

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

FOR ELECTORAL AREA C (Fort St. James Rural)



2026

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Thank you to those residents, members of the public, and stakeholders who shared their thoughts and ideas through the engagement process.

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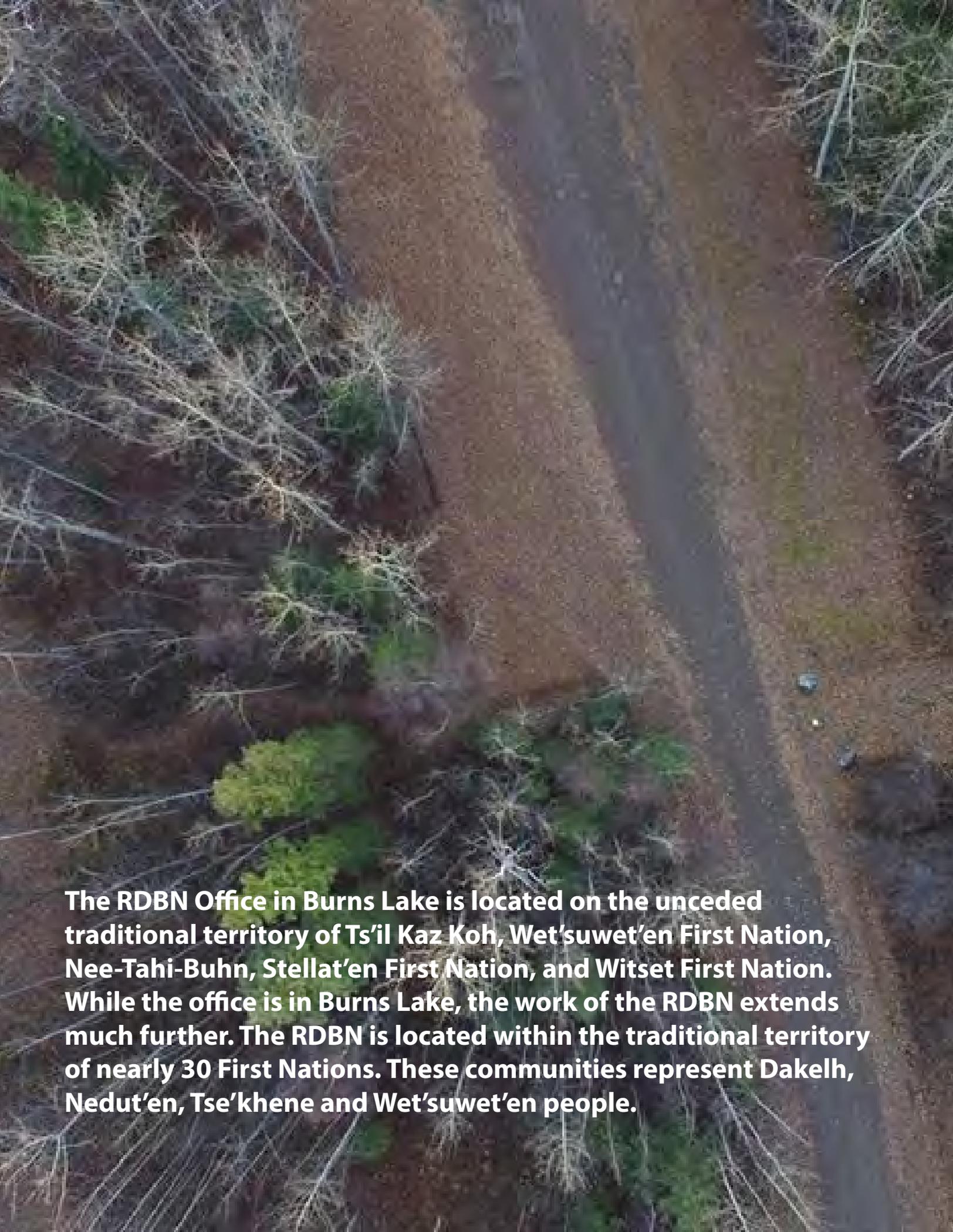
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An executive summary will be included in the Final Report.

An aerial photograph of a narrow stream flowing through a forest. The water is dark and still, reflecting the surrounding trees. The banks are covered in dense, green vegetation, including tall grasses and shrubs. The overall scene is a natural, wooded landscape.

The RDBN Office in Burns Lake is located on the unceded traditional territory of Ts'il Kaz Koh, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Stelat'en First Nation, and Witsset First Nation. While the office is in Burns Lake, the work of the RDBN extends much further. The RDBN is located within the traditional territory of nearly 30 First Nations. These communities represent Dakelh, Nedut'en, Tse'khene and Wet'suwet'en people.

1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) encompasses the north-central region of British Columbia, with the majority of the Regional District's residents living in and around the communities along Highway 16, though settlements can be found across the region. The RDBN is home to 14 First Nations, with many others having identified Aboriginal rights or title. These nations have been stewards of the lands since time immemorial and continue to have significant cultural values and interests. The region includes rich agricultural lands, abundant rivers and lakes, as well as extensive forestry and mining opportunities that provide economic opportunities. Recreation opportunities including fishing, hunting, camping, are essential to enhancing both residents and visitors alike, while bolstering the local economy.

The RDBN's *Parks and Outdoor Recreation Study* (2020) identified the need for a regional parks and trails service to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation in the region's rural areas and address gaps in the recreation services provided by volunteer clubs, municipalities, Recreation Sites & Trails BC, and BC Parks. In response to the 2020 study, the RDBN initiated the creation of four Parks and Trails Service Areas including Smithers and Electoral Area A, Houston, Granisle and Electoral Area G, Burns Lake and Electoral Area B and Electoral Area E, and Fort St. James and Electoral Area C. RDBN has also established four Recreation Contribution Service Areas that provide financial assistance to organizations offering recreational activities for residents and visitors. To facilitate the implementation of these services, the Regional District is developing Parks and Trails Master Plans for each service area. This plan is the first for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural).

1.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan builds on the progress made by municipalities, community groups, and other parks and trail managers in providing outdoor recreation experiences in Electoral Area C. The plan sets out a vision, goals, and specific recommendations to guide management of parks and trails in the region over the next 10 years.

1.1.2 PLANNING AREA

Dakelh, Nedut'en, and Tse'khene speaking peoples have resided upon the lands that include Electoral Area C since time immemorial. First Nations with reserve communities and Aboriginal rights or title in Electoral Area C include the Binche Whut'en, Nak'azdli Whut'en, Takla Nation, Tl'azt'en Nation, and Yekooche First Nations (Figure 1). The Stellat'en, Lheidli T'enneh, Saik'uz, McLeod Lake, Halfway River, West Moberly, Doig, Nadleh Whut'en, Tsay Keh Dene, and Lake Babine Nations have also identified Aboriginal rights or title in Electoral Area C.

This plan applies to Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural), located in the northeastern part of the RDBN. The area extends from Fort St. James and the Stuart River Valley in the southeast to the northern end of Takla Lake in the northwest. Electoral Area C surrounds the District of Fort St. James, the Electoral Area's only incorporated municipality and its main population centre. Most residents live in the Fort St. James area, with additional population in the First Nations communities of Binche and Yekooche on Stuart Lake, Takla on Takla Lake, and the unincorporated settlements of Germansen Landing and Manson Creek.

Like residents across the Bulkley-Nechako region, residents of Electoral Area C enjoy many opportunities for outdoor recreation in parks, trails, recreation sites, and Crown lands. It's distance from Highway 16 results in a rural, independent lifestyle.

Electoral Area C has a population of 1,266 residents (2021). Its numbers have decreased by 12% since 2016, similar to the decline seen in Fort St. James. The Electoral Area has a slightly higher proportion of seniors age 65 or older (22%) than the RDBN (18%) and British Columbia (20%). Electoral Area C has a similar proportion of youth aged 14 years or younger (13%) as British Columbia (14%), but a lower proportion than the RDBN (19%). Adjacent to Fort St. James is Naka'zdli's main reserve, Nak'azdli 1, which has a population of 528 residents. Youth make up 19% of the reserve's population, consistent with the RDBN average.

Roughly 18% of Electoral Area C residents reported some form of Indigenous identity. Only 35 residents identified as visible minorities, although this demographic is commonly underrepresented in census data.



Figure 1: First Nations Communities in the Plan Area (Source: OCP 2024)



Figure 2: Electoral Area C Boundary.

1.2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 – Review of Relevant Background Materials: The first phase included background research, reviewing relevant regional strategies and bylaws, and mapping the existing inventory of parks and trails in the region.

Phase 2 - Community Engagement Round 1: In the second phase, site visits, discussions with RDBN staff, and community engagement occurred. This involved outreach to local First Nations, interviewing interest-holders, a public in-person pop-up event, and a public online survey. These sessions aimed to introduce the community to the project, understand their values and priorities, and identify challenges and opportunities regarding parks and trails in the region. Findings from engagement activities were summarized in a Draft Engagement Summary.

Phase 3 - Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan: This phase involved developing the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan, including information gathered in the first two phases of the project and a draft vision, goals, and recommendations.

Future Phases

Phase 4 - Community Engagement Round 2: The fourth phase featured a second round of community engagement to report the plan’s findings back to the community and collect feedback on the draft vision, goals, and recommendations. Round two of engagement included another online survey and a virtual open house. Engagement findings from both rounds of engagement were summarized in a final engagement summary.

Phase 5 - Final Parks and Trails Plan: The fifth phase included incorporating feedback from the final round of engagement into the draft plan to develop the final Parks and Trails Plan. The final plan was presented to the Regional District’s Board of Directors.



Figure 3: Project timeline

1.2.1 RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The Electoral Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan is informed by the following RDBN strategic documents.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

The RDBN's Strategic Plan outlines the vision, mission, and priorities of the Regional District as it plans for future community growth between 2022 and 2026. The Plan outlines four strategic focus areas: relationships with First Nations, advocacy with the Province, housing supply, and community and economic sustainability.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: Park and trail planning and development present opportunities to implement the Plan's recommendations for collaborating with First Nations on areas of mutual interest. They also serve as opportunities to act on the recommendation to provide services to First Nations communities. Additionally, outdoor recreation-based tourism could help advance the goal of economic diversification in Electoral Area C.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – 2020

This study was part of the groundwork that led to the development of the Parks and Trails Service. It reviewed community demand for outdoor recreation across the Regional District and surveyed outdoor recreation clubs that operate in the region. It also gives an overview of regional district park services across British Columbia and their service-delivery strategies. The study presents potential strategies for the RDBN to provide park and recreation services to residents in rural regions of the Regional District.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: This study established the vision for delivering outdoor recreation in the region, where volunteer-based clubs continue to play a vital role in providing recreation experiences, backed by support and collaboration from the Regional District.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan – 2024

The OCP identifies the values and aspirations of Electoral Area C's residents with respect to land use and development. It states objectives and policies to govern areas of different land-use designations and provides management guidelines for park and recreation lands.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Fort St. James Rural OCP emphasises the protection of areas having significant environmental or recreational value, and recommends developing a Parks & Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C. The OCP supports the development of recreation access to lakes and rivers. The OCP also maps areas with potential for new parks and trails, and areas where development proponents should enhance recreation values.

Bulkley-Nechako Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee - Accessibility Plan – 2024

The Accessibility Plan identifies barriers that people living with accessibility concerns experience in the RDBN. The plan includes recommendations to promote a more accessible built environment, including in parks, trails, and outdoor public spaces.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Accessibility Plan recommends the design or upgrading of recreation infrastructure to adhere to standards set out in the BC Parks Universal Design Guide Front-Country Parks.

RDBN Value of Tourism Report – 2017

The report identifies the value of tourism for communities across the RDBN in accordance with Tourism BC's Value of Tourism Model. The report summarizes the benefits of tourism in the RDBN and includes an estimate of tourism spending in the region. The report also contains a review of local planning documents related to tourism.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Report contains no specific recommendations relevant for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, but its findings demonstrate that infrastructure is in place to allow the RDBN to benefit from tourism, which is often driven by outdoor recreation in the region.

District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan – 2010

This Plan includes a vision and strategies to guide land use and development in Fort St. James. The plan includes objectives and policies on parks, trails, and open spaces. This includes a classification system of municipal parks as well as acquisition/suitability criteria for future parks. The plan emphasizes supporting the development of regionally significant recreation amenities to benefit residents and promote tourism. The plan also includes objectives and policies to guide the development of active transportation infrastructure.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The OCP recommends a downtown and community revitalization project, including signage, appearance beautification, and developing the lakeshore/bringing the lake into the forefront. In addition, the OCP proposes developing walking, hiking, and biking trails with historical information and boardwalks at key locations. The OCP also recommends establishing related community infrastructure, such as a swimming pool, an arts centre, and a skateboard park.

Parks And Trails Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1930, 2020

A bylaw to establish a parks and trails service for Fort St. James and Electoral Area C.

Implications for this Plan: This bylaw authorizes the RDBN to establish, operate, and promote parks and trails, thereby supporting the implementation of recommendations in this Plan related to creating new parks and trails.

1.2.2 ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT

The role of the Regional Parks and Trails Service is to establish, manage, and promote parks and trails, and by extension, support healthy and active living, foster community bonds through recreation, and enable individuals to enjoy the natural environment. It is the intention of the RDBN to complement and coordinate with the overall network of parks and trails in the region but not duplicate the services of other agencies in fulfilling its mandate. The general role of the park and trails system is to provide opportunities for the public to access and enjoy significant destinations for a range of year-round outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, biking, walking, boating, paddling, fishing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and swimming.

The RDBN intends to take a phased approach to developing parks and trails, focusing first on providing access to day-use recreation areas, improving access to lakes and shorelines, and supporting the efforts of other government and community organizations to provide recreation services. Future phases will be determined by the availability of resources, funding opportunities, and community priorities.

1.2.3 REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICES

In addition to the Parks and Trails Service and Recreation Contribution Service, the RDBN also does the following:

- **Grants in Aid:** The RDBN provides grants to community organizations through an application process which is reviewed by the RDBN's Board. Grants may be used for cultural, charitable, sporting, recreational, service activities and special events for the purpose of benefiting the community.
- **Canada Community Building Fund:** The RDBN administers funding and local non-profit organizations can apply for support on a variety of community projects, including outdoor recreation capital projects.
- **Transfers to Partner Municipalities for Recreation Services:** The RDBN may collect property taxes from rural residents to contribute to the costs that municipalities incur for providing recreation services. The RDBN does currently contribute to the Fort St. James arena.
- **Grant Writing Support:** The RDBN has an economic development team with proposal writers on staff that can assist non-profit organizations with the grant writing process.¹

¹ Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – June 2020

2 CURRENT PARKS & TRAIL SYSTEM



2.1 THE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

Parks and trails play a crucial role in the region and are greatly appreciated by the community for providing recreational opportunities that enhance health and wellness. They serve as avenues for accessing nature, engaging in outdoor activities, and protecting open spaces for the benefit of future generations.

The RDBN is known for its many lakes and fishing opportunities, as well as abundant recreation sites, camping, and trail networks, particularly for motorized recreation, that weave through working forests and crown lands.

2.1.1 REGIONAL PLANNING

The RDBN Parks and Trails Service is administered by the Regional District’s Planning Department. In each of the four service areas, planning staff are responsible for overseeing the development of the Parks and Trails Service, coordinating with provincial government and community recreation organizations, offering outdoor recreation services in the regional district, and administering planning processes and capital projects maintenance of parks and trails.

Each parks and trails service area has unique challenges and opportunities, as well as distinct outdoor recreation needs. A key challenge for the RDBN has been the question of how to balance resources and staff time between each service area. In 2025, 20% of staff time was dedicated to Fort St. James/Electoral Area C, with additional time allocated for 2025/2026 to develop and implement this plan. As the parks and trails service in each area grows, additional staff resources may be needed to address inequities.

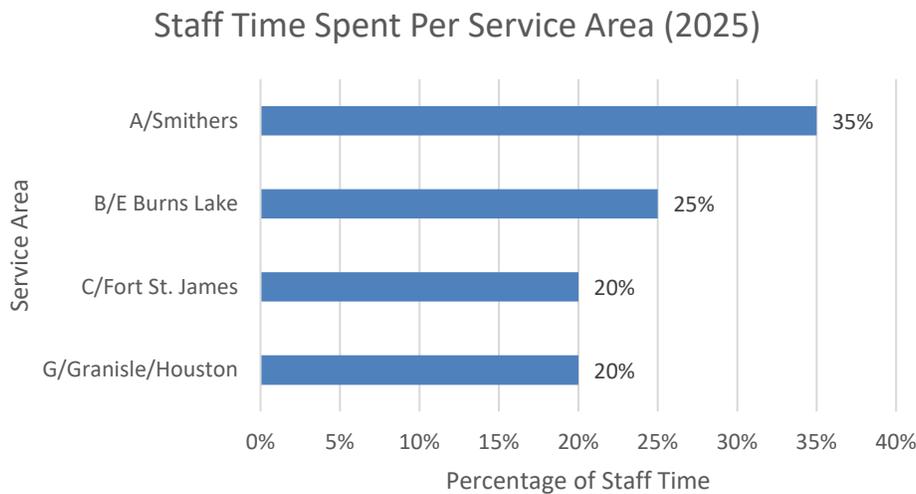


Figure 4: Staff Time Spent Per Parks and Trails Service Area

2.1.2 PARKLAND ACQUISITION

The RDBN has the authority to establish and operate parks and recreation services as set out in *Part 10 of the Local Government Act*. The *Act* allows the RDBN to acquire land for parks and trails and pass regulatory bylaws with respect to managing those parks. With the RDBN's establishment of a parks function by bylaw, the following funding streams are the main sources of revenue:

- **Property Taxes:** Property taxes are the most common revenue stream for supporting a parks and recreation function.
- **Canada Community Building Fund and other Senior Government Grants:** The RDBN has access to various government grant programs to fund parks and recreation infrastructure. Typically, these programs do not provide funding for maintenance or operational costs.²

Although not currently in use or commonly available, the following additional tools can be used to generate revenues for parks and recreation services, should opportunities arise:

- **Parkland or Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland at Time of Subdivision:** The *Act* gives the RDBN authority to require parkland dedication or cash in lieu of parkland dedication equivalent to the market value of 5% of the land at the time of subdivision.
- **Development Cost Charges (DCCs):** Through a Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw the RDBN may charge developers a fee at the time of development. DCCs for parks can be used for land acquisition and for specific improvements, such as trails and picnic areas.
- **Ecological gifts, bequests, life-estates, land donations:** The RDBN has the authority to accept ecological gifts of land. It can be a considerable tax benefit to a donor to have a land donation recognized as having "ecological significance" by Revenue Canada.

In each service area, there will be a separate Parkland Reserve Fund. The revenues collected within each service area will be used to cover the expenses for the capital, operational, and administrative aspects of the parks and trails service, specifically in that area.

² Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – June 2020

2.1.3 OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

Various levels of government, contractors, and recreation organizations play a significant role in parks and recreation in the planning area. These include:

- BC Parks – BC Parks holds tenure and manages provincial parks. Some are undeveloped designated park lands, while others have been improved with amenities like camping, trails, and boat launches.
- Parks Canada – Parks Canada owns and manages the National Historic Site at Fort St. James. The site includes a collection of wooden buildings restored to the fur trade era, and interpretive features, staff, and events are hosted during the summer months.
- District of Fort St. James – Fort St. James owns and manages municipal parks, trails, and sidewalks within the District boundaries, supporting community organizations and public users of parks and trails.
- First Nations – Indigenous Peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their inherent rights, including the rights of First Nations to own, use, develop and control lands and resources within their territories in BC First Nations are also responsible for on-reserve parks and trails.
- Private Businesses – Private businesses related to parks and trails include commercial campgrounds, marinas, shuttle and water taxi services, guiding and charter services, backcountry outfitters, lodging and restaurants. This plan focused on enhancing recreation that will compliment these services, enhancing the overall economic opportunities for the Electoral Area.
- Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) – Provide parks and management services for recreation sites and trails on backcountry Crown Land in Area C. These sites include various amenities such as campgrounds, day use areas, and washrooms.
- Recreation organizations – Provide operational services and maintenance of trails on Crown and community forest land, including the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and the Stuart Lake Nordic Society.

2.2 PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY

This section provides an inventory of parks and trails within the service area. The RDBN does not currently own, manage, or operate any parks or trails, so this section focuses on those provided by others. A comprehensive inventory of parks and trails in Electoral Area C enables the RDBN to bridge existing gaps in the parks and trails system and identify opportunities to expand service offerings.

Maps are provided in Appendix B.

2.2.1 RDBN PARKS AND TRAILS IN ELECTORAL AREA C

While there are no parks and trails owned and managed by RDBN within Electoral Area C, the Regional District cooperates with other recreation service providers to support the delivery of parks and trails within the area. The main mechanism is through the recreation contribution grant, which provides multi-year funding to outdoor recreation organizations such as the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and Stuart Lake Nordic Society for maintenance costs.

2.2.2 OTHER PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEMS

(1) District of Fort St. James

The District of Fort St. James owns and manages municipal parks, trails, and sidewalks within the District boundaries, supporting community organizations and public users of parks and trails. There are five municipal parks, including a waterfront park, plaza, and sports fields.

Table 1: Parks and Trails in the District of Fort St. James

Parks and Trails	Amenities
Cottonwood Park & Cottonwood Marina	Free WiFi; beach; beach volleyball; washrooms; change rooms; band stand; covered picnic area; playground; small campground; boat launch; boat moorage
Municipal Campground (within Cottonwood Park)	50 amp power at 4 waterfront sites; 30 amp power at Lakeshore Drive sites; water hook-ups; sani-stations
Goodwin Park	Playground; tennis courts; splash park; playing field; washroom
Rotary Kiddie Park	Playground; picnic tables
Spirit Square Park	Plaza; war memorial; botanical garden; monument to Johan Pitka

(2) Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC)

Recreation Sites and Trails BC (and their contractors) and partner recreation organizations, such as the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and Stuart Lake Nordic Society, are responsible for the operation and maintenance of recreation sites and trails on Crown and community forest lands. There are 26 RSTBC recreation sites and 586km of RSTBC trails in Electoral Area C.

