

Paul Lake Park Draft Management Plan

Summary of Public Input

Planning Process Prior to the Draft Management Plan:

The Paul Lake Park management planning process was initiated in May 2021. Consultation took place with Paul Lake Park users, various interest groups, local communities, and the wider public, as well as representatives of the Tk'emlups First Nation, through email exchanges, in-person meetings, an on-site information display at the park's day-use area, and an initial online public survey set-up to gather information on park values, issues and opportunities, and desired visitor experience (the "Initial Online Survey"). BC Parks received 509 responses to the Initial Online Survey.

The Initial Online Survey that ran from May to August 2021 asked a series of questions on activities undertaken, values, challenges, and potential improvements and changes in management Paul Lake Park. Each response was linked to a username with no method of identifying individual respondents. The results of the Initial Online Survey showed (numbers represent the percentage of respondents for each item):

- The most popular activities were: hiking (69), use of small non-motorized watercraft (62), swimming (62), fishing from boats (61), nature and wildlife viewing (53) and day use (43).
- In order of importance, the main values of the park were facilities (76), views (72), trails (72), safety of lake users (70), biodiversity/wildlife (69), peaceful enjoyment (68), fishing for Kokanee (67), accessibility (65), water quality (63), recreation (63).and lake access (58).
- Identified challenges included wakes from boats (54), safety concerns between motorboats and other users (48), environmental impacts of use (47), noise from boats (41), aquatic weeds (36) and geese (34) in beach area, and limitation of boat access at boat launch (33).
- Requested improvements included provision of cell or internet service, a shower building, more trails, and accessible buildings.
- Boat launching was a specific topic of discussion, with the initial survey showing that 61% of respondents wanted a continued restriction to car-top boats only, while 25% wanted the bollards removed, and 19% suggested removal of the bollards during the shoulder seasons in spring and fall.
- Fifty-one % suggested a boating speed limit; 30% were against this option.

The Initial Online Survey results, as well as all the information gathered during other consultations during the initial consultation stage, was used to develop a draft of the new Paul Lake Park Management Plan.

Draft Management Plan Survey:

The new draft Paul Lake Park Management Plan was made available to the public for comment from May 5 to June 15, 2022. The purpose of putting the draft of the new Paul Lake Park Management Plan online was to gauge public support of the suitability of the draft plan in reflecting all the initial input and determining if there were outstanding opportunities or issues that had not yet been considered.

In order to facilitate further input from the public on the new draft Paul Lake Park Management Plan, BC Parks posted another survey with the draft plan online (“Second Online Survey”). The Second Online Survey asked three general questions and allowed respondents to provide a range of responses in an open essay type format. As with the Initial Online Survey, each response in the Second Online Survey was linked to a username with no method of identifying individual respondents.

The Second Online Survey results were analyzed by identifying topics within each response and tallying the frequency of each topic. Some respondents provided input on several topics, or provided alternate options, under the same question. Accordingly, it was possible for respondents to contribute to the tallies for multiple topics under each question. Some responses were more relevant to another question. Such responses were moved to the appropriate question when summarizing the information. BC Parks received a total of 123 responses to the Second Online Survey.

Response Summary:

The following is a summary of the responses from the public to the Second Online Survey with some staff comments below. This summary concludes the public input phase of the Paul Lake Park management planning process. The draft of the new Paul Lake Park Management Plan will now be submitted for final internal review and recommended for approval. If approved, the new Paul Lake Park Management Plan will replace the existing 1996 Paul Lake Park Management Plan.

Three questions were asked on the Second Online Survey.

Question 1: Has the draft management plan adequately outlined the values of the park? (118 responses).

Answer or Topic	No. of responses
Yes (with no explanation)	81
No (with no explanation)	17
Missing cultural information on historic lodge on lake	4

Did not include some wildlife species in Vision Statement	1
---	---

Response:

- Information on Echo Lodge and Bill Nation, who was an avid fishing guide, expert and enthusiast in the Kamloops area, and based out of the lodge, will be sought and included.
- Suggested wildlife species have been added to those species already listed.

Question 2: Does the draft park management plan provide good direction for protection of park values while also providing for recreational activities? (123 responses)

Answer or Topic	No. of responses
Yes (with no explanation)	59
No (with no explanation)	11
No – need trailered boat launch due to accessibility issues for older age people or those with disabilities	58
No, need speed restrictions and boat access	11
Failed to address issues	2
Not enough consideration for residents of the lake	1
Do not allow larger boats on lake	3
Need for accessible walkway to beach and to facilities	2
Conservation should take precedence over use	1
Need a fire prevention and fuel management direction	6
Need to bring back amphitheater programming	1
Need to deal with goose droppings and swimmer’s itch	3
Concerns of bike use on same trails as hikers	2
Need to implement a carrying capacity to protect values	1

Response:

