Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada

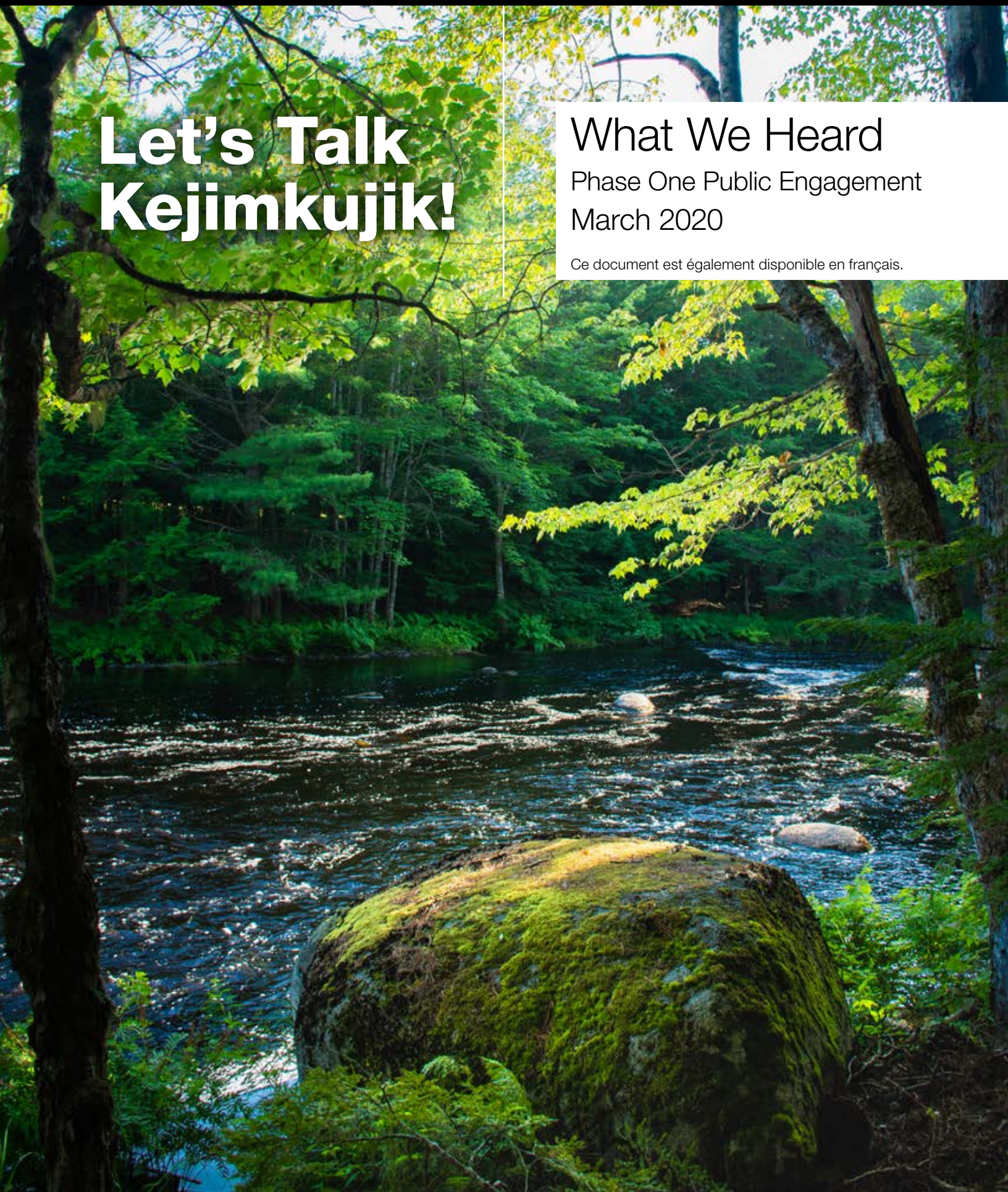
Let's Talk Kejimkujik!

What We Heard

Phase One Public Engagement

March 2020

Ce document est également disponible en français.



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1 Introduction and background

About Parks Canada

Parks Canada manages Canada's system of national historic sites, national parks, national marine conservation areas, and Canada's first national urban park. The mandate of the Parks Canada Agency is:

To protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

This mandate includes protecting natural and cultural resources, facilitating inspiring experiences for visitors, and providing public outreach education. Parks Canada plans and manages heritage places for the three aspects of its mandate using an integrated approach. Parks Canada is equally committed to a system of national heritage places that recognizes and honours the contributions of Indigenous peoples, their histories and cultures, as well as the special relationships Indigenous peoples have with traditional lands and waters.

Parks Canada's goal is to make Canada's places and stories more relevant to Canadians as described in the Agency's vision statement:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

About Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site, including Kejimkujik Seaside, and its management plan review

Parks Canada acknowledges that Kejimkujik is in the unceded traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw people and that this land is covered by the Historic Treaties of Peace and Friendship. Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site has two discrete portions: Kejimkujik Inland is approximately a 2-hour drive from Halifax in Queens, Annapolis and Digby Counties, and Kejimkujik Seaside is in Queens County on the South Shore. Along with the Tobeatic Wildlife Area, Kejimkujik Inland and Seaside form the core area of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve[1].