Table 2: RSTBC Sites in the Service Area

Recreation Site Name
Ahdatay
Battleship Bay
Camp Lake
Camsell Lake
Chuchi Lake North
Chuchi Lake Point
Cripple (Nendatoo) Lake
Dem Lake
Dolphin Lake
Grassham Lake
Inzana Lake
Kalder Lake
Kloch Lake
Manson Lake
Philip Creek
Philip Lake South
Robinson Lake
Sakeniche Crossing
Sarah Point
Skunk Lake
Takatoot Lake
Tchentlo Hot Springs
Tezzeron Lake
Tsilcoh Falls
Whitefish Bay
Wolverine Lake

Table 3: RSTBC Trails in the Service Area

Recreation Trail Name
Duzcho Grease Trail
Fort St. James Snowmobile Trail South
Fraser Lake-Stuart Lake Trail
Island Lake Trail
Kazcheck Falls Trail
Murray Ridge Trail
Shass Mountain Trail

(3) BC Parks

BC Parks holds tenure and manages provincial parks (see Table 4). Most are undeveloped designated park lands that protect important habitats, lakes, and waterways. There are three main parks that are accessible and have amenities that support outdoor recreation:

- **Paarens Beach Park**, located 11 km from Fort St. James on the south side of Stuart Lake, is a full-service campground with 39 campsites and a day-use area. The park day use area includes a paved boat launch, a long beach along the lake, as well as a playground. Activities include boating, swimming, fishing, picnicing, and enjoying nature and the beautiful setting.
- **Sowchea Bay Park**, located 20km from Fort St. James on the south side of Stuart Lake, is a former forestry campground. The 30 smaller-vehicle campsites are rustic, with hand-pump water taps and pit toilets. Lake access is via a single-lane gravel boat launch, and there is no day-use area due to parking limitations.
- **Mount Pope Park** is a highly valued park close to Fort St. James that has a rock climbing area, caves, and hiking trails. There is also a network of mountain biking trails that traverse in and out of parklands and adjacent private properties known as the **Graveyard Trails** because the access point from Fort St. James is adjacent to a cemetery.

Other BC Parks lands, though scenic and ecologically rich, are remote and more difficult to access. While there is potential for more outdoor recreation, there are no immediate plans for additional amenities. With the abundance of lakes and rivers, two other BC Parks systems are worth noting.

- **Nation Lakes Chain** offers a 120 kilometre route to canoeists through four spectacular lakes of Tsayta, Indata, Tchentlo and Chuchi. It was established in 2004 as a result of the Fort St. James Land and Resource Management Plan. There are four road locations for canoe access and eight backcountry, water-access provincial campgrounds. There is one commercial lodge at the north end of the chain.
- **Stuart-Trembleur-Takla Lake boating system**, which has 630km of lakeshore with a series of small parks with protected anchorages and beaches, but no facilities.

(4) Parks Canada – National Historic Site

Parks Canada owns and operates the Fort St. James National Historic Site located in the heart of the District of Fort St. James. The Fort is open during the summer months and has historic recreations of buildings and interpretive programs focused on the fur trade era of the late 1800's. The Fort is a significant tourist draw and offers open space, beachfront access on Stuart Lake, and a large dock.

Table 2: BC Parks and Amenities in the Service Area

Park Name	Park Area (ha)	Frontcountry Camping	Boat Launch (Motorized)	Trails	Day Use Area
MOUNT POPE PARK	2,030			x	
PAARENS BEACH PARK	52	x	x	x	x
SOWCHEA BAY PARK	16	x	x	x	x
TOTAL Parkland with Amenities	2,099				
BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - HOOK (DEEP BAY) SITE	179				
BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - SANDPOINT SITE	55				
MOUNT BLANCHET PARK	24,396				
MUDZENCHOOT PARK	644				
NATION LAKES PARK	18,875				
OMINECA PARK	107,292				
OMINECA PROTECTED AREA	2,070				
RUBYROCK LAKE PARK	41,250				
STUART LAKE MARINE PARK	227				
STUART LAKE PARK	344				
STUART RIVER PARK - LOWER SITE	12,950				
SUTHERLAND RIVER PARK	13,612				
SUTHERLAND RIVER PROTECTED AREA	4,835				
TAKLA LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	240				
TAKLA MARINE PARK - TAKLA WEST	550				
TREMBLEUR LAKE PARK	57				
TOTAL Wilderness/Unimproved	227,577				

2.3 OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The following is a comparison of the parks and outdoor recreation amenities in each of the four parks and trails service areas in the RDBN and a summary of the outdoor recreation services. The intention of this section is to provide a snapshot of the outdoor recreation services available in Electoral Area C and identify gaps and potential opportunities for the RDBN to address unmet needs in the planning area.

2.3.1 COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE AREAS

Gaining insights into the provision of parkland and outdoor recreation amenities in each of the RDBN's parks and trails service areas will empower the RDBN to make informed decisions about the specific services and amenities required in each area. Table 5 below shows the number of parks and recreation sites by service area, including those managed by the RDBN, BC Parks, municipalities, or Recreation Sites and Trails BC.

Compared to the other Parks and Trails Service Areas in the RDBN, Electoral Area C has the second-highest number of recreation sites; however, these are predominantly rustic sites with limited amenities, are user-maintained, and may be difficult to access. The supply of provincial parks is similar to other electoral areas. There are three popular provincial parks in the Fort St. James area, including Mount Pope, Paarens Beach, and Sowchea Bay Parks. Most of the remaining provincial parks have backcountry or water access only or are unimproved.

Table 3: Electoral Area Parks Opportunities Compared to other RDBN Service Areas

Service Areas in RDBN	RDBN Parks	Provincial Parks	Municipal Parks	Recreation Sites
Village of Burns Lake and Electoral Area B, and Electoral Area E	2	10	13	35
Town of Smithers and Electoral Area A	2	3	21	21
District of Fort St. James and Electoral Area C	0 ³	9	7	26
District of Houston, Village of Granisle, and Electoral Area G	0 ³	11	19	21

³ As of 2026, service is new, so no parks have been established.

2.3.2 SUMMARY OF ELECTORAL AREA C OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Table 6 below provides an overview of amenities provided by outdoor recreation service providers including various government entities, land managers, and outdoor recreation organizations. Electoral Area C has abundant winter activities, including cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and snowmobiling. These opportunities are managed and maintained by community recreation organizations and occur primarily on Crown lands authorized through RSTBC. Warmer season activities include full-service and rustic camping, rock climbing, swimming and boating at Stuart Lake, and ORV riding. Trails in Mount Pope Provincial Park offer hiking opportunities, and Fort St. James has walking paths. Some of the winter trails are also used in the summer for hiking and biking. While there are many opportunities, some of the main challenges include ease of access, the level of maintenance and consistency for users, the sustainability of the volunteer base, and the availability of information and signage.

Table 6: Outdoor Recreation Activities by Service Provider

Outdoor Recreation Service Providers	Campgrounds	Walking/Hiking / Biking Trails	Skiing / Snowshoeing Trails	ATV / Snowmobiling Trails	Beach Access/ Beaches	Boat Launches	Outdoor event space/ Fair Grounds
RDBN							
District of Fort St. James	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
BC Parks	✓	✓			✓	✓	
RSTBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Community Recreation Organizations		✓	✓	✓			✓
Community Forest		✓		✓			✓
Total Activities	3	5	2	3	3	2	3

2.4 PARKLAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Parkland Needs Assessment involves an exploration of the gaps and opportunities within the parks and trails system that have been identified during the planning process. A benchmarking exercise was also conducted, comparing the provision of parkland to other similar communities in BC.

There is no definitive way to determine whether a region has an adequate supply of parkland; it depends on the values, desires, and needs of the communities. However, several common metrics can be used to gauge the adequacy of parkland, such as comparing with other regions, assessing the amount of parkland available per capita, and evaluating the distribution and ease of access. The following section analyzes parkland averages to understand the inventory and distribution needs of the RDBN.

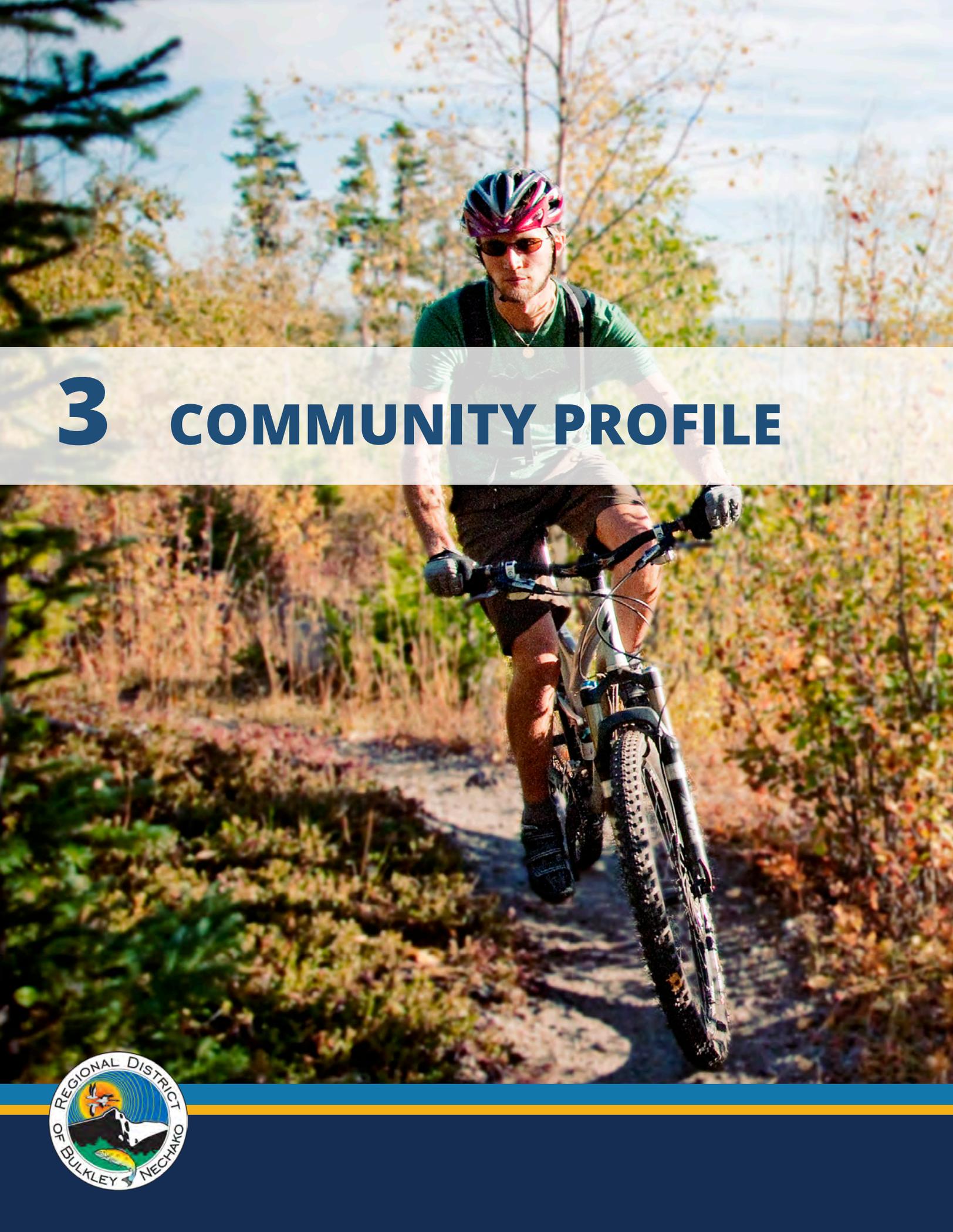
2.4.1 PARKLAND PER CAPITA ANALYSIS

Parkland area and population estimates were used to determine the amount of regional district parkland in Electoral Area C per 1,000 residents. Since the establishment of the Parks and Trails Service in 2020, the RDBN has acquired approximately 43.5 hectares of parkland, resulting in an overall average of 1.2 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents in the RDBN. The RDBN has a below-average supply of parkland compared to similar regional districts. However, as the RDBN’s Parks and Trails Service is newly established, this is anticipated to change over the next 10 years.

To meet the average of 2.8 hectares/ 1,000 residents, an additional 62.16 hectares are required throughout the RDBN. **Proportionally, Electoral Area C would need 3-4 hectares to meet this target.**

Table 4: Parkland Supply Compared to Similar Regional Districts

Regional District	Population (2021)	Total Area of Regional Parks (ha)	Parkland (Ha) Per 1,000
Bulkley-Nechako	37,737	43.5	1.2
Thompson-Nicola	143,680	67	0.5
Peace River	61,532	72	1.2
Central Kootenay	62,509	86	1.4
East Kootenay	65,896	254	3.9
Fraser Fort-George	96,979	330	3.4
Central Okanagan	222,162	2,020	9.1
Average			2.8



3 COMMUNITY PROFILE



3.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The RDBN’s regional context includes rich agricultural lands, rivers, and abundant lakes, as well as extensive resource lands that provide economic opportunities through forestry and mining. Tourism, particularly fishing, hunting, camping, and outdoor recreation, is essential to the diversity of the economy, and to residents’ well-being and quality of life. Electoral Area C is home to several sizable provincial parks, which have primarily been established to protect critical fish and ungulate habitat. The region sees short, mild summers and cold winters, with average daily temperatures below 0°C for five months of the year, during which time snowfall averages more than 170 cm annually.

Developing a community profile for RDBN’s Electoral Area C is an important step towards understanding the community’s present and future needs for parks and recreation. As of 2021, the service area had a total population of 1,266 accounting for approximately 3.4% of the population of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The primary population center within the service area is the District of Fort St. James. As of 2021, the District of Fort St. James had a total population of 1,386, accounting for approximately 3.7% of the population of the RDBN. Within Electoral Area C, an estimated 1,379 people live on reserve, comprising 3.7% of the total population, with Nak’azdli 1 being the largest reserve.

Although 2021 Statistics Canada Census data reports declines in population between 2016 and 2021, the Regional District and District of Fort St. James note that this may be inaccurate, and it is believed that the population has remained relatively unchanged.

Looking ahead, BC Stats reported that the population is expected to remain stable over the next 20 years (BC Statistics, 2025). Most of the population growth is expected in people older than 45 years (Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, 2024).

Table 5: 2021 Census Population Estimate

	2021 Census population	Population Density (per km ²)	Percent of Total Population
RDBN	37,737	0.5	100%
Electoral Area C	1,266	0.05	3.4%
District of Fort St. James	1,386	59.1	3.7%
Nak’azdli 1	528	170.9	1.4%
Yekooche 3	90	45.2	0.2%
North Takla Lake (Takla Lake FN)	243	248	0.6%
Tache 1 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	400	44.5	1.1%
Binche 2 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	118	25.5	0.3%

Population growth, age distribution, and household incomes are pivotal demographic factors shaping the recommendations in this Master Plan. The Statistics Canada Census Reports (2021) unveil key characteristics about the service areas.

Average Age

- Electoral Area C has an average age of 46.1, which is slightly higher than the RDBN (41.1) and British Columbia (43.1).

Household Incomes

- In 2020, the median after-tax annual household income in Electoral Area C was \$67,500, slightly less than British Columbia and RDBN (both at \$85,000).

Youth Percentage

- 13% of the population within Electoral Area C consists of youth aged 0-14, which is slightly less than British Columbia (15%) and the RDBN (18.9%).

These demographic trends underscore the necessity for the parks and trails system to adapt to accommodate the population of Electoral Area C, ensuring diverse recreational options. A robust parks and trails system is important for attracting and retaining families, particularly within the context of a stable, yet aging population. The recommendations in Section 5 include actions to improve accessibility and the user experience.

3.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.2.1 PURPOSE

The volunteer community in the planning area, including an extensive network of community organizations and sport/interest groups, is actively engaged in the provision of recreation opportunities in Electoral Area C. Therefore, understanding the community's vision and goals for local parks and recreation is critical to the success of the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Through community engagement, significant challenges and opportunities were identified, providing key input that guided the recommendations included in this Master Plan.

The first round of community engagement, held in summer 2025, asked stakeholders and potential partners and the public to provide information about how they use parks and recreation facilities and programs within Electoral Area C. The feedback from the first round of engagement informed the vision and goals for the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan and helped to identify potential opportunities for the future parks and trails system.

The second round of engagement, held in early 2026, asked the community for feedback on draft recommendations to confirm the developed vision and goals.

3.2.2 WHAT WE DID

The following summarizes the engagement activities by phase. A detailed description of the engagement activities and findings is included in **Appendix A**.

3.2.3 PARTICIPATION

Participation included:

- 107 participants in the online surveys
- 9 participants in community open houses and workshops
- 1 in-person pop-up event

3.2.4 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The RDBN invited fifteen First Nations, identified as having consultation areas within the RDBN's Electoral Area C, to participate in individual rights holder meetings, as well as extending the invitation to participate in the public event and online surveys. There have been no requests for meetings to date.

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes protecting culturally significant areas within the parks system. As further input is provided, it will be integrated into the decision-making process.

3.2.5 WHAT WE HEARD

Several key themes emerged during engagement, including:

Challenges

- Volunteer capacity challenges, including maintenance, risk and liability, and securing trail access across private property;
- Limited resources available from other levels of government;
- Safety and accessibility for walking and cycling connections to town;
- Maintenance is one of the key barriers, as well as people being too busy and lacking information on park and trail opportunities, and
- Need for better lake access, boat launches, and parking.

Opportunities

- Formalize and improve the trail network, locally known as the Graveyard Trails, ensuring access as development occurs;
- Trail connection from Sowchea Road to downtown Fort St. James and around to the Graveyard Trails and Mount Pope Provincial Park;
- Joining McLeod Lake and Nak'azdli in improvements to the Grease Trail;
- More cross-country ski trails closer to town;
- Improved lake access, boat launches, and parking;
- Improving accessibility and comfort amenities within existing trail networks, and
- Improving information and trail signage.

Priorities

- “Creating and managing new trails” was the highest priority, but both “creating connections between communities and key destinations” and “acquiring land and creating regional parks” were very closely ranked second.
- Priorities for Parks: Opportunities to exercise and be active, beach access, opportunities to connect with nature, environmental protection, and park amenities were the top 5 priorities.
- Priorities for Trails: Hiking and walking trails, trails signage and wayfinding, connections to other parks and trails, mountain bike trails, and tourism opportunities were the top 5 priorities.
- Mt. Pope trails, Stuart River, Murray Ridge trails, Sowchea Bay and Paarens Beach were the top 5 locations mentioned.
- The top activities were camping, a variety of water-related activities, festivals/markets/events, and downhill skiing.



4 BENEFITS & TRENDS



4.1 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section presents research showing that parks and trails improve health and wellbeing, advance reconciliation, strengthen local ecosystems and the environment, and provide economic growth and tourism.

Health and wellbeing

Spending time in nature and participating in outdoor recreation reduces stress and promotes social connections. In 2023, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORCBC) conducted a survey on outdoor recreation participation, emphasizing the importance across British Columbia. The survey highlighted the significance of outdoor recreation for creating positive social connections and preserving mental well-being during the winter in the RDBN. The Stuart Lake Nordic Society and Fort St. James Snowmobile Club are two examples of organizations that spend considerable time and energy to provide winter recreation opportunities in the community.



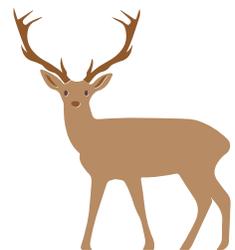
Reconciliation

There is an increasing imperative to understand the pre-colonial settlement history of British Columbia and to gain greater awareness and consideration of Indigenous cultures. Initiatives such as naming parks and trails in partnership with Indigenous communities and incorporating Indigenous stories and histories have become best practices. Engaging with First Nations communities and incorporating their values and needs in parks and trails is a very important step that land managers can take towards Reconciliation. Consideration is also needed when establishing parks or amenities to protect archaeological and other culturally important areas, and making sure access is maintained for hunting, fishing, gathering, and ceremony.



Environmental

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), parks and trails serve a vital role in conserving natural resources, providing wildlife habitat, safeguarding air and water quality, offsetting carbon emissions, and preserving open spaces for future generations. Engaging in stewardship and participating in volunteer activities within parks allows the public to actively contribute to protecting these spaces for the future while also increasing awareness of environmental issues at both local and global levels.



In the RDBN, parks can play a significant role in safeguarding essential ecosystems and natural features, such as rivers, lakes, spawning areas, and marshes. Moreover, they can serve as habitats for a diverse range of wildlife.

Tourism

This region's natural attractions are becoming increasingly popular with tourists seeking outdoor activities in rural areas. In particular, the area is known for the abundant lakes and rivers, offering boating and fishing opportunities. Camping and other recreation activities are promoted through various organizations and outlets, such as Destination BC, which could increase interest in parks and trails in the area. Tourism brings economic benefits by supporting outdoor recreation guides and outfitters, as well as restaurants, hotels, and other services. A cohesive set of information and resources on the wide variety of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities could include maps, brochures, and links to additional resources. Planning for variation in the tourism sector is also important, as tourism can be affected by wildfires and weather.



Economic

Parks and trails encourage people to get outside and move, contributing to long-term reductions in healthcare costs associated with the health burden of physical inactivity and associated chronic diseases. Research suggests that even a 10% increase in physical activity rates among Canadians could lead to a substantial \$280 billion reduction in direct healthcare costs⁴.

Regional district parks and trails serve as attractive destinations for both visitors and residents. The infrastructure of these parks and trails provides opportunities to generate revenue through venue rentals, events, educational programs, and interpretive activities. A 2020 study reveals that outdoor recreation in British Columbia contributes over 15 billion dollars in economic value to the residents of the province each year⁵.



