

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGES TO SNOWMOBILE USE AT CALL LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

BC Parks would like to thank everyone who provided feedback on snowmobile use within Call Lake Provincial Park. During the month-long consultation period, over 150 responses were collected. BC Parks staff has concluded an in-depth review of all response and have determined a plan for moving forward. Please see below to learn more about what was discovered, and our next steps.

1

Background:

Snowmobile use at Call Lake Provincial Park has exceeded the stated park management objectives, resulting in impacts to park conservation values and creating public safety issues and concerns. As a result, BC Parks is changing the way in which snowmobile use is managed within Call Lake Park.

The Call Lake Provincial Park Management Direction Statement from September 2000 states: **“if safety issues, user conflicts, ecosystem impacts or increased levels of use warrant, snowmobile use may be prohibited in future.”**

A consultation process initiated throughout November 2021 to solicit feedback from stakeholders and residents. Community members were invited to complete an online survey consisting of questions related to snowmobiling in Call Lake Park. The survey received over 150 responses and a range of views were expressed.

2

What BC Parks Heard:

BC Parks recognizes that many visitors are concerned with the way in which snowmobile use is currently managed. Furthermore, it is known that some respondents have experienced user conflicts, or have concerns about safety, noise, and impacts to the environment due to snowmobile use. The survey responses also highlighted that snowmobile access to Call Lake is important for families with young children and for individuals with limited mobility. In addition, it was noted that snowmobiles help to pack down the snow, making it easier for hikers to navigate the trails.

Many survey responses suggested that fully prohibiting snowmobile use was not the best, nor the most inclusive, solution. Implementing clearer guidelines and outlining additional rules would be beneficial for all user groups and would be the preferred course of action.

3

What Decision Has Been Made?

After thorough analysis of the survey results, BC Parks has made the decision to allow continued access to snowmobilers within Call Lake Park, however, additional guidelines and restrictions will be implemented. Snowmobile use will continue for visitors to access the lake and for transportation between fishing sites. There will, however, be limitations on how snowmobiles will be used while in the park.

Starting December of 2022, BC Parks is implementing a one-year pilot that will require visitors who choose to snowmobile within the park to obtain a free, annual authorization, that specifies guidelines and expected behaviours related to snowmobile use within the park. These guidelines will address user conflicts, safety issues and concerns, and ecological impacts. Snowmobilers riding in the park without a pass, or those violating the conditions, may be evicted from the park and/or charged under the Parks, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulations.

BC Parks staff are currently developing a process for visitors to request annual snowmobile authorization. Once developed, the method to apply for an annual snowmobile pass, and the rules, guidelines and expectations will be laid out and communicated to the public. In addition, signage highlighting the requirement for a pass and the new snowmobile rules will be posted at official park entry points.

4

Next Steps:

Over the next few weeks, BC Parks will be reaching out to community members to discuss strategies to foster continued stewardship from snowmobilers and at the same time address the needs of the environment and all park visitors. If you wish to participate in a further discussion to help BC Parks determine appropriate snowmobile guidelines, please contact Babine Area Supervisor, Peter Crawford at Peter.Crawford@gov.bc.ca

Throughout the next snowmobile season (December 2022 – March 2023), BC Park Rangers will be patrolling Call Lake Provincial Park, educating visitors, checking for compliance, and monitoring the success of this new initiative. We are committed to developing a process that works for user groups and will continue to review the process as required after the pilot year.

BC Parks thanks you for your feedback on this important discussion.