

Asi Keyi

Natural Environment Park

PARK MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS



The Asi Keyi Steering Committee held its second round of community and public engagement on the park management process from November 2023 through January 2024. The goals of the engagement process were to obtain feedback on key issues and questions as well as the Committee's proposal on management issues, goals, and approaches. Feedback was obtained by means of an online questionnaire hosted on the Committee's webpage, and directly from people who attended the community meetings in Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Beaver Creek, Whitehorse, and Haines Junction. This newsletter summarizes feedback received, highlights suggestions on the draft management plan and outlines next steps.

General Feedback on the Presented Management Issues, Proposed Goals and Possible Management Approaches

Overall, there was support for the Steering Committee's proposed goals, objectives, and approaches. Respondents indicated that the Committee should stay the course for the draft management plan. Within the management plan itself, respondents would like to see more emphasis put on the collaboration between the Government of Yukon, Kluane First Nation, and White River First Nation. Respondents would also like to see more emphasis put on management options developed using all ways of knowing and approaches using Indigenous traditional laws and values as well as historical and current knowledge.



Key Issue 1 – Understanding Past, Current, and Future Activities

Not many respondents had been into the park area. There was recognition from many that one of the things that makes the park special is the lack of people visiting for recreation and the lack of impacts. There was also recognition that there is a need to strictly manage access to the park to keep recreational use and impacts low. Recreational activities need to be controlled to minimize impacts and prevent unwanted outcomes. Respondents generally agreed that this park was well suited to ecological, historical, and cultural tourism, and some said commercial operators should be limited in number and their tours be very prescriptive. Respondents also stated that this park needs to be a safe space for Kluane First Nation (KFN) and White River First Nation (WRFN) citizens to undertake homeland activities and recreational use needs to be managed in some areas when homeland activities are occurring. For example, recreational users should be prohibited from entering active hunting areas due to safety concerns. Respondents were also concerned that because the easiest way to access the park was by flying in there could become an imbalance where only wealthy tourists are catered to. Citizens need to have equitable access, if not be prioritized above tourists.

Key Issue 2 – Future Vision for Welcoming Visitors to the Park

This issue is tied to the above future activities in parks. Respondents agreed that the park has huge ecotourism potential, but also the potential to become too popular which will result in significant impacts and destroy the pristine nature of the park. Respondents recommend that the committee have a strong visitor management system in place before a potential explosion in popularity occurs. Additionally, it was recommended that there be a code of conduct for recreational visitors and tourists to follow for appropriate way to behave if they come upon WRFN and KFN citizens practicing homeland activities (i.e. no photography of people). Respondents do not want increased access to the park or developed access. Tourism and recreation access should be strictly contained to minimize impacts and there should be consideration for restrictions on the time of year that people can visit the park. There should be opportunities for easier access specifically for Elders and those with mobility issues, but not for other park visitors. Respondents like the idea of having a visitor centre outside of the park to provide information about the park.



Key Issue 3 – Special Management Considerations for Specific Park Areas or Values

Respondents recommended that special management considerations be developed for the following:

- spring lambing or calving habitat and overwintering habitat;
- cultural areas, places for food or medicine; and
- Tats'at Mân (Teepee Lake), Big Boundary Lake, Nadia Chù Tăn Shì (Klutlan Glacier), delicate alpine, and The drunken forest on the toe of the Nadia Chù Tăn Shì (Klutlan Glacier).

Other Insights, Topics and Proposals Brought Forward by Respondents

Here are some insights, topics, and proposals brought forward by respondents for consideration by the Steering Committee. The following list is not exhaustive but includes major themes.

- Indigenous cultural access should be prioritized above recreational and tourist access.
- General concern that the populations of game species are declining due to the number of predators in the park.
- This is a park that was set aside for the two First Nations and the idea for the park was for a First Nation Park and they should be involved in any decision making about what goes on in the park.
- Its important to do things the way the Elders taught people and for the park to be under First Nation control.
- Youth need to be brought in as much as possible as they are the next generation of decision makers. There is a need to lay down a good strong foundation for them to build on and make decisions on. This includes involving youth in stewardship activities, opportunities to actively engage with the area and learn about the cultural and ecological history, in addition to helping to shape tourism opportunities.
- Its important that the Indigenous languages are built in/incorporated as much as possible including: on maps (place names), within the plan itself, and on educational and interpretive materials.



Next Steps

The Steering Committee will consider all the feedback in any decisions on how to refine the management approaches and overall content of the draft park management plan. The Steering Committee will be moving into Stage 5 of the planning process – drafting the park management plan. The third and final round of community and public engagement will seek input on the draft management plan that will be developed during Stage 5.