⁴ BC Provincial Health Services Authority, 2019

⁵ Patrick Lloyd-Smith, *The Economic Benefits of Recreation in Canada*, accessed November 17, 2023, https://plloydsmith.github.io/files/LloydSmith_RecCJE.pdf.

4.2 TRENDS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section examines key trends shaping parks and trails in Area C, including climate change, communication and wayfinding, recreation, accessibility, park use, and volunteer capacity.

Climate Change

Northern BC is experiencing the effects of climate change, including increased wildfire risk, extreme weather events, changes in snowfall and frost-free days, more severe rainfall events, and other impacts on residents' health and community infrastructure. Climate change will be top of mind for future park endeavours, including operational practices, maintenance considerations and park acquisition. On the flip side, parks can enhance climate resilience by serving as respite in hot weather, protecting important natural areas such as wetlands and lakeshores, and incorporating FireSmart principles to ensure community preparedness for wildfires.



Wayfinding

Communicating with park and trail users is an important component to creating a vibrant tourism sector, as well as making residents aware of the opportunities in the community. Wayfinding and interpretation make it easier to find and take advantage of the abundant opportunities, while also connecting people to place and telling the story of the area's natural and cultural values. Interpretive programs, signage, and wayfinding resources help park visitors learn about the area they are exploring, providing a more profound and meaningful experience beyond just being present in the space.



Recreation

Activities such as fishing, mountain biking, cycling for recreation, canoeing, horseback riding, motorized trail use, walking and hiking continue to increase in popularity – highlighting the importance of planning and managing for diverse use and potential conflicts associated with shared use of parks.

In Northern BC, both residents and visitors are increasingly drawn to wildlife viewing, with the Bulkey-Nechako area being recognized as one of the finest places to observe undisturbed wildlife in remote locations. Wildlife viewing offers a flexible, equipment-light activity suitable for all ages. However, educating park visitors is crucial to ensuring public safety during wildlife viewing and to effectively minimizing human-wildlife conflicts.



Accessibility

With an aging population in the planning area, a growing number of individuals will face mobility challenges precisely at a time when the significance of staying active and getting outdoors increases. In parks, the presence of safe, enjoyable options for seniors and those with limited mobility holds great appeal, as these amenities can be used by people of all ages, including parents with strollers and younger children. Trails that are safe and easily accessible play a crucial role in encouraging and empowering children and youth to engage in physical activity.



The issue of accessibility extends beyond the younger and older demographics. According to the Canadian Survey on Disability Reports, in 2017, 22% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older had one or more disabilities, ranging from mild to severe (Canada, 2020). These disabilities pose challenges for the most vulnerable members of the community in accessing public facilities, including parks.

Year-Round Park Use

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako experiences winter weather conditions for nearly six months each year. Encouraging and embracing outdoor recreation during this period is essential to keep people active and engaged with parks throughout the entire year. By providing opportunities for these winter activities, parks can cater to a broader range of visitors and ensure that the enjoyment of outdoor spaces extends beyond the warmer months.



Volunteerism

The ORCBC study (2023) emphasized volunteer retention can be challenging, with factors such as burnout and aging demographics contributing to this issue. Outdoor recreation clubs expressed that the burden of work falls on the same few volunteers consistently. The combination of an aging volunteer base and a relatively small population presents further difficulties in effectively addressing these maintenance needs. There is a need for strategies to build community capacity and increase sharing and collaboration among organizations.



5 VISION, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1 VISION

This vision for the future of parks and trails in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) was created based on community input, exploration of the trends and opportunities, and discussions with RDBN staff.

Over the next 10 years, the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area C will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and outdoor recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experiences for all users.
- **Support the Creation of Safe Connections.** The parks and trails system in Electoral Area C will support connections between rural residents and Fort St. James, as well as connections to parks and key recreation destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and wellbeing for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by building and maintaining new infrastructure, as well as the creation of new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty.** The parks and trails system will facilitate access to lakes, shorelines, unique natural areas, historic sites and trails, and important community destinations. The parks and trails system will protect and enhance the rich ecosystems of the region, preserving opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation of native flora and fauna for future generations.

5.2 GOALS

Five goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trail. Each goal is supported by specific recommendations to be accomplished over the next 10 years. These recommendations are outlined in the next section.

Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the Parks and Trails Service in Electoral Area C

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity

Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation

Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails

Goal 5: Support active transportation and a connected community

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section outlines key recommendations specific to each goal for Electoral Area C.

GOAL 1: ESTABLISH TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE IN ELECTORAL AREA C.

This goal focuses on establishing a comprehensive approach to delivering parks and trails services in Electoral Area C that complements, but doesn't duplicate, work by others. By providing a clear framework and consistent processes, this goal ensures the strategic allocation of resources for the parks and trails within Electoral Area C.

Recommendation 1.1

Continue to engage with other levels of government and community organizations to identify and prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships or through direct acquisition and management.

This could take the form of a parks and trails "working group". An example of this model is the Shuswap Trails Alliance, which brings together interest-holders across all sectors to one table for regular meetings to discuss, collaborate, coordinate, and share resources and knowledge. By bringing interest-holders together, the RDBN will help build community capacity and volunteerism and can also help identify ways to remove administrative burdens and increase collaboration toward shared priorities.

The members could be invited from First Nations, District of Fort St. James staff, BC Parks, RSTBC, Parks Canada, local outdoor recreation organizations, local stewardship organizations, local outdoor recreation businesses, youth representatives, etc.

Recommendation 1.2

Establish service levels for future parks and trails.

For parks, develop a park management plan for any future parks and update every five years. Management plans should consider maintenance levels, infrastructure development and upgrades, universal accessibility, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and invasive species management.

For trails, once maintenance responsibilities are assumed, conduct regular trail inspections as described in the RDBN Parks and Trails Inspection and Maintenance Policy. This will help ensure trails are safe, well-maintained, and that appropriate resources and budget are allocated to maintenance.

First Nations consultation and archaeological assessments may be required for both parks and trails.

Recommendation 1.3

Consider adding additional staff to support the implementation of new parks and trails projects across the RDBN's four parks and trails service areas and ensure equitable distribution of staff time between the service areas as the network of parks and trails grows.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY.

This goal emphasizes the importance of building robust partnerships and enhancing community capacity in the realm of parks and trails services. By fostering collaboration, providing financial support, and expanding land-use agreements, this goal aims to build a stronger community foundation and ensure effective management and development of parks and trail services.

Recommendation 2.1

Continue to build relationships with First Nations and prioritize protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values. A preliminary initiative could be to create a naming policy for parks and trails and to incorporate Indigenous place names, stories and histories into interpretive signage in trails where appropriate.

A special feature of Electoral Area C is the long-distance historic trail connections that form part of the "Grease Trail" network, which were used for millennia to transport eulachon (oolichan) fish oil from the coast to the interior, driving a vast trade network. This could be an opportunity for collaboration (see Recommendation 5.3).

Recommendation 2.2

Continue the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that supports the RDBN in allocating multi-year funding to recreation organizations providing recreation services, such as regular maintenance of the snowmobile trail network. Continue to monitor the success of the program and adjust criteria for funding and reporting requirements as needed. Increase funding availability as resources allow, if needed.

While there is not currently a mountain biking or hiking organization in Electoral Area C, should a group emerge within these focus areas, funding would provide significant benefits, along with administrative and coordination support.

Recommendation 2.3

Increase awareness of the RDBN's capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations with administrative matters, supporting grant applications, and coordinating with other levels of government.

GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION.

This goal focuses on increasing access to outdoor recreation, particularly lakes and trails. By enhancing access, this goal aims to improve recreational opportunities while recognizing the significance of these natural assets.

Recommendation 3.1

Explore opportunities for the RDBN to support BC Parks in improving access to Mount Pope trails, including the T-Caves climbing area, and improving key amenities such as parking and washroom facilities.

Recommendation 3.2

Explore opportunities to improve year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road in support of non-motorized boating and cross-country ski trails on the lake.

Recommendation 3.3

Explore the potential for developing a small, water-access rustic campsite with basic amenities, and a natural shoreline boat landing to support paddlers, small craft boaters and backcountry recreation users on the north shore of Stuart Lake.

Long-term, this campsite is envisioned as a first step toward exploring a network of rustic campsites that would support a multi-day kayak and canoe route around Stuart Lake. The route would provide designated overnight options that improve safety, reduce informal shoreline use, and promote responsible, low-impact recreation while maintaining the lake's natural character

Recommendation 3.4

Explore opportunities to further develop the Mount Dickenson Trail, as it is already used by multiple trail user types, both motorized and nonmotorized. It is already promoted in brochures but would benefit from improved signage, implementation of trail standards and additional support amenities. The trail starts within the District of Fort St. James but ends at a viewpoint in the Regional District. It is currently a one km trail and is quite steep. There could be opportunities to identify a better alignment that is accessible for more trail users, even if universal accessibility standards are not possible due to the terrain.

Recommendation 3.5

Support intergovernmental collaboration for the formalization and improvement of the Graveyard Trails network. The role of the RDBN needs to be defined, but it could include coordination support and funding partnerships with the District of Fort St. James, BC Parks, and a local mountain bike or hiking group. At the time of this report, there is no formal mountain bike organization in Fort St. James. \

Recommendation 3.6

Explore opportunities to partner with First Nations communities, local recreation organizations, and tourism organizations to create a long-term, shared vision for Grease Trails in the region. Depending on interest and capacity, a first phase could be to create an improvement and enhancement plan for the Nyan Wheti trail from Fort St. James to Fraser Lake, but other priorities might emerge through further discussions.

GOAL 4: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE AT PARKS AND TRAILS.

This goal aims to improve overall user experience within Regional District parks and trails. By prioritizing accessibility, information availability, cultural inclusion, and amenity expansion, this goal aims to create an enriched and user-friendly parks and trails, enhancing community enjoyment and engagement.

Recommendation 4.1

Follow accessibility standards, such as the [Universal Design Guide](#) by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading parks and trails. Support organizations managing trails to increase accessibility through trail upgrades and new or improved support amenities.

Recommendation 4.2

Lead the development of a cohesive mapping and information system for trail networks in the region. Update the RDBN's website to provide more information about trails, including information about accessible features at trails, safety, wayfinding, and amenities.

Recommendation 4.3

Develop a wayfinding and signage plan that is consistent with standards for other service areas and other service providers (BC Parks, RSTBC, District of Fort St. James). In particular, the District of Fort St. James' Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan⁸ and the Great Northern Circle Route Signage Program⁹ both have signage standards and details that could be incorporated to enhance a cohesive experience for trail users and visitors.

Recommendation 4.4

Support enhancements to the provincial RSTBC trails southwest of town, currently managed and maintained by the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club. These are four-season trails used by hikers, backpackers, cross-country skiers, snowmobiles, and ORVs. Improvements could include wheelchair access, picnic tables, and an outhouse.

⁸ <https://phredmartin.com/fort-st-james/>

⁹ <https://www.travelnbc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/MASTER-GNCR-Signage-Presentation-.pdf>

Recommendation 4.5

Work with Recreation Sites and Trails British Columbia (RSTBC) to identify priority recreation sites for increased maintenance, management, or financial support from the RDBN. Priority sites will include locations that improve public access to lakes and shorelines, are connected to parks and trails, and can accommodate camping, viewpoints, and other special features..

GOAL 5: SUPPORT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

This goal focuses on fostering active transportation and community connectivity within Electoral Area C. By addressing transportation needs and connectivity, this goal contributes to better access to recreation for all ages and abilities, improved access to services, and enhances tourism-readiness.

Recommendation 5.1

Explore opportunities to connect communities and key recreation assets in Electoral Area C through the development of multi-use trails and pathways for both residents and tourists. As a long-term vision, there are two key routes proposed:

- Paarens Beach Provincial Park along Sowchea Road into Fort St. James and continuing to Mount Pope Provincial Park;
- Highway 27 from Fort St. James south to connect residents and businesses. A first phase could be to Airport Road, with future phases continuing south.

The bridges across the Necoslie and Stuart Rivers are critical links in achieving these connections.

Both routes should be coordinated with the District of Fort St. James and Nak'azdli Whut'en to enhance the plan for a Community Gateway and active transportation initiatives described in the Fort St. James Rural OCP.

Recommendation 5.2

Define the RDBN's approach to the use of motorized vehicles on trails and active transportation routes in Electoral Area C, including discussions with MOTT where needed.

6 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



6 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To be included in the Final Report

APPENDIX A

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Regional District of Bulkley Nechako

Parks and Trails Master Plan – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Engagement Summary

LEFS
ASSOCIATES

Electoral Area C (For St. James
Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan
Engagement Summary

FINAL

February 25th, 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) is developing a Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural). This plan will create a strategy and plan of action for parks and trails that reflects the unique character, culture, and geography of the region.

Community input is key to the success of this initiative. To make sure that the Plan reflects a community vision and a wide range of perspectives, consultation included outreach to the public and key rights and interest-holders including outdoor clubs, community groups, and Indigenous communities. Consultation with BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), local governments, and organizations was also completed to coordinate efforts and build on existing infrastructure and service offerings.

The engagement program took place in two rounds which provided participants an opportunity to shape the vision and priorities for parks and trails in the area, then provide feedback on the draft Master Plan before the final revision.

Round 1 engagement included stakeholder meetings, stakeholder interviews, a public online survey, and a public pop-up event. Round 2 engagement included a public online survey, and a virtual public open house. The details of these activities are described below, and the results are summarized in this report.

1.2 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The RDBN invited fifteen First Nations that have identified as having consultation areas within the RDBN's Electoral Area C to participate in individual rights holder meetings, as well as extending the invitation to participate in the public pop-ups and online surveys. There have been no requests for meetings to date.

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes the protection of culturally significant areas within the parks system. As further input is offered in the future, it will be integrated into the decision-making process.

2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.1 PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of Round 1 engagement was to provide an opportunity for interest holders, rights holders, potential partners, and the public to discuss how current parks, trails, and recreation areas are meeting community needs; the challenges and opportunities of providing and operating parks and trails in the RDBN; and strategies for improved partnership and coordination.

2.2 OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

Public consultation activities included virtual interest-holder workshops, a public online survey, and a community pop-up event. Further details about each activity are provided below, and a summary of the results is included in this report.

A combination of phone calls, email invitations, and social media posts was used to encourage participation in this engagement series. The RDBN website provided a headquarters for all updates, information on how to participate, and a link to the online survey.

Engagement by the Numbers

107 participants in the online survey

9 participants in the community workshops

Pop-up event at the Fort St. James Night Market

2.3 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

2.3.1 INTEREST-HOLDER WORKSHOPS

Three virtual workshops were held with interest-holders, including local and provincial government representatives, community organizations, and school representatives. At the time of the workshops, a BC Government Employees Union strike delayed engagement with staff of provincial agencies. Interviews with individual knowledge holders were also conducted. Participants included representatives from:

- Elected officials from RDBN Electoral Area 'C'
- Elected officials from District of Fort St. James
- Fire Smart
- BC Parks
- Stuart Lake Nordic Society
- Stuart Lake Seniors Association
- Fort St. James Snowmobile Club
- Fort St. James Dog Sled Association
- Fort St. James Secondary School
- Murray Ridge Ski Area

Workshops involved a brief presentation on the project and a discussion about the current state of parks and trails in the region, challenges faced by interest holders, and opportunities to improve outdoor recreation amenities in Electoral Area C.

2.3.2 COMMUNITY POP-UP

One in-person pop-up event was held at the Fort St. James Night Market at Calendonia Days on August 15, 2025 from 4:00-8:00pm. Facilitators from the Regional District and LEES+Associates were present to gather feedback, guide conversation, and answer questions.

The pop up was focused on introducing the project to the community and providing information about parks and trails planning in the area. Display boards prompted participants to share their vision for parks and trails, identify key locations they would like to see prioritized, and share what features and amenities were most important. The pop-up also encouraged participation in the online survey.

The following questions were asked on the display boards:

- What areas should be prioritized for future parks and trails?
- What features and amenities would you like to see in Regional District parks?
- What features and amenities would you like to see in Regional District trails?
- Over the next 10 years, what are the most important priorities for parks and trails?
- What is your vision for the future of parks and trails in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)?

2.3.3 PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY

Public input was gathered through an online survey hosted on the SurveyMonkey platform. A total of 107 responses were collected from August 15 – September 30, 2025.

3 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

3.1 INTEREST HOLDER WORKSHOPS

3.1.1 ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Land acquisition at Stuart Lake is under consideration to support a water access campsite and campsite improvements. There is potential for the establishment of a circuit is proposed to tie into BC Parks and other RDBN sites.
- It was noted that while trails are informally managed by community groups, a lack of formal leadership presents challenges for organizing and coordination. Volunteers contribute considerably to the trail system, and have limited capacity to take on additional responsibilities.
- It was noted that some trails are located within FireSmart fuel treatment areas and that there may be a synergy between fuel management and trails establishment.
- Pedestrian safety was raised as a priority.

3.1.2 BC PARKS

- Limited staffing was identified as a challenge.
- Improved connections with user groups and volunteers are desired.
- An outhouse at Mt. Pope has been requested by the community.
- The climbing trailhead parking is at capacity.
- There is an opportunity for improved partnerships with RDBN for signage, promotion of trail improvements.
- Opportunity to join McLeod Lake and Nak'azdli in improvements to the Grease Trail was highlighted.

3.1.3 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- The Seniors Association would benefit from improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians along Sowchea Road.
- Community organizations expressed that volunteer capacity, risk and liability, and securing access to trail areas that intersect with private property are key challenges.
- It was noted that there is no walking trail on the bridge crossing the Stuart River. However, Necoslie River has a good walking trail.
- Improvements for walking and cycling from Sowchea Road into Fort St. James were identified as a priority.
- The Graveyard Trails are well-loved, but are located in Crown, private and BC Parks land.

- The need for improved bike safety to protect cyclists commuting around the town from industrial traffic was expressed.
- There are opportunities for a trail from the subdivision north of town along the old railway bed and gas line to town. People currently bike on the highway.
- Protection of boat launches and water access is a priority. Boat launches are in place at Paarens Beach, Sowchea Bay, Big Bay, and on Stuart Lake.
- Additional parking near lakefronts for vehicles and boat trailers was requested.
- Snowmobile trails would benefit from wheelchair access, picnic tables, and an outhouse.
- The Nordic Club faces challenges as a few key volunteers are responsible for trail maintenance. They would like to offer trails closer to town, and on Stuart Lake.
- Access to the lake around Mt. Pope was identified as a challenge, especially for canoes and kayaks.
- The Nordic trail would benefit from the burial of overhead electrical lines, which are frequently impacted by tree blowdown.

Key Locations

- Stuart Lake
- Necoslie River
- Graveyard trails
- Paarens Beach
- Big Bay
- Mt. Dickinson
- Nyan Wheti Trail, south of Fort St. James
- Sowchea Road connection to Fort St. James, including improvements to the Highway 27 bridge over the Stuart River
- Mount Pope

3.2 PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT

- The “Graveyard Trails” were frequently mentioned as being well used but under-developed.
- Traditional First Nations travel routes were mentioned as an opportunity for developing long-range and inter-regional trails. Routes mentioned spanned from Takla to Fort Babine, Fort St James to McLeod Lake, and Fraser Lake to Stuart Lake.
- The Mt. Pope trails and climbing walls were described as well-used but in need of additional infrastructure such as pit toilets.
- Participants expressed a need for additional formal boat launches on Stuart Lake.

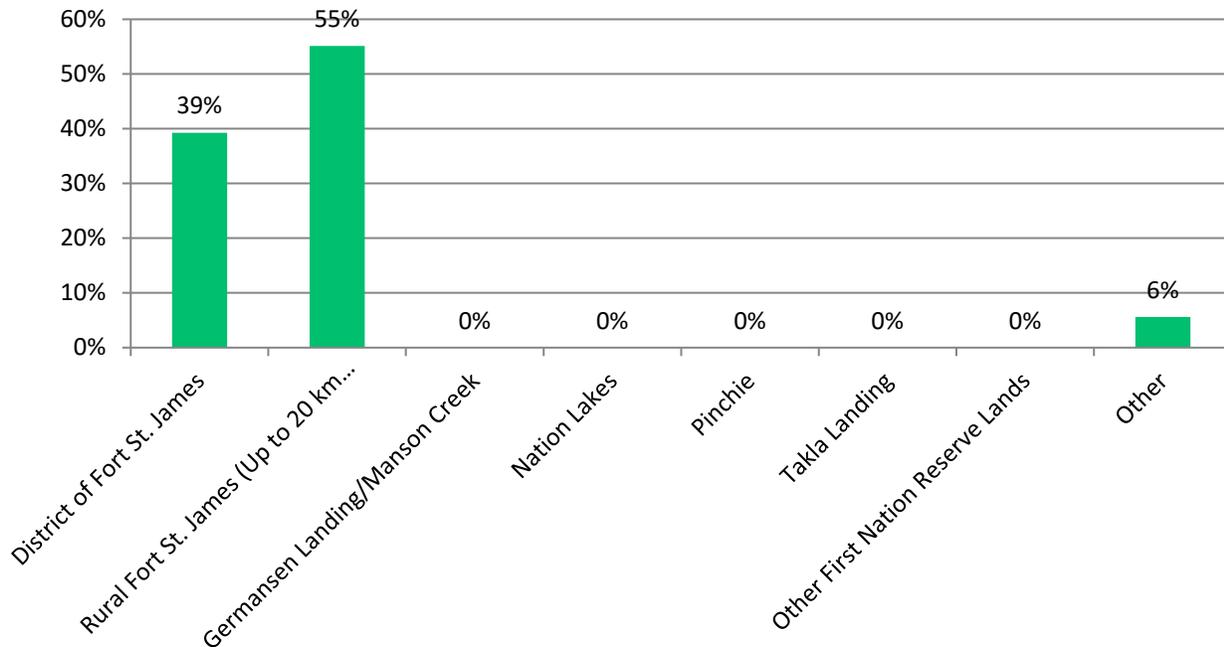
- Concerns were expressed regarding the decommissioning of Forestry Service Roads, which are regularly used for recreation (hiking, ATVing, etc.) and access to wilderness areas.

