



Day Use Pass User Survey

June 15, 2021





What We Heard

2020 Day Use Pilot

The BC Parks Day Use Pass Pilot Program was launched on July 27, 2020 to manage the high number of visitors in some of our most popular parks during peak season. This program was implemented to alleviate issues such as parking availability, crowded facilities and congestion at narrow viewpoints and along trails. The aim of the pilot program was to help ensure protection of natural and cultural values, ecological integrity, and to enhance visitor experience.

The day use passes were implemented in six of our busiest provincial parks: Cypress, Mount Seymour, Garibaldi, Golden Ears, Mount Robson (Berg Lake Trail) and Stawamus Chief (Chief Peaks Trail). Passes were available through the Discover Camping reservation system at no cost and opened at 6 am each day for same-day park visits. Each park had a maximum number of passes, limiting visitor capacity according to the unique conditions and elements of each park.

In the spring, BC Parks launched a survey for the day use pass pilot program. The survey was sent to more than 75,000 people who registered for a day use pass last summer.

The purpose of the survey was to better understand people's experiences with the pilot program. The feedback gathered through the survey provided key information for BC Parks to evaluate so improvements could be made to the pilot this season.

What is BC Parks doing?

Based on stakeholder feedback, day-use passes will no longer be required this summer for Mount Seymour Park and Cypress Park. For the parks included in the summer pilot, the number of passes available each day will be adjusted to accommodate as many visitors as possible. Changes also include extending the booking time to 7 am the day prior to arrival to help with planning. Youth will not require a pass when accompanied by a parent or guardian with a pass.

We are also partnering with the BC Parks Foundation to introduce more than 30 full-time discover parks ambassadors to welcome visitors and provide information about safe and responsible recreation.

Summary of Survey Results

Response Highlights

- The survey was sent to more than 75,000 people who used day passes in 2020.
- 11,497 respondents shared their views on the day use pass pilot.
- 15% of those contacted to participate responded.

Day Use Booking Experience

Ease of Booking

Survey respondents varied in terms of their perception of and experience with the booking process.

- 43% of respondents indicated they found the booking process to be fairly easy.
- 36% of respondents indicated they found the booking process somewhat challenging.

Same-Day Bookings

During the 2020 pilot project, day passes were available to book at 6 am each day.

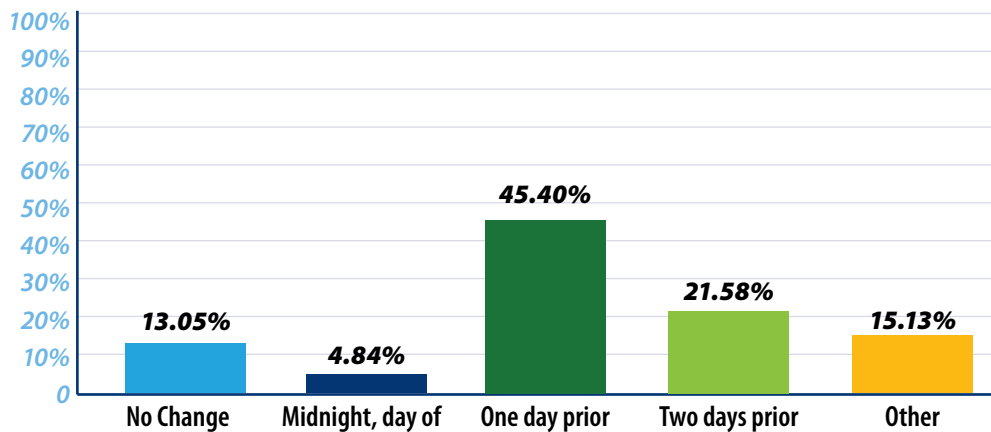
- 77% of respondents indicated the same day reservation booking impacted their trip preparation.
- 23% of respondents noted that the same day reservation booking did not impact their trip preparation.