Together, Kejimkujik Inland and Seaside protects 404 km^2 of diverse habitat in southwest Nova Scotia. Designated as a national park in 1974, the Kejimkujik Inland protects a representative example of the Atlantic coastal uplands natural region. Consisting of 381 km^2 of freshwater habitat features, lakes, rivers, bogs and floodplains and mixed Acadian woodland, Kejimkujik Inland is home to 178 species of birds as well as several different species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Kejimkujik Seaside, 93 km away by road on the Atlantic coast, is a 24 km^2 oceanside area, added

[1] Biosphere reserve" is a UNESCO designation for large demonstration areas for sustainable development and conservation. The Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve encompasses the five counties of southwest Nova Scotia.

in 1985 to more fully represent the Atlantic coastal headlands, drumlins and eskers. This area of the park offers colourful coastal barrens that lead to bogs of pitcher plants and sundew, and on to rugged capes, cobblestones, white-sand beaches and rocky islets spotted with seals.

Kejimkujik is the only national park where the entire inland portion of the park is also recognized as a national historic site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1995. This land is the keeper of stories and memories. For thousands of years, this cultural landscape has been, and continues to be, the homeland of the Mi'kmaq. It is for this important reason that Kejimkujik is a national park, with a hotbed of bio-diversity and a gentle wilderness escape for visitors, and a national historic site, where Mi'kmaw history and present converge to forge a path forward. Since time immemorial, this land has been used and occupied by the Mi'kmaq. It is spiritually significant and protects a number of sites that are sacred to the Mi'kmaq. While artifacts have been found in Kejimkujik dating back 4500 years, evidence of much longer occupation may yet be found.

In 2010, Kejimkujik Inland was also designated as a Dark-Sky Preserve by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The Society defines the requirements of a Dark-Sky Preserve as: an area in which no artificial lighting is visible and active measures are in place to educate and promote the reduction of light pollution to the public and nearby municipalities.

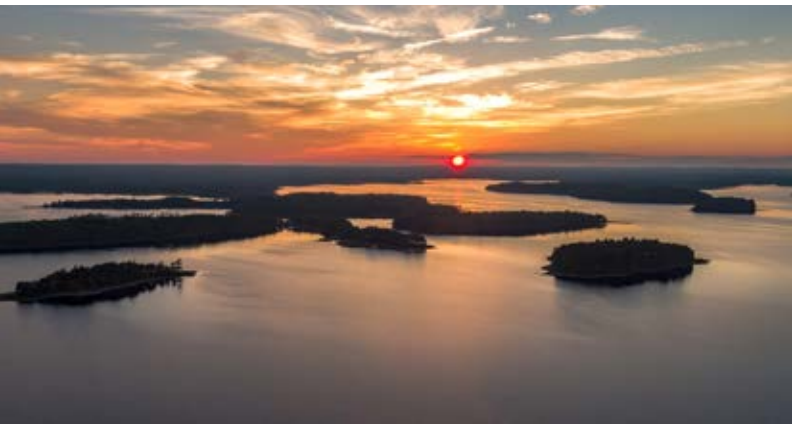
In accordance with the Parks Canada Agency Act and the Canada National Parks Act, a management plan must be developed for Kejimkujik and reviewed every ten years. The management plan proposes a strategic management approach that aims to integrate the three elements of Parks Canada's mandate: heritage resource protection, public education and visitor experience. Management plans are developed in consultation with Indigenous people, and through the engagement of partners, stakeholders and the public. The management plan for Kejimkujik will be submitted for approval by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, and is intended to serve as the key accountability document to Parliament and to Canadians regarding the management of the park.

2 Engagement and Consultation Process

Overview of *Let's Talk Kejimkujik!* consultation process

In order to facilitate meaningful opportunities for the public to contribute to Kejimkujik's management plan, a two-phased engagement approach is being used to promote participation by all Canadians, locally and nationally, in the management plan review for Kejimkujik through a variety of in-person and online tools.

- Phase one engagement (June - August 2019) focused on refining elements of the vision and exploring, with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, site partners, stakeholders and the Canadian public, the opportunities and challenges related to management of the park which will guide the development of a draft management plan.
- Phase two consultation (March-May 2020) will provide the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, site partners, stakeholders and the Canadian public with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft management plan.



Phase one engagement activities

A variety of approaches were used to engage the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, partners, stakeholders, and the Canadian public. Questions were grouped under five themes to organize the collection of feedback:

1. Refining the vision for Kejimkujik
2. Ensuring ecological integrity
3. Meeting the changing needs of visitors
4. Infrastructure and facility improvements
5. Sustaining and building collaborative relationships

On-line engagement platform

Websites (www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca and www.parlonsdekejimkujik.ca) were developed to facilitate the collection of feedback through a variety of tools including a survey, a space for people to share stories, and a place for people to post ideas. The survey was open for public input from June 21 to August 26, 2019.

Multi-Stakeholder workshop

A multi-stakeholder workshop was held on June 12, 2019. Twenty individuals attended, representing a wide-range of sectors and communities including: federal and provincial government, non-government organizations, tourism, heritage and culture, conservation organizations, and research partners. Members

of the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO), Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), and the Mainland Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee were also in attendance.