3.3 PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY

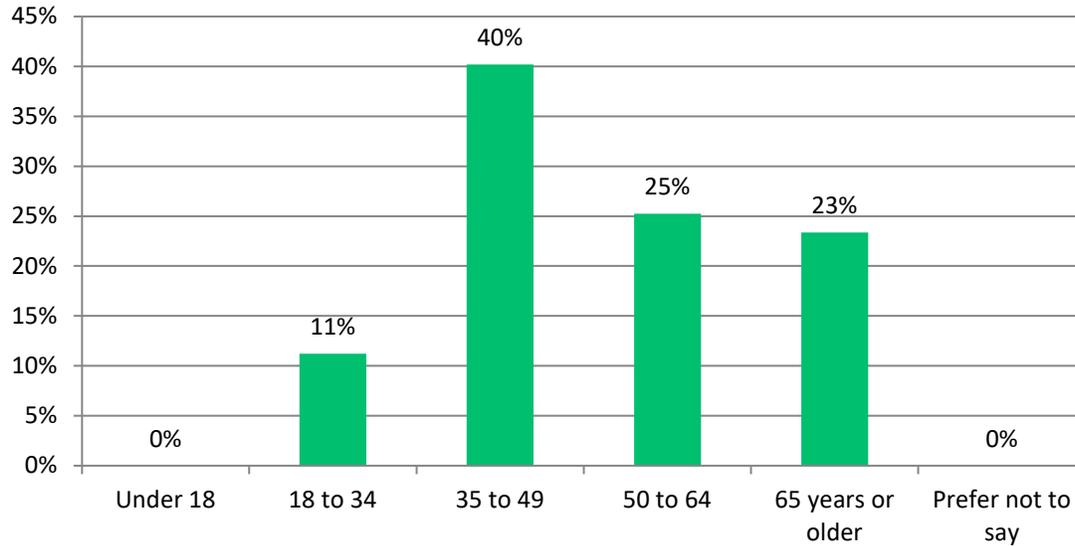
Who Responded

- The survey was completed by a total of 107 respondents.
- The majority of respondents identified as women (62%).
- The largest age group of respondents were between 35 and 49 years of age (40%).
- Less than half of respondents noted having children under the age of 18 living at home (37%).
- The majority of respondents were from Rural Fort St James, up to 20km from municipal limits (55%).

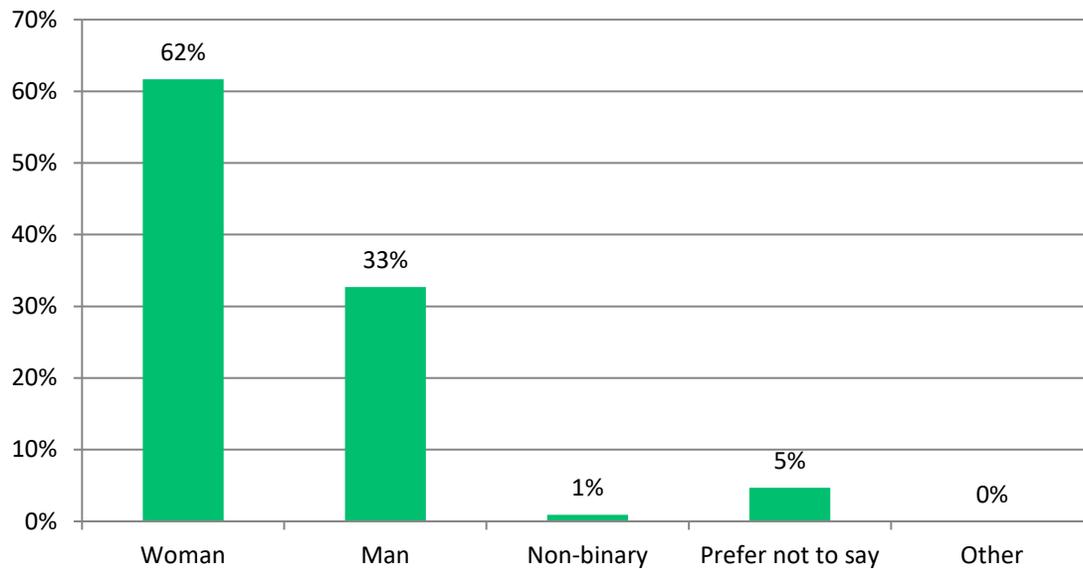
Where do you live?



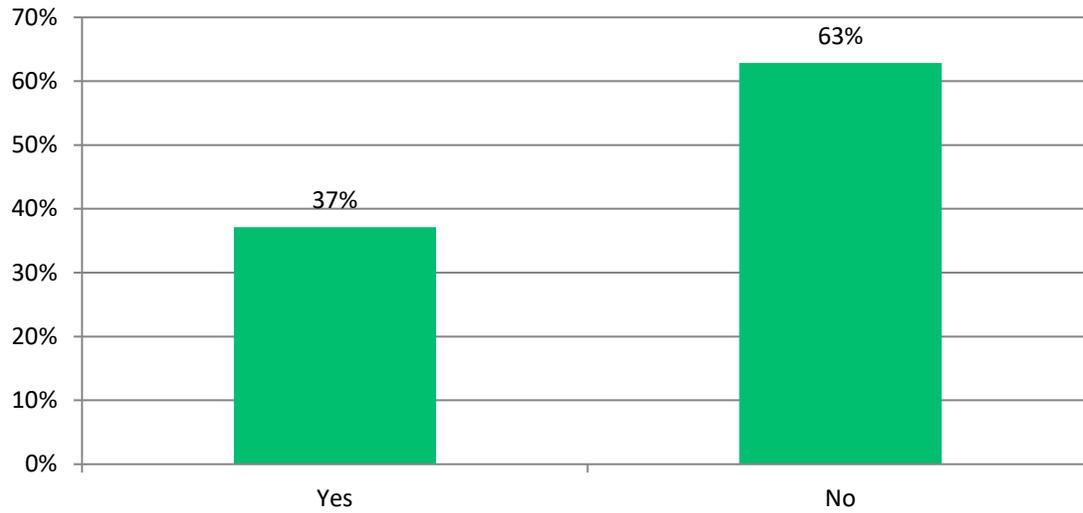
What age category are you?



What gender do you identify with?



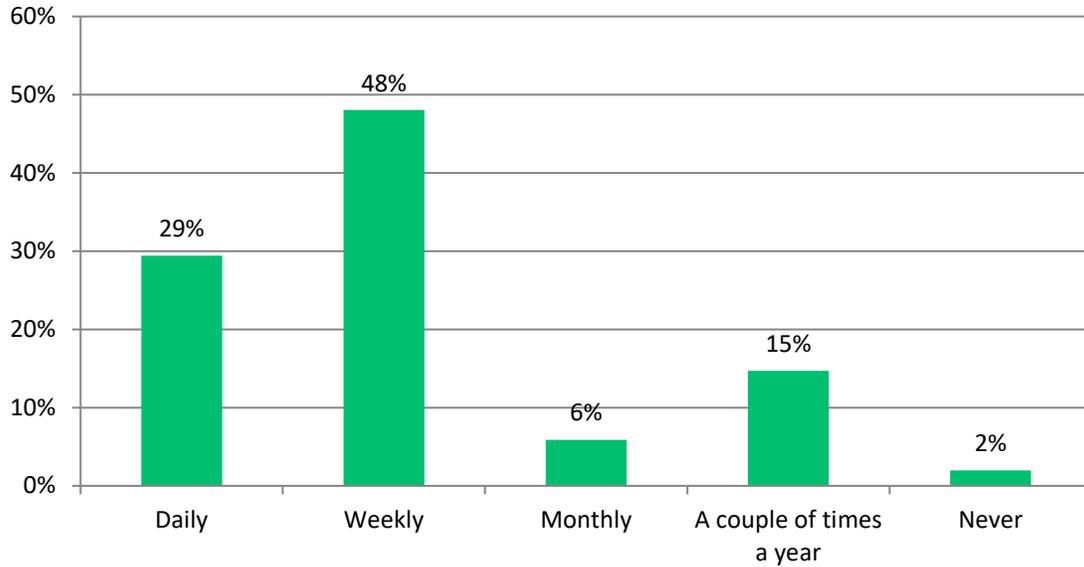
Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?



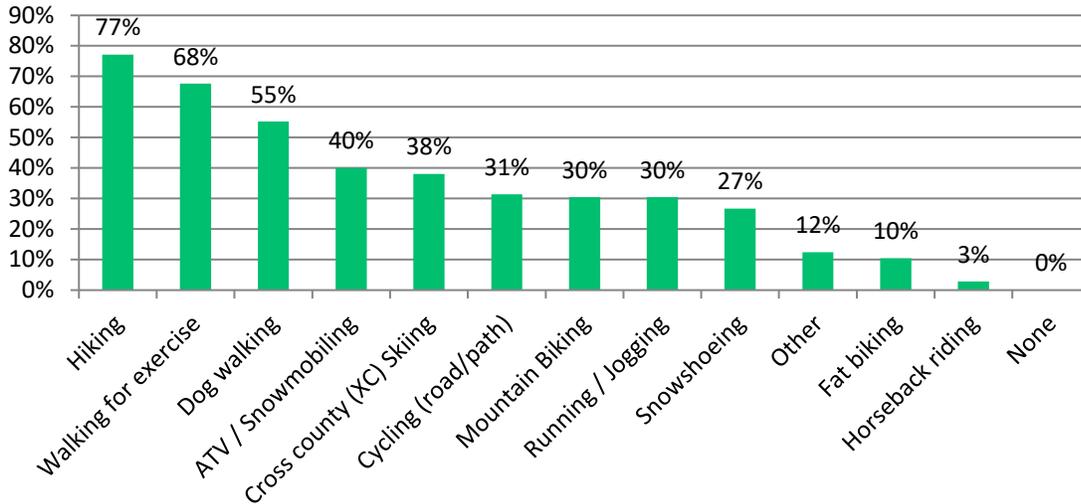
Trail Use Habits

- Roughly three-quarters of respondents noted using trails at least on a weekly basis (77%).
- The most popular trail activities among respondents were hiking (77%), walking for exercise (68%), and dog walking (55%).
- Though not as popular as summer activities, a significant portion of respondents reported participating in winter trail activities.
- The most popular trail activity among the children of respondents was hiking (69%), though ATV/snowmobiling (49%), cycling (49%), dog walking (44%), and mountain biking (44%) were also common responses.

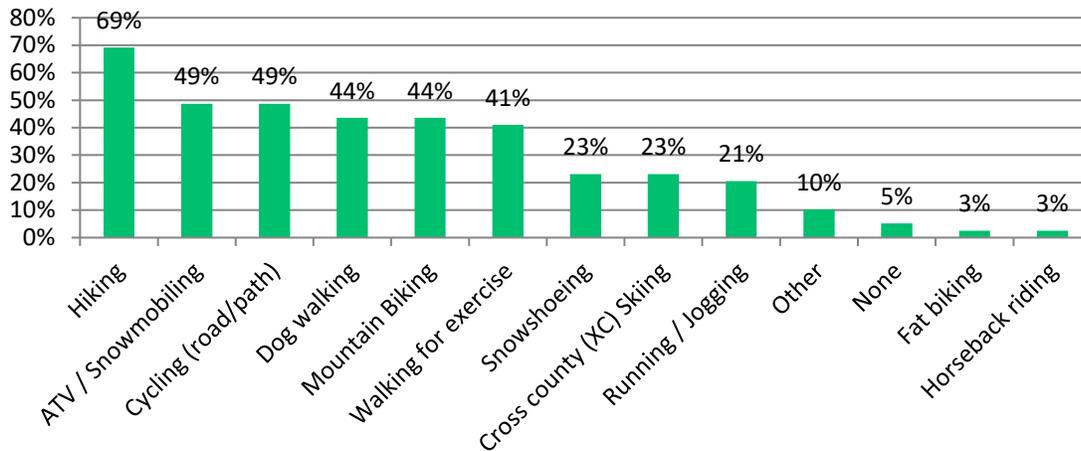
How often do you use trails?



What types of trail activities do you do most often? (Select all that apply)



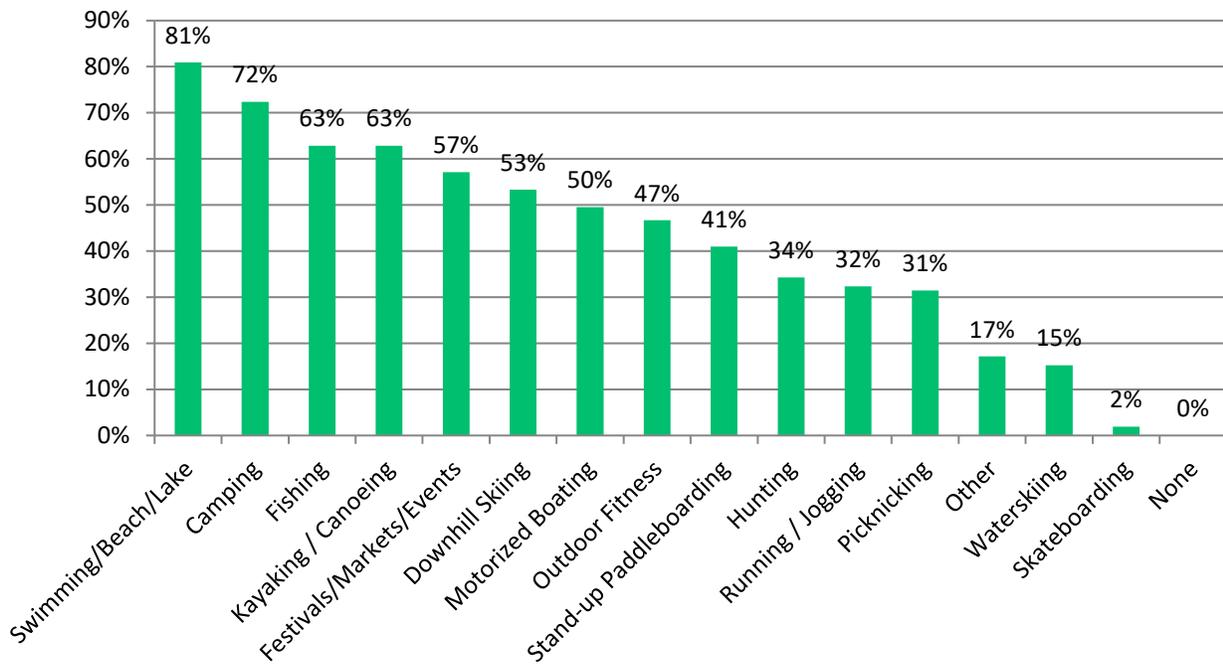
What types of trail activities do your children do most often? (Select all that apply).



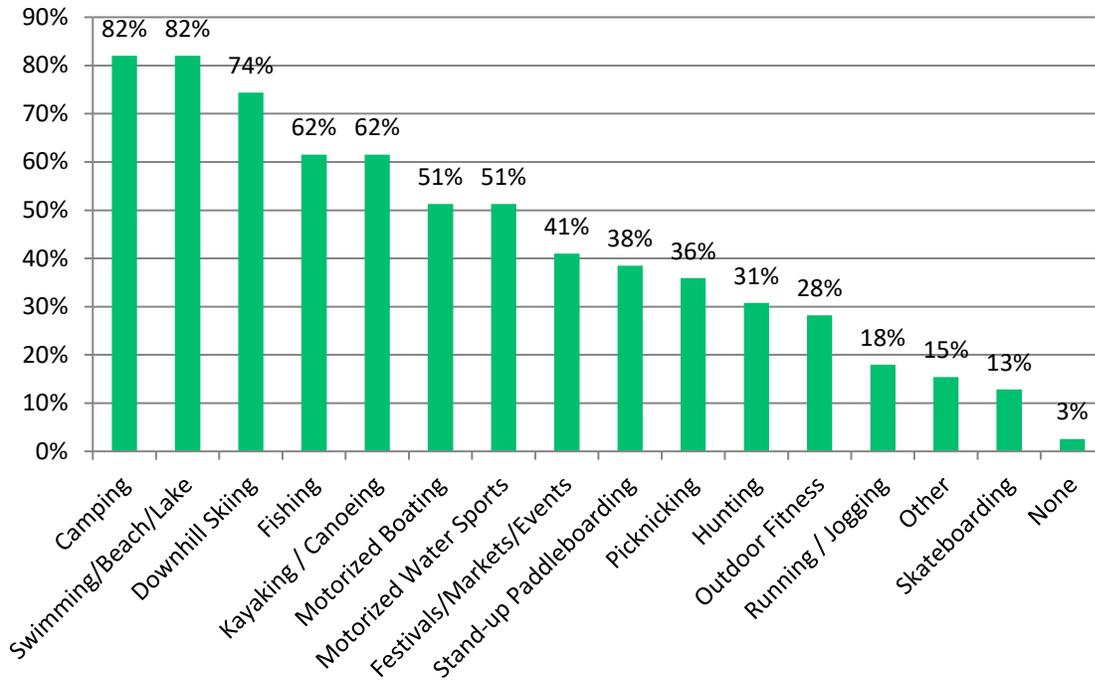
Outdoor Recreation Habits

- Water-based activities such as swimming and visitation of lakes and beaches were the most popular outdoor recreation activities among respondents (81%).
- Many respondents participated in camping (72%), fishing (63%), kayaking and canoeing (63%), festivals, markets, or other events (57%), and downhill skiing (53%).
- The most popular outdoor recreation activities among the children of respondents were camping (82%), swimming/going to the lake (82%), and downhill skiing (74%).

What types outdoor activities do you enjoy?
Think of all times of the year. (Select all that apply).



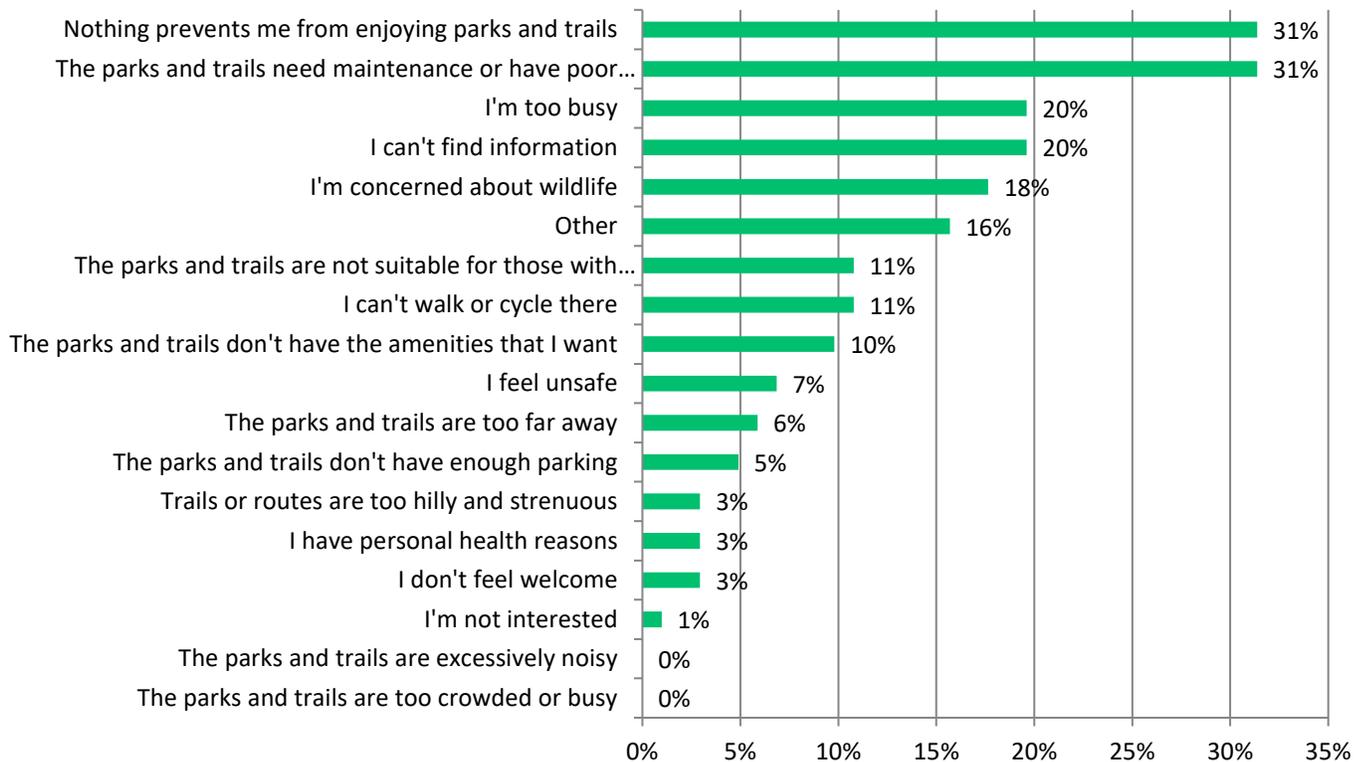
What types outdoor activities do your children enjoy? Think of all seasons and times of the year. (Select all that apply).



Barriers to Accessing Outdoor Recreation

- The primary barriers to using parks and trails more often were poor park and trail maintenance (31%), being too busy (20%), and lack of information (20%).
- Roughly one-third of respondents said they don't face any barriers in accessing parks and trails (31%).

What, if anything, keeps you from visiting parks or getting out on trails more often? (Select your top 3 reasons).



