province.<sup>58</sup> The municipality of Canmore (28.2%) is among the thirty municipalities with the highest rate of participation in a French immersion program in Canada, excluding Quebec.<sup>59</sup>

[77] The *French Policy* also states that “Government of Alberta ministries will consult with Alberta Education when developing and distributing any print or digital materials intended for school-aged children and youth (Kindergarten to Grade 12) and their parents/guardians to ensure simultaneous provision in English and French.”<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that several ministries already offer educational resources or programs in French. The Ministry of Forestry and Parks could use their best practices to develop French-language educational resources.

[78] ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta are proposing that the Ministry of Forestry and Parks consider designating provincial parks offering educational programs as bilingual because of their proximity to municipalities with Francophone schools. Such designations would ensure near-total coverage of the province's Francophone schools, and a complete French-language experience for schools using educational programs.

[79] Many of these parks were also mentioned under recommendation #1; the additional parks are highlighted below:

- Bonnyville – Moose Lake Provincial Park
- Bellevue / Brooks / Lethbridge - Dinosaur Provincial Park and Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park
- Calgary and surroundings (Airdrie, Cochrane, and Okotoks) - Fish Creek Provincial Park and Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park
- Canmore – Bow Valley Provincial Park
- Cold Lake / Lloydminster – Cold Lake Provincial Park
- Edmonton and surroundings (Beaumont, St. Albert, Legal, Sherwood Park, and Stony Plain), Camrose / Wainwright - Miquelon Lake Provincial Park
- Falher / Peace River - **Young’s Point Provincial Park, Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park or Moonshine Lake Provincial Park**
- Fort McMurray - **Gregoire Lake Provincial Park**
- Grande Prairie – **Saskatoon Island Provincial Park or O’Brien Provincial Park**
- Jasper – William A. Switzer Provincial Park
- Lac La Biche / Plamondon - Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park
- Medicine Hat - Cypress Hills Provincial Park
- Red Deer - **Aspen Beach Provincial Park**
- St. Paul - Garner Lake Provincial Park

[80] In addition, due to the proximity of Francophone schools and a vibrant Francophone community, hiring French-speaking staff would not be a burden on the ministry, allowing it to offer a face-to-face educational program equivalent to that offered in English.

[81] Alberta Parks also offers educational programs via videoconference. These programs could be adapted and translated into French, and then facilitated by a French-speaking staff member. Because

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<sup>58</sup> Statistics Canada. 2024. *Participation in French immersion, bilingualism and the use of French in adulthood, 2021*, p.7. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-x/2021018/98-200-x2021018-eng.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Statistics Canada. 2024. *Participation in French immersion...*

<sup>60</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p. 9.

of the virtual nature of this program, the person(s) administering it could be located anywhere in the province and would not need to be present in the provincial park. This could allow Francophone schools to have access to this program, while maximizing the Ministry's resources.

**Recommendation #4: Parallèle Alberta should be a partner of choice for Alberta Parks to expand its reach into the Canadian and international Francophone market, increase visitation to Alberta's provincial parks, and support the province's Francophone tourism businesses.**

[82] In addition to the importance of provincial parks for heritage preservation and their contribution to the education of young Francophones, Alberta's provincial parks could also play a crucial role in the economic development of Alberta's Francophonie.

[83] In fact, in its *French Policy*, the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of economic development in ensuring the vitality of Alberta's Francophonie: "Fostering Francophone economic development plays an essential role in integrating and retaining French-speaking Albertans in the province once their education in French is complete."<sup>61</sup>

[84] As such, Francophone tourism, particularly from Québec and France, is an essential vector for economic diversification and cultural promotion within Alberta's Francophonie. It reinforces Alberta's Francophone identity by offering visitors the opportunity to discover the culture, history, and traditions of Alberta's Francophonie.

[85] According to a survey conducted by the *Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité* ("RDÉE"), 74% of respondents believe that a well-developed tourism sector is essential in regions of the country where French is a minority language.<sup>62</sup>

[86] In Alberta, France ranks as the province's third most important international tourism market. Travel Alberta estimates a potential of 1.7 million French visitors. As for Quebec, it represents a potential of almost 500,000 visitors.<sup>63</sup>

[87] By attracting local, national, and international French-speaking visitors with French signage, staff, and programming, among other things, provincial parks could become important economic engines for Alberta's Francophonie, generating more revenue for Francophone and/or bilingual tourism businesses.

