



DECISION TO APPROVE PORCUPINE CAMPGROUND RELOCATION

What We Heard

Alberta Parks conducted a 60-day online public consultation on the Porcupine Campground Relocation Proposal from August 2 to October 3, 2016. Public input was received through five official responses through ParkNews. Public comments included the following topics:

- Campground capacity.
- Emergency service response.
- Reference requests for:
 - wildlife studies;
 - traffic impact assessment;
 - wetlands reports with respect to Chilver Lake; and
 - Salamander studies and crossings of the Trans-Canada highway.

Details on the public comments and responses are provided in the following table.

| What We Heard | Alberta Parks Response |
|--|---|
| Support for replacing campground capacity | As part of flood recovery, Alberta Parks is working on rebuilding infrastructure throughout the Kananaskis Region. |
| There are already too many facilities in the area proposed. Alberta Parks needs to propose more campgrounds in Kananaskis Country specifically on Hwy 40. | Alberta Parks provides numerous camping opportunities throughout the front country and backcountry in the Kananaskis Region. Through recent Government of Alberta infrastructure funding announcements, Alberta Parks is in the process of planning and implementing campground initiatives throughout the region including Hwy 40. |
| Can Alberta Parks advise where the emergency service response (fire, medical first responders) would come from? | Bow Valley Provincial Park is located in Kananaskis Improvement District. Emergency services for Bow Valley South including the proposed Porcupine Group Campground are provided by Kananaskis Emergency Services. |
| What wildlife studies have been completed/referenced in determining the feasibility of locating a campground at the proposed location? | The Bow Valley Protect Areas Management Plan and the Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines for the Bow Valley indicate that the Bow Valley Provincial Park regional habitat patch provides important winter habitat for elk. In addition, a wildlife corridor is described in under the Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park, P2-Wildlife Corridor designation to facilitate elk movement between Bow Valley South and the Kananaskis Valley. Alberta Parks is proposing to operate the proposed Porcupine campground during the summer season (May to October) only to avoid campground use during the winter elk use. |

| What We Heard | Alberta Parks Response |
|---|--|
| Wildlife studies cont' | <p><u>References</u> Alberta Environment and Parks. 2002. Bow Valley Protected Areas Management Plan. Website: http://www.albertaparks.ca/media/123493/bowvalleymanagementplan.pdf Accessed: April 2016.</p> <p>Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group. 2012. Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines for the Bow Valley. Website: http://biosphereinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BCEAGFinalReport2012.pdf Accessed: May 2016.</p> |
| What traffic impact assessments have been completed for the access road coming into/out of the sites? | <p>The Bow Valley South road network was designed to accommodate the 1993 Boy Scouts Jamboree. The Jamboree held 12,000 campers at that location. There is currently 40 site capacity at Bow Valley South between Owl and Grouse campgrounds. Alberta Parks is proposing a 40 unit capacity at the new group camp. The potential 120 sites are under the original design capacity of the road network. Therefore Alberta Parks did not conduct an additional extra traffic assessment.</p> |
| What wetlands reports have been prepared with respect to Chilver Lake regarding impacts from increased activity thereon, any waterfowl usage, etc. | <p>The proposed Porcupine group camp is not anticipated to impact Chilver Lake. There is no indication that Owl or Grouse Group Camp users currently access the lake. During an August 9, 2016 conversation, the Facility Operator commented that most users do not even know the lake is there. There are no formal trails connecting the group camps to the lake. The only well-used informal trail bisects Grouse and runs through a portion of the YMCA disposition to the Camp Chief Hector dock which is clearly signed as the "Hector Waterfront – to be used only under the supervision of a YMCA staff member". Signage along the west edge of Grouse indicates no entry due to reclamation efforts in process. A possible site northwest of Grouse was rejected early in the planning process to support reclamation that is well underway, and to discourage use of riparian areas.</p> |
| There was a concern in the past with respect to salamander crossings of the Trans-Canada highway, and the fatality rates incurred. What studies have been completed on salamander presence/habitat in this area, and are there more species than just elk that need to be examined for the proposed sites? | <p>The tiger salamander (<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>) is classified as a "secure" species in Alberta, with populations considered healthy and widespread. To Alberta Parks knowledge there have been no formal studies focusing on tiger salamanders in the proposed Project area since the one exploring the large mortality event of 1999. The study found the natural movement patterns of tiger salamanders leaving Chilver Lake to occur in a northwest direction across the Trans-Canada highway. There is no evidence, formal or anecdotal, to indicate that the Bow Valley South Group Camps or their access roads impact tiger salamander migration or habitat. Although there have been no recent, targeted studies of tiger salamanders at Chilver Lake, the water body is monitored for amphibian eggs/larvae each spring as part of the provincial Researching Amphibians Numbers in Alberta (RANA) program.</p> <p><u>References</u> Clevenger AP, Mclvor M, Mclvor D, Chruszcz B, Gunson KE (2001) Tiger Salamander, <i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>, movements and mortality on the Trans-Canada highway in southwestern Alberta. <i>Can Field Nat</i> 115:199–204.</p> |