Key Destinations

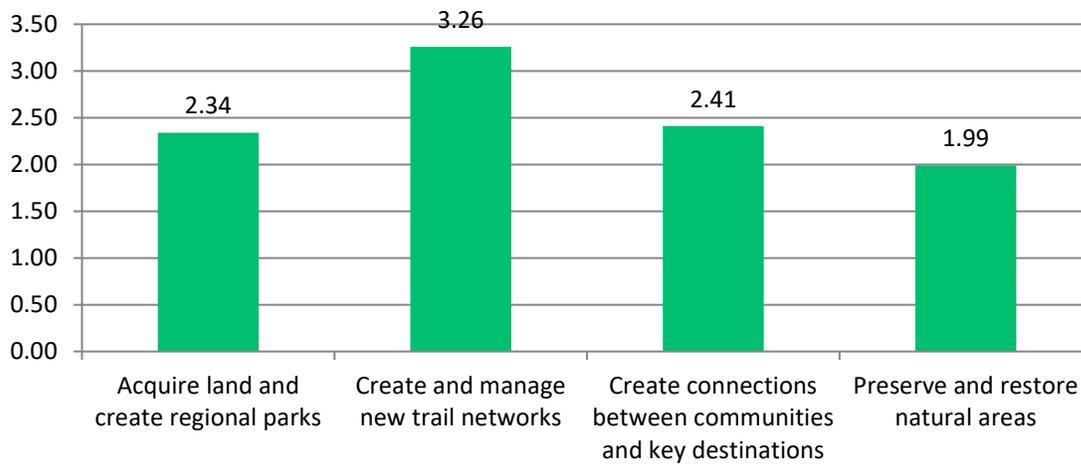
Destinations raised by engagement participants included:

- Mt. Pope trails (n=60)
- Stuart River (n=26)
- Murray Ridge trails (n=25)
- Sowchea Bay (n=14)
- Paarens Beach Provincial Park trails (n=11)
- Graveyard trails (n=9)
- Mt. Dickinson trails (n=7)
- Cottonwood Park (n=6)
- T-Caves (n=6)
- Nyan Wheti (n=3)
- Jim Henry Trail (n=2)
- Whitefish Bay (n=2)
- Russ Baker Memorial (n=1)
- Pinchi Mountain (n=1)

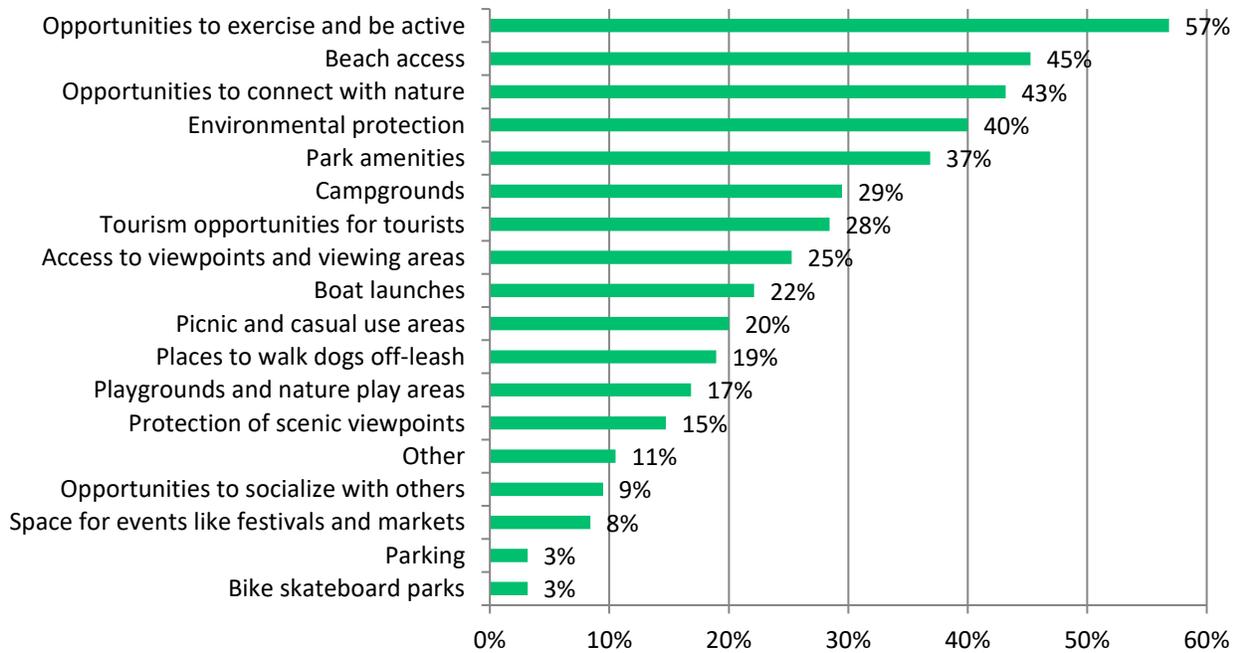
Park and Trails Priorities

- Respondents indicated that the **creation and management of new trails networks** should be prioritized over the next 10 years (Score of 3.26/4). 56% of respondents selected this as their top priority.
- The **creation of connections between communities and key destinations** was of importance to respondents (Score of 2.41/4).
- Respondents indicated that opportunities to be **active** (57%), **beach access** (45%), opportunities to **connect with nature** (43%), and **environmental protection** (40%) are their main priorities for parks in Electoral Area C.
- Respondents indicated that **hiking and walking** (80%), trail **signage** (55%), **improved trail connections to other parks and trails** (37%), **mountain bike trails** (36%), and **tourism opportunities for visitors** (33%) are their main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area C.
- More respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails improvements than those opposed (59% supportive compared to 21% opposed). A fifth of respondents (20%) were neutral regarding increased taxation.
- When asked what else we need to know, many respondents commented on the need for improved signage, wayfinding, and information (n=10). Improved maintenance (n=9) and the importance of parks and trails to local tourism (n=9) were also commonly mentioned.

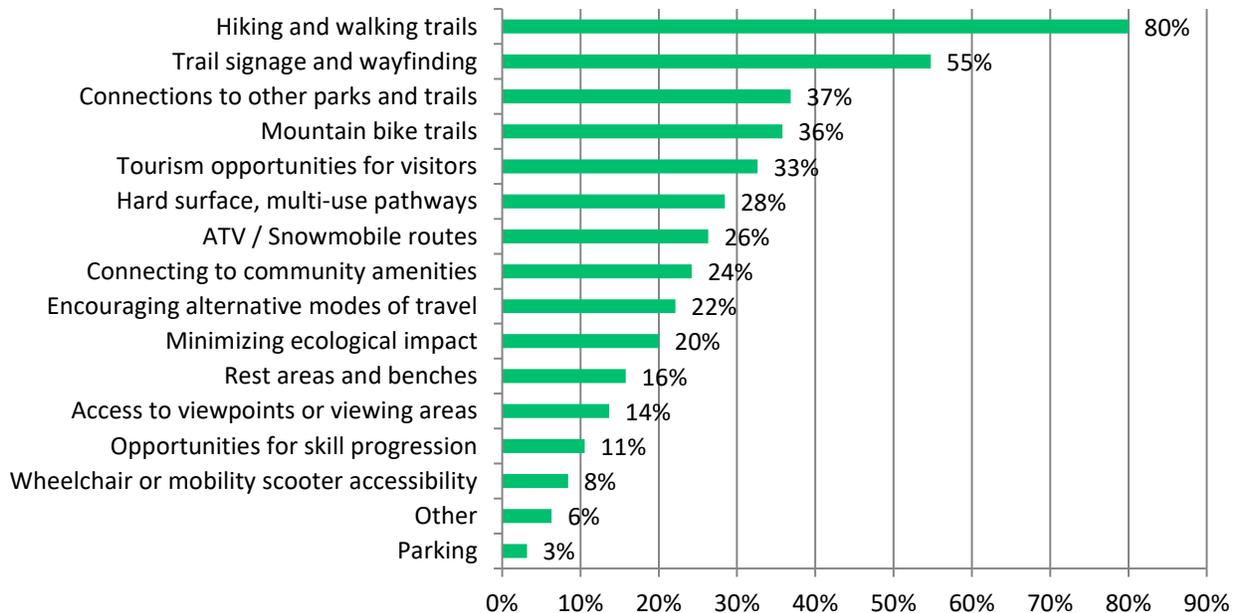
What should the RDBN prioritize in parks and trails over the next 10 years? (Rank options in order of priority).



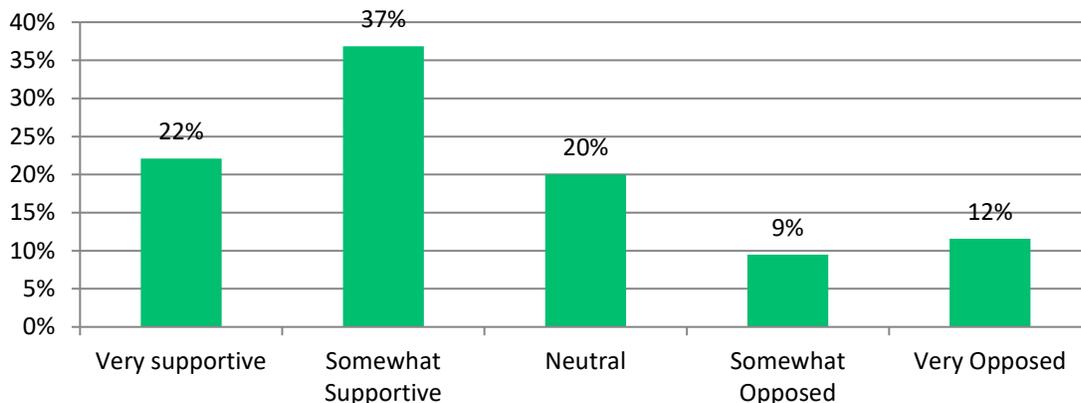
What are your main priorities for parks in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5)



What are your main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5).



How supportive are you of a tax increase to fund the acquisition of new parks and trails, or the development of new infrastructure in parks and trails?



4 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

Section four includes a summary of themes from survey comments, as well as a compilation of what we heard through workshops and the in-person pop-up event.

Challenges

- Volunteer capacity challenges, including maintenance, risk and liability, and securing trail access across private property;
- Limited resources available from other levels of government;
- Safety and accessibility for walking and cycling connections to town;
- Maintenance is one of the key barriers, as well as people being too busy and lacking information;
- Need for better lake access, boat launches, and parking; and,
- Wildfire risk.

Opportunities

- Formalize and improve the Graveyard Trails, ensuring access as development occurs;
- Trail connection from Sowchea Bay Road to Fort St. James and around to the Graveyard Trails and Mount Pope Provincial Park;
- Add an outhouse at Mount Pope;
- Joining McLeod Lake and Nak'adzi in improvements to the Grease Trail;
- More cross-country ski trails closer to town;
- Improved lake access, boat launches, and parking;
- Improving accessibility and comfort amenities within existing trail networks;
- Providing funding to organizations for care of trails;
- Improving information and trail signage; and,
- Improving winter access of trails.

Priorities

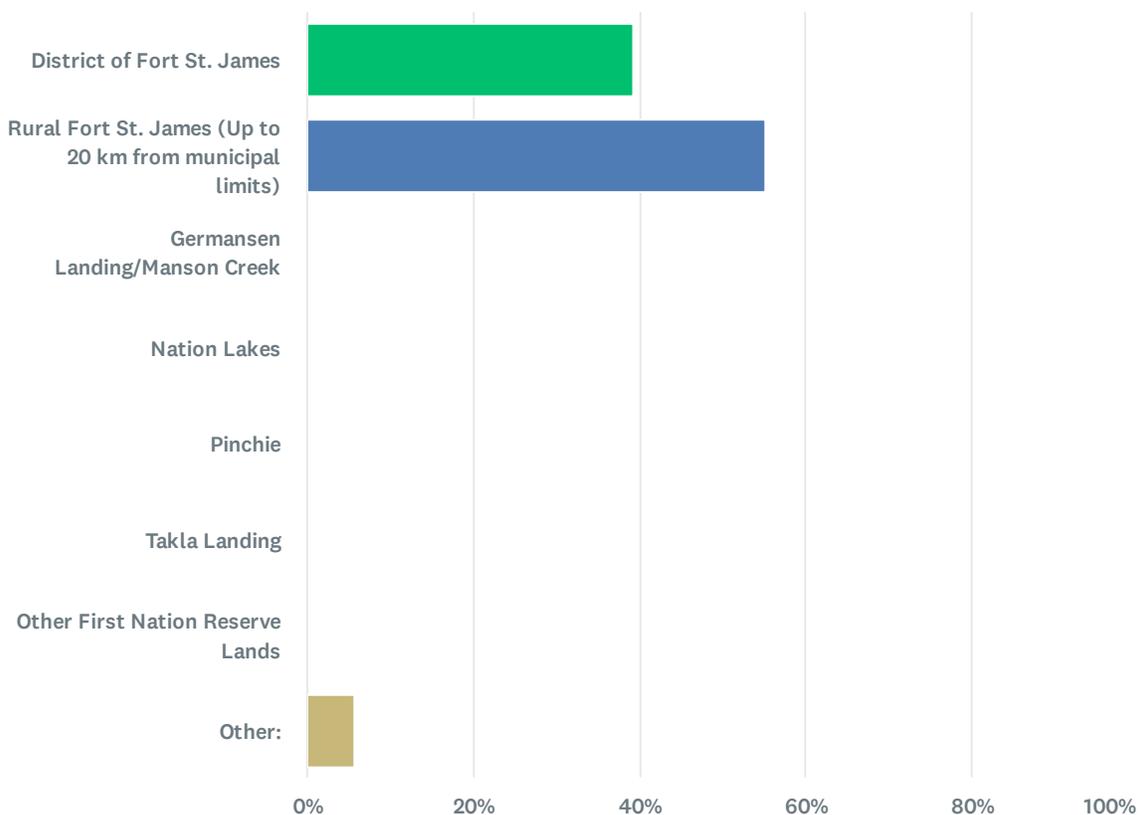
- “Creating and managing new trails” was the highest priority, but both “creating connections between communities and key destinations” and “acquiring land and creating regional parks” were very closely ranked second.
- Priorities for Parks: Opportunities to exercise and be active, beach access, opportunities to connect with nature, environmental protection, and park amenities were the top 5 priorities.

- Priorities for Trails: Hiking and walking trails, trails signage and wayfinding, connections to other parks and trails, mountain bike trails, and tourism opportunities were the top 5 priorities.
- Mt. Pope trails, Stuart River, Murray Ridge trails, Sowchea Bay and Paarens Beach were the top 5 locations mentioned.
- The top activities were camping, a variety of water-related activities, festivals/markets/events, and downhill skiing.

APPENDIX A: FULL ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Q1 Where do you live?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● District of Fort St. James	39.25%	42
● Rural Fort St. James (Up to 20 km from municipal limits)	55.14%	59
● Germansen Landing/Manson Creek	0%	0
● Nation Lakes	0%	0
● Pinchie	0%	0
● Takla Landing	0%	0
● Other First Nation Reserve Lands	0%	0
Total		107

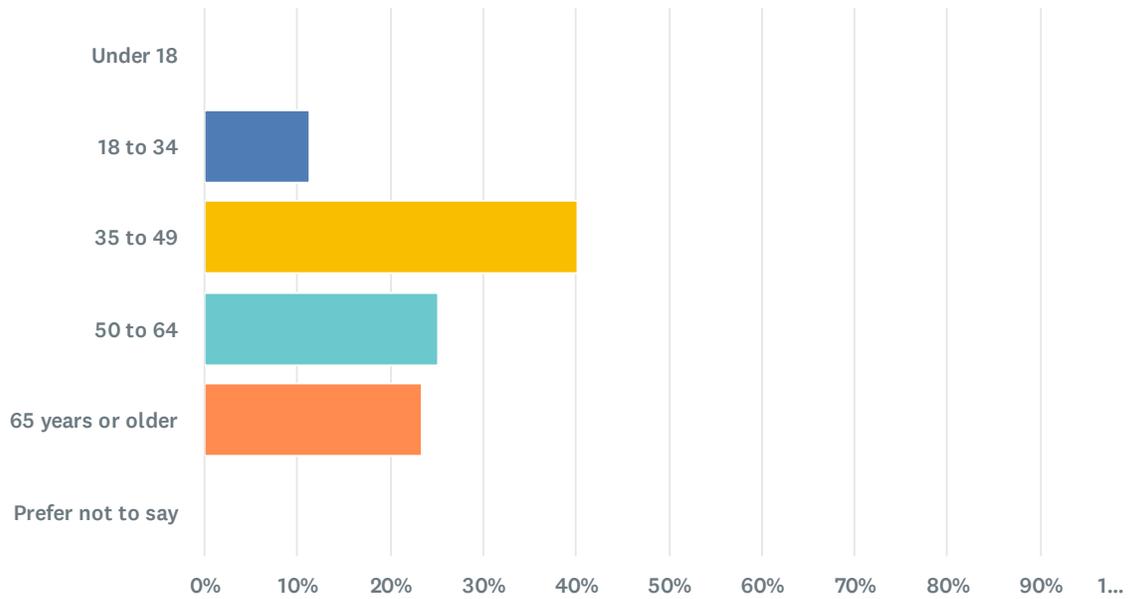
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Other: Show responses	5.61%	6
Total		107

RDBN - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	Hibiscus Rd	9/26/2025 3:42 PM
2	On Takla Lake	9/25/2025 6:34 AM
3	Vanderhoof. Own cabin on Stuart lk	9/20/2025 7:34 PM
4	Vanderhoof	9/19/2025 11:41 AM
5	Houston	9/17/2025 11:07 AM
6	Prince George BC (I spend lots of time in FS James)	8/31/2025 10:04 AM

Q2 What age category are you?

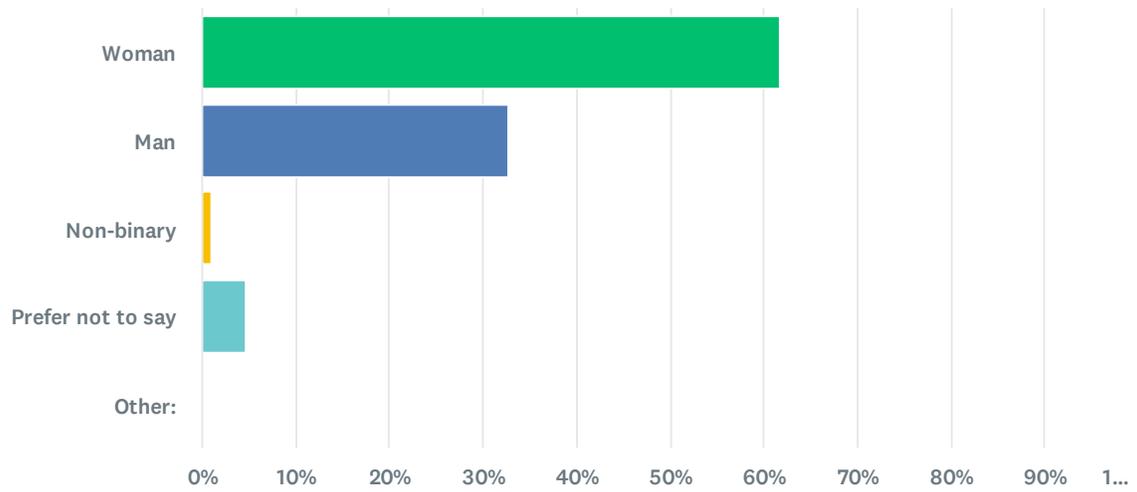
Answered: 107 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Under 18	0%	0
● 18 to 34	11.21%	12
● 35 to 49	40.19%	43
● 50 to 64	25.23%	27
● 65 years or older	23.36%	25
● Prefer not to say	0%	0
Total		107

Q3 What gender do you identify with?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 0

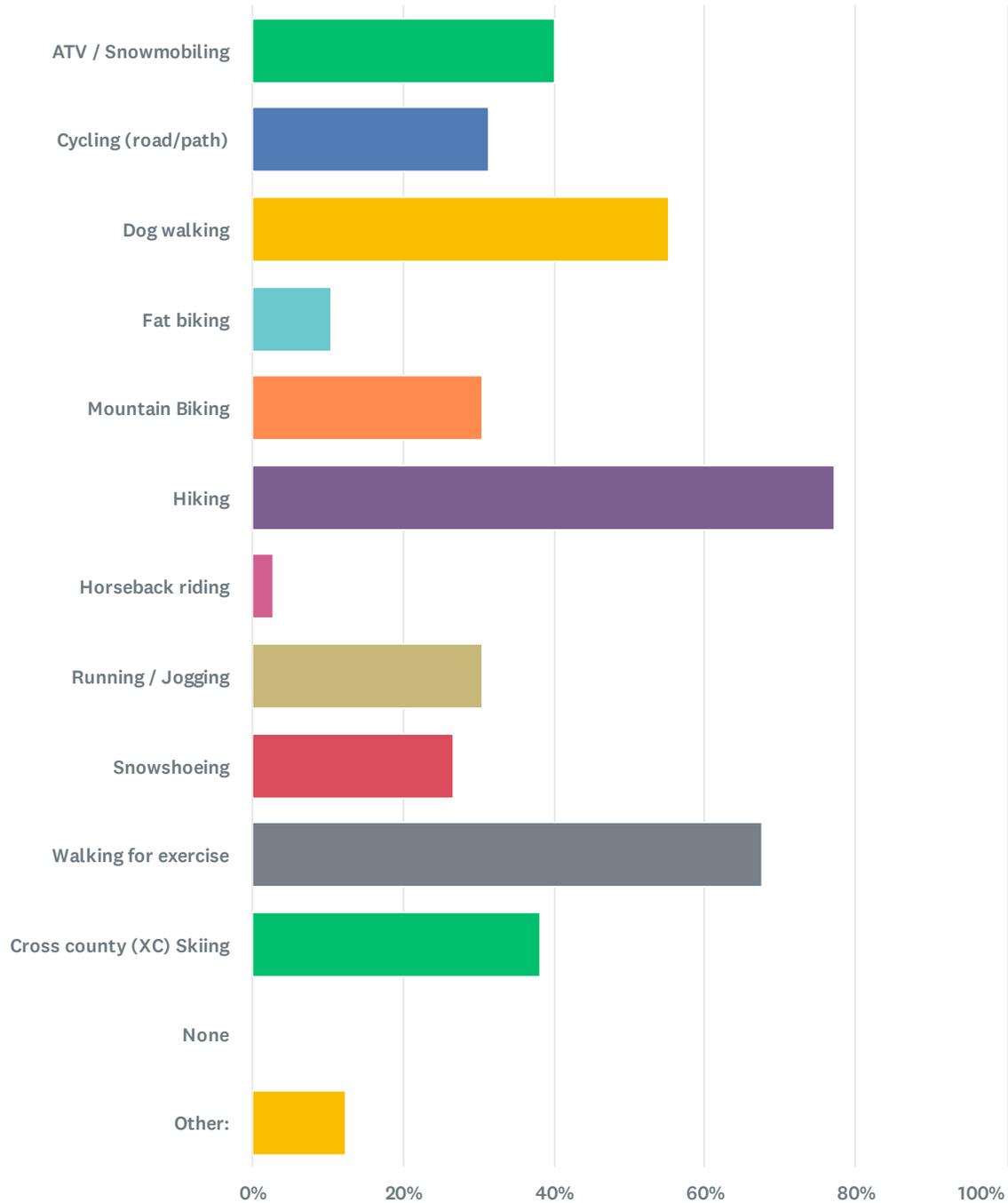


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Woman	61.68%	66
● Man	32.71%	35
● Non-binary	0.93%	1
● Prefer not to say	4.67%	5
● Other: Show responses	0%	0
Total		107

