

103,690 Overnight Stays at Camping Parks

Thirteen (13) of Nova Scotia's provincial parks will open by June 5. Seven day-use and camping parks opened on Friday, May 15 in time for the Victoria Day weekend. Provincial parks attract more than a million visitors annually, with the number of campers increasing each year.

The 2026-27 provincial budget includes \$9.5 million for improving campsites, updating washrooms and upgrading roads, parking lots and trails. Visitors will see improved amenities and services at parks including Blomidon, Dollar Lake and Martinique Beach.

In 2025, there were 103,690 overnight stays at provincial camp-

ing parks, a nine per cent increase over 2024 and a new record - the first time there have been more than 100,000.

Last year, 56 per cent of campers were from Nova Scotia, 32 per cent from other parts of Canada and 12 per cent were international visitors.

Alcohol and cannabis are not permitted at day-use parks.

People should take precautions to prevent tick exposure when they are outdoors, such as tucking in shirts and pulling socks over pant legs; for early protection against Lyme disease, people can visit their local pharmacist to have their tick bite assessed and determine if a preventive antibiotic is appropriate

Wood Heat Conversions to Support Forestry Sector

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Landon Reginato, Manager of Operations, Mira Forestry, Cape Breton added, "Wood heat today is professionally managed and monitored just like any commercial heating system. Modern wood-chip heating facilities are automated, clean and efficient. Most of our material comes from decaying or stagnant

trees that are no longer growing well. The wood is then removed from the forest, chipped and delivered as fuel."

This is the first major project under the government's wood initiative announced in July 2025. The deadline for submissions is June 24. Using wood products aligns with the Nova Scotia Loyal program, reduces reliance on imports and

enhances export markets. It also supports the forestry sector, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and helps the province move to a low-carbon economy.

Quick Facts: 20 public buildings, including schools and hospitals, already use wood heat, and two more are in development. All departments have been directed to

look for every opportunity to use mass timber, wood pellets, biomass, biofuels and other products made with wood left over from sustainable harvesting and sawmilling and the Province has updated design and procurement policies to prioritize the use of wood products in new buildings and renovations.

Backgrounder to "Why Use Wood"

The Province of Nova Scotia is making wood construction and heating with wood a priority in public buildings.

Direction to government departments: All provincial government departments are looking for every opportunity to use local wood materials and byproducts, including innovative new uses where applicable. These include lumber, mass timber, wood pellets, biomass, biofuels and other products made with wood that's leftover from sustainable harvesting and sawmilling.

Rationale: This focus on wood products supports goals to enhance markets, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move Nova Scotia to a low carbon economy. It also aligns with the Nova Scotia Loyal Program, encouraging the use of local resources to strengthen the provincial economy, support the forestry sector, and reduce reliance on imported alternatives.

Implementation: Government departments will collaborate with the departments of Natural Resources and Public Works to prioritize the use of these wood products in new construction, renovation and conversion from oil to wood heat in public buildings. They will also prioritize use of wood where applicable in projects external to government that are fully or partially funded by government.

Short term actions include:

Review the design manual and procurement policies for government buildings to incorporate sustainable wood practices to ensure wood heating and construction are considered as per the National Code and the Nova Scotia Provincial Building Codes.

Review provincial design requirements to remove barriers to using wood in public procurement policies and infrastructure projects.

Amend provincial design requirements that prevent wood use and allow mass timber and biofuels to be accepted as equivalents or alternatives to non-organic and non-combustible construction and heating applications.

Include terms and conditions in provincially funded projects (i.e. nursing homes, etc) to utilize local wood materials and byproducts, where applicable.

Ongoing actions include:

Convert fossil fuel heating systems in public buildings to wood heating systems where possible.

Expand the use of modern, efficient wood-fired heating systems in public buildings and district heating projects.

Support the bioeconomy sector capacity building and the industrial development of biofuels, bioplastics, and other high-value bio-based products from residual wood.

Conduct research studies on carbon modelling and lifecycle analysis of wood-based materials.

Collaborate with research institutions and industry stakeholders to advance technological innovations in the provincial bioeconomy sector.

Wood materials and uses

Mass timber products are solid, structural load-bearing components such as columns, beams, and panels, typically manufactured by fastening multiple layers of wood together with glue, dowels or nails, and are engineered for high strength. They have similar fire and seismic performance to concrete and steel but are significantly lighter in weight and outperform traditional light-frame wood construction.

Biomass is organic material derived from plants, animals and microorganisms that can be used as a source of energy. It includes wood, agricultural residues, manure, food waste and algae. Biomass is a renewable resource because it can be replenished through natural growth and biological processes.

Pellets are small, cylindrical pieces of compressed wood made from sawdust, wood shavings or other wood waste. They are a form of biomass fuel commonly used for heating, electricity generation and industrial energy production.

Biofuels are renewable energy sources from organic matter (biomass) such as plants, agricultural crops, forestry residues or animal waste. They are used primarily as alternatives to fossil fuels in transportation, heating and electricity generation.

District heating is a system for distributing heat generated in a centralized location (such as a biomass plant, combined heat and power plant, or industrial facility) through a network of insulated underground pipes to multiple buildings for space heating and hot water.

Park visitors are reminded to be vigilant about wildfire prevention. Campfires and smoking are not allowed in day-use parks or at beaches at any time, and people at provincial camping parks and other campgrounds must follow daily provincial burn restrictions. That means campfires are only permitted after 2 p.m. and before 8 a.m. when the Province's BurnSafe map is green, or between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. when the map is yellow - the same as campfires in people's backyards. If the map is red, campfires are not allowed. A \$25,000 fine applies to violations of the daily burn restrictions.

Devices such as gas stoves and charcoal briquette barbecues can be used any time, following manufacturers' instructions.



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