Kejimkujik Seaside workshop

In the morning of July 31, 2019, a half-day meeting specifically focused on Kejimkujik Seaside was held at the Coastal Queens Place, Port Mouton, with representatives from key stakeholder groups and communities in the vicinity. In the afternoon, at the same location, a public drop-in was held to discuss the future management of the seaside portion of the park.

Other meetings

Additional meetings were held to capture input from other groups and organizations, including with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute and the Port Joli Community Association.

Staff workshop

Twenty Parks Canada staff working in administration, resource conservation, external relations and visitor experience met on June 26, 2019 to provide their perspectives on the future of Kejimkujik.

3 Who we heard from

Many thoughtful responses were received during the *Let's Talk Kejimkujik!* engagement and consultation process. The quality and depth of feedback illustrates the strong connection that Canadians have to Kejimkujik. Consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia is ongoing, pursuant to the Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Process.

Comments for phase one public engagement were collected, notably via the www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca and www.parlonsdekejimkujik.ca websites from June 21 to August 26, 2019. In total:

- Over 10 000 views of the video, largely via social media
- Close to 3000 visitors to the online engagement platform, including 343 respondents to the primary survey (all respondents on the English survey and no respondents on the French survey), which constituted about 17%[2] of all people who visited the website
- 20 participants from 18 groups and organizations attended the multi-stakeholder workshop
- 11 participants attended the Seaside workshop and 15 members of the public attended the Seaside drop-in session
- 20 individuals attended the staff engagement session

Percentages cited in this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Postal code data provided upon registration at www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca indicated that all survey respondents were Canadian except one, with the vast majority being from Nova Scotia (330 or 96%). People of all age groups participated in the survey, with the largest demographic being those between the ages of 35 and 44 (Figure 1). A high proportion of respondents had visited Kejimkujik Inland within the past five years (94%) while fewer had visited Kejimkujik Seaside within the same timeframe (56%).

Ages of the *What We Heard* participants.

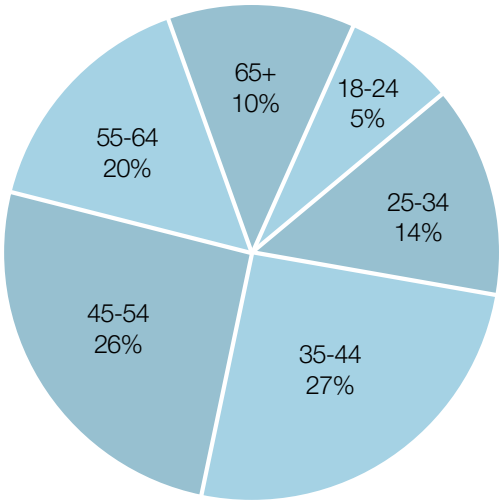


Figure 1: Age groups of participants, self-reported during registration at www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca and www.parlonsdekejimkujik.ca

4 What we heard

The feedback provided to Parks Canada is organized under the five topics that were explored through public engagement and consultation:

1. Refining the vision for Kejimkujik
2. Ensuring ecological integrity
3. Meeting the changing needs of visitors
4. Infrastructure and facility improvements
5. Sustaining and building collaborative relationships

Comments and feedback received during the *Let's Talk Kejimkujik!* phase one engagement process were carefully considered, analyzed and summarized under the following topic categories.

4.1 Refining the vision for Kejimkujik

Draft vision elements for Kejimkujik were developed by Parks Canada based on the vision outlined in the 2010 management plan. The proposed vision elements for the revised plan were further informed by discussions with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, partners, and stakeholders prior to being presented to the general public for input as part of the online survey and during the in-person sessions.

During in-person sessions, some expressed that the vision would benefit from more emphasis on the unprecedented changes that Kejimkujik is facing (with regard to the impacts of climate change in particular) and suggested that it is important for Parks Canada to position itself as a leader in resource conservation. Others expressed a desire to recognize and celebrate both the European and Mi'kmaw histories associated with the site, perhaps highlighting a need to reinforce the message that Kejimkujik is designated as a national historic site expressly to recognize it as a Mi'kmaw cultural landscape. There was a general feeling in both the in-person sessions and through survey responses that the vision was somewhat long and detailed, and warranted being more clear and concise.

In an effort to identify what the public valued most about Kejimkujik, survey respondents were asked to provide a one-word answer to complete the statement: "Without _____, it would not be Kejimkujik." Responses are grouped below:

- Forests or trees (37%)
- Water, lakes, waterways or specifically Kejimkujik Lake or the Mersey River (31%)
- Wildlife, sometimes a specific type of wildlife (24%)
- Nature or ecosystems (15%)
- Peace and quiet (4%)

Overall, 94% of survey respondents felt that the proposed vision updates identified the most important priorities for Kejimkujik Inland, and 90% felt that the vision identified the most important priorities for Kejimkujik Seaside. However, some survey respondents, and participants at in-person sessions, felt that the vision focused disproportionately on Kejimkujik Inland and wanted to see more attention given to Kejimkujik Seaside. Those who preferred a more defined focus for Kejimkujik Seaside suggested that more reference could be made to that site's coastal ecosystems, visitor amenities, and visitor services. Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction about the way the vision outlined some of the following elements:

- Year-round access, particularly winter camping (6%)
- The role of the Mi'kmaq in the management of the park (6%)
- Visitor enjoyment and visitor amenities (6%)
- The importance of conservation and protection of ecosystems (5%)
- Visitor experience (4%)
- Ecosystem health priorities (2%)

> *"The vision was overly broad that I felt focused more on the Inland range than the Seaside. Each space is special in its own right and could be addressed separately with its own paragraph highlighting special priorities."*
> *– Survey respondent*

4.2 Ensuring ecological integrity

At the in-person sessions, participants recognized that climate change will lead to significant ecosystem changes at Kejimkujik, as well as impact cultural resources in the park. It was expressed that Parks Canada needs to weigh the costs and benefits of interventions while working in partnership with adjacent land managers. Participants acknowledged that a "new normal" might emerge to characterize a resilient ecosystem with different species and ecosystem assemblages. Although Kejimkujik currently protects an area characteristic of the

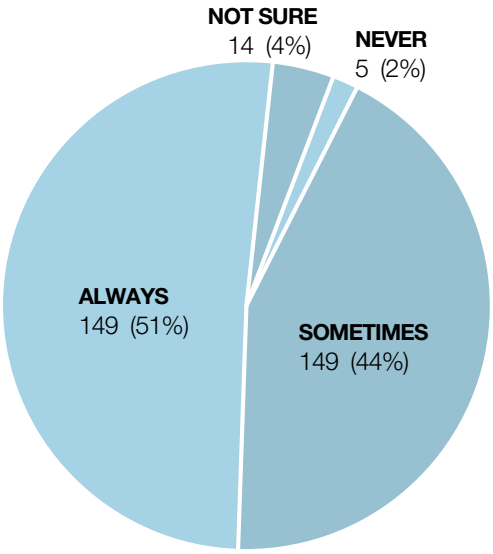
natural region within a fragmented landscape, it is anticipated that efforts to protect for ecological integrity ought to extend to a broader landscape level perspective. While strong environmental leaders already exist in the region, participants noted that Parks Canada is better positioned and resourced to lead in environmental practices, and to promote successes as demonstrated through the park's ecological monitoring program. It was felt that Kejimkujik Seaside receives less conservation resourcing than the inland portion of the park and as a result, there was a desire for Kejimkujik Seaside to collaborate more actively with others to conserve the coastal area and publish ecological findings.

There was overwhelming support from survey respondents (close to 95%) for Parks Canada to take an active management approach to address invasive species, with 44% indicating Parks Canada should actively manage invasive species at all times and 51% indicating support for active management of invasive species some of the time (see figure 2).

When given an opportunity to elaborate on reasons for choosing a particular level of management intervention, nearly half of respondents (48%) elected to provide more information:

- 35% indicated that active management interventions are always necessary because Kejimkujik is a special place, where the special characteristics should be protected at all times.
- 37% indicated a preference for a more passive approach to management interventions:
  - o 24% indicated that Parks Canada should accept changes as inevitable
  - o 9% stated that that ecological changes are global in scope
  - o 4% suggested may not be cost effective for Parks Canada to intervene

How often participants thought Parks Canada should take an active management approach



ALWAYS (51%) Parks Canada should invest time and resources to intervene and protect ecosystems against climate change impacts or invasive species threats I protecting or restoring native species.

SOMETIMES/IT DEPENDS (44%) Parks Canada should sometimes intervene with targeted actions to protect ecosystem climate change impacts or invasive species threats by protecting or restoring native species.

NEVER (2%) Parks Canada should not intervene to protect ecosystems. Landscape level changes or example change native fish populations or forest composition are an inevitable and acceptable level of change in Kejimkujik ecosystems.

NOT SURE (4%) Not enough information to know how often Parks Canada should take an active management approach.

Figure 2: How often do you think Parks Canada should take an active management approach?

Active management interventions in aquatic ecosystems were supported by the majority of survey respondents. Recent changes to fishing regulations at Kejimkujik Inland, designed to protect native fish, were supported by 94% of respondents (combination of "strongly favour" and "somewhat favour"). When asked about installing invasive fish barriers to further protect native species, 93% indicated that they are in favour of this approach and 83% favoured electrofishing to remove invasive species. Of the possible interventions suggested on land to protect the park from invasive species like the Hemlock woolly adelgid, the greatest support indicated by survey respondents was for planting native species (96%), while 92% favoured diversification of the forest around campgrounds, and 86% supported a ban on imported firewood to help reduce the spread of invasive species. Both using chemical and biological controls was supported by 70% of respondents.

When asked about landscape conservation priorities, there was only a slight variation between support for wildlife connectivity, climate change impacts, species at risk, and invasive species. Respondents indicated that each of these areas are viewed as important.

"It is important to protect our native ecosystems; however, with climate change and our limited resources it is impossible to mitigate all upcoming threats. I believe that the best approach would be to target specific species or ecosystems that are vitally important so that our resources and efforts aren't spread too thin to be effective."
– Survey respondent

"Not only is an active management approach important for the park, but by acting, Parks Canada demonstrates leadership in the community and helps to educate people about the changes, how alarming climate change is and how everyone needs to act."
– Survey respondent

Cultural heritage protection

Individuals at the in-person sessions raised the importance of increased understanding and protection of cultural resources in the park, especially as this relates to climate change and the anticipated impacts on cultural resources and ecosystems. At Kejimkujik Inland, participants said that more could be done to improve the public's understanding of the Mi'kmaw cultural landscape, which forms the basis for Kejimkujik's joint designation as a national park and national historic site. At Kejimkujik Seaside, which is not designated as a national historic site, some participants noted there is evidence of European settlement within the park and Mi'kmaw resources near the park (e.g. shell middens).