- The most frequent responses that accounted for 80 responses (the 11 who stated “No” were also included in this count) were related to the lack of trailered boat access, either together with speed restrictions or seasonal bollard removal. BC Parks understands the frustration of people who have physical restrictions in launching boats in the park. However, the initial public consultation phase for the new draft management plan that included discussions with and input from interest groups, local communities on Paul Lake, the general public, First Nations and park visitors through the Initial Online Survey, email exchanges, and in-person meetings, showed that the shoreline ecosystem and wildlife, water quality, park safety and a quiet family experience were a priority for the majority of people and that increased boat access would be detrimental to those values. Recall that the Initial Online Survey asked more detailed questions and had 509 respondents with 61% requesting that the boat launch remain for “car top” carry boats only. In addition, the park is not set up for trailer parking and already gets congested at popular times. The additional disturbance of the near-shore area by trailers must be taken into consideration. For these reasons, and based on the overall input, staff recommends that the boat access remain “car-top” only. This being said, staff also recommends that BC Parks continue to “explore ways to assist those who may have difficulties in launching car-top boats.

This is now a second priority management strategy after retaining the “car-top” launch and is a commitment by BC Parks to continue working with the fishing community and others who have difficulty in launching their boats to enable easier launching so they can enjoy the high quality fishing or just an outing on the lake.

- Boat speed and motor size restrictions are not the mandate of BC Parks. This is a federal responsibility. Historically, it has been easier to obtain such restrictions, but the process and justification requirements have changed over time with emphasis on community cooperation. The Paul Lake Park environment can absorb some impacts, but not a dramatic increase in the number and type of boats, especially without harming the common user’s experience of the park. The degree and number of impacts can become overwhelming and cause damage. The current degree of boat access has evolved overtime and appears to be manageable and, to a certain extent, self regulated, with boat operators aware of other users on the lake.
- The plan was never to open up the boat launch to all sizes of boats. The recommendation is for the car-top launching restriction to remain in place.
- Accessibility is a priority for BC Parks. Any improvement in facilities will take this into consideration, including washrooms and change rooms, trails, parking and access to the fishing dock. And yes, it includes finding ways to launch small boats more easily at the boat launch.
- The new Paul Lake Park management plan will state that conservation will take precedence over any further developments within the park, and existing uses may have to be modified. This being said, recreational use and access to fishing will continue to factor into future decisions. At a minimum, the present level of biodiversity, water quality and habitat values to wildlife will be maintained and improved to the extent possible by BC Parks, recognizing that most the lake is outside BC Parks’ jurisdiction. We will do our part.
- More explicit statements on the role of fire in the ecosystem, assessing fire risk and making the park and area more resistant to wildfires have been added to the management plan. BC Parks is working with the Forest Service in the Paul Lake area to jointly implement fire risk reduction strategies.
- An objective has been added to the management plan to provide opportunities to learn about park values and management. This may take any number of forms, but not necessarily the traditional park amphitheatre presentations. Instilling knowledge and a sense of stewardship for park visitors is considered an important part of the park system.
- BC Parks will continue to attempt to reduce the droppings left by geese on the beach and adjacent grass, as well as their contribution to beach users being exposed to swimmer’s itch. However, this is a difficult issue to address. Many enjoy seeing geese on the lake and few want to see a goose cull, but families should not be subjected to a potential health issue of a droppings filled beach and contaminated water when a main recreational draw of the park advertised by BC Parks is the beach.
- Bikes will not be allowed on most hiking trails. Some allowance may be made where trails are wide enough to accommodate both users, or possibly some sections for bikes only. Visitor safety and an appropriate park experience are priorities.
- BC Parks will continue to manage access and visitor use to protect the natural ecosystem and wildlife. Conservation values are a priority.

Question 3: Do you have any additional comments or suggestions on the draft park management plan for Paul Lake Park? (117 responses).

Answer or Topic	No. of responses
Need bear safe garbage containers	1
Extend season of operation	1
BC Parks needs funding to implement this plan	1
Strategies will cause environmental deterioration	2
Favours the residents of the lake	7
Favours angling community	1
Not enough consideration for residents of the lake	1
Political document, not for management of the park	1
What is the plan review frequency?	1
Need correct highway and website directions to park (group site, campsite, day use)	1
Concern if cell phone service provided	1

Response:

- Some of these comments are operational in nature and too specific for a park management plan. Operational staff will be made aware of all concerns.
- During development of the park management plan all factors and public input were taken into consideration, with protection of the environment and wildlife, the desired park experience by visitors and safety being of high priority. To the degree that the outcome may seem to favour one group or another is purely coincidental.
- All developments within a park undergo an impact assessment process. Environmental protection is a priority.
- Park management plans are reviewed internally every five years for whether they continue to be valid in providing adequate direction for the park. If circumstances change, new activities emerge, or impacts occur that are not supported by the existing management plan, then the park will be placed on a priority list for either a new park management plan or plan amendment.