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TOURISM

IN BIG LAKES COUNTY, ALBERTA
#GOBIGLAKES



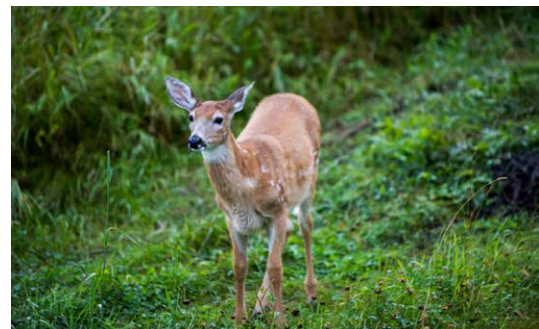
TRUE WILDERNESS TO EXPLORE

Big Lakes County is a wilderness enthusiast's paradise located just a few hours from Alberta's major northern cities. We are proud of our wilderness: beautiful lakes, forests, and rolling countryside. We are equally proud of the first-rate resorts and developments on our lakeshores and throughout the area. There is tremendous opportunity for tourism in Big Lakes County. [LEARN MORE →](#)



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TRUE WILDERNESS TO EXPLORE



Big Lakes County is covered by dense boreal forest and lakes. Our neighbours are the flora and fauna of the north. It is not uncommon to spot deer, ducks, eagles, and all kinds of wildlife.

The air is pure and the water is clean. The prairie skies are big and bright, with almost 24-hour daylight during parts of the summer and the lights of aurora borealis in the dark winters.

Camping, birdwatching, fishing, hiking, hunting, off-highway vehicle riding, boating, wind surfing, and kayaking/canoeing, and sailing are activities embedded in our local culture and tourism offering.

BUCKET LIST EXPERIENCES YEAR ROUND

COOLER MONTHS:

The aurora borealis, also known as the “northern lights,” is a natural celestial phenomenon that gives off the appearance of dancing green and pink lights in the sky. Big Lakes County is an ideal region for viewing. Optimal viewing is September through mid-May in northern Alberta. In the winter, Big Lakes is also home to another hamlet: a 100+ hut ice fishing village on Lesser Slave Lake just off the shores of the Hamlet of Jossard.

WARMER MONTHS:

June is a month of great activity when Big Lakes County really comes alive. Enjoy some of the best fishing of the year, the annual North Country Fair folk music festival that attracts thousands, local demolition derbies, Canada Day celebrations, the Driftpile First Nation Pow Wow, and more. Visitors can also spend the day horseback riding and getting lost in corn mazes at EC Bar and Ranch, fishing derbies at Shaw’s Point Resort and Spruce Point Park, and hiking along the Grouard-Peace River Trail to experience first hand the fur trade that built Canada.

ACTIVITIES FOR LAND-LOVERS

- › Cycling
- › Hiking
- › Cross country skiing
- › Snowshoeing
- › Birding
- › Camping
- › Mountain biking
- › Hunting
- › OHV riding
- › Horseback riding
- › Golf

ACTIVITIES FOR LAKE-LOVERS

- › Swimming
- › Fishing & ice fishing
- › Sailing
- › Canoeing/kayaking
- › Power boating
- › Water skiing
- › Wind surfing
- › Paddle boarding



BIG LAKES: IT'S IN OUR NAME

Lesser Slave Lake is the third largest lake in Alberta, covering 1,160km² and measuring over 100km long and 15km at its widest point. The deeper of the two basins, the east basin, has a maximum depth of approximately 20.5 meters, while the west basin measures about 15.5 meters at its deepest point. Five rivers flow into Lesser Slave Lake. The lake also flows into the Lesser Slave River and into the Athabasca River. Visit the Lesser Slave Watershed Council for more information: www.lswc.ca

MARINAS & BOAT LAUNCHES

Boasting Alberta's largest inland marina and many other marinas, Big Lakes County is a freshwater playground. Marinas are located along Lesser Slave Lake, Winagami, and Snipe Lake.

- › Bay Shore Resort – 1 launch/40 slip marina
- › Cattail Cabins & RV Park – 1 launch/30 slip marina
- › Hill & Hollow Campground – 1 launch/35 slip marina
- › Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park – 1 boat launch
- › Ladyhawk Cabins – 1 launch/35 slip marina
- › Lakeshore Campground – 1 launch/35 slip marina
- › Reel In Resort – 1 boat launch
- › Shadow Creek Resort – 400 boat slips
- › Shaw's Point Park – 5 launches/75 slip 2 marina
- › Snipe Lake Southshore Resort – 1 boat launch
- › Spruce Point Park – 1 launch/100 stall marina
- › Winagami Lake Provincial Park – 1 boat launch



TOURISM QUICK-FACTS

Beauty of the lakes and natural environment is the number one visitor comment.

LESSER SLAVE LAKE in Big Lakes County is the 3rd largest lake in Alberta, covering **1,160KM²**



There are **600 RV SPOTS** at **SHAW'S POINT RESORT** and a waiting list for seasonal lots.



Big Lakes has the **LARGEST INLAND MARINA** in Alberta at **SHADOW CREEK RESORT**.

HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU!

Big Lakes County has countless trails, parks, and back country to explore. Today, there are a rising number of local guides who can take visitors fishing, hunting, and exploring.

