

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Koocanusa Recreation Strategy Updated

More Crown land camping areas open to public as of May long weekend

(East Kootenay) – The 2021 Koocanusa Recreation Strategy has been updated and is now available for viewing and download at www.koocanusarecreation.ca. The Strategy strives to support and manage Crown land recreation access and use in a way that maintains the ecological integrity, cultural values, recreation experience, and economic value of the Koocanusa area for current and future users.

The 2021 Strategy is the result of extensive work, research, and public engagement over the last five years and will be implemented and enforced beginning immediately. In March, the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee (KRSC) presented its draft Strategy to the public and launched a month-long online survey and interactive map aimed at gathering feedback. There were 244 respondents. Parallel to the public engagement process, the KRSC also reached out directly to First Nations and affected stakeholders in the region.

“While the majority supported the draft Strategy (55%) there were a number of people who had concerns over specific aspects,” said Jeff Zukiwsky, Coordinator of the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee. “The majority of people opposed to the Strategy did not like the camping restrictions, and some wanted to see additional areas designated for motorized recreation. However, some people were opposed because they wanted more enforcement of the restrictions and expressed concerns the restrictions did not do enough to protect the environment.”

To read more about the survey results, visit www.koocanusarecreation.ca. Next steps for the KRSC will be to use public feedback to guide further discussion and potential revisions to the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy, which is a living document and subject to change.

On May 14, the Province of BC amended its Recreation Order for the Koocanusa to align with the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy, resulting in more public access to undeveloped camping areas on Crown land in the Koocanusa Recreation Management Area. To view the amended Recreation Order visit the BC Government website (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/camping-hiking/sites-trails/alerts>). Inquiries about the Government’s Recreation Order can be emailed to Koocanusa.Rec.Order@gov.bc.ca.

The amendment affirms that, starting May long weekend, not only are the designated recreation sites open for camping throughout 2021, but also the undeveloped camping areas identified in the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy, which accommodate over 200 camping units and cover about 95 hectares of Crown land. These backcountry campsites are user-maintained with no facilities and limited access.

Open undeveloped camping areas in the Koocanusa include: Sharptail, Strauss, Linklater, Rocky Road, Colvalli, Rock Creek, Kikomun Creek, Blue Bottom and Fussee. Detailed information, including photos and site descriptions, are provided within the Strategy at www.koocanusarecreation.ca.

The undeveloped camping areas are in addition to the 300+ public campsites already open at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park, and several recreation sites in the region: Wapiti Lake, North Star Lake, Suzanne Lake, Kikomun Creek, Loon Lake, Edwards Lake, Gold Creek Bay, Gold Creek and Englishman Creek. Two additional recreation sites are in the Grasmere area – Western Pine and Grasmere.

To stay up to date on the latest information, recreation users and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to visit www.koocanusarecreation.ca and sign-up for the KRSC newsletter.

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Photo Cutline: An undeveloped camping area at Colvalli in the Koocanusa.