

**TIAM AND ITM CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT VISITORS AND BUSINESSES
IN RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

Parks Canada's Unilateral Decisions Directly Impacting Local Communities

Wasagaming, MB – Parks Canada announced sweeping restrictions on water access throughout Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP). This follows months of uncertainty and the cancellation of all water-based events earlier this year. The Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba (TIAM) and Indigenous Tourism Manitoba (ITM) are concerned that the ban has been announced without complementary supports to address impacts to visitor experiences, local businesses, and local jobs.

“Federal and provincial governments have a duty to step up with support programs to ensure businesses can continue to serve visitors to the region.” said John Gunter, TIAM Board Chair.

Parks Canada has indicated that this decision is valid throughout 2024 with no timeline for reassessment. The impacts from this decision are already being felt, including by new Indigenous tourism operators.

“Indigenous Tourism Manitoba is deeply concerned about the impact of these restrictions, including on Indigenous tourism operations offering visitors the chance to immerse themselves in the rich culture and traditions of the area's Indigenous peoples,” said Holly Courchene, CEO, ITM. “We urge governments to work with us to find a solution that preserves the park's beauty while ensuring the viability of our tourism industry.”

TIAM and ITM, in collaboration with local businesses and operators in RMNP, are requesting that in addition to establishing an advisory committee on lake protection for RMNP, the federal and provincial governments invest in enhanced visitor experiences for the Park and establish an economic relief fund for local businesses. Specifically, they are calling for:

- A minimum investment of \$500,000 in a 2024 Visitor Experience Fund for the Park
- A minimum investment of \$500,000 in a 2024 Economic Relief Fund for local businesses

“It is critical, now more than ever, that all levels of government engage with the community to address the impacts of this decision and develop long-term solutions.” said Chuck Davidson, President & CEO, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.