

Public Input to Lillooet Area Park Planning – A Summary

BC Parks began a park planning process in May 2011 for nine parks in the Lillooet area. These included:

- South Chilcotin Mountains Park (previously named Spruce Lake Protected Area)
- Big Creek Park.
- Bridge River Delta Park.
- Yalakom Park.
- Fred Antoine Park.
- French Bar Park.
- Marble Canyon Park.
- Skihist Park.
- Gwyneth Lake Park.

An online comment form was available for individuals and groups to provide comments through the BC Parks website from October, 2011 through January 2012. This report is a summary of this online input. Public input was also sought through meetings with various stakeholder groups. Summaries of these meetings were made available on the BC Parks website.

Number of Responses

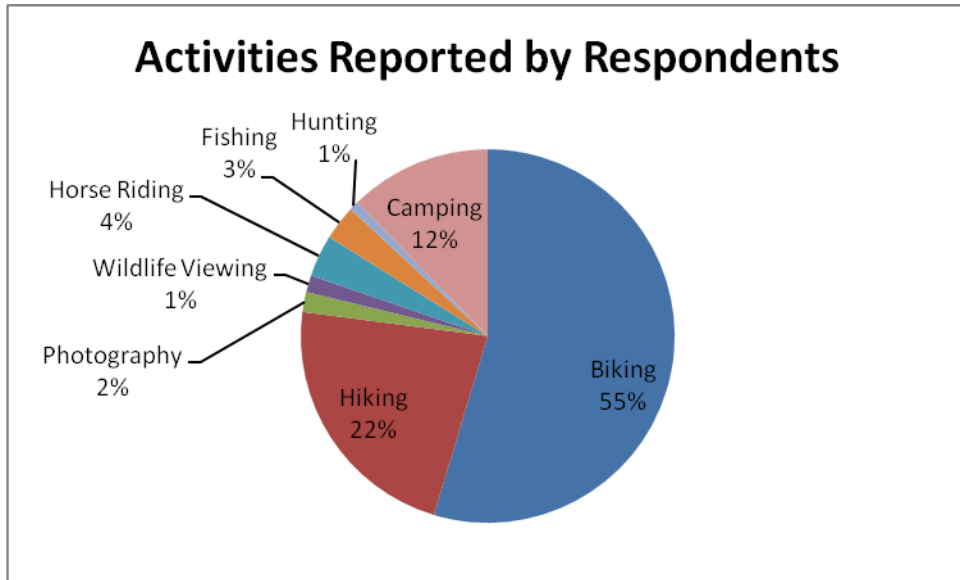
A total of 781 comment forms were received, representing 1432 individuals. Almost all comments applied to South Chilcotin Mountains Park or to all parks in aggregate. Little input was received specific to the eight other parks for which plans are being developed. Seventeen comments were specific to Big Creek Park, three to Yalakom Park and one for Marble Canyon Park. A total of 568 respondents, or 73%, reported having visited at least one of the parks within the last two years.

Activities by Visitors

Of those visitors reporting to have taken part in activities within the parks, most (55%) reported to have participated in mountain biking. Most visitors reported taking part in more than one activity. For instance, many of those participating in mountain biking also reported participating in hiking.

It was known that a campaign was underway by the mountain biking community to provide input to the survey. This is likely the reason for the large number of respondents reporting as participating in biking and should be taken into consideration when viewing the results of this report.