4.3 Meeting the changing needs of visitors

During the in-person sessions, participants were asked how park management might better meet the changing needs of visitors. Input received has been grouped into the following categories:

- Year-round offer: There was strong support for expanding the visitor offer to year-round at Kejimkujik Inland, possibly with reduced visitor fees, and the Visitor Centre serving as a hub of winter activities and expanded programs (Dark-Sky, Learn to Camp, Mi'kmaw programming). People observed the need for trail grooming and facilities like washrooms and warming centres being available.
- Strengthened Seaside presence: There was support voiced for an expanded summer offer at Seaside. People particularly noted the need for a staff presence to provide orientation and interpretation, to ensure compliance with rules, and for public safety. As well, people expressed interest in guided hikes and packaged offers, improved trails, and possibly overnight stays (although there was a difference of opinion with regard to overnight stays, particularly to ensure that camping or other accommodations would be consistent with the natural setting). Seaside stakeholders voiced the need to improve the state of the Saint Catherine's River Road, the entry road to Seaside, a desire to keep the site natural or to limit additional facilities, as well as an interest in accessing the Port Mouton side of the park.
- Partnerships: Respondents repeatedly indicated the need for partnerships and local service support to ensure visitor needs are met at both Kejimkujik Inland and Seaside.

- New technologies: A few participants, and particularly staff, observed a need for greater adoption of new technologies to meet visitor expectations, including Wi-Fi, use of mobile apps, and to facilitate online booking of sites and programs. Other participants and staff noted the need to strive for greater universal accessibility, which they felt could be achieved through minor modifications to existing offers and programs (e.g. barrier-free oTENTiks).

Building on the input received at in-person sessions, the online survey asked a series of targeted questions aimed at providing Parks Canada with the information needed to make management decisions related to visitor experience.

When asked if a return to a year-round offer were offered at Kejimkujik Inland, survey respondents indicated their interest in various types of visitor

experiences (including services, facilities and programs) that might take place during the summer season. While every option presented garnered a level of interest from respondents, there were three standouts among the available choices:

1. Washrooms were important to 78% of respondents
2. Hiking was of interest to 72% of respondents
3. Camping and warming shelters (listed as separate options in the survey) were both of interest to 59% of respondents

When asked about the kinds of visitor offers available at Kejimkujik Seaside during the summer months, survey respondents were invited to select any (or all) of the options presented. Having Parks Canada staff at the entrance was the most frequently selected option with 64% of respondents, guided hikes was second with 62%, and stargazing programs was third with 51% (see figure 3).

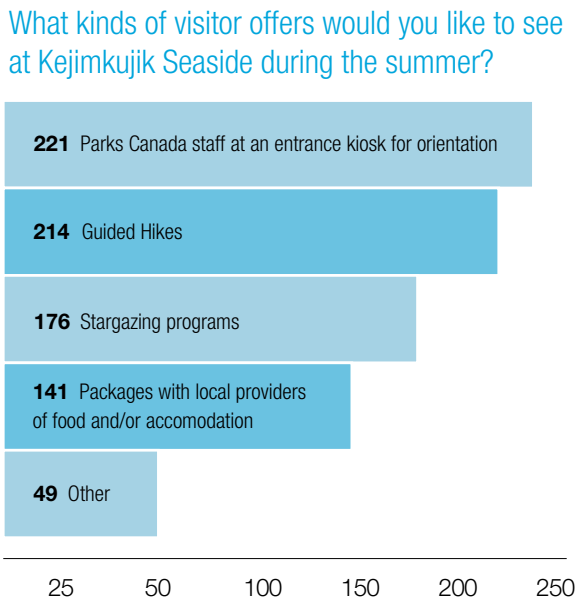


Figure 3: Kinds of visitor offers that respondents would like to see offered at Kejimkujik Seaside during the summer.