Day Use Booking Preferences

Pass Availability

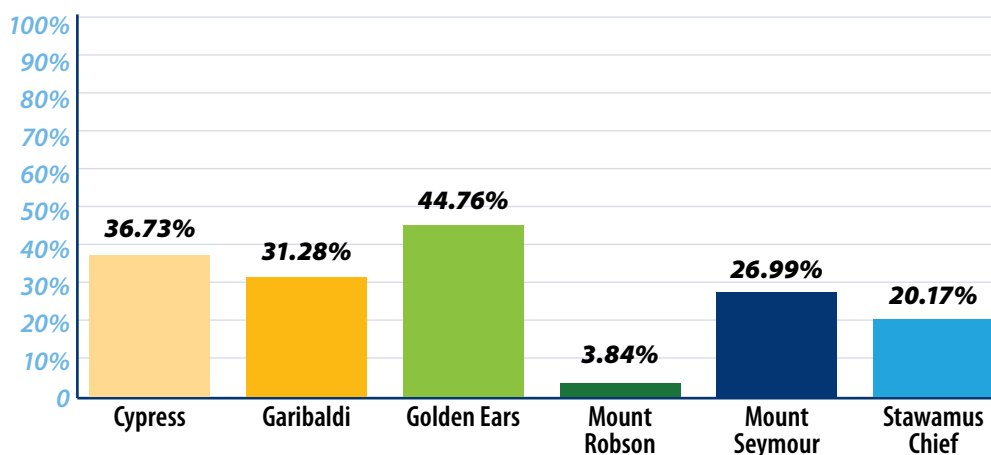
Respondents were asked their preference on when day use passes should be made available for booking. The most popular option was having the passes available one day prior. Those who answered “other” preferred booking a week ahead or suggested to discontinue the passes.



Visitation Behaviour

Respondent Visitation Distribution

Respondents were asked which park(s) they had visited during the 2020 day use pilot program. The graph below demonstrates the proportion of respondents who visited each of the participating parks.



Notes on visitation:

- 25 vehicle passes were available for Mount Robson (Berg Lake Train) each day, accounting for the smaller proportion of survey respondents.
- Some survey participants visited more than one of the pilot parks during the pilot.

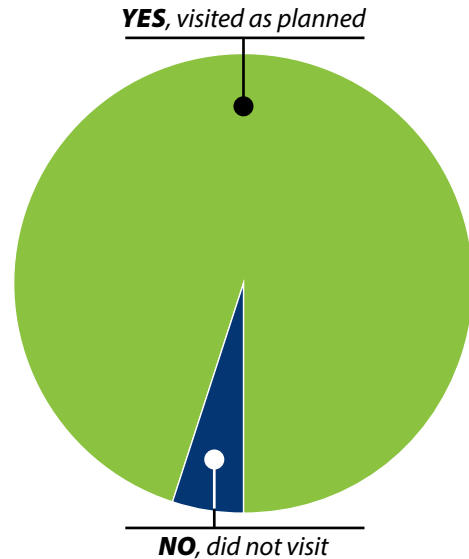
Day Pass Usage

Survey participants were asked if they had visited the park(s) as planned for the day they had booked a day use pass.

- ▶ 95% of respondents visited the park on the day they booked a day use pass.
- ▶ 5% did not visit the park as intended on their day of booking (i.e., no shows).

There was a high level of follow through from people who booked a day pass, with most visiting the park as planned after booking a pass.

Many people would like an option to be able to cancel a pass once they book it.



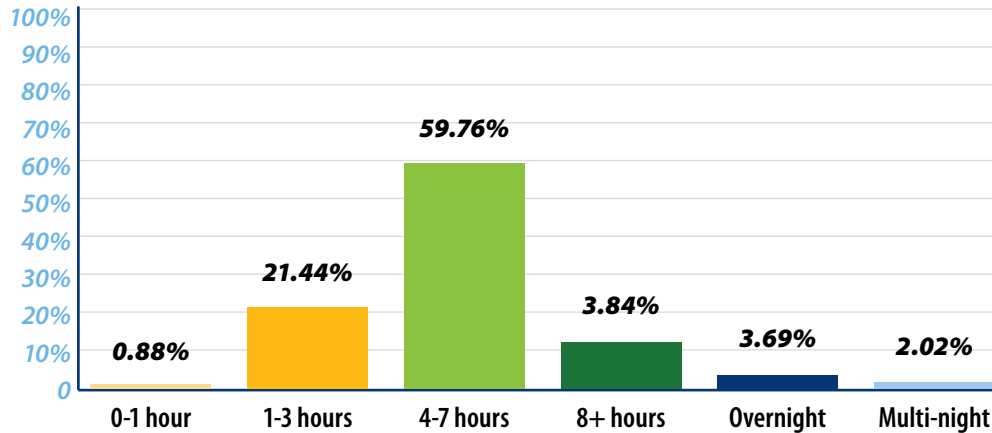
What is BC Parks doing about it?

From the feedback, most people made use of their day pass. However, we heard and observed that some passes went unused and people want the option to cancel their passes. Although we don't have the ability to cancel passes in the current system, this is something we will investigate for future improvements. In the meantime, we have added 10% to our visitor caps to accommodate for "no shows". BC Parks will monitor how effective this and adjust as needed.



Length of Visit

The survey found that the average respondent spent between four to seven hours in a park.