#	OTHER:	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q4 What types of trail activities do you do most often? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 105 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
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RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 ATV / Snowmobiling	40.00%	42
 Cycling (road/path)	31.43%	33
 Dog walking	55.24%	58
 Fat biking	10.48%	11
 Mountain Biking	30.48%	32
 Hiking	77.14%	81
 Horseback riding	2.86%	3
 Running / Jogging	30.48%	32
 Snowshoeing	26.67%	28
 Walking for exercise	67.62%	71
 Cross county (XC) Skiing	38.10%	40
 None	0%	0
 Other: Show responses	12.38%	13
Total		444

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	motorcycle trials and river boating	9/27/2025 9:05 PM
2	Down hill skiing	9/23/2025 5:12 PM
3	Rock Climbing	9/19/2025 8:34 AM
4	Downhill skiing.	9/18/2025 1:02 PM
5	Kayaking	8/31/2025 10:05 AM
6	Kayak routes	8/16/2025 5:40 PM
7	Dog sledding	8/16/2025 4:24 PM
8	Skijoring, bikejoring, mushing	8/16/2025 12:33 PM
9	I used to hike and walk but am now too disabled	8/16/2025 5:54 AM
10	Kayaking, Rock climbing, ice boating, wing skiing	8/15/2025 9:40 PM
11	Back country skiing	8/15/2025 9:14 PM
12	I can't because they aren't accessible.	8/15/2025 9:12 PM
13	Trapping	8/15/2025 8:50 PM

Q5 What types outdoor activities do you enjoy? Think of all times of the year. (Select all that apply).

Answered: 105 Skipped: 2



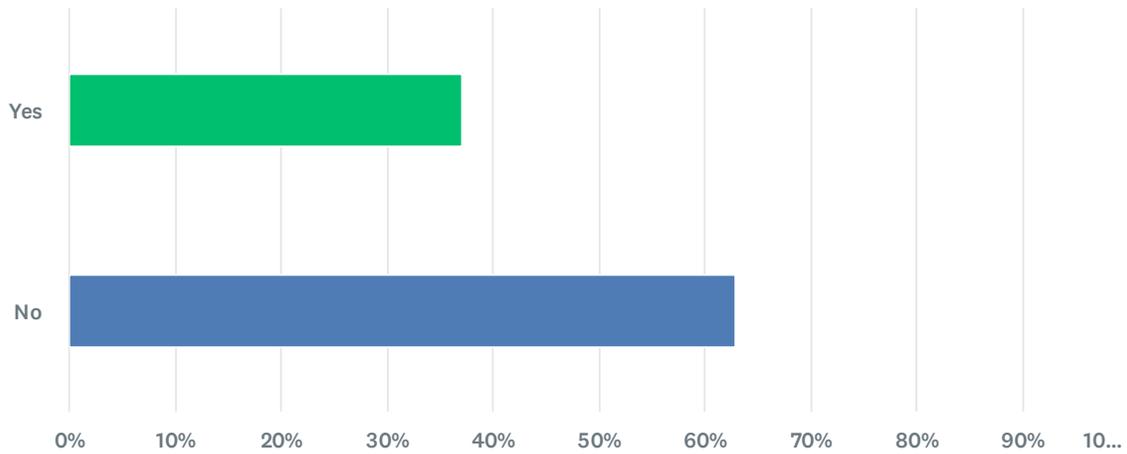
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Camping	72.38%	76
● Downhill Skiing	53.33%	56
● Festivals / Markets / Cultural events	57.14%	60
● Fishing	62.86%	66
● Hunting	34.29%	36
● Kayaking / Canoeing	62.86%	66
● Motorized Boating	49.52%	52
● Outdoor Fitness	46.67%	49
● Picknicking	31.43%	33
● Running / Jogging	32.38%	34
● Skateboarding	1.90%	2
● Stand-up Paddleboarding	40.95%	43
● Swimming / Going to the Beach or Lake	80.95%	85
● Waterskiing	15.24%	16
● None	0%	0
● Other: Show responses	17.14%	18
Total		692

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	Cross country skiing and basketball	9/25/2025 4:43 PM
2	Climbing	9/24/2025 5:31 PM
3	Rc truck driving with kids	9/22/2025 7:31 AM
4	SXSing	9/21/2025 9:07 AM
5	Walking	9/20/2025 8:18 PM
6	Outdoor skating, climbing	9/19/2025 8:34 AM
7	mountain bike trail maintenance	9/4/2025 6:22 PM
8	Hiking	9/3/2025 11:57 AM
9	Rock climbing	8/22/2025 3:38 PM
10	Bird/wildlife watching and photography	8/16/2025 5:40 PM
11	mushing, winter camping, ski touring, wildlife watching	8/16/2025 12:33 PM
12	Foraging	8/16/2025 5:54 AM
13	rollerblading	8/16/2025 12:02 AM
14	Golf	8/15/2025 9:47 PM
15	Cross-country skiing	8/15/2025 9:40 PM
16	Kick sledding, wing skiing, mountain biking, skating, hiking	8/15/2025 9:14 PM
17	Foraging	8/15/2025 8:57 PM
18	Sailing	8/15/2025 9:20 AM

Q6 Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?

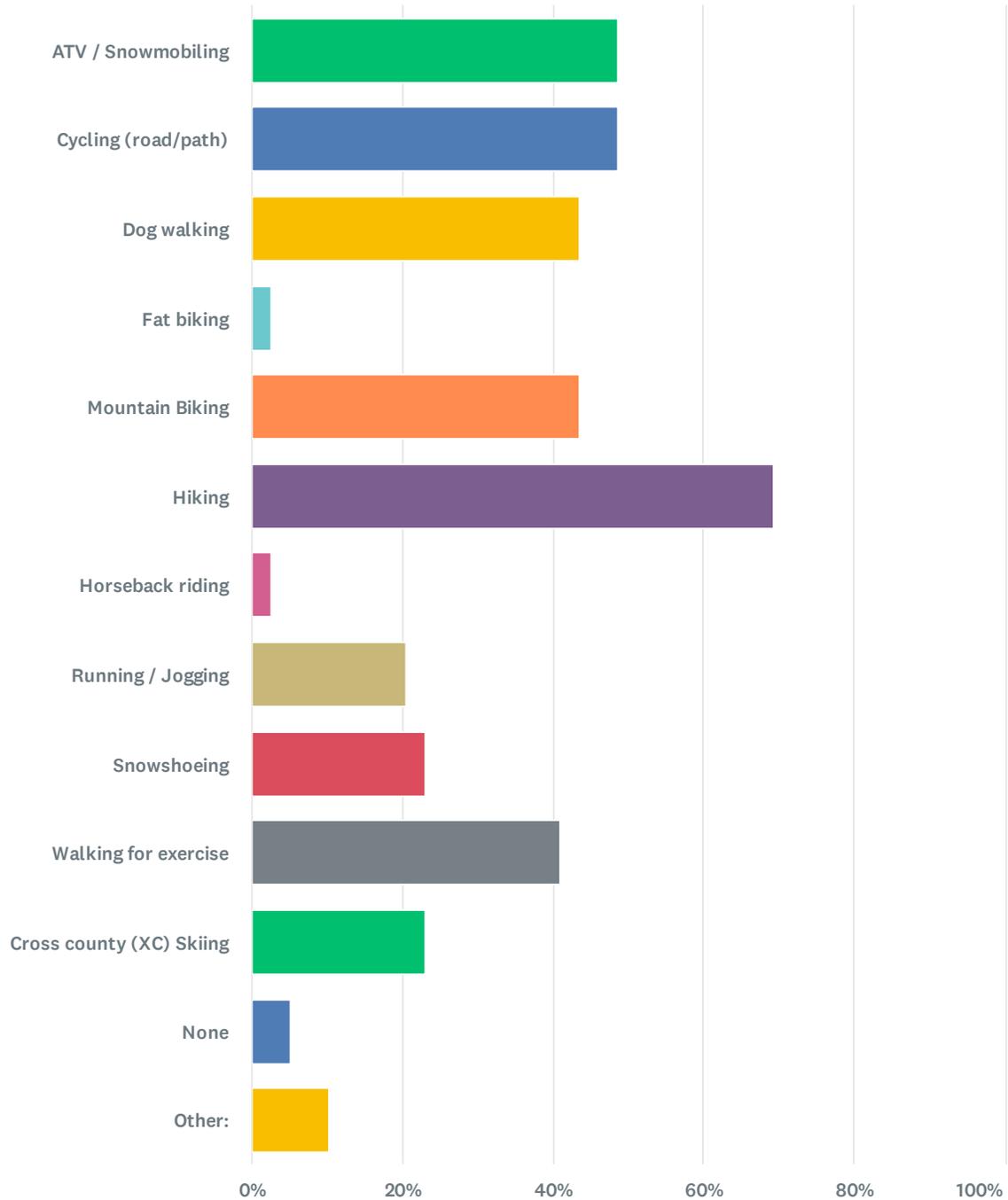
Answered: 105 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	37.14%	39
● No	62.86%	66
Total		105

Q7 What types of trail activities do your children do most often? (Select all that apply).

Answered: 39 Skipped: 68



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
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RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 ATV / Snowmobiling	48.72%	19
 Cycling (road/path)	48.72%	19
 Dog walking	43.59%	17
 Fat biking	2.56%	1
 Mountain Biking	43.59%	17
 Hiking	69.23%	27
 Horseback riding	2.56%	1
 Running / Jogging	20.51%	8
 Snowshoeing	23.08%	9
 Walking for exercise	41.03%	16
 Cross county (XC) Skiing	23.08%	9
 None	5.13%	2
 Other: Show responses	10.26%	4
Total		149

RDBN - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	Soccer	9/28/2025 9:42 AM
2	Rc truck driving	9/22/2025 7:33 AM
3	Downhill skiing	9/19/2025 8:35 AM
4	Education	8/17/2025 1:51 PM

Q8 What types outdoor activities do your children enjoy? Think of all seasons and times of the year. (Select all that apply).

Answered: 39 Skipped: 68

Camping



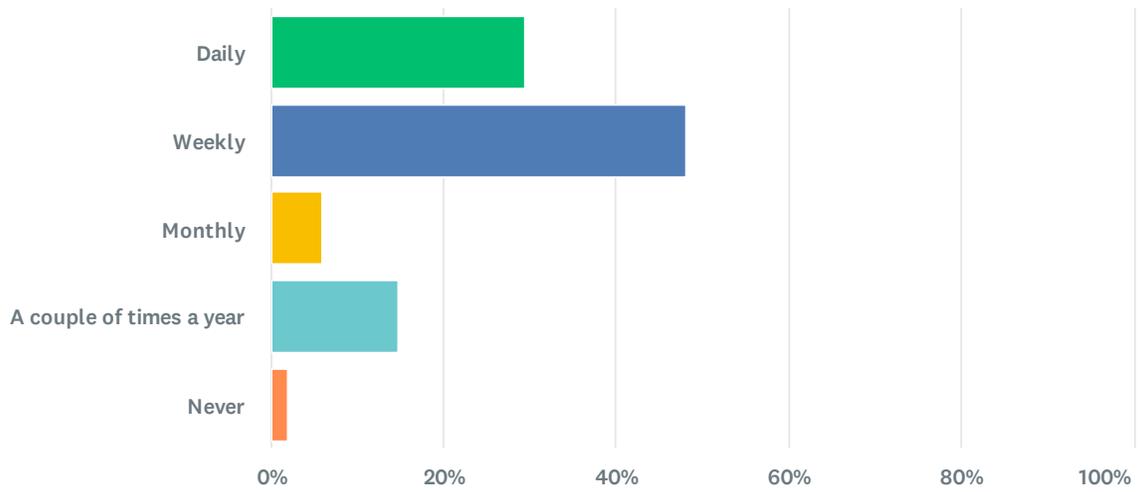
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Camping	82.05%	32
● Downhill Skiing	74.36%	29
● Festivals / Markets / Cultural events	41.03%	16
● Fishing	61.54%	24
● Hunting	30.77%	12
● Kayaking / Canoeing	61.54%	24
● Motorized Boating	51.28%	20
● Outdoor Fitness	28.21%	11
● Picknicking	35.90%	14
● Running / Jogging	17.95%	7
● Skateboarding	12.82%	5
● Stand-up Paddleboarding	38.46%	15
● Swimming / Going to the Beach or Lake	82.05%	32
● Motorized Water Sports (waterskiing, wakeboarding, tubing, etc.)	51.28%	20
● None	2.56%	1
● Other: Show responses	15.38%	6
Total		268

RDBN - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	Climbing	9/24/2025 5:32 PM
2	Rc truck driving	9/22/2025 7:33 AM
3	Snowboarding	9/19/2025 11:42 AM
4	Berry picking	8/20/2025 10:40 AM
5	Sailing	8/16/2025 7:53 AM
6	Sailing	8/15/2025 9:21 AM

Q9 How often do you use trails?

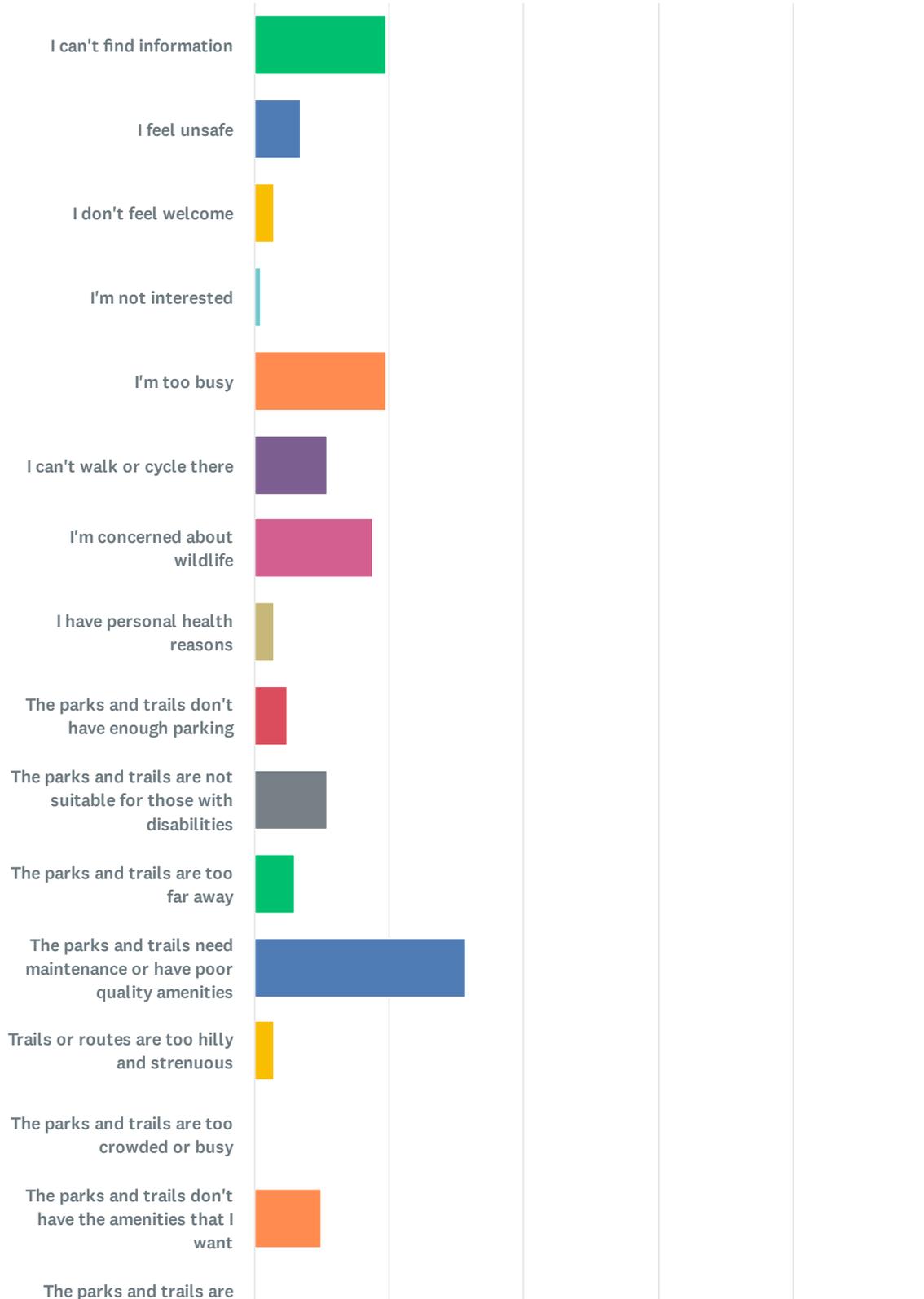
Answered: 102 Skipped: 5



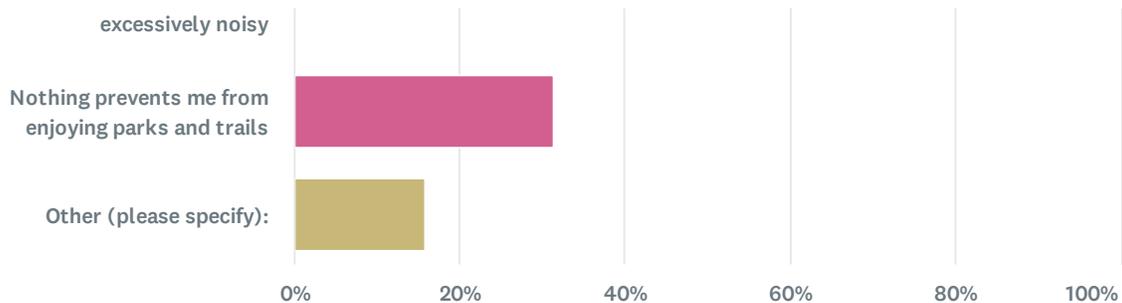
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Daily	29.41%	30
● Weekly	48.04%	49
● Monthly	5.88%	6
● A couple of times a year	14.71%	15
● Never	1.96%	2
Total		102

Q10 What, if anything, keeps you from visiting parks or getting out on trails more often? (Select your top 3 reasons).

Answered: 102 Skipped: 5



RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● I can't find information	19.61%	20
● I feel unsafe	6.86%	7
● I don't feel welcome	2.94%	3
● I'm not interested	0.98%	1
● I'm too busy	19.61%	20
● I can't walk or cycle there	10.78%	11
● I'm concerned about wildlife	17.65%	18
● I have personal health reasons	2.94%	3
● The parks and trails don't have enough parking	4.90%	5
● The parks and trails are not suitable for those with disabilities	10.78%	11
● The parks and trails are too far away	5.88%	6
● The parks and trails need maintenance or have poor quality amenities	31.37%	32
● Trails or routes are too hilly and strenuous	2.94%	3
● The parks and trails are too crowded or busy	0%	0
● The parks and trails don't have the amenities that I want	9.80%	10
● The parks and trails are excessively noisy	0%	0
Total		198

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Nothing prevents me from enjoying parks and trails	31.37%	32
 Other (please specify): Show responses	15.69%	16
Total		198

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	They have been destroyed bc by motorized bikes and trucks.	9/28/2025 9:28 PM
2	sometimes stay off if there are too many bears with cubs around	9/23/2025 11:18 AM
3	Need signage	9/22/2025 10:12 AM
4	Trails aren't marked	9/22/2025 6:26 AM
5	The trails need clear signs for what trail you're on, super easy to get turned around.	9/21/2025 8:56 PM
6	Need more forest rec sites	9/21/2025 8:46 PM
7	Not sure if I start a trail where it goes or how long it will take which signage or maps would alleviate.	9/20/2025 9:03 AM
8	Don't have trails to use	9/4/2025 6:36 PM
9	Not enough variety	9/3/2025 11:59 AM
10	They are not cycle friendly and the roads are also not cycle friendly and there are too many loose aggressive dogs	8/31/2025 12:02 PM
11	motorized vehicles such as ATVS and Dirtbikes	8/31/2025 10:04 AM
12	Need a way up hill at Murray Ridge bike trails	8/22/2025 3:41 PM
13	Private industry creating roadblocks and disrupting trails systems	8/20/2025 10:46 AM
14	there are just 3 - Mt Pope, Mt Dickenson and the short loop.	8/16/2025 7:12 PM
15	Lack of accessibility (benches, info on shorter routes, wheelchair accessibility)	8/16/2025 5:58 AM
16	I do use the trails around Mt. Pope, but they are quite hilly for my deteriorating knees. Nothing to be done about that!	8/15/2025 9:58 AM

Q11 What places do you consider key destinations in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)?