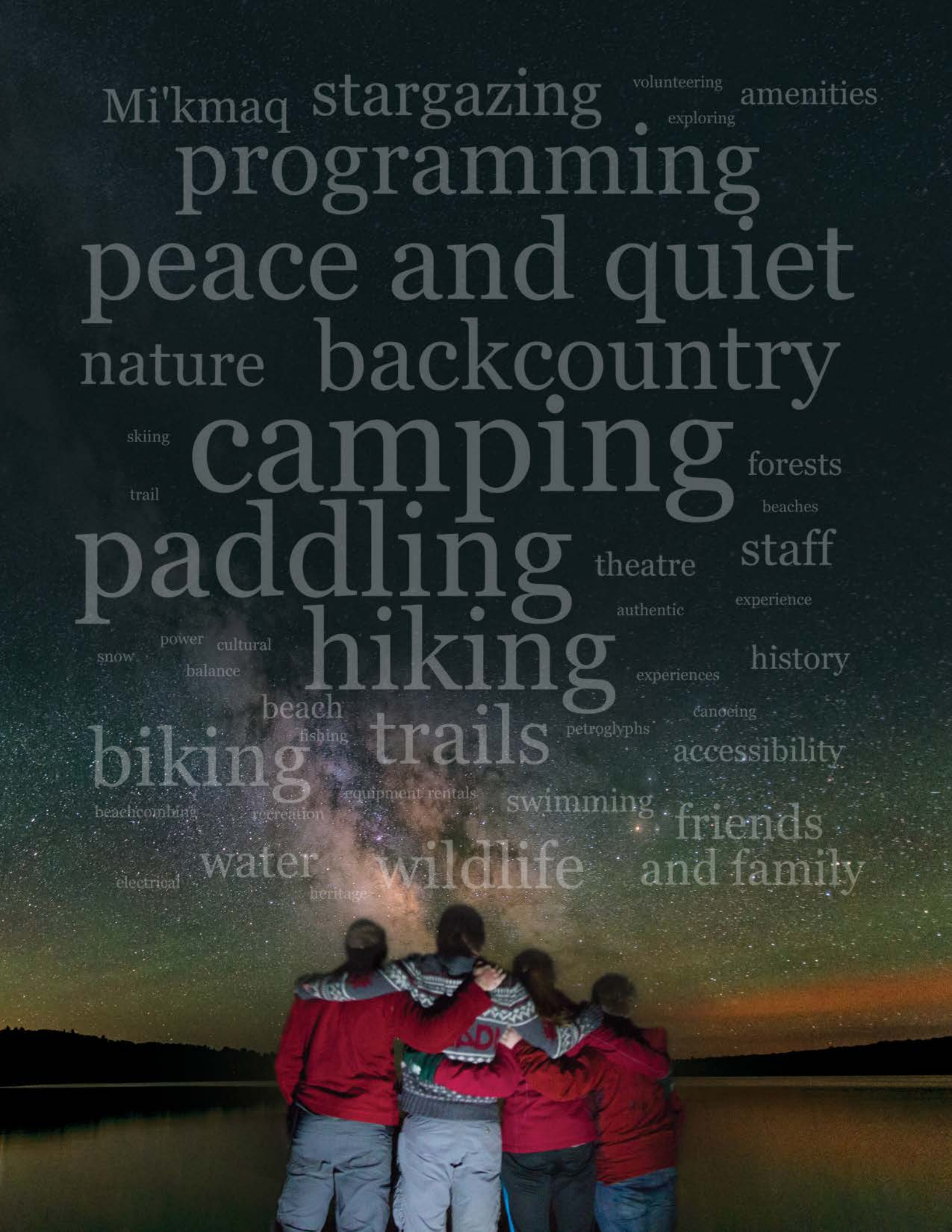
Respondents were also provided with an open ended comment box to list any visitor offers not presented in the previous question. Some examples of suggestions submitted are listed below:

- Interpretive programming
- Camping
- Events (culinary, guest speakers)
- Roofed accommodations
- Volunteer opportunities

When asked generally what services, facilities or programs are missing that would make respondents feel more connected to Kejimkujik, people mentioned the following in the open ended comment box:

- Programming, particularly children/family programs, bike hikes, amphitheatre programs (50 respondents)
- Year-round offer (33)
- Visitor facilities (32) (including camping, electrical, trails, toilets, playgrounds).
- More affordable programs (10)
- A better reservation system (8); (note that throughout the survey, respondents voiced frustrations with the reservation system)

Survey respondents were then asked to provide a one-word answer to complete the statement: “Without _____ it would not be a Kejimkujik experience.” Responses are represented in the word cloud:


Mi'kmaq
stargazing
volunteering
amenities
exploring
programming
peace and quiet
nature
backcountry
skiing
camping
forests
trail
beaches
paddling
staff
theatre
authentic
experience
power
cultural
snow
balance
hiking
history
experiences
beach
canoeing
fishing
petroglyphs
biking
trails
accessibility
equipment rentals
swimming
beachcombing
recreation
friends
water
wildlife
and family
electrical
heritage

Mi'kmaw cultural heritage experiences

Survey respondents were invited to select from a list the experiences related to Mi'kmaw culture and the Mi'kmaw cultural landscape that would be of greatest interest to them. The top five selections from the list of Mi'kmaw experiences were:

1. Connect to heritage / learn about traditional connection to Kejimkujik (75%)
2. Canoeing on traditional Mi'kmaw routes (72%)
3. Storytelling – experience Mi'kmaw stories in compelling locations (72%)
4. Petroglyphs – visit and touch ancient stone carvings with a Mi'kmaw guide (71%)
5. Culinary discovery – learning about and tasting traditional food (67%).