This information shows how people are using the park so operational decisions can be made based on the needs of visitors. The survey data shows that many day use visitors and hikers are planning half to full day excursions. More planning and earlier start times may be required for longer day hikes, and passes being available the same day from 6 am was challenging for some people.



What is BC Parks doing about it?

For 2021, we have updated the day use pass reservation system so people can book passes a day in advance, improving their ability to plan park visits.

Past Visitation

Those surveyed were asked if they had previously visited the park they had booked a day pass for.

- 67% of respondents indicated they had previously visited the park.
- 33% of respondents indicated they had not previously visited the park.

From the responses, 33% were either visiting a park that was new to them, or perhaps some may have been new to BC Parks in general. This demonstrates the influx of new visitors BC Parks is seeing across the parks system. These visitors may have varying levels of skill and experience when it comes to recreating outdoors.

In-Park Experience

Visitation Levels and in-Park Experience

When asked if high visitor numbers have an impact on the quality of park experience:

- 70% of respondents agreed that visitation levels impact the quality of their experience.
- 18% of respondents did not agree.
- 12% of respondents were unsure.

Day Pass User Experience

Survey participants were asked if the day use pass had changed their experience with the trail/park.

- 72% of respondents agreed that the day use pass had changed their experience.
- 28% of respondents did not think the day use pass had changed their experience.

Of those who indicated that the day use pass had changed their experience with the trail/park, they were split down the middle on whether the day pass had changed their experience for the better or worse.

Supportive respondent comments included:

- **LESS CROWDING** – Some respondents noted there were less people on the trail during the day pass pilot.
- **PARKING AVAILABILITY** – some visitors found there was more parking than usual available when they arrived in park.
- **GOOD EXPERIENCE** – some respondents said using the day pass was a good experience.

Respondents articulated challenges including:

- **Access concerns** – some visitors were concerned about barriers to accessing the day pass, such as Internet connections or computer availability.
- **Need to plan ahead** – Some respondents were concerned that the pass took the spontaneity out of going for a hike.
- **High demand for passes** – some respondents suggested it was difficult to secure passes, and some parks “sold out” soon after passes were released each day.
- **Minimal in-park enforcement** – A number of respondents were concerned with the lack of enforcement in-park once they arrived.
- **Selecting the right park** – some respondents found it stressful to ensure they were selecting the right pass for the park they planned to visit.
- **Unsuccessful attempts at booking** – some hikers noted frustration, as they would arrange to go hiking and then were unsuccessful in obtaining a pass for the day of their planned visit.



What is BC Parks doing about it?

In response to concerns about in-park enforcement, BC Parks is ensuring that the gatehouses and checkpoints will be staffed seven days/week during peak hours from 7 am to 4 pm (and from 7 am to 7 pm for Joffre Lakes Park).

We also heard that people were frustrated by the lack of passes being available and concerns that trails were under-utilised. BC Parks is maximizing the number of passes that can be made available, increasing pass numbers and allowing for AM/PM intakes where possible to disperse people throughout the day.

Expansion of the Day Use Pass Program

Impact on Continued Visitation

Those surveyed were asked whether they would continue to visit if the day use pass continued to be required at these parks, or if it were to be expanded to additional parks.

- 66% responded that they would visit / continue to visit.
- 12% responded that they would not visit / continue to visit.
- 22% of respondents were unsure.

Level of Support for Day Use Passes

Survey participants were asked whether they would support the implementation of day use passes at other BC Parks.

- 41% of respondents said they would support expansion of the day use program.
- 32% of respondents said they would not support expansion of the day use program.
- 27% of respondents were unsure.

Additional Parks to Consider

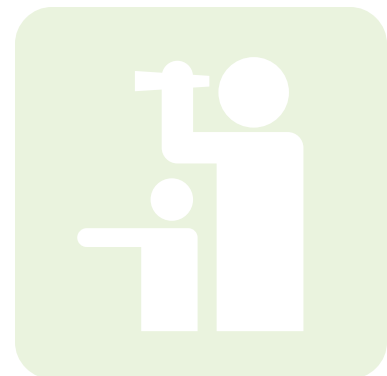
Those surveyed were asked which other parks they would like to see the day use pass expanded to include. The top suggestion was Joffre Lakes.

Joffre Lakes is one of the most over-utilized parks in the BC Parks system. While it remained closed throughout the 2020 season, it is slated to re-open in 2021 as part of the day use pass pilot.

Additional Survey Suggestions

When asked to provide additional feedback and suggestions, survey respondents suggested:

- Ability to book in advance.
- Ability to cancel and return passes to the system.
- A lottery rather than a release time.
- A small fee charged at trail head for people who did not get pass in advance.
- Cancel the day pass program.