Grouard-Peace River Trail: Connecting the western end of Lesser Slave Lake to the Peace River, the Grouard-Peace River Trail was originally used by Aboriginal peoples and later became well-trodden with missionaries, gold-seekers, traders, and homesteaders. The trail is currently rebuilt and is part of the Trans-Canada Trail network and can be used for cycling, hiking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing.

Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park: Hilliard's Bay is a provincial park located 40km from High Prairie, on the northwest shore of Lesser Slave Lake.

Lesser Slave Lake & Wildland: The Lesser Slave Lake Wildland, located on the north shore of Lesser Slave Lake, contains important fish spawning and rearing habitat, key waterfowl staging and production areas, moose habitat and critical moose winter range, as well as bald eagle and osprey nesting areas.

Winagami Lake Provincial Park & Wildland: Winagami Lake is a provincial park and wildland located approximately 30km northwest of High Prairie.



Big Lakes County is home to **26,957 HECTARES** of park & protected natural assets.

2 PROVINCIAL PARKS:
Hilliard's Bay & Winagami Lake



4 Historical
Museums



8 Major Events
Year-Round



The **PEAK TIME** for tourism in the region is from July to September.



WINTER TOURISM in the region is also growing in popularity due to activities such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing.



RICH TRADITIONAL AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Big Lakes County's population is 52% Indigenous. Located in the county are five hamlets, two towns, five First Nations Communities, and three Métis Settlements. There are many opportunities to learn more about the Indigenous and pioneer cultures that first lived in this area.

Grouard Native Cultural Arts Museum: The Native Cultural Arts Museum provides learning experiences to the public by respectfully portraying the history, cultures, and languages of Northern Alberta. The Museum's collection celebrates various aspects of Aboriginal cultures, with a special focus on Métis peoples and the Woodland Cree of northern Alberta. The Museum's historical and contemporary collections serve to educate the public by depicting Aboriginal lifestyles through exhibits of art, music, hunting, regalia, clothing, and more.

High Prairie & District Museum: The High Prairie and District Museum is located in the town of High Prairie as the Gateway to the Peace. The Museum's exhibits tell the history of the Town and Big Lakes County; from pre-contact, with exhibits of locally collected stone tools and fossils, to current community themes.

Kinosayo Museum: The Kinosayo Museum, provides visitors with an inviting glimpse into what life was like in the days of pioneerism and allows visitors to experience the beauty of Northern Alberta's wildlife with one of the most developed wildlife exhibits in Alberta.

Pioneer Threshermans Association: Pioneer Threshermans is located 15km east of High Prairie in the Triangle District within Big Lakes County. The museum has a large collection of agricultural machinery (tractors, combines, balers, and threshers) and historic buildings (sawmill, blacksmith shop, log house, church and flour mill).

BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Big Lakes County is developing a tourism strategy that aims to enhance a visitor's overall experience. We are looking at all aspects, from better internet connectivity and information booths, to beautification, new policies and supports, and more.

Tourism is already thriving in Big Lakes County. Approximately 29 percent of travelers to Northern Alberta travel for pleasure, making it the second most popular reason to go north, according to Alberta Culture & Tourism. There is room for growth and supporting services and events. Big Lakes County had 111 businesses in 2016, greatly increasing 26.1% from 88 in 2015. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting segment had the largest increase over last year, increasing 216.7% to 19.

Shaw's Point Resort: This family-run private resort has two marinas and over 600 RV lots, as well as cabins. The fully developed and full-serviced resort was founded in the early 80s. Today, there are tens of thousands of visitors per year. According to the resort, the economic impact of the resort is close to \$20M. Shaw's hosts the Golden Walleye Classic that for decades has been a premier event with a current purse value of \$100,000.

Hamlet of Jossard: This former fishing village is now home to several campgrounds, seasonal lots, and subdivision developments alongside or next to Lesser Slave Lake. There is one public marina

and the largest private marina in the County and the province at Shadow Creek Resort. Young families and retirees live seasonally or year-round in Jossard. The potential in Jossard is huge with developments already underway.

Hamlets of Faust & Kinuso : The Hamlet of Faust is located on Lesser Slave Lake and has tremendous development opportunities. The Hamlet of Kinuso is near Lesser Slave Lake and Spruce Point Park . Kinuso has all the amenities that a visitor needs including a general store, restaurants, a hotel, and a museum. Spruce Point Park also has the annual Wildrose Rodeo, music events, and more.



ABOUT BIG LAKES COUNTY

Big Lakes County is one of 64 rural municipal districts in Alberta, situated 365 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, the province's capital city.

Total Area: 13,942.43 sq. km.

Total population in this area: 16,832

- » 52% Indigenous (First Nations or Métis)
- » A small, but diverse immigrant population

Hamlets: Enilda, Jossard, Faust, Kinuso, and Grouard

Major Parks: Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park and Winagami Lake Provincial Park

Major Lakes: Lesser Slave Lake, Winagami Lake, and Snipe Lake

Municipal Tax Rates (in millions):

- » Residential/Farmland: 4.25
- » Non-Residential: 14.5

Property Tax Rates (in millions):

- » Residential/Farmland: 6.7674
- » Non-Residential: 18.2084



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Our visionary, coordinated, and ambitious economic development leadership is available to provide you with more information and to facilitate your success. Please contact Big Lakes County Economic Development Authority at ecdev@biglakescounty.ca.

For up-to-date statistics on Big Lakes County, access the following resources:

The Government of Alberta Regional Dashboard:
regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/big-lakes

Townfolio's interactive data profile on Big Lakes County:
townfolio.co/ab/big-lakes