

## Camping trends

Carol Ann Quibell photo



THIS IS THE LIFE: Bill and Shirl Vankoughnett enjoy camping at Derby Reach near Fort Langley, B.C., each year; however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a camping spot.

## Joining the club

More RVers are discovering the advantages of membership camping

by CAROL ANN QUIBELL | Membership camping has been around Canada for many years and is quickly becoming popular with campers and RVers of all ages. It may actually become a necessity in the future rather than an option since many campgrounds have recently closed due to owners taking advantage of rising land values and selling to developers.

Not to be confused with individually owned strata or leased lots, membership camping requires a one-time cost plus annual dues. This enables campers to stay in a variety of beautiful parks for no nightly fee. A membership gives campers a home park and connects them with affiliates all over North America where they may stay

for a much reduced rate.

Western Canada has one of the best examples of membership camping with Holiday Trails Resorts near Bridal Falls, B.C., a short drive from Vancouver. Holiday Trails' home park is actually a whole system rather than just one campground. Members stay for no fee at all Holiday Trails Resorts, including B.C. locations in Rosedale, Christina Lake, Chemainus and Cumberland. Also included in the system are resorts in Drumheller and Lethbridge, Alberta; one near Ferndale, Washington, and Host-Parks at Alberta Beach, Alberta, and Comox Valley on Vancouver Island.


"I want Canadians to be aware of the membership choice for camping and the

lifestyle that it provides," said Margot Bartsch, VP of business development with Holiday Trails Resorts.

Having a membership provides many options that are as diversified as campers themselves. The ease of making reservations, ensuring a site is available, no nightly fees in their home system and a consistently high standard of amenities are definite pluses. A membership also offers long-term benefits and can be considered an asset that may be sold, transferred or left as an inheritance.

Campers in Western Canada are very fortunate to have many beautiful and picturesque campgrounds operated by the provincial governments and regional districts such as Metro Vancouver, as well as the private campgrounds and resorts scattered throughout the provinces. The number of campgrounds and/or camping facilities is diverse. They range from the most basic rustic spot in the wilderness to the most luxurious city resort with every amenity possible. Unfortunately, this wonderful resource for campers may not be as plentiful in the future. According to Bartsch, more than 74 campgrounds have closed within the past couple of years—mostly due to housing or condo development.

Bill and Shirl Vankoughnett enjoy their favourite campground at Derby Reach near Fort Langley, B.C., operated by Metro Vancouver. When asked why they return to the same campground each year, Bill said, "We love it. We're only half an hour from home but it's a whole different world. Where else can you park 10 feet from a river and fish from your doorstep? But it's getting more crowded all the time and hard to get a spot."

As more people join the thousands of RVers now enjoying themselves, the shortage of campsites will become more evident. Many RVers never consider buying a campground membership; it may appear too confusing so they walk away and therefore may be missing a fabulous opportunity. For those campers who appreciate their comforts and wish to become part of an RV family, membership camping is worth checking out. 

### RESOURCES:

[www.holidaytrailsresorts.com](http://www.holidaytrailsresorts.com)  
[www.camping.bc.ca](http://www.camping.bc.ca)  
[www.discoveralberta.com/Wheretostay/Campgrounds](http://www.discoveralberta.com/Wheretostay/Campgrounds)  
[www.campcanada.com/Saskatchewan](http://www.campcanada.com/Saskatchewan)



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