[88] Francophone and/or bilingual tourism businesses are important private providers of French-language services, and include lodging establishments, restaurants, and leisure businesses. According to a survey conducted by the RDÉE, 67% of respondents consider it "important" or "very important" to have access to Francophone businesses.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité. 2024. *Sondage RDÉE Canada/Pollara visant à dresser un portrait actuel des préoccupations et des perceptions des francophones en situation minoritaire au Canada*. [https://rdee.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sondage\\_RDÉE\\_Pollara\\_Juin2024.VP\\_.pptx.pdf](https://rdee.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sondage_RDÉE_Pollara_Juin2024.VP_.pptx.pdf) disponible seulement en français

<sup>63</sup> Travel Alberta. 2024. "Market Size." <https://industry.travelalberta.com/research/tourism-indicators/market-size>

<sup>64</sup> Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité. 2024. *Sondage RDÉE Canada/Pollara...*

[89] These Francophone businesses are also major employers in an industry where many Albertans work. In July 2024, the number of employees in Alberta's tourism sector reached approximately 268,800, an increase of 6.8% over the previous year. The sector is dominated by food services, with 119,400 jobs, followed by leisure and entertainment services, with 83,500 jobs.<sup>65</sup>

[90] Given the importance of the tourism sector, Parallèle Alberta has been a key partner of Travel Alberta for many years. This partnership has led to the creation of a website dedicated to Francophone and bilingual tourism in the province. This website allows visitors, whether they speak English or French, to design personalized itineraries or discover thematic routes for each region of Alberta.

[91] The thematic routes help boost the local economy in lesser-known regions, and highlight points of interest offering services in French in many municipalities. These points of interest are often Francophone or Francophile businesses that have understood the importance of being able to serve their customers in both of Canada's official languages. Parallèle Alberta has partnered with some 20 tourism organizations in various regions of the province to promote their tourism industries.

[92] It should be noted that several provincial parks are located in the regions of these thematic routes. So, by bilingualizing certain provincial parks and offering services in French in several regions of the province, Alberta Parks could be added to the itinerary of French-speaking visitors who use the thematic routes. Provincial parks would be ideal places for tourists to take a break en route to their next attractions.

[93] Parallèle Alberta is ready to work with Alberta Parks to integrate provincial parks into the rural Francophone economy and promote services in French.

[94] Parallèle Alberta could also be a partner in the recruitment and development of a French-speaking workforce, thanks to the employment services it offers to Francophones.

[95] Such a partnership would also be in line with the mandate letter of the Minister of Forestry and Parks, which states: "Designing a ministry-specific job-attraction strategy that raises awareness for young Albertans (aged 16 to 24) and adults changing careers of the skilled trades and professions available in each economic sector, including pathways for education, apprenticeship, and training."<sup>66</sup>

[96] In fact, 79% of young Francophones aged 18 to 24 say that the tourism industry is crucial in their regions.<sup>67</sup> Young francophones could then find work opportunities in provincial parks, or create businesses in the Francophone tourism sector in regions where provincial parks are located.

[97] This would ensure that these young French-speaking Albertans interested in the tourism sector have access to quality jobs where their language skills can be put to good use, so that they can continue to contribute to Francophone economic development once they have completed their studies.

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<sup>65</sup> Government of Alberta. 2024. *Tourism employment*. <https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/dashboard/tourism-employment#section3>

<sup>66</sup> Premier of Alberta. 2023. *Mandate Letter to the Minister of Forestry and parks, the Honourable Todd Loewen*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/bf7f9a42-a807-49b3-8ba3-451ae3bc2d2f/resource/20ee4e3e-716e-44a4-bcbf-f5158139aa71/download/fp-mandate-letter-forestry-and-parks-2023.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité. 2024. *Sondage RDÉE Canada/Pollara...*

## Conclusion

[98] In conclusion, ACFA, SHFA, and Parallèle Alberta remain ready to work with the Ministry of Forestry and Parks to implement the recommendations proposed in this brief, including the bilingualization of provincial parks after consultation with Alberta's Francophonie. These recommendations will enable the ministry to implement the *French Policy*, while offering French-language services that are targeted to the needs of Alberta's Francophonie, including in rural areas.