List of Mi'kmaw experiences *What We Heard* participants would be interested in

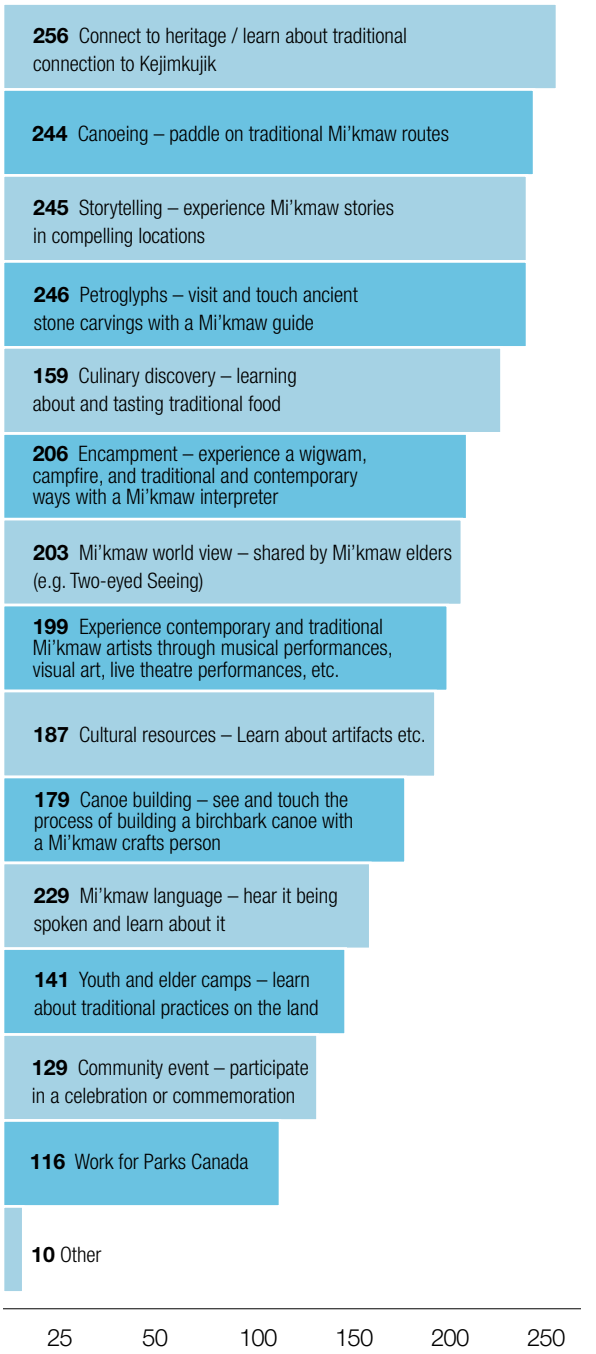


Figure 4: Kejimkujik is the perfect place, as a Mi'kmaw cultural landscape, to explore, experience and connect with Mi'kmaw culture. Select all of the experiences that would be of interest to you. (Total 342 respondents)

4.4 Infrastructure and facility improvements

Feedback gathered through in-person engagement sessions reflected overall support for infrastructure and facility improvements at Kejimkujik. Group discussions examined infrastructure priorities for both portions of the park:

- Kejimkujik Inland: Participants expressed that the construction of a new Visitor Information Centre was a top priority and viewed this investment as an important tool for the sharing of stories about the park, as a base for visitors to learning about the cultural ties at Kejimkujik, as a community centre for skills sharing, and as a forum for artisans to sell their works. Participants also indicated that Parks Canada should continue to offer innovative accommodations while extending the current offer to include year-round access to washroom facilities and Wi-Fi connectivity. Suggestions were made to develop a "tenters-only area" within the campground and for the creation of a Mi'kmaw cultural centre at Merrymakedge to share food, exhibits, culture, and to serve as a place for Mi'kmaw elders. Participants at the staff engagement session highlighted the need for investment in the roads and trails most used by returning visitors and cautioned that infrastructure investment must also be paired with the resources to manage these sites into the future.
- Kejimkujik Seaside: Participants agreed that investments to improve the welcome and orientation infrastructure would be appropriate however opinions were mixed when discussions turned to rustic fixed-roof accommodations or "glamping" options. Overall, participants agreed that priorities for facility improvement at Seaside should be focused on trails, the boardwalk over stone beaches, the observation deck, and shelter. Some participants mentioned that they would appreciate seeing a bridge at Port Mouton. Seaside stakeholders frequently brought up that the Saint Catherine's River Road is in terrible condition and suggested that in-park concessionaires might compensate for what they described as a general lack of services for visitors in the region (gas, food, lodgings).

Feedback gathered online indicated overall support for infrastructure investment, albeit with slightly different priorities than those expressed during in-person sessions.

- Kejimkujik Inland: Survey respondents were asked to consider a proposed list of possible facility investments and to rate their importance. The facilities that respondents cited as "very important" were: frontcountry trails (65%); backcountry facilities (60%); facilities to support year-round use (e.g. warming shelters) (57%); Jeremy's Bay Campground enhancements (44%); and reception facilities (44%). Other possible investments from the list that received

more than 25% support included facilities that support learning, beach facilities, and playgrounds.

- Kejimkujik Seaside: Survey respondents were asked if they would like to see facility investments made at Kejimkujik Seaside and those who indicated "yes" were further prompted to select the top two areas they would like to prioritize. The majority of survey respondents indicated they would like to see facility investment (77%) and of the options provided the top three priorities were:

  o Washrooms (43% respondents)
  o Hiking trails (36%)
  o Multi-use trails (32%).