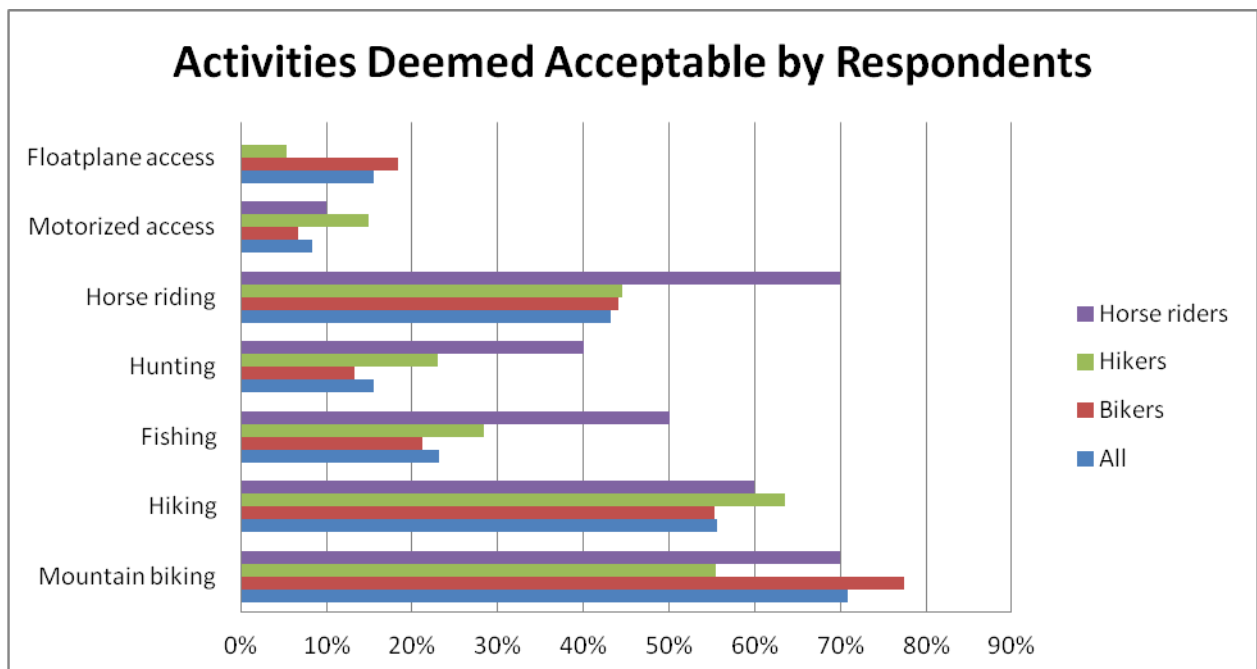
Individuals made up most of the respondents; commercially guided individuals are not well represented in the survey. Of those answering this question, twenty-two respondents specified being guided, while 280 reported as entering the parks as individuals.



Acceptable Activities

Respondents were asked what activities they considered to be acceptable within the parks. Most respondents listed multiple activities as being acceptable. Due to fact that most visitors to the parks reported participating in multiple activities, it was not possible to present data by those only taking part in one activity.

To get an indication if there was a difference in acceptable activities between users, the data were analyzed separately for those who reported participating in only mountain biking (420), hiking (74) or horseback riding (10). The other activities of hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and photography were considered secondary activities while moving through the parks using one of the three modes of travel.

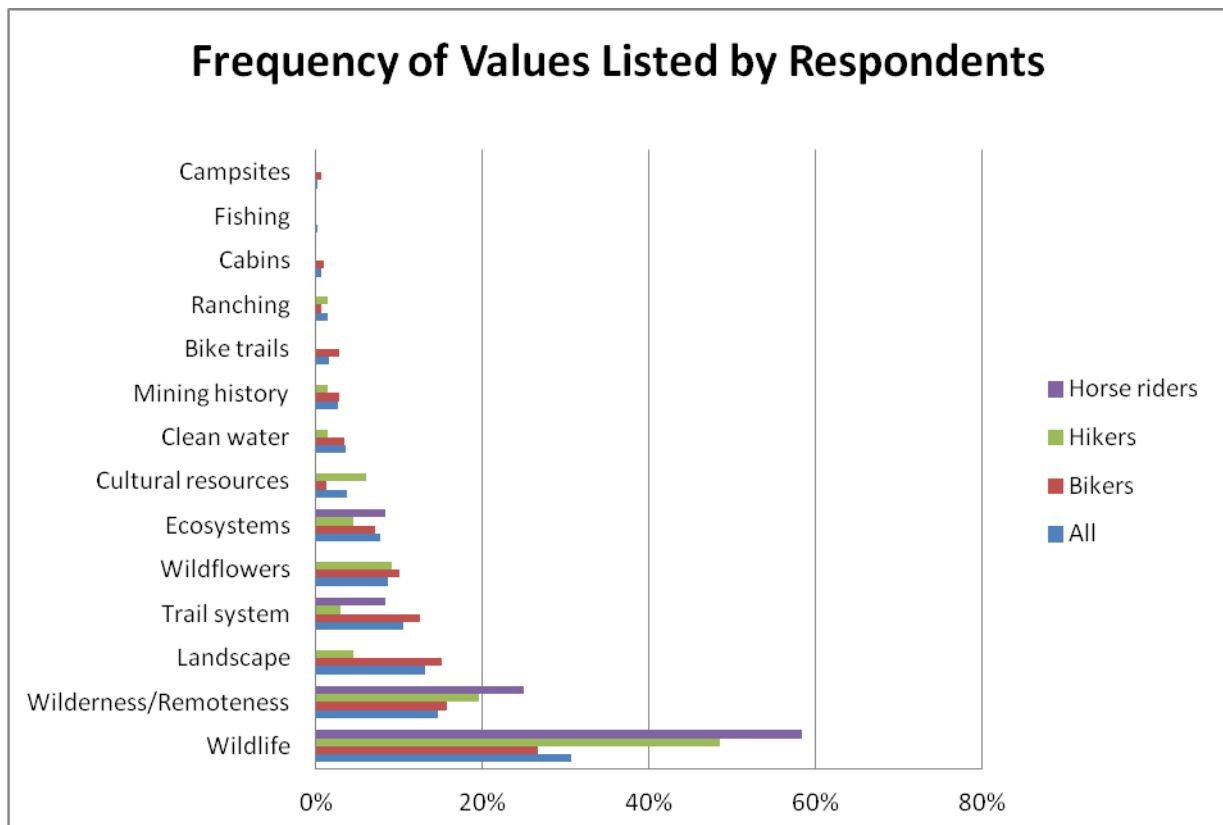


The results indicate that most users of the parks are tolerant of other activities, with acceptable activities showing a similar pattern of acceptability among different user types. For example, 55% of those reporting themselves as being exclusively hikers listed mountain biking and horseback riding as acceptable uses within the parks (this may seem low, but only 63% of this same group listed their own activity as being acceptable). Similarly, 55% and 44% of bikers listed hiking and horseback riding, respectively, as acceptable uses (78% of bikers listed their own activity as acceptable). Horseback riders appeared to be most tolerant of other activities, especially hunting and fishing, but this was from a small sample size of 10 respondents that may have skewed results.

Respondents were also asked about what activities they considered unacceptable and should be prohibited. Motorized vehicle use was the number one response, accounting for 401 out of 426, or 94%, of responses. Float plane access and commercial activities were each cited as unacceptable by 1% of respondents.

Values

The online survey requested respondents to list the values they considered important within the parks. Again, multiple values were reported by most respondents.

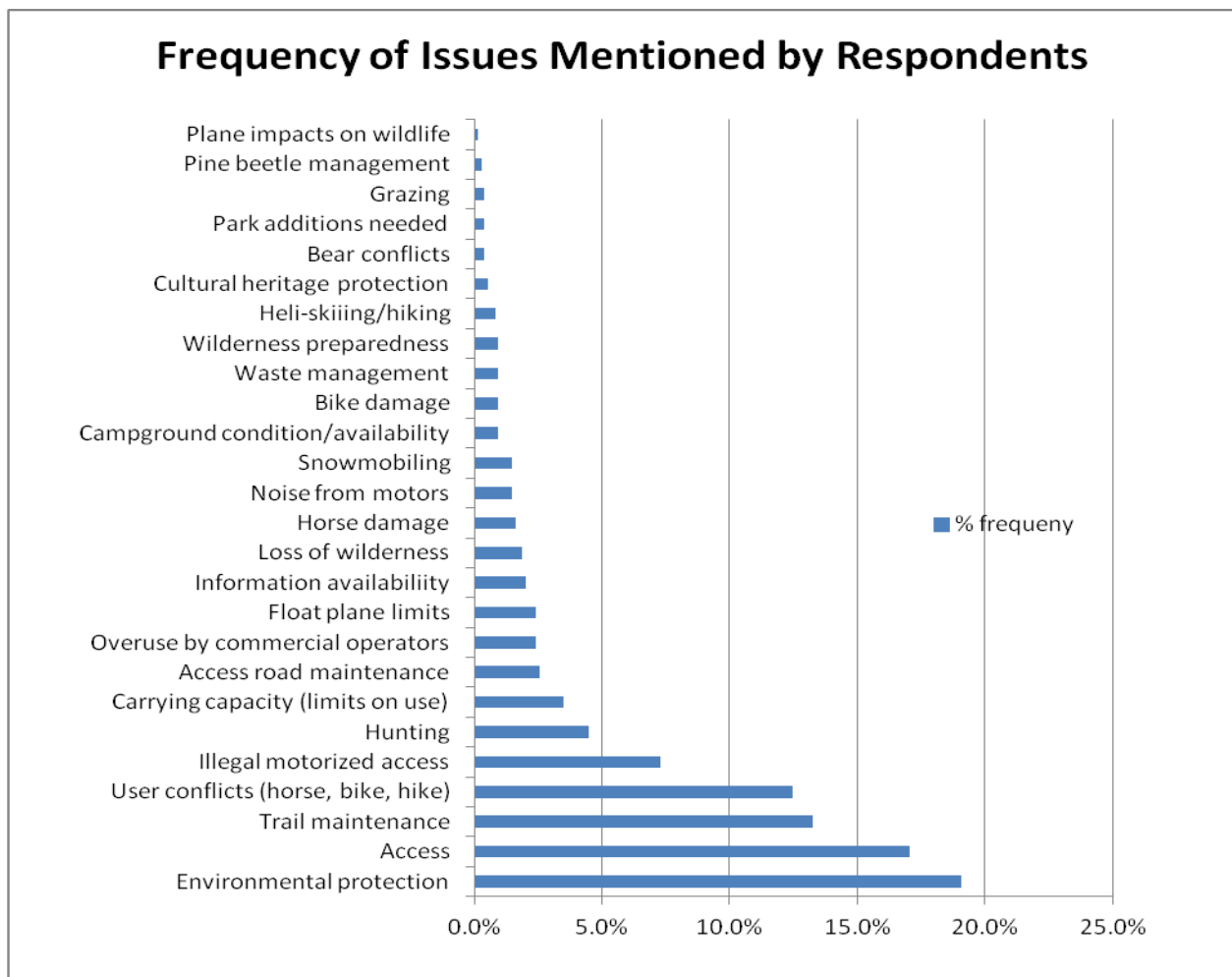


Natural values were the most frequently cited, with wildlife, wilderness or remoteness, landscape, wildflowers, ecosystems and clean water accounting for 80% of all items listed. Wildlife was the most frequently listed value.

Some differences between user types was noticed. Those reported as only hiking or horseback riders valued wildlife and the wilderness/remoteness more than bikers. Bikers appeared to be slightly more interested in the landscape and trail system than the other user types. However, the same pattern of values was exhibited by all users, with wildlife and wilderness/remoteness being the most frequent value listed by each user type. Natural values accounted for 78%, 88% and 98% of items listed by bikers, hikers and horseback riders respectively.

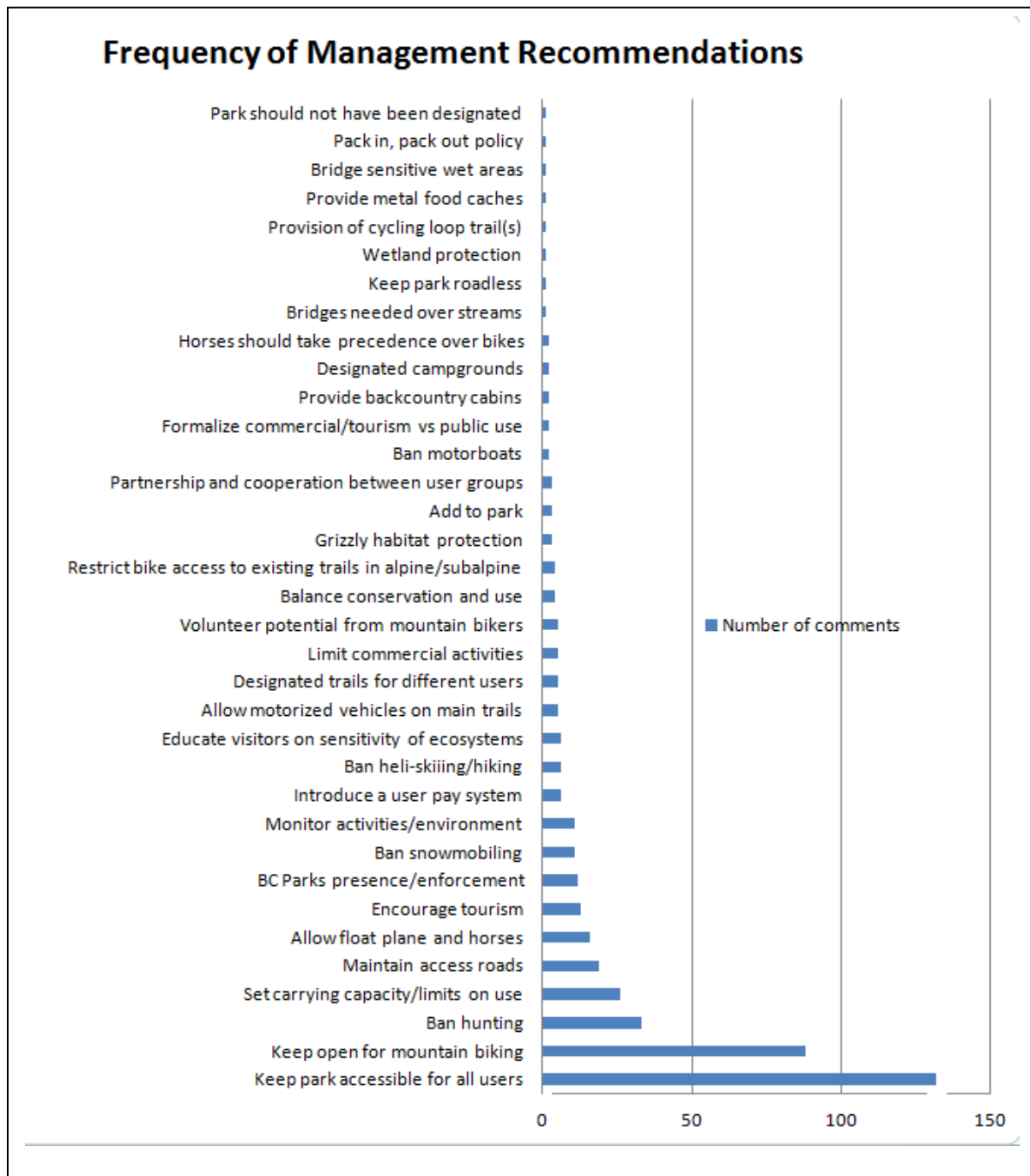
Issues

When asked about the issues that needed to be addressed within the parks through the management plan, environmental protection was the most frequent, followed by access, trail maintenance, user conflicts and illegal motorized activity.



Management Recommendations

Respondents provided ideas on management through general comments or while providing input to values and issues. These are listed in the following table by frequency.



Keeping the park accessible for all users, and specifically for mountain biking, was the main input for future management. A lower number of recommendations called for removing hunting, setting carrying capacity for use and maintaining access. Again, it must be taken into consideration that most respondents were from the mountain biking community.

Use of Results

The results of this online survey provides important insight into park visitors, their values and desired experiences that attracted them to the parks and the issues that they feel should be addressed. Management recommendations provided by respondents are valued by BC Parks and will be considered during preparation of the management plans.

Development of the park management plans will incorporate the information obtained from this survey, as well as that obtained from various groups, organizations and commercial operators that have provided input. Information and direction from the Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan process, that recommended the designation of the parks and the values to be maintained through a large public consultation process, will provide important input for park management.

Given the values and issues expressed by the public, conservation of natural values will be a key consideration in development of the management plans.

Many respondents provided their e-mail addresses during the survey. These will be placed on a contact list for the duration of the planning process and notified of progress at each step in the development of the management plans. The list will be deleted upon approval of the final management plans for these parks.