Survey Results

Respondents: 11,497 (sent to 75,000; 15% response rate)

Key takeaways from survey

- ✔ Significant support for expansion of the Day Use Pass Program (41%) combined with a large group of unsure responses (27%).
- ✔ Most people (66%) indicated that the continuation or expansion of day use passes would not stop them from wanting to visit parks.
- ✔ High degree of feedback regarding the difficulty of getting a pass at 6 am on the day of.
- ✔ Large majority of people want the ability to book in advance. Top two choices are one day (45%) and two days (22%) prior.
- ✔ Most people responded that if they could get a pass for the day of their intended visit, their experience at the park was nicer as there were less people on the trails and more room for parking.
- ✔ Conflicting responses show people viewed the day passes as negatively impacting their experience, but also supporting the day passes continuing.

Q1 For which park(s) did you book a day use pass?

Top 3:

1. Golden Ears 45%
2. Cypress 37%
3. Garibaldi 31%

Q2 Did you visit the park on the day you booked a day use pass?

Yes: 95%
No: 5%

Q3 How did you find the process of booking a day use pass?

Scale answer: 0 = easy, 100 = very hard/complicated.

- 43% of the respondents rated the booking process below 50.
- 36% of the respondents rated the booking process above 50.
- 21% of respondents rated the booking process at 50.

Q4 Prior to this year, have you visited the BC Park(s) for which you booked a day use pass?

Yes: 67%
No: 33%

33% of responses showed they were either new to parks, or new to the specific park visited – showing an influx of new park visitors.



Q5 On average, how long did you stay in the park during your visit(s)?

Top Responses:

4-7 hrs 60%

1-3 hrs 21%

Most hikers are going on a minimum half day to full day excursions. More planning is required for long day hikes.



Q6 Day use passes were available at 6 am each day for same day park visits. Did same day reservation booking have any impact on your trip preparation?

Yes: 77%

No: 23%

Q7 If possible, what would be the ideal time that day use passes could be made available?

1 day before: 45%

2 days before: 22%

Most of the other answers said no pass or make available one week ahead of time.

Q8 Do you think the day use pass changed your experience of the trail/park?

Yes: 72%

No: 28%

Q9 If you answered 'yes' to question 8, in what way did the pass change your experience?

Scale: 0 = best 50, 100 = worse.

51 was the average response.

Q10 Please provide feedback on why you answered as you did to question 9 above:

Most common comments:

- Difficult to get a day pass at 6am as they were all taken even when logging on right at 6am
- Hassle to book
- Made parks inaccessible
- Barrier to going hiking spontaneously
- There was room for parking
- Golden Ears was less crowded than pre-COVID times
- Stress over getting the pass/getting it for the right park. Did not feel like a relaxing hiking day
- Angry comments over limiting freedom of outdoor spaces
- Passes set up barriers and make it only for privileged people
- Many people noted that it was hard to plan ahead. They want to decide the day of and get up and go but they couldn't get a pass if they weren't logging on 15min prior and refreshing and even then, it was hard to get a pass
- Frustration for getting the pass and then it wasn't enforced no checks and still saw so many people on trails
- People would arrange to go hiking and then on the day couldn't get a pass. Completely disrupted their plans



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- 1210 responses mentioned there were less people on the trail
 - 415 responses said it was nice to use the day pass
 - 677 responses said it was stressful,
 - 580 responses said it was difficult or frustrating
 - 498 responses said they were unable to make a reservation for the day pass
 - 52 responses said the Day Use program put up barriers and makes the parks inaccessible
 - 22 said it was awful.

Q11 Do visitation levels have an impact on the quality of your experience in the park?

Yes: 70%
No: 18%
Unsure: 12%

Q12 If a day use pass continues to be required and is expanded to other BC Parks, will you continue to visit these parks?

Yes: 66%
No: 12%
Unsure: 22%

Q13 Would you support the implementation of day use passes at other BC Parks?

Yes: 41%
No: 32%
Unsure: 27%

Q14 Which BC Parks would you like to see the day use pass expanded to?

None: 31%
Joffre: 10%
Buntzen: 2%
Golden Ears: 2%



Q15 Do you have any other ideas or suggestions for improving the day use pass pilot project?

- 1034 of the responses said to cancel the Day use program. (~10%)
- Ability to book in advance
- Suggestions to make it a lottery not a race at release time
- Have a way to cancel and return passes to the system
- Small fee charged at trail head for people who did not get pass in advance







For more information please visit:
<http://bcparks.ca/>