Respondents were also given an open comment box to suggest top considerations for facilities investment at Kejimkujik Seaside. The most commonly cited consideration was that respondents would like to see infrastructure that is integrated with nature and the landscape (15 responses) followed by the idea that infrastructure should be environmentally sustainable (13 responses). Those who did not favour facility investment at Kejimkujik Seaside indicated they did not want to see a change, wanted to see the site kept natural, or viewed it as a day-use park where camping and overnight accommodations is not required or appropriate.

Respondents were also asked to review a list of items that might influence Parks Canada's decision-making process for infrastructure investment in general, and to rank them by importance (see figure 5). Results from the in-person session echoed survey responses when considering infrastructure investment considerations.

List of considerations for infrastructure decision-making

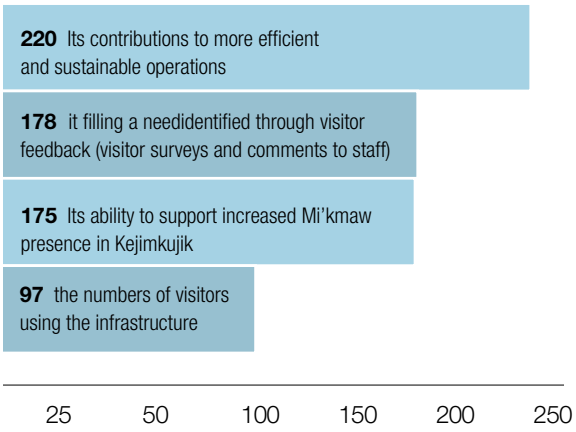


Figure 5: Results from survey respondents when asked to rank a list of considerations for infrastructure decision-making by level of importance.

"I think there is a huge need and opportunity to develop more universally-accessible experiences. Many of the services and facilities current existing could easily be modified or reimagined in a way that makes them more physically approachable – not all things for every user, but a variety of offerings with broad appeal. The PEINP wheelchair beach mats come to mind. Sensory-friendly programs. Upgraded trails. (Mersey Meadow, especially in its current state, doesn't cut it). There is opportunity right now with provincial accessibility target-setting, as well as leveraging the niche accessible destination of neighbouring Mersey River Chalets."
– Survey respondent

4.5 Sustaining and building collaborative relationships

During the in-person sessions, participants recognized that Kejimkujik's relationship with the Mi'kmaq is foundational and needs to be well developed but that Parks Canada must also recognize capacity challenges for Mi'kmaw participation in multiple requests. Participants favoured collaboration between Parks Canada and regional economic development and tourism groups, and wanted to see the inland portion of the park move to a year-round offer – anticipating that a more consistent presence in the community have a positive impact on the regional economy.

During the Parks Canada staff session, participants observed that greater collaboration with adjacent land managers would be a way to connect with communities and meet the growing demand for backcountry experiences. Participants expressed that Parks Canada should spend more time developing new alliances, particularly with local as well as urban youth, and consider establishing a youth advisory committee. This might take the form of Parks Canada working with schools to offer practical experiences, and to combat "nature deficit disorder." Many expressed a firm desire for Parks Canada to continue be a leader within the established Kespukwitk Conservation Collaborative, which integrates the efforts of many and promotes two-eyed seeing for conservation. Some observed that the seasonal nature of many Parks Canada staff positions creates a barrier to maintaining collaborative relationships in the community and subsequently has a negative impact on the deliverables associated with these important relationships.

Building on the information gathered at in-person sessions, survey respondents were asked to provide input on how Parks Canada might better work with partners to achieve regional economic growth and prosperity. Respondents provided suggestions which have been grouped into the following categories:

- Promote gateway community services (17%)
- Partnerships (14%)
- Increased and effective communication with local communities (10%)
- Extending the season of the visitor service offer (8%)
- Provide opportunities for in-park concessions (6%)
- Promote/participate in packaged offers (6%)

Survey respondents were then asked to consider a list of seven potential opportunities for volunteerism in the park and to select the top choice that would motivate them to volunteer, or increase their volunteer participation. The top three selections made from the list included "adventure possibilities" (38%), followed by participation in research/citizen science (20%), and scientist-led research or conservation (13%).

4.6 Final thoughts

- There was a recurring message of appreciation expressed for the opportunity to participate in the management planning process overall, although some did provide constructive criticisms about the design and length of the survey, and the technical nature of some of the questions.
- Many expressed their appreciation for the park's existence and Parks Canada's work to protect and present the site, although some felt that services and facilities at the park are not at the level they once were.
- Some urged Parks Canada to prioritize their responsibilities to protect and conserve while working more collaboratively with adjacent land managers.
- There were vocal pleas for year-round services at the park including winter camping, along with several requests to upgrade washroom facilities, Wi-Fi, electrical sites, and sites in general.
- Several in-person participants and survey respondents expressed their frustration with the current reservation system and provided examples of how this negatively impacted their experience, citing that the reservation system needed to be fixed.

5 Next steps

A draft management plan will be prepared taking into consideration the comments received through phase one engagement and consultation activities, as well as ongoing consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

The draft management plan will be made available for review and input during phase two of the engagement and consultation process at www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca and www.parlonsdekejimkujik.ca.

For updates, register and check back regularly at www.pc.gc.ca/kejimkujik and www.letstalkkejimkujik.ca, or follow us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/Kejimkujik/.