Answered: 84 Skipped: 23

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Sowchea Bay trails	9/29/2025 12:01 PM
2	Pope Parrens Big Bay ATV Clubhouse trails Stuart Lake	9/28/2025 9:44 AM
3	Stuart river	9/27/2025 9:09 PM
4	Pope Mtn Murray Ridge	9/27/2025 8:22 PM
5	Snowmobile trails Mount Pope	9/27/2025 8:00 PM
6	Graveyard Trails Mt.Pope Trail	9/26/2025 5:57 PM
7	Mount Pope	9/26/2025 3:44 PM
8	Murray Ridge, Mt. pope, Dickinson Mountain, Trails along the river or creek.	9/26/2025 3:45 AM
9	Everything around the lake, my pope, ski hill,	9/25/2025 4:45 PM
10	Stuart Lake, Mt Pope, Murray Ridge	9/25/2025 8:46 AM
11	Murrey Ridge, Mt Pope Climbing, Mt Pope mountain biking	9/24/2025 5:33 PM
12	lake, hiking trails (on south shore and Pope Mt area) ski hill	9/24/2025 2:33 PM
13	Sowchea, paarens,(there are not any trails for hiking on this side of the lake) mt. Pope, graveyard trails	9/23/2025 9:07 PM
14	Stuart Lake(campgrounds and lakeshore...also icetop activities in winter), downhill and nordic ski areas, hiking trails(Pope, Murray Ridge, Mt. Dickinson), mountain biking areas on side of Pope and Murray Ridge.	9/23/2025 5:58 PM
15	T caves the bike trails and mt pope or dickensen mountain	9/23/2025 5:36 PM
16	Areas within 10 miles of FSJ. Mt Pope, Murray Ridge, Sowchea swamp area and campsites Paarens Beach and Sowchea Bay	9/23/2025 5:14 PM
17	Mount Pope, Jim Henry trail, Mountain biking trails behind graveyard, t-caves, old pope trail to climbing areas, Mt. Dickinson trail, provincial parks for camping, golf course, pitka bay resort, cottonwood park, splashpark, marina	9/23/2025 11:18 AM
18	Resort hill trails and/ or seismograph hill trails Walk way from historic park to below district office along shoreline	9/22/2025 11:02 AM
19	Cotton wood park, historic park. Mount pope, ski hill,	9/22/2025 7:36 AM
20	Pope Mountain, The ski hill, the Fort	9/22/2025 6:26 AM
21	Mt pope Lake	9/22/2025 4:19 AM
22	Murray Ridge Mt Pope Stuart Lake	9/21/2025 9:30 PM
23	Whitefish Bay	9/21/2025 8:46 PM
24	Mount Pope, Murray Ridge Ski Hill, Stuart Lake, T-Caves, campgrounds, Historic Park.	9/21/2025 8:05 PM
25	Paarens Beach, trails from the ATV clubhouse area, Sowchea Bay, Whitefish Bay	9/21/2025 7:19 PM
26	The snowmobile/ATV clubhouse and trail systems for motorized sports and walking. Murray Ridge and x-country ski trails. Stuart Lake. Mt. Pope and trails	9/21/2025 9:26 AM
27	Mt Pope, Murray ridge, ATV trails (clubhouse).	9/21/2025 3:17 AM

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

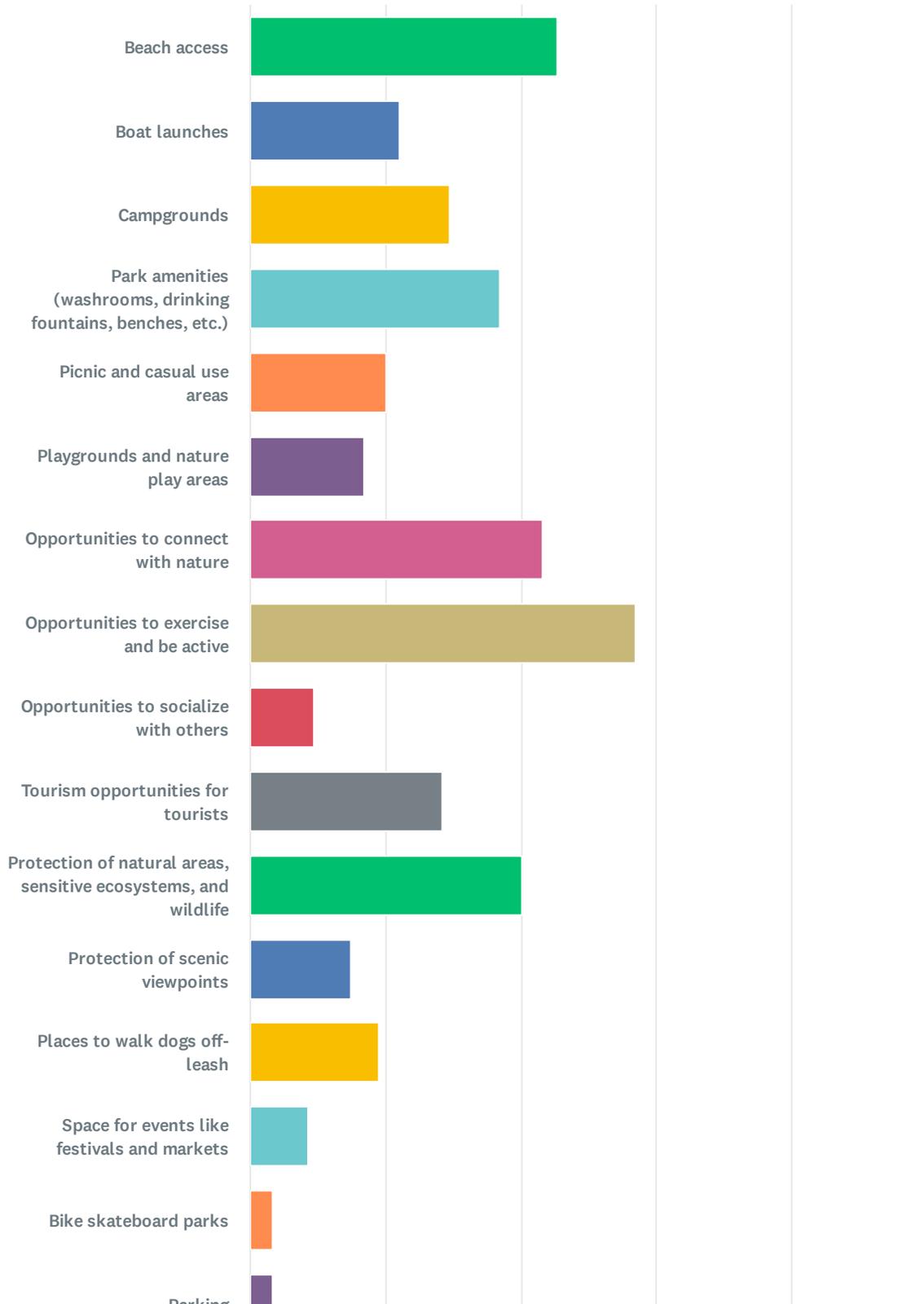
28	Town- shopping and social	9/20/2025 8:20 PM
29	Stuart lk. Sowchea bay and south to dog creek	9/20/2025 7:37 PM
30	Mt Pope, the trails on the scenic route, Murray ridge, rock climbing, the ATV trails	9/20/2025 2:44 PM
31	The places everyone knows? Paarens Beach, Sowchea (Big Bay), Murray Ridge, Cottonwood Park, snowmobile club trails, Russ Baker Memorial. Except, those are not all trails. I see there are a few off shoots people can quad or walk down but its a labyrinth of unmarked, unmaintained trails or ones that end up on the road unsafely.	9/20/2025 9:03 AM
32	Provincial Parks	9/19/2025 6:56 PM
33	Mt Pope, mountain bike trails, Murray ridge, sowchea bay	9/19/2025 11:43 AM
34	Paarens beach, Mt. Pope, Murray Ridge	9/19/2025 8:38 AM
35	Ski shill, Nordic trails, the lake,	9/18/2025 1:03 PM
36	Mnt Pope, Shas Mountain, Mount Dickensen, The Graveyard trails, The pictographs (Stuart Lake), Dem and Hat Lake, Great Beaver Lake, Grassham and Campsell Lake, Beaver Island, Honeymoon & Battle Ship Island.	9/16/2025 9:41 AM
37	Beaches on Stuart Lake Mt Pope and graveyard trails	9/10/2025 10:07 PM
38	Mount Pope	9/8/2025 11:13 AM
39	Anything close to Stuart Lake	9/5/2025 1:37 PM
40	Paarens Beach, Sowchea Bay Park, Ft St James Snowmobile and ATV Trails	9/5/2025 8:01 AM
41	? Not sure meaning of question	9/4/2025 6:36 PM
42	Stuart Lake, Mt. Pope trail /rock climbing	9/4/2025 6:30 PM
43	Ski Hill, snowmobile trails	9/3/2025 4:44 PM
44	Stuart Lake, Mt. Pope, Murray Ridge	9/3/2025 11:59 AM
45	Murray Ridge Mount Pope	9/3/2025 10:08 AM
46	Murray Ridge Ski Area, Mt Pope, Mt Dickson, The loop by the lake	9/3/2025 10:04 AM
47	Murray Ridge, Mount Pope, Mount Dickenson, The Loop, ATV trail network,	9/3/2025 10:04 AM
48	murray ridge ski area mt Pope graveyard trails	9/3/2025 10:02 AM
49	Pope trail network, Dickinson Mt trails	9/1/2025 7:55 AM
50	Provincial parks.	8/31/2025 2:44 PM
51	Stuart Lake, Mt. Pope, T-Caves, mountain biking trails	8/31/2025 1:21 PM
52	I want easy access for cycling and walking in an around my community that does not require being an extreme athlete	8/31/2025 12:02 PM
53	Fort St James (Stuart Lake)	8/31/2025 10:06 AM
54	Mount Pope/lookout trail, Jim Henry Trail system, the loop, cottonwood park	8/31/2025 10:04 AM
55	Mt Pope, Murray Ridge, Stuart lake	8/22/2025 3:41 PM
56	Murray Ridge new bike trails and hiking trails, bike trails on mount Pope, paarens beach, sowchea bay, Stuart lake, local ATV trails, tslicoh falls, nation lakes, takla lake to Stuart lake.	8/20/2025 10:46 AM
57	Big bay, Pareens Beach	8/17/2025 9:12 PM
58	Mt pope?	8/17/2025 6:01 PM
59	Murray ridge, mt pope, beaches/campsites	8/17/2025 1:53 PM
60	Cottonwood marina and campground, paarens beach, sowchea beach.	8/17/2025 10:55 AM
61	Mt Pope is a key destination! As is Stuart Lake in general.	8/17/2025 8:11 AM

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

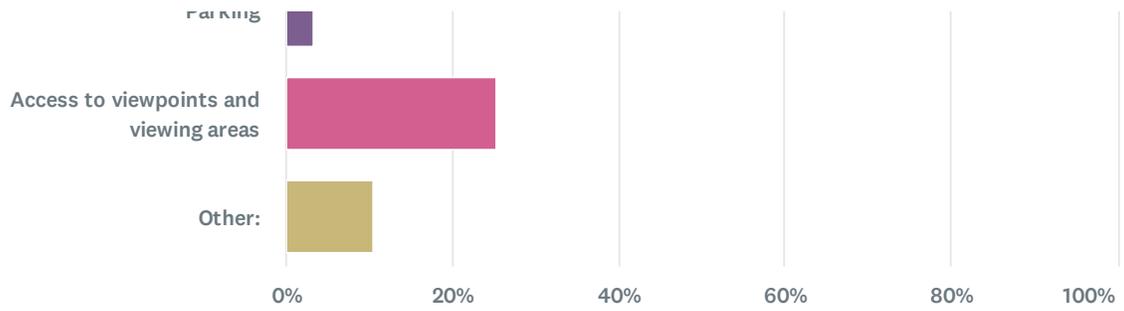
62	Mt. Pope	8/16/2025 7:12 PM
63	Hat lake loop, Sutherland Provincial Park (Bud rd.), used to enjoy Carrier/Boot/Teardrop loop. The Purvis FSR loop is nice too.	8/16/2025 5:42 PM
64	Mt pope Stuart lake National historic site Ski hill	8/16/2025 4:25 PM
65	Mount Pope provincial park Stuart Lake - Paarens, Sowchea Bay	8/16/2025 2:58 PM
66	Stuart Lake, Mt Pope, trails originating from the snowmo clubhouse + Dog Creek area. Give the Indigenous (and the Baldy) historical trails special status.	8/16/2025 12:44 PM
67	Mt Bike/graveyard trails Mt pope trails T-caves Waterfall trail Old Pope trails Mt Dickenson Cottonwood Paarens Lease Lots	8/16/2025 11:59 AM
68	All of it	8/16/2025 8:20 AM
69	Sowchea Bay Area, there is camping sites and resorts all along this stretch of highway and are no walking paths along the side of the highway. This is a serious safety hazard for kids, and adults who have to use the main road as their way of transportation via walking, running or biking. The safety issues include vehicles and logging trucks, driving too fast, road is too busy or narrow to safely move over to give pedestrians room on the road. There needs to be a path created from suspenders to at least Nak'azdli Whut'en lease Lots or even to sowchea bay. During the summer months people travel all over to stay at Pitka Bay resort and other provincial camp grounds along this road. By creating a safe walking path will only enhance safety and create healthy opportunities for families	8/16/2025 8:02 AM
70	Mount Pope and the memory trail Stuart Lake itself All of our beautiful campgrounds Trails that used to be the old railway track could benefit from a few signs in our local trails Beautiful cottonwood Park Our beautiful Murray ridge ski hill as well as our cross-country ski amenities Are snowmobile ATV clubs and trails. They are taken care of greatly better than the ones I feel in town and area for walkers /hikers And last but not least, our most beautiful historic Park and the chicken races is an absolute. Must stop in Fort St. James	8/16/2025 7:56 AM
71	Pope mtn trail network, other lake trails (down sowchea), bike trails by Spencer pit, echo lake, lake ski trails, Murray ridge	8/16/2025 5:58 AM
72	Robin Rd trails, Paarens Beach swimming	8/16/2025 2:56 AM
73	Mt Pope and the trails above the cemetery	8/15/2025 11:31 PM
74	Mount Pope	8/15/2025 11:02 PM
75	Pope Mountain, Sowchea Bay Campground	8/15/2025 10:06 PM
76	"Graveyard Trails", Old Pope trail, Stuart Lake , Golf Course , Ski hill	8/15/2025 9:49 PM
77	Nyan Wheti trail Mt Pope trail My Dickenson trail Town Loop trail Stuart Lake kayaking in summer, cross-country skiing and biking etc in winter Mt Shas	8/15/2025 9:44 PM
78	Mt Pope, Climber's Trail, mountain bike trails by the graveyard, the Loop walk, the xc ski trails at Murray Ridge, the groomed lake trails in the winter for xc skiing, Nyan Wheti, Mt Dickinson.	8/15/2025 9:17 PM
79	Paarens Beach, Big Bay and Mount Pope	8/15/2025 9:09 PM
80	The ATV club trails, Mt Pope and T Caves, Mt Dickinson, Stuart Lake public beaches, the pictographs, the historic site.	8/15/2025 9:01 PM
81	Atv/snowmobile club trails, mount pope trail, stones bay/cemetery trailstrails	8/15/2025 8:56 PM
82	stuart lake, tremblure lake ,nation lake system	8/15/2025 5:21 PM
83	Mt. Pope, trails behind the golf course, Murray Ridge Nordic trails, trails around Mt. Dickensen, any access to the lake.	8/15/2025 9:58 AM
84	Mt Pope, Nyan Wheti, xcounrty ski trails at Murray ridge, Mt Dickinson, Pinchi Mountain, Chas Mountain,	8/15/2025 9:26 AM

Q12 What are your main priorities for parks in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5)

Answered: 95 Skipped: 12



RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Beach access	45.26%	43
● Boat launches	22.11%	21
● Campgrounds	29.47%	28
● Park amenities (washrooms, drinking fountains, benches, etc.)	36.84%	35
● Picnic and casual use areas	20.00%	19
● Playgrounds and nature play areas	16.84%	16
● Opportunities to connect with nature	43.16%	41
● Opportunities to exercise and be active	56.84%	54
● Opportunities to socialize with others	9.47%	9
● Tourism opportunities for tourists	28.42%	27
● Protection of natural areas, sensitive ecosystems, and wildlife	40.00%	38
● Protection of scenic viewpoints	14.74%	14
● Places to walk dogs off-leash	18.95%	18
● Space for events like festivals and markets	8.42%	8
● Bike skateboard parks	3.16%	3
● Parking	3.16%	3
Total		411

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Access to viewpoints and viewing areas	25.26%	24
 Other: Show responses	10.53%	10
Total		411

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	Bike lanes, circle trail routes,	9/26/2025 5:58 PM
2	Family outings with younger children	9/21/2025 3:25 AM
3	All of the above	9/20/2025 8:30 PM
4	we need more of them	9/8/2025 3:24 PM
5	Proper Rescue resources in Fort St James for the recreation resources. FSJ SAR restricted by EMCR rules. No Swiftwater, not Rope Team allowed.....	9/5/2025 8:10 AM
6	I would like to see the Area "C" taxpayers help pay for District parks.	8/31/2025 2:51 PM
7	Walk and cycle friendly areas	8/31/2025 12:08 PM
8	More accountability toward keeping ATVS and motorized vehicles off trails and walking paths	8/31/2025 10:12 AM
9	More bolted climbing routes, Pump track, downhill mountain bike trails at Murray Ridge	8/22/2025 3:54 PM
10	re-foresting urban areas with coniferous trees to prevent wind and make comfortable for winter use,Places to walk that are easy to get to	8/16/2025 7:19 PM

Q13 What are your main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5).

Answered: 95 Skipped: 12

ATV / Snowmobile routes



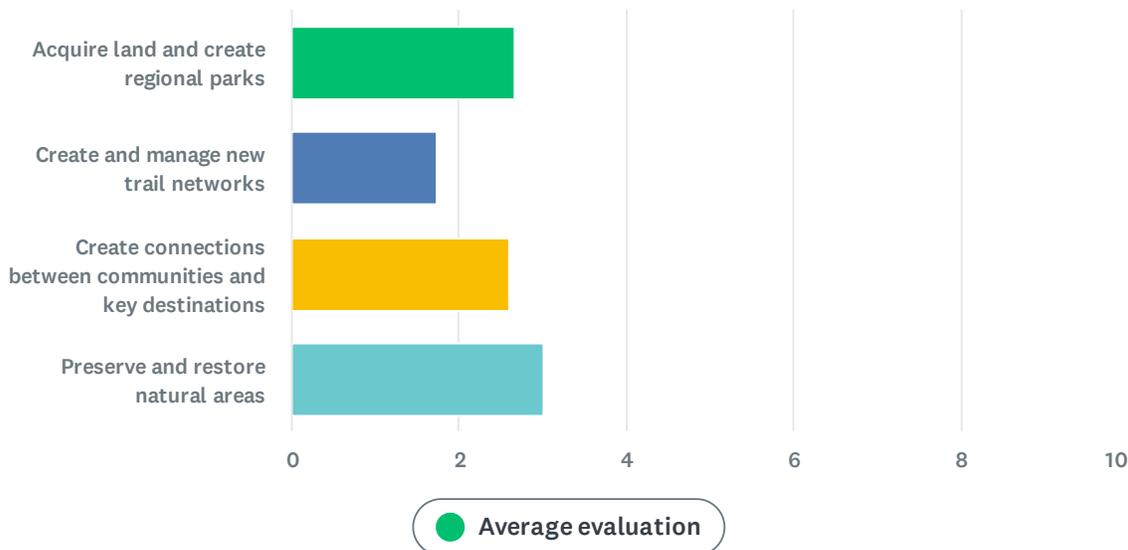
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● ATV / Snowmobile routes	26.32%	25
● Hiking and walking trails	80.00%	76
● Mountain bike trails	35.79%	34
● Connecting to community amenities like schools, parks, and neighbourhoods	24.21%	23
● Encouraging alternative modes of travel	22.11%	21
● Minimizing ecological impact	20.00%	19
● Hard surface, multi-use pathways	28.42%	27
● Opportunities for skill progression	10.53%	10
● Connections to other parks and trails	36.84%	35
● Tourism opportunities for visitors	32.63%	31
● Rest areas and benches	15.79%	15
● Trail signage and wayfinding	54.74%	52
● Wheelchair or mobility scooter accessibility	8.42%	8
● Parking	3.16%	3
● Access to viewpoints or viewing areas	13.68%	13
● Other: Show responses	6.32%	6
Total		398

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER:	DATE
1	having mountain bikes and moto trials and bike share the same trail	9/27/2025 9:24 PM
2	Activate historic trails	9/26/2025 5:58 PM
3	Fishing	9/16/2025 9:44 AM
4	Before building ones in the rural area have the Area "C" taxpayers help pay for what they use in DFSJ.	8/31/2025 2:51 PM
5	Climbing	8/22/2025 3:54 PM
6	<p>It is critical that there be signed, advertised, and maintained access to the lake, most especially on the north side along Stones Bay Road. This area along the lake is comprised of an extraordinary and unique karst topography, with gorgeous cliffs, caves, springs, islands, and beaches. There is also a year-round waterfall down the lake from the T-Caves that creates phenomenal ice sculptures in the winter, as it runs all year. Cliffs on this side of the lake contain multiple pictographs, as well as Simon Fraser's signature. Currently, it is difficult for tourists and residents to access at any time of year unless they have motorised transport or they are very fit. If one has to start their canoe or ski at Cottonwood to access these stunning locations, they must have a high level of fitness due to the at least 20km round trip and the time to do it. This should be priority one for tourism, health, and equitable access for everyone. However, most access points are currently being squatted on by residents or are undeveloped. There is one (apparently) on Stones Bay Sub Road. It is the flattest approach, and people could park along the road or at Mt. Pope. It needs to be cleared, with some attention to the stream that runs in the Spring. In the case of the Stuart Lake Sailing Clubhouse, there are stairs to get down to the beach, but it isn't easy to carry a boat down. It is also dominated by a stream. On either side of this community asset, residents have encroached on the public right-of-way where these approaches are less steep and wet. BC Parks has acquired a fabulous parking asset for the climbing trails and walls along Stones Bay. Again, the access to the beach is wet and steep at the end of the path down. Fairly lithe folks can get down in the winter to start skiing there, but most people are not capable of this. This parking lot and access point could be developed and used for more than climbers, but it, too, has a stream. There are solutions that would be relatively inexpensive for several access points along Stones Bay Road.</p>	8/15/2025 1:35 PM

Q14 What should the RDBN prioritize in parks and trails over the next 10 years? (Rank options in order of priority).

Answered: 95 Skipped: 12



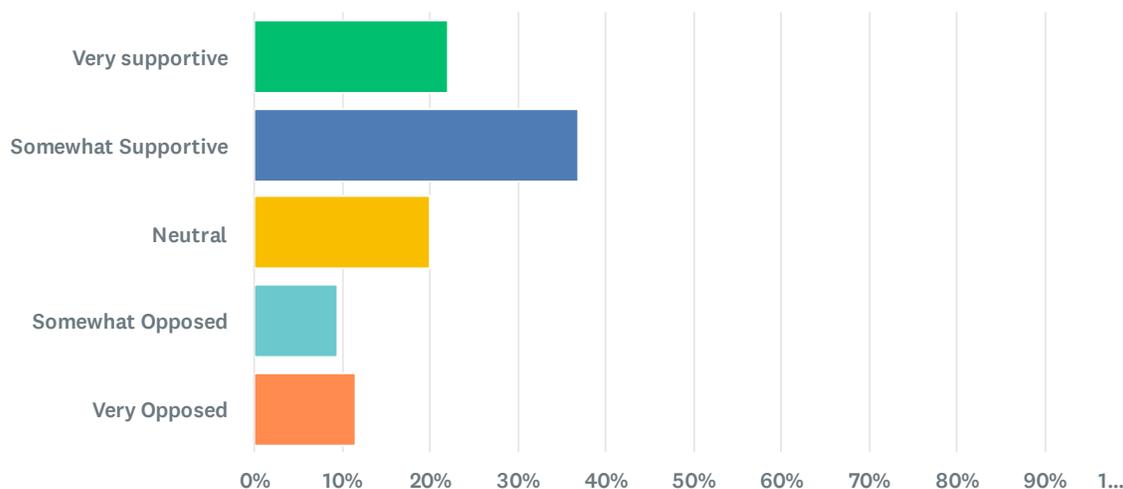
	1	2	3	4	Total	Weighted ...
Acquire land and create regional parks	18.95% 18	25.26% 24	26.32% 25	29.47% 28	95	2.66
Create and manage new trail networks	55.79% 53	21.05% 20	16.84% 16	6.32% 6	95	1.74

380	2.50
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	 1	 2	 3	 4	Total	Weighted ...
Create connections between communities and key destinations	13.68%	35.79%	28.42%	22.11%		
	13	34	27	21	95	2.59

Q15 How supportive are you of a tax increase to fund the acquisition of new parks and trails, or the development of new infrastructure in parks and trails?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 12



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Very supportive	22.11%	21
● Somewhat Supportive	36.84%	35
● Neutral	20.00%	19
● Somewhat Opposed	9.47%	9
● Very Opposed	11.58%	11
Total		95

Q16 What else do we need to know about parks and trails in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 49

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	the parks are for all users.	9/27/2025 9:24 PM
2	Would be nice to have trails for trials riding	9/27/2025 8:23 PM
3	Cell service should be available in our local area parks and public use facilities	9/27/2025 8:04 PM
4	There are many trails that could be dual use. dog sleigh/snowmobile could be bike trailstrails. The old railroad bed to Takla could be repurposed for cycling ,snowmobile or ATV	9/26/2025 5:58 PM
5	Would like to see a trail built from the junction of Mowbay Rd to town, either down the power line or along Hwy 27.	9/25/2025 8:57 AM
6	There are no hard surface trails! There is nowhere for people to ride their bikes safely! There aren't even sidewalks for kids to safely walk/ride. If anyone wants to go for a longer bike ride with family, you need to ride on busy roads and highways.	9/23/2025 9:15 PM
7	Safe trails connecting residential area near top of One Mile Hill(North Road Highway) to town need to be constructed in order to encourage more residents to use active transportation.	9/23/2025 6:06 PM
8	If you're using it maybe there could be a toll fee for usage in some areas or there can be fundraising instead of taxes. Too many seniors in our community for this to reflect onto everyone	9/23/2025 5:43 PM
9	We have tons of great existing trails but having a volunteer group take on the management of them is difficult because trails run over multiple land owners. also I forgot a major important feature in my comment at beginning of survey are the Murray ridge trail network	9/23/2025 11:26 AM
10	Lake Shore walkway from historic park to below district office needs shoreline stability by using big rock. To work with fisheries, federal government, local government and industry to create a sustainable park for tourism and local use.	9/22/2025 11:15 AM
11	Look at places like Grande Cache. Small town with beautifully cut and maintained trails, well marked. There is easy trail access from any area of the town. Trail maps are available and the trails are very clearly marked. In such a way you end up with a town of hikers, motivated to go on the trails daily. Fort St. James is overrun by loose dogs, a much bigger problem than wildlife. The place is absolutely beautiful and could easily be a tourist destination, with better care, infrastructure and business support.	9/22/2025 6:35 AM
12	There are existing trails that would benefit from advertising and maintenance. Pinchi mountain trail for example	9/21/2025 9:34 PM
13	There are lots of trails here, but making them signed better and putting some maintenance into what we have would increase their usability.	9/21/2025 9:01 PM
14	It would be great to have a walking /biking trail network so kids could safely ride bikes into town from Sowchea. The highway and bridges are not ideal for pedestrian/biker safety.	9/21/2025 8:57 PM
15	We could have better accessibility to our local beaches.	9/21/2025 8:14 PM
16	The walking trail along stones bay road needs better identification or delineation or to be moved because in winter drivers can't seem to figure out it's there. So many close calls with head on collisions and people driving on pathway as it's plowed through	9/21/2025 3:25 PM
17	Our family is not too concerned with additional parks unless they don't limit ORV use. Trails of all kinds are important. Multi-use trails, hiking, etc. A multi-use trail end-to-end on Sowchea Rd would be ideal and an attraction for tourism. People at provincials parks could use them, locals could use them, kids and families. A safer way across Stuart River would be ideal as well	9/21/2025 9:48 AM

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18	There are lots of options already, new projects should fill what is missing not add more of the same. A paved path to rollerblade, a lakeside walk that is more than 10 min, a safe place for a bike ride with kids...	9/21/2025 3:25 AM
19	Safe winter walking for elderly eg gym , covered mall, big community centre.	9/20/2025 8:30 PM
20	Access for forest fire fighting and possible SAR operations	9/20/2025 7:40 PM
21	Maintain the trails you do have. The question above is to create new when the old are in shambles. Rec sites are forgotten or unmaintained, like battleship rec site which needs road maintenance. I would like to see a better maintained loop walk in town which is heavily used but puts walkers at risk on road ways, so fix or create the sidewalks on Stones Bay and the road to the marina. Ensure year round use by ensuring walking areas are sanded or plowed in winter without delay. Make it priority. Wheelchair users can't get up on the lip of the curb in front of the RCMP building let alone a chunk of snow or ice. They need a walking loop by the hospital, one that is easy and gentle because the hill up to it is not and those with mobility issues will be stuck in their homes at the top of the hill. Connectors and shortcuts that get most used by kids walking home from school need attention to keep from getting hard packed and slippery. Bear resistant garbage bins, because it isn't the bears it is the crows the spread it everywhere on the corner of stones bay and hwy. Keep walkers or runners off hwy by cutting in the ATV trail beside it across from the graveyard. Crime prevention through environmental design (it's a whole discipline that you might find useful, like not too bright but not too dark lighting considerations)	9/20/2025 9:33 AM
22	If work is done, publicize it for maximum use and benefit.	9/16/2025 9:44 AM
23	There is not enough of them	9/8/2025 3:24 PM
24	Not sure	9/8/2025 11:15 AM
25	There are lots of existing trails and corridors around Fort St James, work needs to be done to connect these and maintain them with the mindset of reducing Wildfire risk and using the trails as fuel breaks. Lots of work needs to be done on the trails within the provincial parks (ie. Mt Pope trails)	9/5/2025 1:41 PM
26	Serious concerns that Mt Pope is being promoted for climbing, but I doubt most people are not aware that Ft St James does not have the ability to rescue someone if there is an accident. Utilize and enhance existing trails where we can.	9/5/2025 8:10 AM
27	What is here is not sufficient. At \$40/m anything new is not going to be cheap. Mountain bike trails It should be safer to ride a bike into, and around the town of Fort St. James. I would like to see a specific area for mountain bike trail development. The old school trails can stay but to truly attract bike riders good, challenging, predictable, trails are needed.	9/4/2025 8:15 PM
28	Sowchea road is very busy and dangerous for walking or riding bikes and there are no trails for walking or biking.	9/4/2025 6:41 PM
29	Your finances to help the existing clubs in the area to maintain the trails that they are working at	9/3/2025 4:48 PM
30	Need more variety, better signage.	9/3/2025 12:02 PM
31	Mount Pope needs an outhouse, The Stuart River Bridge needs walking/biking lane, the land behind the hospital around Dickinson is crown and could be developed, Collaboration with the ATV club, The Ski Hill, the xcross county club, the Climbing club, annd Nak'azdli, and the municipality is needed to creat maps and a plan for maintaining the existing trails and new ones. New trails need to be accessible for tourists who visit the National Historic Park to encourage tourism	9/3/2025 10:16 AM
32	MT Pope needs an outhouse!	9/3/2025 10:10 AM
33	If the RDBN taxpayers don't pay for parks they use within the DFSJ, DFSJ taxpayers should not have to pay for ones in the rural area.	8/31/2025 2:51 PM
34	Easy access, no dogs, safety for aging population, opportunities for seniors to stay active and enjoy the outdoors	8/31/2025 12:08 PM
35	I would like to see less ATV/dirt bikes on the trails and walking paths. It destroys the ecosystem, creates noise pollution, and creates stress to the wildlife. I do not understand why people use utility vehicles for "entertainment" in the beautiful Nak'azdli Whut'en territory and	8/31/2025 10:12 AM

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

assume it does not affect the land, animals, or people around them. It is frustrating to see so many people drive these machines through the land without any regard/care. I would like to see regulations put in place and follow-through regarding the use of these vehicles in trail and walking systems.

36	We are falling behind other near by communities in developing our mountain bike trails. Murray Ridge is best place to invest in this. Mostly need a way to get bikes up the hill. A pump track is handy for developing mountain bike skills. Develop the climbing area. More accessible bolted routes. Indoor climbing/ bouldering wall is needed.	8/22/2025 3:54 PM
37	Locals have been developing trails networks for years that are not well protected and some have been lost to industrial activity that is suspect. The preservation of these trails, and further development would build a great culture for the local communities that use the area. Land would need to be purchased and boundaries expanded to protect them. Stuart lake is beautiful and with some development the local tourism industry could flourish. The Murray Ridge Ski Area is a massive attraction for the are as well, but recently the local municipality has not been supportive. The buisness has been standing on its own with regional and provincial grants helping expand its reach and amenities. This mountain area is a gem and needs to be preserved from future development and industrial activity.	8/20/2025 11:00 AM
38	Allowing residents year round access to existing infrastructure (trails/parks) significantly contributes to getting outdoors and enjoying/benefitting from the place we live and the things we have. Making it accessible in the winter is key. Something to consider when implementing new parks/trails. Thank you.	8/17/2025 2:00 PM
39	Fort St James has a great opportunity to tap into tourism and have the town strive and do much better than its current state.	8/17/2025 11:01 AM
40	I think we have some amazing parks and trails existing currently in Area C. Lots of people come to our town to use Mt pope but a bathroom at the bottom would be very helpful for a lot of visitors coming from out of town.	8/17/2025 8:17 AM
41	urban bears are a problem, and wind is a problem It would be nice to make the loop in town longer mountain biking trails should be a priority	8/16/2025 7:19 PM
42	Parks and trails are critical to not only providing activities for the residents of this area but also to draw tourism to area in all seasons to help diversify work and income opportunities as well as have the groundwork and initial assets to push for grants and funding for future development.	8/16/2025 5:49 PM
43	Engagement with the community before writing any plans.	8/16/2025 12:54 PM
44	There needs to serious Consideration to create trails along the highway of sowchea road. The lack of consideration for safety For community members that live in this area is unacceptable. There needs to be accessible cleared paved paths. This will help to encourage a healthy environment and lifestyle for those who reside in this area and to increase tourism as this is the main area for tourism to come and stay.	8/16/2025 8:08 AM
45	They just need to have more love, care, upkeep, signage, rest areas. Maybe just look interested that people care about Fort St. James, as much as they do in other areas that are rural	8/16/2025 8:01 AM
46	There are a lot of excellent trails that would be much more accessible with only a little bit of upgrading and more information. Drive-in lake campsites they aren't directly downtown in Fort are often full, more of those would be lovely and there's so much lake here, both the big Lake and so many little ones	8/16/2025 6:03 AM
47	There needs to be playground upgrades, specifically Goodwin park. Or new playgrounds. The children's favorite playground is the one at the Paarens Beach Provincial campground.	8/16/2025 3:00 AM
48	Information on trail systems so people who did not grow up here know what is available, where to access and park.	8/16/2025 1:59 AM
49	The Dickenson Mt area would be a great spot for walking, hiking, biking trails.	8/15/2025 11:43 PM
50	They exist but nothing is marked. A great example of a well established trail system would be Grande Cached, AB. The visitor centre here is a disaster. In other towns the visitor centres actively promote the trail systems and lead tours, hand out maps.	8/15/2025 10:16 PM

RDBN – Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Parks and Trails Master Plan Community Survey

51	Many trails are maintained by volunteers and clubs . Funding to these clubs / persons would be beneficial for upgrades	8/15/2025 9:55 PM
52	Toilet facilities at the Mt Pope trailhead should be a high priority. Nyan Wheti should be a World Heritage trail and major tourist attraction, given it's historic significance	8/15/2025 9:52 PM
53	It would be amazing to maintain the Nyan Wheti trail, Historical, cultural, environmental importance to our community.	8/15/2025 9:21 PM
54	Engage groups already doing accessibility and outdoor work	8/15/2025 9:18 PM
55	Our beaches are incredible, but swimmer's itch seems to be an increasingly common issue that makes swimming unpleasant. It would be nice to see an update to the Baker Drive/Nyan Wheti trailhead with improved trail signage.	8/15/2025 9:08 PM
56	we own property in the district of fort st james and property in the RDBN. i see our district tax notice we pay RDBN for parks and trails, I do not see RDBN paying for there residents use of the district parks cottenwood, goodwin, spirit Square or the loop waking trail, Why is that the case, all the RDBN residents use and enjoy those amenities and as such should be contributing to the cost associated with those amenities ? that is actually the case for many of the amenities and infrastructure that the fsj district develops and maintains, the free ride needs to end.....	8/15/2025 5:34 PM
57	Access to the natural environment is why we live here. Expand all access so that people who don't have a lot of money and access to trucks, trailers, and motorised 'toys' can see more of the area. Thanks for your time.	8/15/2025 1:35 PM
58	It would be nice to have a safe pedestrian path/bike trail to travel from Sowchea Rd to town that prevents being on the highway with big trucks, especially for families and teens. (Something like the Smithers - Telkwa bike corridor)	8/15/2025 9:36 AM

APPENDIX B

MAPS

RDBN Parks & Trails Master Plan Electoral Area C

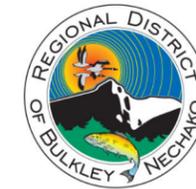
Parks and Recreation Sites Inventory

Draft v1
November 10, 2025

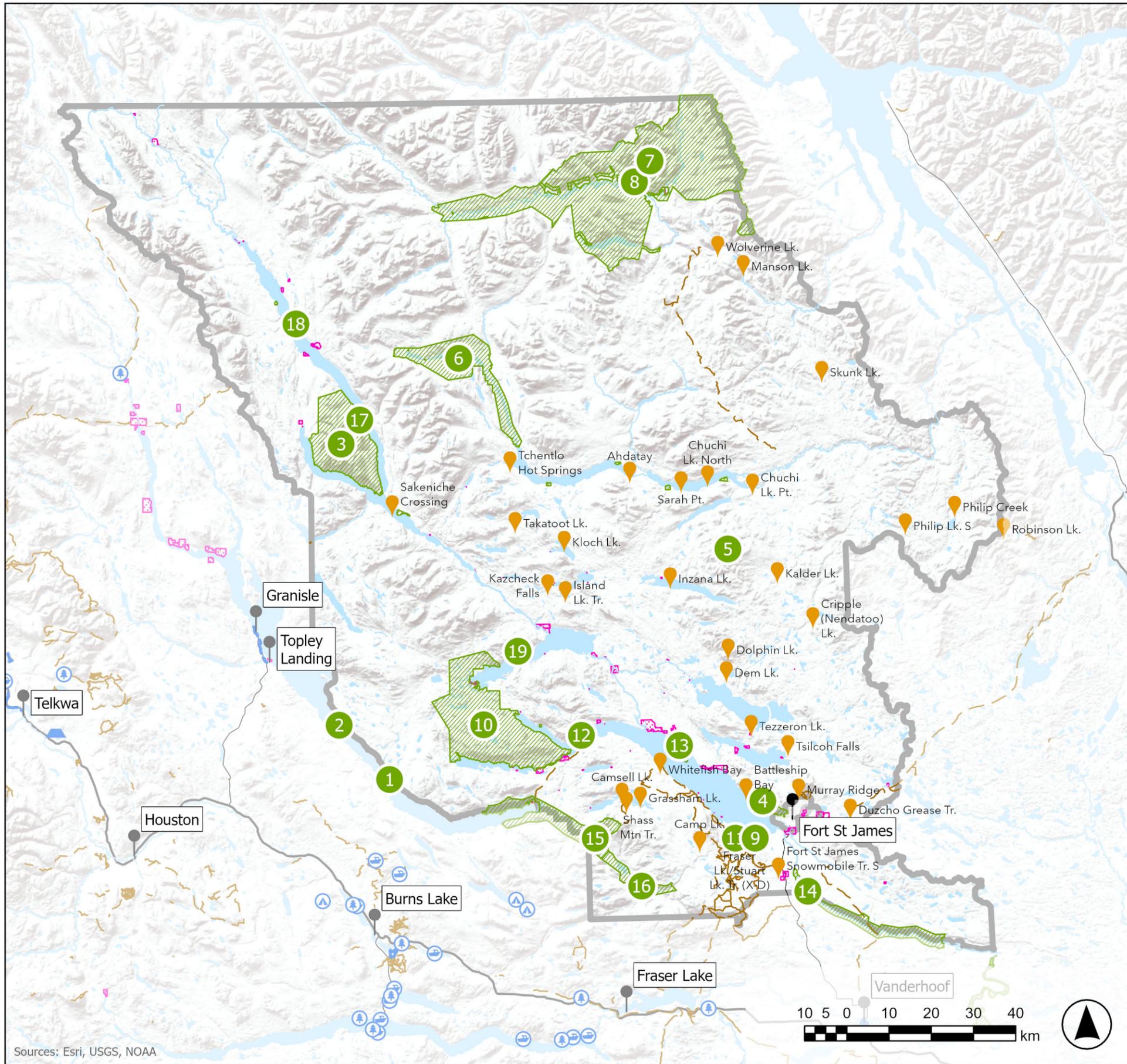
Client:

Consultant:

Scale: 1:1,000,000
(on 11x17 Inch Sheet)



LEFS
ASSOCIATES



Legend

- RDBN Electoral Area C
- Municipality
- Reserves
- Recreation Sites - Electoral Area C
- BC Provincial Parks - Electoral Area C
- RDBN Boat Launch
- RDBN Campsite
- RDBN Day Use Site
- RDBN Dock
- RDBN Regional Trail
- BC Provincial Trail
- Minor Road
- Major Road
- Lakes
- Rivers & Streams

- 1 BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - HOOK (DEEP BAY) SITE
- 2 BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - SANDPOINT SITE
- 3 MOUNT BLANCHET PARK
- 4 MOUNT POPE PARK
- 5 MUDZENCHOOT PARK
- 6 NATION LAKES PARK
- 7 OMINECA PARK
- 8 OMINECA PROTECTED AREA
- 9 PAARENS BEACH PARK
- 10 RUBYROCK LAKE PARK
- 11 SOWCHEA BAY PARK
- 12 STUART LAKE MARINE PARK
- 13 STUART LAKE PARK
- 14 STUART RIVER PARK - LOWER SITE
- 15 SUTHERLAND RIVER PARK
- 16 SUTHERLAND RIVER PROTECTED AREA
- 17 TAKLA LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
- 18 TAKLA MARINE PARK - TAKLA WEST
- 19 TREMBLEUR LAKE PARK

Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA