

Western Opinion Research



Parks Canada

Backcountry Users Research
Call-Up #: 5P412-070008/011/CY

Report (Final)

May 3, 2007

WESTERN OPINION RESEARCH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five focus groups in total were conducted in Prince Albert (2) and Saskatoon (3) with backcountry visitors at Prince Albert National Park (PANP ‘the Park’). The groups consisted of previous Park visitors who were recruited by WOR from a list provided by Parks Canada. The groups were conducted from March 19 to March 21, 2007.

Focus groups are a qualitative research method, where participants are led through a discussion by a moderator. Participants are encouraged to provide open-ended and detailed responses to questions that allow for probing of inner thoughts and feelings.

The primary objective of this study was to understand the motivations of backcountry users and to identify if there are vast differences in motivations for different user-types. The Park was also interested in exploring if backcountry facilities played a role in the decision to go to a particular area, and whether they played a role in the satisfaction with the experience. An important focus of the focus group discussion was to develop a list of drivers of backcountry use.

Profile of Backcountry Users at PANP

From this research, it is possible to define three types of backcountry users at PANP:

PANP cabin owners or long-term seasonal campers: The Park is home for these individuals. They grew-up accessing the backcountry areas. They are typically older now and most backcountry for them consists of boating on the large lakes and making an annual trek or boat to Grey Owl’s Cabin. The motivation for backcountry is to escape the crowded areas around Waskesiu. This group contains a large body of back country users.

The weekend/short stay backcountry enthusiast: Enjoys the isolation, the natural wildlife and the exertion required, but also enjoys some degree of ‘civilization’—outdoor outhouses and prepared firewood. A significant portion of PANP backcountry population is this group. There is often a long-term childhood connection with the Park. Often, there is a ‘passing the PANP experience’ to their own child.

Wilderness adventure visitors: These are a ‘hardcore’ backcountry enthusiasts interested in the challenge of backcountry as much as enjoying the natural beauty of the area itself. They are often younger and less attached to the Park itself. It is one of many areas in Saskatchewan where one can enjoy the backcountry experience. Some individuals are of the view that much of what is considered backcountry at PANP is not really backcountry or wilderness camping at all.

Backcountry users at PANP consider themselves to be better than average stewards of the environment; however, in terms of what they actually practice in this regard, it is difficult to say if this is the case. Individuals are apt to practice similar environmentally friendly routines as the majority of society (recycling and energy conservation, for example). They certainly have a strong appreciation of what is at stake in terms of the consequences of environmental degradation—aided in part by their backcountry experiences.

Backcountry users also appear to be regular practitioners of environmentally friendly backcountry practices while in the Park.

¹ For the definition of ‘involved’ Canadians please refer to the Methodology section of this document.

Why Backcountry at PANP

Unquestionably, the scenic beauty combined with the isolation is the primary motivation of PANP users. PANP offers an accessible yet, for most, an authentic backcountry experience. Once in a backcountry area, either one of the main lakes or canoe routes, it is possible to feel alone in the wilderness. The abundance of wildlife in the Park is also noted as a significant contributor to the overall experience.

It is important to emphasize the accessible aspect of the Park's backcountry areas. It was not uncommon to hear study participants comment on how they are able to bring their young family with them on an outing. They can do so comfortably because there is an element of predictability with going backcountry at PANP. The sites are well appointed and various excursions are manageable.

Differences between Backcountry Users

There are no outstanding differences between user types: Anglers, Boaters or Hikers.

Crean vs. Kingsmere Lakes

Both lakes are viewed positively by backcountry users. Crean appears to be more of 'boaters lake', particularly power boaters. The Lake's vast expanse can be more easily navigated with a power boat as opposed to a canoe. The abundance of beaches make day-trips on Crean very enjoyable.

Kingsmere is used for a range of activities. It is a popular choice for canoeists, particularly those tackling the canoe routes. The extra effort required to access the lake makes it less of a choice for day-trips, although the day excursion up to Grey Owl's Cabin is one trip that is popular.

In terms of fishing, neither lake is particularly known for spectacular fishing, although the ability to trout fish on Kingsmere is certainly noted. Kingsmere is generally identified as the better fishing lake.

Backcountry User Concerns

For the most part, backcountry users at PANP are satisfied with their experiences and service while at the Park. As noted earlier, the biggest attraction for going backcountry is the natural setting and this appears to be a very positive feature of the Park.

There were a few concerns raised beyond some specific issues regarding Park maintenance in a few areas. These broader concerns encompass fees and what may be described as the 'openness' of the Park staff to backcountry visitors.

Concerns about increased fees surfaced spontaneously in almost all groups. It is not a major concern at present, but it is an area that has been noticed by visitors. Specifically, cost increases are drawing attention to some deterioration of park services—trails, foot bridges, boardwalks, etc.). In addition, there are some concerns, from an affordability aspect, that access to the Park is being limited to those who can afford to enjoy the backcountry, as opposed to everyone who would want to enjoy it.

The concern regarding the ‘openness’ or the welcoming nature of Park staff toward backcountry users is based purely on visitors’ perceptions and changes they have witnessed over the years. In some cases, perceptions about openness is affected more by the relationship between the Park staff and cabin owners, however, also affects attitudes regarding backcountry usage. This feeling is also encouraged, to some degree, by the fee concerns outlined above.

The openness issue is not a universal impression among backcountry users, but it is one that is worth noting, particularly when considering different communication initiatives directed toward this population.

RÉSUMÉ

On a tenu cinq séances de discussion (deux à Prince Albert et trois à Saskatoon) avec des groupes composés de visiteurs de l'arrière-pays du parc national du Canada de Prince Albert (PNCPA). Il s'agissait de visiteurs du parc invités par Western Opinion Research à participer aux séances à partir d'une liste fournie par Parcs Canada. Les séances ont eu lieu du 19 au 21 mars 2007.

Les séances de discussion avec des groupes de consultation sont une méthode de recherche qualitative, selon laquelle les personnes invitées participent à des discussions animées par un modérateur. On encourage les participants à répondre de façon ouverte et détaillée à des questions visant à connaître leurs idées et leurs sentiments.

L'étude avait comme objectif principal de comprendre les raisons pour lesquelles les visiteurs se rendent dans l'arrière-pays et de déterminer si ces raisons varient beaucoup selon le type d'utilisateurs. Par ailleurs, les responsables du parc voulaient savoir si les installations dans l'arrière-pays influaient, d'une part, sur la décision d'aller dans un secteur particulier et, d'autre part, sur le degré de satisfaction des visiteurs à l'égard de leur séjour. Un des objectifs importants des séances de discussion avec les groupes d'utilisateurs était d'établir une liste des raisons pour lesquelles les gens se rendent dans l'arrière-pays.

Profil des personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays au PNCPA

L'étude a permis de classer les personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays au PNCPA en trois catégories :

Les propriétaires de chalet et les campeurs saisonniers de longue durée. Ces gens habitent dans le parc. Ils ont grandi en ayant l'habitude de fréquenter l'arrière-pays. Pour la plupart, ils sont maintenant plus âgés et leur fréquentation de l'arrière-pays se limite dans une large mesure à naviguer sur les grands lacs et à faire une fois par année une excursion à pied ou en bateau jusqu'à la cabane de Grey Owl. Ils se rendent dans l'arrière-pays pour fuir les secteurs « surpeuplés » autour de Waskesiu. Ce groupe représente une partie importante des personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays.

Les enthousiastes de l'arrière-pays qui y passent la fin de semaine ou y font de brefs séjours. Ils aiment l'isolement et la nature sauvage ainsi que les efforts requis pour en profiter, mais ils apprécient aussi certaines commodités telles que l'accès à des latrines et à du bois de chauffage prêt à l'usage. Une proportion importante des personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays au PNCPA fait partie de ce groupe. Ces gens fréquentent souvent le parc depuis leur enfance et transmettent l'habitude de le fréquenter à leur propre enfant.

Les amateurs de loisirs dans la nature sauvage. Il s'agit des enthousiastes « irréductibles » de l'arrière-pays : ils apprécient autant les défis qu'ils y trouvent que la beauté des lieux. Ils sont souvent plus jeunes que les personnes des deux autres groupes et ils sont moins attachés au parc. En fait, le parc est pour eux l'un des nombreux endroits en Saskatchewan où ils peuvent pratiquer des activités dans l'arrière-pays. Pour certains d'entre eux, l'arrière-pays du PNCPA et les séjours qu'on peut y faire n'ont rien à voir avec le véritable arrière-pays ou le camping sauvage.

Les usagers de l'arrière-pays du PNCPA considèrent qu'ils se démarquent des visiteurs moyens sur le plan de la gérance de l'environnement. Cependant, il est difficile de vérifier cette

affirmation à la lumière de ce qu'ils font concrètement à cet égard. Ils ont pour la plupart des comportements écologiques semblables à ceux de la plupart des autres membres de la société (recyclage et économie d'énergie, par exemple). De toute évidence, ils mesurent pleinement les enjeux du point de vue des conséquences de la dégradation de l'environnement, en partie grâce à leurs séjours dans l'arrière-pays.

De plus, les usagers de l'arrière-pays semblent adopter des comportements respectueux de l'environnement en tout temps quand ils se trouvent dans parc.

Raisons pour lesquelles les gens fréquentent l'arrière-pays au PNCPA

Indiscutablement, la beauté des paysages combinée au sentiment d'isolement est la principale raison qui pousse les gens à se rendre dans l'arrière-pays. L'arrière-pays du PNCPA est accessible et il offre la possibilité d'y pratiquer des activités dans un cadre considéré, du moins par la plupart, comme authentique. Une fois dans l'arrière-pays, que ce soit sur l'un des principaux lacs ou l'une des routes de canotage, on peut avoir le sentiment d'être seul dans la nature sauvage. L'omniprésence de la faune dans le parc, comme les participants l'ont souligné, contribue de façon notable à la qualité générale de l'expérience.

Il convient d'insister sur le caractère accessible de l'arrière-pays du PNCPA. Beaucoup de participants à l'étude ont parlé du fait qu'ils pouvaient y faire un séjour avec leurs jeunes enfants. Ils peuvent le faire sans difficulté parce qu'ils savent à quoi s'attendre quand ils se rendent dans l'arrière-pays du parc. Les emplacements sont bien répartis et diverses excursions sont à leur portée.

Les différences entre les groupes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays

Il n'y a pas de grandes différences entre les groupes de personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays, qu'il s'agisse des pêcheurs, des canotiers et plaisanciers ou des randonneurs.

Comparaison du lac Crean et du lac Kingsmere

Les deux lacs sont appréciés des usagers de l'arrière-pays. Le lac Crean est apparemment plus populaire auprès des plaisanciers, particulièrement les amateurs de motonautisme. En raison de sa grande étendue, le lac convient en effet mieux aux embarcations à moteur qu'aux canots. Le grand nombre de plages rend très agréables les excursions d'une journée au lac Crean.

Le lac Kingsmere est utilisé pour diverses activités. Il est populaire auprès des canoéistes, plus particulièrement ceux qui parcourent les routes de canotage. Il l'est moins auprès des personnes qui font des excursions d'une journée parce qu'il faut d'abord faire l'effort de s'y rendre. Cependant, l'excursion d'une journée jusqu'à la cabane de Grey Owl est très prisée des visiteurs.

En ce qui concerne la pêche, aucun des deux lacs n'est reconnu pour offrir des possibilités de qualité exceptionnelle, mais le lac Kingsmere est certainement reconnu pour la truite que l'on peut y prendre. D'une manière générale, le lac Kingsmere est considéré comme le meilleur des deux lacs pour la pêche.

Préoccupations des usagers de l'arrière-pays

Les usagers de l'arrière-pays du PNCPA sont dans une large mesure satisfaits de leurs séjours ainsi que des services auxquels ils ont accès dans le parc. Comme nous l'avons mentionné précédemment, le cadre naturel est ce qui attire le plus les gens dans l'arrière-pays et ce cadre est apparemment l'un des principaux atouts du parc.

Outre certains points particuliers concernant l'entretien du parc dans quelques secteurs, les participants à l'étude ont exprimé quelques préoccupations plus générales concernant les droits d'entrée et ce que nous pourrions appeler « l'ouverture » du personnel du parc à l'endroit des visiteurs de l'arrière-pays.

Des inquiétudes concernant l'augmentation des droits d'entrée ont été spontanément exprimées dans presque tous les groupes. Ce n'est pas un grand sujet de préoccupation pour l'instant, mais les visiteurs l'ont remarquée. Plus particulièrement, l'augmentation des droits attire l'attention sur une certaine détérioration des installations du parc (sentiers, passerelles, trottoirs de bois, etc.). On a en outre soulevé la question de l'abordabilité, à savoir que l'accès au parc est réservé aux personnes qui ont les moyens de profiter de l'arrière-pays plutôt qu'à tous ceux qui aimeraient le faire.

La préoccupation concernant « l'ouverture » ou le caractère accueillant du personnel du parc à l'endroit des personnes qui se rendent dans l'arrière-pays n'est qu'une perception des visiteurs et est étroitement liée aux changements qu'elles ont observés au fil des ans. Dans certains cas, les perceptions concernant l'ouverture sont davantage influencées par les relations entre le personnel du parc et les propriétaires de chalets. Ces perceptions n'en influencent pas moins les attitudes à l'égard de la fréquentation de l'arrière-pays. Ce sentiment est également renforcé, dans une certaine mesure, par les préoccupations concernant les droits d'entrée.

La préoccupation relative à l'ouverture du personnel n'est pas partagée par l'ensemble des personnes qui fréquentent l'arrière-pays, mais il convient d'en prendre note, surtout lorsque l'on se penche sur différents moyens de communiquer avec les groupes d'utilisateurs.

STUDY BACKGROUND & RESEARCH DESIGN

Background & Objectives

Western Opinion Research (WOR)¹ was requested by Parks Canada to conduct a qualitative research study of Prince Albert National Park (PANP the ‘Park’) backcountry visitors.

The primary objective of this study was to understand the motivations of backcountry users and to identify if there are vast differences in motivations for different user-types. The Park was also interested in exploring if backcountry facilities played a role in the decision to go to a particular area, and whether they played a role in the satisfaction with the experience. An important focus of the focus group discussion was to develop a list of drivers of backcountry use.

Prince Albert National Park was interested in identifying the primary motivations that draw visitors into the backcountry and also attempt to understand the potential impact that different types of use may have on the environment.

A two-phased research approach was developed to address the primary objective of the Park. The first stage of research (conducted in the summer of 2006) involved interviewing visitors as they were leaving the backcountry at one of two locations, Kingsmere Lake and the Hanging Hearts Marina (which allows access to the Hanging Hearts and Crean Lakes). In all, 235 interviews were conducted. The questions asked were designed to identify specific user types, detail the activities engaged and routes taken, as well as to collect general information about the visitors’ experiences (other groups encountered and overall satisfaction).

This second phase of the project, involved a series of 5 in-person focus groups.

Analysis of the data collected during the intercept interviews led to the identification of three distinct types of users:

- Hikers (Kingsmere Trailhead only)
- Anglers (all lakes)
- Recreational boaters (all lakes)

Focus groups were conducted with the three populations across two locations in Saskatchewan—Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

¹ On trouvera une définition de l’expression « Canadiens engagés » dans la section de ce document portant sur la méthodologie.

¹ Western Opinion Research is a fully functioning, legally maintained company within the larger firm known as NRG Research Group.

¹ Western Opinion Research operates as fully functional research company providing research services to the Federal Government under the qualitative standing offer list. NRG Research Group (NRG) was formed in 2005 from the merger of Western Opinion Research and Nordic Research Group, two companies whose combined legacy as leaders in the field of market and public opinion research totals over forty years.

Methodology

WOR was contracted by Parks Canada through the Qualitative Standing Offer list to provide the research services necessary to address the study objectives.

The recruiting was done primarily from existing lists provided by Parks Canada. During the list recruit, a referral method was utilized with individuals who were unable to attend the sessions, but perhaps knew of another individual who participated in the above noted backcountry activities. WOR developed the recruitment screener in close consultation with Parks Canada staff.

Groups consisting of 8 to 10 participants were recruited. WOR was responsible for the recruitment of individuals who participated in the focus group sessions.

WOR was responsible for the management of activities required for the focus groups. This included the arrangement of facilities, AV requirements, hospitality requirements and the provision of participant incentives.

The groups lasted approximately 1^{1/2} to 2 hours, and were held at 6:00pm and 8:00pm in the above noted locations. A \$50 incentive was provided to participants.

Location	Date	Type
Prince Albert	March 19	Anglers
Prince Albert	March 19	Boaters
Saskatoon	March 20	Anglers
Saskatoon	March 20	Boaters
Saskatoon	March 21	Hikers

A total of 41 backcountry users participated in the study.

All five groups were moderated by Andrew Enns, Senior Vice President with WOR, by utilizing a moderator's guide developed in conjunction with Parks Canada.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

General Park Usage Patterns & Characteristics

The groups all began with a general discussion regarding the visitation, history and connection participants had with Prince Albert National Park (PANP/the 'Park').

In every session there was at least a third or more of the participants who had a long (20 years or more) association with the Park. Many of these individuals were cabin owners or seasonal campers in the Park. It was not uncommon for these individuals to mention that they had grown up visiting the Park.

- *I've been going to Waskesiu for about 54 years. It's been my summer playground forever of my life...we've worked our way up to having a family cottage up on the hill*
- *Went to the park in the late 50's...we've been travelling back and forth there for years. We trailered for many years but built a cabin there about 5 years ago*
- *I've been going to the park since age 6 and I'm about 62 years old... Tented, camped, trailered, bought a part a portable cabin and then built a new cabin. We enjoy the park because it's kind of a special place where people take care of the environment in a special way. It's a great place to be in wintertime, summer, spring or fall*

Other individuals who participated in the study could be categorized as regular users. Regular users do not visit the part to the same degree of as the long-term cabin owner population. These individuals indicated they visited the Park several times over the summer and fall, which typically included a week to two week stay over the summer. Many of the individuals indicated they had visited the Park as a child.

- *I probably go up 5-10 times a year and most of it is probably winter but I'm starting to do more and more canoeing and kayaking so I'm doing some in the summer too*
- *5-10 times in a year and rarely that would be overnights. Maybe once or twice in a year overnight*

A final group of participants could be categorized as more casual users. These individuals visit once or twice over the summer. For these participants PANP was one of several parks in the area that they often visited.

In Prince Albert, backcountry users in the sessions were an older demographic which had some bearing on the frequency and type of backcountry activities they participated in. The Fishers were most notably of an older demographic—50 years of age or older in general. Participants who boated were somewhat younger. The younger individuals tended to canoe and kayak on the backcountry lakes.

A vast majority of participants in both Prince Albert groups were individuals who had grown-up visiting the Park and thus had been visiting for, on average 30 years or more. There were a few individuals who were new visitors to the Park.

In each session in Prince Albert, about half of the participants were cottage owners or trailer-park residents in the Park.

In Saskatoon, the groups consisted of a broader mix of age groups and fewer cottage owners. Saskatoon Fishers and Hikers were more likely to have been visiting the Park since they were

very young. The Saskatoon Boaters group, however, expressed somewhat less of an historic attachment to PANP.

When asked what activities they participated in while in the Park, the following list was compiled. The results are loosely sorted by the most common or frequent mention:

- Golfing
- Fishing
- Boating
 - Power boating
 - Canoeing
 - Sail boating
- Swimming
- Hiking
- Cross country skiing
- Biking
- Shopping
- Tennis
- Spotting wildlife and unusual insects
- Running
- Picnics
- Interpretative programs
- Skating

In terms of specific backcountry activities that group participants said they had done recently, the following were provided:

- Grey Owl hike
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Fish Crean and Kingsmere
- Ice fishing
- Camping
- Hiking
- Winter camping
- Pelican watching
- Namekus Lake – no motor boats
- Cross-country skiing

Participants said they do visit other areas of the Park over the course of the year, but not usually over the course of one visit. The duration of Park visits range considerably among individuals and are usually dependent of lifestyle or life cycle situations. Some individual are in the Park for the full summer period. Other people visit only over several weekends or perhaps for one week depending on holiday availability. Almost all participants in PA said they expect to be visiting the Park to the same extent, if not more often, in the year ahead. One female participant said her family's visitation may decrease in the near future as a result of changing employment circumstances of her spouse.

Most participants in the Saskatoon sessions said they would also visit the park to the same extent, although it was more common to hear in these sessions that individuals are open to exploring other parks in Saskatchewan.

There is some visitation of other parks in the area. Other park areas mentioned were:

- Nipiwini
- Candle Lake
- La Ronge
- Churchill River system
- Meadow Lake
- Emma and Christopher lakes
- Sandy Hill Lake
- Cypress Hills
- Duck Lake

A few individuals, particularly in the Saskatoon sessions mentioned that they often (perhaps every other year) made an excursion to one of the other National Parks. These were usually to the mountain parks of Banff, Waterton and Jasper.

All participants in Prince Albert felt PANP compared favourably to other parks in the area, both in general, as well as when considering backcountry opportunities specifically. In Saskatoon this feeling was less strong. In the Boaters group in Saskatoon, there was very clearly a view that PANP had some short comings. From a wilderness/backcountry perspective many participants felt the Park was not as challenging and interesting as some other areas of Saskatchewan, particularly the Churchill River system area. One of the main drawbacks identified was that in PANP the backcountry excursions were somewhat limited in nature—taking a weekend to do as opposed to a longer 4 to 5 day trip these individuals were interested in. For some, “civilized” backcountry facilities also were a drawback.

- *There’s real wilderness camping and then there is the organized routes at Prince Albert with specific sites and outdoor facilities.*

Backcountry Usage

As noted above, backcountry usage is often identified as fishing in some of the ‘harder to get to’ lakes, boating on these lakes, particularly canoeing or kayaking, hiking and finally camping. It is important to note that the definition of participating in a backcountry experience was slightly different for some people.

Some participants, particularly motor boaters, did not immediately associate boating up the hanging Hearts Lakes to Crean as a backcountry experience. To them this was more of a day-trip excursion.

Backcountry activities were those activities requiring:

- Planning
- Extra effort to accomplish
- Camping in un-serviced areas

Some of the specific backcountry activities done in PANP were:

- Boating on Crean and Kingsmere
- Fishing on Crean, Kingsmere and Hanging Hearts
- Canoeing the canoe routes off Kingsmere (Bagwa and/or Bladebone)
- Canoeing or boating up to Grey Owl's Cabin
- Hiking to Grey Owl's Cabin
- Canoeing into Crean (south-end Kitchen site)
- Boating day-trip into Crean involving "putting ashore" at one of the beaches for awhile

Most participants indicated they had done several of these activities or plan to do several of them in the future. Not surprisingly, the age of the individual is the most predictable indicator of current backcountry activities. Older participants (over 55 years of age) are much more likely to participate in backcountry power boating, most notably on Crean Lake. While boating, this population is also likely to do some fishing.

Younger participants are more likely to provide a range of different activities. It seems individuals have a favourite activity, such as canoeing or hiking, but are also willing try something different to "*change things up.*"

Backcountry activities tended to be done in one visit as opposed to undertaking several backcountry excursions during one visit. This question was somewhat difficult for cabin owners or seasonal campers in the Park to answer, as their visits were of a very long duration.

The one area of the Park that many participants volunteered they had not visited at all or often, was the west side of the park. Reasons for this were the distance one had to drive to get to this area (noted as a roundabout route) and the fact that for some individuals, it was perceived as a fairly windy area and not that pleasant. A few people mentioned that the road to the west side of the Park was in "*pretty rough shape.*"

All participants stated that the primary reason they make the effort to 'backcountry' is to enjoy the peacefulness, solitude and natural surroundings. All participants expressed a genuine appreciation of the scenic beauty of the backcountry at PANP. This applies to relative short-term users residing in Saskatoon, to seasonal Park residents (cottage owners) from Prince Albert.

- *That's the only reason I go (for backcountry activities)...as soon as you get away into Kingsmere, Crean, any of those that are other than Waskesiu, you've got all the space, all the peace and quiet you want.*

Backcountry Boating

Backcountry boating is a popular activity in the Park. A majority of participants in all sessions had done some boating on one of the backcountry lakes. Most of these Boaters had done some power boating in the area, but a significant number had only been canoeing or kayaking.

Boating on the backcountry lakes was an enjoyable experience for those who undertook the activity. Enjoyable, in the sense of meeting the primary goals of going backcountry at PANP—escape from the crowds into a beautiful natural setting.

- *The experience, the scenery. The whole combination*
- *Just to get out there and look around and do whatever you feel like. If you feel like fishing, you fish, if they don't bite you may go walking on the shoreline or sit around and just enjoy it.*
- *I go to backcountry for the solitude, to get away from the people and to have the lake to myself.*
- *I go up there because it's so incredibly beautiful (Crean, Waskesiu, Heart Lakes) and I don't fish. I can't swim but I'm in the lakes 3 times a day...I go with my family that love to fish...it's just so peaceful.*
- *'Vegging' out, just being there, relaxing and let the boat drift or do whatever.*

Boating on one of PANP's backcountry lakes, however, was also noted as an activity not to be taken lightly. It was almost universally known among backcountry participants that the lakes, particularly the large lakes of Kingsmere and Crean, were dangerous lakes when the wind was blowing from the North. In addition, there was a general feeling that the weather on these lakes could change rapidly. As one participant noted, *"If you are out on one of these lakes [Kingsmere/Crean] you really have to know what you are doing and always be aware of the weather."*

Participants said the busiest lake in the Park was Waskesiu Lake. At certain times, such as mid-summer weekends and Long Weekends, this lake was too busy for some participants, and a compelling reason to boat on one of the other lakes in the Park.

The popular or favourite lakes for backcountry participants were:

- Kingsmere
- Crean
- Hanging Heart
- Namekus
- Lilly

These lakes tended to be popular for different reasons to individuals.

Kingsmere was often cited as a popular lake to boat on because of some very popular destinations around the lake. Canoeists often mentioned the Bagwa and Bladestone routes as popular destinations off Kingsmere. Boating to Grey Owl's Cabin was another very popular activity on Kingsmere. Interestingly, while Kingsmere was a popular lake it was also noted as not being very busy—for some individuals it was less busy when compared to Crean. The motor size limit along with the challenge to get into the lake, were noted as possible reasons for this.

Another draw to Kingsmere mentioned by participants was the fact it was the most accessible lake where an individual could do some Trout fishing. Many participants, particularly those who did a considerable amount of fishing, mentioned that at certain times of the year Trout fishing could be good on the lake.

Individuals who mentioned Crean as a preferred lake enjoyed the expanse of the lake along with the ease of access. Most participants who preferred this lake were power boaters. The size of the lake combined with the fact there were no defined canoe routes off the lake, were the main reasons for this. Interestingly, a number of Crean Lake regulars felt this lake was quieter than Kingsmere. After some discussion, it was acknowledged that it may in fact have more boat traffic on it but because it was so large it did not feel that way.

- *I really like that lake and even in the summertime it's very seldom that you see another boat in that lake. It's a big lake but there's hardly anybody on it...*

Favourite pastimes on Crean were leisurely boating combined with some swimming, either from the boat while out in the lake or offshore at many of the beaches around the lake. The beach areas on Crean were noted as being very nice for a shore lunch and relaxing afternoon of swimming. Another popular destination on Crean Lake were the islands on the lake, particularly Big Island. Fishing was mentioned as another draw to the lake, primarily Jack fishing in the Moose Bay area.

Hanging Heart Lakes was another very popular boating area. For participants who power boated, this was a transitional area passed through on the way to Crean. A number of power boaters who fished a fair amount mentioned that Jack fishing on this lake was not bad at times.

Many participants mentioned they canoed in the Hanging Heart Lakes. Participants noted it was fairly accessible to get to (not a long canoe ride) and once in the lakes it was good to canoe on. The channels and lakes were small enough not be affected by the wind. Another positive element about the Hanging Heart Lakes was that there were three to choose from, so it provided some variety.

The only concern expressed by a few canoeists was that power boat traffic could occasionally be busy when going up Hanging Heart to Crean Lake.

Namekus was a popular lake with canoeists because the lake was off limits to motorized boat traffic. In addition, there were a few nice beaches on the lake.

Lilly Lake was mentioned as a favourite lake for its solitude. Participants said its remote location almost guaranteed that one could “*be alone*” in the wilderness.

Crean vs. Kingsmere

Participants were asked to provide descriptions or characteristics that differentiated the two large backcountry lakes at PANP. Lists of descriptions for both lakes are provided below.

Crean Lake

- Big, Biggest
- Clear water
- Beautiful blue shade of water, particularly noticeable at the south end
- Fairly easy access, as long as the water is high
- Less used, less likely to see other people
- No hikers on shore
- Great beaches. Secluded beaches
- Islands

Kingsmere Lake

- Grey Owl's Cabin
- Good canoe/kayak routes

- Access was not easy (rail-car system)
- Trout fishing
- Motor size limits
- Camping, Lot's of spots
- Busier (on the lake and along the trails)
- Deep
- Cold

From an enjoyment perspective, both lakes were viewed as providing visitors with an enjoyable park experience. Both lakes were equally scenic. One feature that was noted a few times which seems to differentiate Crean from Kingsmere was the colour of its water.

- *Kingsmere is a typical northern lake...a lot of sand and a lot of spruce pine trees...when you go to Crean because of the light bottom, you get a spectacular bluey green water and you see so much more sand and hills and it's just not like being in Northern Saskatchewan.*
- *Color of the water (is different) as you enter Crean from the channel – something so surreal about it.*

Some individuals felt that they were more likely to see wildlife on Crean Lake compared to Kingsmere because of the lack of hiking trails on Crean. Not all participants agreed with this, however.

The most prominent characteristics distinguishing Crean Lake from Kingsmere were related to access. Kingsmere Lake with the rail car system was for many individuals a reason why they have not ever or do not often visit the lake. It was noted in all groups that this was a laborious process. In addition, it was noted by a few groups that if, by chance, several boaters arrived at the rail car at the same time the wait to get into the lake could be considerable. The system of accessing Kingsmere was seen by a few people as a “*bottle neck*.”

Another rather minor irritant related to the Kingsmere Lake rail system, was that the last portion of the rail line into the Lake was lined with gravel which made it very noisy. Some participants felt this was likely disturbing any wildlife in the area and therefore limiting the chance of seeing any in the South end of the Lake.

Another access related factor limited usage of Kingsmere for some individuals was the motor size restriction. These individuals owned boats with larger motors.

It is important to note, that while there were numerous concerns expressed about the challenges of accessing Kingsmere Lake using the rail-car system, there was no strong desire to change the approach and make access to the lake easier. The majority of participants recognized that the current manner in which Kingsmere Lake was accessed served to limit the number of people on the lake and to a degree, ensures those on the lake “*really wanted to be there to enjoy the surroundings*.”

Backcountry Fishing

Fishing on one of the backcountry lakes was done by a large number of participants in the research study, beyond those who were specifically recruited to the Fishing groups. One group in particular, the Fishing group in Prince Albert, stood out as consisting of very dedicated anglers. Most of the other participants could be categorized as more casual anglers.

For the majority of anglers on one of the Park's backcountry lakes, the fishing was good *if* one knew where to go. In addition, like most lake fishing, there were better seasonal times for fishing, such as spring when the water temperature was colder. In the same breath, individuals also noted that in their view the fishing was not as good as it used to be on the lakes, which was a concern.

A few individuals mentioned that the fishing, particularly Trout fishing, was better in some of the more remote lakes in the north end of the Park. One of the lakes mentioned in several sessions was Wassegam Lake. Sandy Lake in the south end of the Park was noted for good Jack fishing.

Many participants mentioned Trout fishing on Kingsmere as a usual annual outing. Other popular fishing experiences were Jack fishing in Crean Lake, particularly up toward the North end of the lake. Pickerel fishing was another popular past time, although based on the number of comments in the groups; this was perhaps a more elusive fish to catch in either of the big lakes. Hanging Heart Lakes and to a lesser degree Kingsmere, were noted as 'not bad' places to catch Pickerel, particularly early or late in the season (June/September).

In general, fishing on one of the backcountry lakes at PANP was 'a' reason to visit the lakes, but not 'the' reason. Many participants who fished regularly in the Park, said they did so more out of habit or something to do while enjoying the natural surroundings, as opposed a destination where one could catch a lot of fish. Participants often mentioned that while canoeing up the Kingsmere or boating slowly in Crean, that they would have a fishing line out. If they caught a fish it was almost viewed as a bonus. It meant an unexpected addition to the shore lunch or something extra for dinner.

On the subject of shore lunches, many participants noted that the camp sites located around the lakes made for very convenient spots to stop and enjoy a meal. This was particularly the case for Crean Lake users.

Participants who fished were familiar with the concept of 'catch 'n release', but did not practice this a great deal, except when the fish caught was too small to warrant the trouble of cleaning. The limited practice of 'catch 'n release' fishing, is perhaps another sign that the fishing is not overly fruitful on the back country lakes.

A concern about the fees related to fishing on the backcountry lakes was raised in several sessions. Individuals noted that the fees had increased in recent years. In addition, a few people noted the fee structure had changed, specifically the elimination of the day license, which was a convenient and inexpensive way to take a son or daughter fishing for the day. According to participants, the net effect of these changes was to make fishing in the Park a less affordable activity than it once was.

For almost all participants the primary attraction to fishing on one of PANP's back country lakes was the beautiful natural setting of the lakes themselves, as opposed to the act of fishing itself. Even the group of Prince Albert Anglers, who were more serious about fishing, said the beauty of the Park's surroundings was the main reason they went up to one of the lakes.

- *The atmosphere, the isolation part of it is pretty good. You never seem to be overcrowded with 50-60 boats around. No, you're out on your own quite a bit I feel.*
- *I think a lot of people out fishing in the park, they also love nature so they get the two combined type of deal. That's what they enjoy about the park fishing.*

Backcountry Hiking

The vast majority of participants were day users of the Park's hiking trails. A few individuals indicated they had stayed overnight along one of the Parks trails, usually the trail up to Grey Owl's Cabin.

Participants did most of their hiking during the day and consequently the discussion regarding the hiking experiences drifted between backcountry trails and more accessible front country trails. For reference, the more popular trails mentioned in the sessions were:

- Kingfisher
- Treebeard
- Waskesiu
- Narrows Peninsula
- Boundary Bog
- Spruce river
- Mud Creek

A few of the backcountry trails mentioned, in addition to the Grey Owl's Cabin route, were:

- Freight
- Elk
- Westside Boundary

The three specific backcountry trails listed above were most often mentioned and used by the Hikers group in Saskatoon. A number of these trails were noted as being good trails for mountain biking, as well as, hiking.

Most participants who used the hiking trails in the Park—backcountry or otherwise—had a very good impression of the trails. The trails were, for the most part, well maintained and provided a very enjoyable hike. These participants mentioned they liked the hikes because of the very scenic settings, the diversity of terrain and the frequent sightings of wildlife and/or bird life.

- *The trails are quite nice, just the location because you can be beside the lake or you can be through the huge trees, lots of different types of forest around you, they're well marked.*
- *I like the diversity 'cause you can take one trail and go through like 3 or 4 or 5 different eco zones or whatever. That's what I really like.*
- *There's just so many [trails] that you can lose yourself...we just end up walking into finding something that we didn't even know was there.*
- *I would say that's part of the attraction of hiking in the park is that you're maybe more likely to see wildlife there than in some of the provincial parks.*

It was noted in several sessions that some of the less utilized trails, particularly those in the south and west ends of the Park were less well maintained. For example, several people commented that it was not uncommon to come across deadfall across the trails in these areas.

The Grey Owl's Cabin trail was a popular hike for individuals. For many participants it was an annual tradition. Older participants were less likely to have hiked the trail recently. A preferred method of visiting Grey Owl's Cabin for this population was via boat, as this could be relatively easily done in a day.

The Grey Owl's Cabin trail was perceived as an easy hike in terms of terrain, however it was fairly long (over 20 kms one way), which made hiking this in one day a strenuous feat. A few participants said they had hiked the trail in a day, but it was acknowledged that this was a challenge.

The most interesting points along the Grey Owl's Cabin were when the trail came out to the edge of Kingsmere Lake. The hikers also liked the camp site/rest areas along Grey Owl's Cabin trail.

A few people mentioned that sections of the Grey Owl's Cabin trail needed some maintenance. The boardwalks were identified specifically as needing some repairs. The lack of distance or kilometre markers was also noted in the Hikers group as something which should be addressed.

One group, the Boaters group in Saskatoon, raised some very specific concerns about the PANP hiking trails. These included:

- Consisted mainly of logging roads, therefore not very exciting or interesting
- Many were linear so not very convenient for hiking. Preferred loops
- Some of the trails, notably Grey Owls Cabin was mostly through the bush and did not provide many scenic vistas of Kingsmere lake.

It should be noted that these views were at odds of most other impressions of the trails in PANP.

Backcountry Camping

There was not a large number of recent backcountry campers represented in the sessions. A larger number of individuals had camped at one time in the backcountry of PANP, but this may have been many years ago.

Among those participants who had recently done some backcountry camping, the most popular areas were the two canoe routes off Kingsmere Lake and along the trail to Grey Owl's Cabin. A few individuals mentioned they had camped on Crean Lake, notably Big Island. A few individuals in the Prince Albert Boaters group had done some camping in the Sandy Lake area.

The primary reason for not camping in the backcountry was the reluctance to go through the preparations necessary to camp in a remote un-serviced area. As noted earlier, many participants were cabin owners in the Park or seasonal campers in one of the main campgrounds. This meant that backcountry excursions were generally day-trips where one could return to a 'civilized' home base.

Those individuals who did do some backcountry camping expressed mixed views with respect to the process. According to participants, the system of registration was fairly straight forward and for the most part worked well. Some concerns were expressed about the inability to reserve a spot and the occasional problem where a spot which should have been available was not. In a few groups the problems caused by busy weekends were discussed, and how this sometimes either led to a very crowded campsite area (with multiple parties sharing an area) or a very long canoe or hike to the next available camping site. A few people mentioned creating their own 'unofficial' camp site in these instances, but this did not seem to be a prevalent occurrence.

The inability to reserve created some particular frustrations for individuals. It was felt that backcountry camping was not the sort of activity one could do on a whim—planning was required—therefore, it seemed contradictory to not allow reservations of camp sites.

The camp sites themselves were generally viewed positively by users. They were in good locations, well laid-out and maintained. There was a general appreciation of amenities such as the outhouses, elevated food caches and prepared firewood. The outhouses were singled out in almost all groups as being quite small.

- *The campsite where I put up my tent was flat, it was clean and it was surrounded by trees...the picnic table was in very good shape and there were brand new fire pits on the stands. They were new, they turned fine and they worked wonderfully. There was a good supply of wood...the only thing I would say though is that the toilets are rather small though. I don't know how a man could possibly use one of those outhouses...and sit down, let's put it that way, 'cause my knees were right up against the door.*
- *Almost all of my experiences have been good. Everything has been maintained well and there are supplies there and things are level but the last time we camped at Lily, there was dead fall across everything. There'd been erosion so you could barely get to the camp stove without falling down the bank so clearly that hadn't been as well taken care of at that point in time.*

Typically, if there was a poor experience mentioned when camping it was in regards to other backcountry users 'invading their space' as opposed to a problem with the camping facilities themselves.

- *All of a sudden all these boats showed up, like motorboats, and they were full of kids and people and they just took over the whole entire campground. We actually got up and moved to the spot was farthest away that we could....and the other one is I think that Peace Point is too crowded. I think there are too many camp spots on Peace Point right now.*

There were a few comments about how the above amenities seemed to contradict the notion of "roughing it" in the backcountry wilderness. These individuals, however, also recognized that providing these services made for a safer camping experience (with the tree caches) and less environmental disruption to the area (pit toilets and prepared wood).

Park Backcountry Service Expectations and Future Needs

When it came to backcountry service expectations the Parks was generally doing well in meeting the requirements of users. There were no large issues raised. The suggestions for improvements included the following:

- Better trail distance markers (not too obtrusive, however)
- Some areas of the Grey Owl's trail where the boardwalk is in disrepair
- Creek, stream and marsh crossings require some maintenance
- Better more detailed maps of trails, canoe routes and campsites
- Wet or rotten wood at some sites around Namekus and Kingsmere
- Repair the boat launch area at Kingsmere (erosion)
- Park staff could be more visible
- More information regarding the dangerousness and unpredictability of the large lakes

- Staff could be more forthcoming with backcountry information, particularly when registering for a backcountry excursion
- Outhouses pretty small
- The channel into Crean. Markers need repainting
- A hiking trail around Waskesiu Lake
- Repair the old 57 trail to open access to the west part of the Park
- Webcam on Kingsmere so one can see what the waves are like
- Webcam to see the pelicans

This discussion led to comments regarding the overall state of the Park, particularly the main town site area. Participants in all groups expressed a concern that there was a general “run-down” look and feel to the Waskesiu town site. People often commented on the state of disrepair of streets and sidewalks. People attributed this problem to reductions in funding, however, a few people noted with some annoyance that, “*park fees keep going up but things don’t seem to be getting any better.*” In one of the Saskatoon groups the point was made that letting the appearance of the Park deteriorate can have consequences in terms of how people may treat the Park in the future. If the impression is that Park officials appear less concerned about the appearance and state of the Park infrastructure, visitors may adopt a similar mindset when it comes to being respectful to the Park’s environment, i.e. picking up litter.

In several groups this discussion led to a broader commentary regarding fees at the Park. Many participants expressed some concern about the fees increasing. The concerns over fees related to the expense of accessing the Park and its services. In addition, the increasing fees also raised questions regarding “*where is the money going*” given that some individuals perceived the Park was less maintained and offered fewer services than before.

- *This has become an issue in the park in the last 8-10 years and that certainly the fees that have increased and prevented in some respects probably the average Canadian who struggles to maintain a family of 3 or 4, it’s an expensive proposition now to come up and do a lot of these things so I think they have to really rethink the fee structure that they apply to people.*
- *It is becoming more of a privilege than I think some of us are realizing. It’s getting too pricey for some.*
- *I was fully in the backcountry and yet...it was beyond the means of the average person. It’s getting pricey.*

General Environmental Attitudes

In each group participants were asked a few questions about their general impression of the environment, beyond a park environment.

Not surprisingly, the majority of participants saw themselves as more attune with the environment and saw it is an important issue. They often attributed this attitude to the fact they liked and regularly experience the outdoor natural environment, and therefore are more aware of what potentially is at stake in terms of the country’s environmental future.

Interestingly, while most participants viewed themselves as more environmentally friendly than the average person, their actions did not necessarily confirm this. The environmental conservation activities usually practiced were fairly common and ones that many people in society also practiced. Some common environmental friendly activities mentioned were:

- Recycling
- Driving a vehicle less
- Ride a bike or walk
- Energy efficient light bulbs
- Turning the heat down at home
- Careful at home about chemical use (pesticides) and disposal
- Do not run taps un-necessarily

While in the Park, backcountry or otherwise, individuals said they were very conscious of the need to minimize their environmental footprint. They regularly brought their garbage outside of the backcountry to then deposit in a bin in the Park. Participants also mentioned that they limited the amount of time they had fires. A few people noted they emptied their 'grey water' into the outhouse pits. Others said that while in the Park they seldom used their car. They used mountain bikes for getting around. In Prince Albert it was mentioned that going to a 4-stroke engine from the more common 2-stroke engine would improve the environmental health of the Park's lakes.

During this discussion, a few comments were made regarding the need to have the hiking trails maintained, specifically, the bridges over boggy areas or deadfall across the trail, as these obstacles caused visitors to create their own trails where they should not. Along similar lines were comments such as: it was important for the paths to the tree caches and outhouses to be cleared, so people know to use them instead of trampling anywhere in the bush.

For the most part individuals said they maintained these environmentally friendly practices when visiting all parks. A few people, however, did indicate they were particularly protective of PANP as it was their "home" park. These individuals tended to be cabin owners or seasonal campers in the Park. A few other individuals said they tended to be extra vigilant regarding maintaining the natural environment in the Park because it was a national park. These individuals noted that, to them, it seemed the standards of environmental stewardship were higher in a national park.

There was no support for the idea that the best way to preserve beautiful natural areas like PANP would be to deny or limit public access to it—"The Park is for the people." Participants felt that seeing wilderness areas like PANP helped people appreciate and understand the importance of preserving our environment.

Park Communications

General Perceptions

Generally, participants felt the necessary information was available to backcountry users at PANP should they require it. This information was usually available at the information/registration area where most users checked-in before proceeding into one of the backcountry areas.

When questioned further regarding whether any additional information was necessary for backcountry users, the most frequently mentioned areas were maps and advice regarding being out on the large lakes during bad weather.

Maps, specifically detailed maps, were an important piece of backcountry information that many participants said was not available. A few individuals were aware that topographical maps were available for purchase at the Information Centre, but most people were not aware. There were several suggestions that the maps be detailed enough to be able to recognize specifically where one was on the lake or trail. In addition, it was important to have the campsite and other points of interest marked clearly.

In terms of weather information, many individuals stressed the importance of making people aware of the unpredictability of the lakes in inclement weather. Participants in the Prince Albert groups were particularly concerned that this should be done better.

- *The biggest danger on Kingsmere is the wind. You're going to die if the wind comes up and you get swamped, there's a good chance you're going to die and that's one thing that should be conveyed to park users in Kingsmere is that danger factor.*

Several individuals recalled seeing weather forecast information posted at the Information Centre which was helpful.

There was some agreement that first-time Park backcountry visitors should receive some additional information compared to repeat visitors, but there was also a widely accepted view that backcountry excursions required planning and most users typically seek out information about the area prior to their arrival. Participants distinguished the manner in which information needed to be proactively provided to the more casual park visitor as opposed to the backcountry user who needed certain information for planning purposes and therefore would seek this out on their own.

In terms of accessing backcountry information, participants said the Information Centre was a logical place to have it available. It was mentioned that for anything more than a daytrip, almost all users had to check-in at the Information Centre.

Providing brochures was noted as the common method of disseminating information regarding most park services, backcountry or otherwise.

Many individuals, particularly younger participants, thought that more information on backcountry activities at PANP could be provided online. There was some mixed views and some confusion regarding Park information online. Some individuals referenced a good website containing PANP information, but this may have been a site specifically for the town site business district. Other participants felt the Park information available online was lacking and often dated. Regardless, there was a general consensus that as much information as possible, including maps, should be available over the web.

Current Backcountry Brochures

These were generally fine. They were not particularly eye-catching or visually appealing, but did provide a good assortment of information.

The canoe route brochures were of particular interest to many participants. These brochures provided important information such as portage lengths, as well as, overall trip length estimations. The maps included in the brochures were an improvement over the main map provided in the visitors guide, but still not detailed enough for some participants (The Grey Owl's

Cabin brochure map was viewed less positively). Surprisingly, a number of individuals who had canoed one of the two routes were not familiar with the brochure.

The advice regarding weather was noted as being included in the excursion brochures, however, there were some suggestions that this could be made to stand out more prominently.

A few individuals commented positively about the historical information provided in the Grey Owl's Cabin brochure. It was suggested that more general park information should be provided in this brochure as well, since this site represents an important piece of the park's history.

There were no specific suggestions for improving the brochures. A number of participants mentioned that these brochures, or at least the information contained in them, should be also available online.

Final Thoughts

The groups all concluded with some final thoughts regarding visiting the backcountry areas at PANP. Participants generally took the opportunity to emphasize how much they appreciated the natural beauty of the park, particularly the backcountry areas. Many individuals likened the Park to "Saskatchewan's gem" to be preserved for future generations to enjoy, just as they have enjoyed as they grew up.

Some final thoughts from participants also included a concern that PANP officials were interested in limiting access to the backcountry areas of the Park. The reason for this feeling ranged from purposely not maintaining hiking trails to not being as forthcoming with backcountry information (online). Increasing fees were also noted as a way to discourage backcountry use.

- *I get the feeling sometimes that the park administration is all the happier that there's fewer and fewer people going into the backcountry.*
- *I think so...the park in general seems to be with their increased fees...they seem to be playing it down and almost wanting it to just go back to a wilderness.*
- *They [Park staff] will answer all your questions but I've never had a sense that they actually want people up there...there's been a very strong sense from most of the people that I talk to that use the Park that we're intruders, we don't belong there and the place would be better off if there just weren't any people there 'cause we're spoiling everything.*
- *There's always been this feeling that they dread the spring, the people are coming back.*

Many Park cabin owners weighed in on this point citing some simmering conflicts between themselves and Parks Canada staff.

It is important to note that not all participants felt this way, in fact many felt the opposite.

APPENDIX A**Recruitment Instrument****Client Supplied Sample Intro:**

Hello, May I please speak with _____?

My name is _____ and I am calling from NRG Research on behalf of Parks Canada. When you last visited Prince Albert National Park, you mentioned you might be interested in receiving further communications from the park and Parks Canada. We would like to get your feedback on your use, needs and expectations of Prince Albert National Park to make sure your future visits are even more memorable, as well as gather your views on the various communication pieces Prince Albert National Park provides its visitors. We will be conducting focus group meetings with recent visitors to Prince Albert National Park on March 19 & 22, 2007. These meetings include 8 to 10 visitors to Prince Albert National Park, like yourself, and the group is led by a moderator. The group lasts about two hours and you will be paid \$50 for your time.

Screeners 1: Would you be interested in participating in one of the focus groups?

Yes – **[CONTINUE]**

No – **[ASK TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE ELSE IN THE HH THAT MAY BE INTERESTED AND ASK FOR A REFERRAL- SKIP TO REFERRAL SCREENER ON PAGE # 6]**

Screeners 2: Would you be 18 years of age or older?

Yes – **[CONTINUE]**

No – **[ASK TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE ELSE IN THE HH THAT MAY BE INTERESTED AND ASK FOR A REFERRAL- SKIP TO REFERRAL SCREENER ON PAGE # 6]**

We have just a few more questions for you to see which group you should participate in.

1. Do you or a member of your household work in any of the following industries?

Market research	1
Advertising	2
Media	3
Parks Canada	4
Prince Albert National Park	5

[IF YES TO ANY, PLEASE END WITH THANKS AND SKIP TO REFERRAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON PAGE 6]

2. Have you participated in a focus group with Parks Canada in the past 6 months?

Yes 1 **[ASK FOR SOMEONE ELSE IN HH AND A REFERRAL]**
 No 0 **[CONTINUE]**

3. Approximately when did you last visit Prince Albert National Park?

Within last two years **[CONTINUE]**
 Over two years ago **[END WITH THANKS]**

(*Last two years = visited January 1, 2005 till present.)

4. What are the main activities you participate in when visiting the park?

[ONLY READ OPTIONS IF RESPONDENTS CAN'T REMEMBER] [RECORD ALL MENTIONS]

Fishing / angling	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUIT FOR GROUP 1 [GO TO Q5]
Boating / power boating	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUIT FOR GROUP 2 [GO TO Q5]
Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUIT FOR GROUP 2 [GO TO Q5]
Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUIT FOR GROUP 2 [GO TO Q5]
Other activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	GROUPS 8 & 9 [AND SKIP TO Q7]

***IMPORTANT NOTE: IF FISHED AND BOATED, RECRUIT FOR FISHING GROUP. FISHING TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER BOATING AND OTHER MENTIONS.**

[FOR ANGLERS AND BOATERS]

5. When you visited Prince Albert National Park last summer, on which lakes did you fish / boat?

Hanging Hearts Lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUE AT Q7
Kingsmere Lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUE AT Q7
Crean Lake	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUE AT Q7
Other lakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	IF OTHER ACTIVITIES MENTIONED IN Q4- RECRUIT FOR

VISITORS GROUPS 8 OR 9. OTHERWISE END WITH THANKS AND SKIP TO REFERRAL SECTION ON PAGE 6]

***NOTE: TO GET TO KINGSMERE LAKE, VISITORS MUST PORTAGE.**

7. What is your age range? Are you...

18 to 24 years	1	
25 to 35 years	2	
36 to 45 years	3	
46 to 55 years	4	
55 to 64 years		5
65+ years	6	

[FOR GROUPS 8 & 9 PLEASE RECRUIT A MIX OF AGES. THE MIX IS NOT IMPORTANT FOR GROUPS 1 & 2]

8. Gender **[PLEASE RECORD. DO NOT ASK]**

Female	1
Male	2

[FOR GROUPS 8 & 9 PLEASE RECRUIT A MIX OF AGES. THE MIX IS NOT IMPORTANT FOR GROUPS 1 & 2]

ould you be available on: (SEE TIMES AND DATES BELOW)? The focus group will last 2 hours.

APPENDIX B

Moderator's Guide

Schedule

Group guidelines & Introductions - 10 minutes

General Park Usage Patterns – 10 minutes

Drivers for Backcountry Usage – Entire section 35 minutes

- *Lake Visitors – Boating – 5/15 minutes*
- *Crean vs. Kingsmere – 5/10 minutes*
- *Fishers – 5/15 minutes*
- *Hiking - 5/15 minutes*
- *Camping – 5 minutes*

Park Service expectations – Entire section 12 minutes

- *Future Services – 5 minutes*

Environmental Stewardship – 20 minutes

Communications – Entire section 20 minutes

- *Park Brochures – 10 minutes*

Wrap-up - 3 minutes

Interview Guidelines

- Use this document as a guide, it is meant to be a semi-structured discussion with focus group participants
- Ask additional questions for clarification
- It is not necessary to answer the questions in order
- Keep discussion informal and conversational
- Summarize notes, comments and conclusions at the end of the discussion
- Avoid discussion of a general nature. Participants should be talking about themselves, their behaviours and attitudes. They should not be expressing opinions about the general population or others.

Introduction, Guidelines & Warm-Up (10 min)

- Introduce the moderator and WOR
- Introduce assignment and role of the focus group
 - *Parks Canada is the sponsor of these focus groups*
 - *Interested in understanding the impressions and attitudes of users of the park. Specifically want to speak with back country users of Prince Albert national park, such as yourselves.*
 - *Only talking with a few groups of people, thus your observations and opinions are important.*
- Conduct of the discussion
 - *Not all at once, but do not need to wait for me to call on you*
 - *Want to get individual thoughts and opinions—we're not looking for a consensus. Encourage individual group members to participate.*
 - *Respect*
 - *No wrong answers.*
- Audio recording and presence of observers.
 - *Assure participants we are not selling anything; this meeting is strictly for research purposes.*
 - *Colleagues behind the mirror/adjacent room who are observing.*
 - *Confirm that individual responses will be kept confidential. The purpose is not to report on individuals, but instead to get a better understanding of the needs across different types of park users.*
- Roundtable Intros

What I'd like you to do is go around the room and introduce yourself, first name is fine, and tell me what keeps you busy these days—work, family, hobbies.

General Usage Patterns & Characteristics (10 minutes)

1. How frequent do you visit the Prince Albert National Park? When was your last visit? What did you do on your last visit?

How long do you usually stay in the Park? A weekend? Longer?

2. Do you visit multiple areas of the park in one visit? Or do you travel around a fair amount within the Park during a visit? How much?

Do you visit different areas of the Park in a year? Is there any particular reason for that? What is it?

3. Do you visit other parks in the area? Which ones? Are there specific reasons you visit other parks in the area?

4. How likely is it you will be visiting PANP this year? [PROBE WHY IF SOMEONE SAYS NO] Do you think you will visit more often this year compared to last? Why is that?

When you visit the Park again will you stay for a longer time?

Drivers for Backcountry Park Usage (Entire section 35 minutes)

5. When you visit Prince Albert National Park what are you primarily going there to do? What else have you done [LIST ACTIVITIES FLIP CHART]

I want to follow up on the backcountry activities as this will be a focus of what we are talking about this evening.

6. Do you do different backcountry activities or do you primarily go to the Park for one specific activity i.e. to boat on one of the lakes only or hike the trails?

7. Do you participate in these things only at PANP or are there other parks in the area that you can do all this at?

How would you say PANP compares to some of the other parks you have visited? Better? Worse? Same?

Lake Visitors - Boating

8. You mentioned visiting one of the lakes in the PANP. What is it that draws you to the lakes in the Park? [PROMPT WITH], type of fishing able to do, good boating, connection with nature, word of mouth, etc.)

9. For those of you who visit one of the lakes what is the primary purpose of the visit? [IF JUST TO BOAT OR RELAX PROBE] Do you do any fishing? Power boating? Canoeing or kayaking? Camping?

10. Which lakes are you visiting usually? Do you have a favourite? [IF SO] which one? Why is that? [LIST REASONS]

11. Are the lakes busy in terms of other boat traffic? Are certain lakes busier than others? Certain times of the year busier than others?

Do you try to avoid the lakes when you know they are busy?

What about those of you who canoe or kayak on the lakes are there sometimes too many motorized boaters? Is this on certain lakes normally? Which ones? Certain times?

Crean vs. Kingsmere

12. I want to spend a few minutes getting your thoughts about two of the larger lakes in the Park (PROBABLY ALREADY MENTIONED)—Crean and Kingsmere.

Do you prefer one over the other? Why is that?

What is the difference between the two? If you were describing the lakes to someone who did not know them at all what you tell this person? [LIST DIFFERENCES AND DISCUSS] Is one lake for Fishers and one for Boaters?

Is one better for canoeing vs. another? Which one?

Is one lake easier to get? Does this make a difference? One busier than the other?

13. What in particular do you enjoy about boating in the PANP?

14. Has anybody not visited one of the lakes in the Park? Why is that? Any specific reason or concerns [LISTEN FOR weather issues, isolated, too much work, etc.]

Fishing

15. How's the fishing on the lakes? Any lake better than others in terms of fishing? Are you doing any specific kind of fishing [SPORT]? Are you looking for certain species?

Do you practice 'catch 'n release'? Do you have to or is that by choice?

Does the type of fishing you practice change with time of year/season?

16. What is it that you enjoy most about fishing on one of the lakes in PANP? IF NECESS PROMPT WITH]

- Great fishing
- Peacefulness – not crowded
- Set-up: facilities and amenities
- Lot's wildlife
- Natural beauty

Hiking

17. A few of mentioned hiking as something you do when you visit the Park. What trails are you normally using? Do you have a few favourites? Which ones? Why do you like those? What is it about those trails over others?

18. What is that you enjoy most about hiking in PANP?

- Great trails
- Peacefulness – not crowded
- Set-up: facilities and amenities
- Lot's wildlife
- Natural beauty

19. When you are hiking are there certain points along the way you always stop at? Why is that? What is the attraction or reason for stopping there?

20. Anybody hike up to Grey Owl's cabin? What's that like? Tell me about that hike?

Is this a good trail? Would you recommend it? Why or why not?

Camping

21. Any of you camp overnight in the Park, either when fishing, boating or hiking?

[IF NO] Why not? Would you consider camping if there were changes made in terms of how it worked or sites available?

IF YES] What's the experience? Is it easy to camp? Find a spot? Good spots available?

Park Service Expectations (5 minutes)

22. Is PANP meeting your service expectations? How / why / why not? (Prompt: number of toilets / bathrooms, picnic tables)

23. Tell me what can the Park do better? What areas can they improve? Is there something missing? [PROBE AND DISCUSS]

Future Service Needs & Improvements (5 minutes)

24. Are there any facilities / signs / trails, etc., that are out of date / need to be renovated / upgraded? [DISCUSS AND LIST]

25. Any suggestions for improvements? Why should these things be upgraded (are they safety hazards? For aesthetics for tourists?)

Do you have any suggestions for new facilities / services / etc.? What?

Environmental Attitudes, Perceptions & Conscientiousness (20 minutes)

I am going to introduce another topic. I want to get your thoughts regarding the environment and different environmental issues.

26. How important is the state of Canada's environment to you? Is the issue top of mind?
Why / why not?

Would you say you are more concerned about the environment than your neighbour or the average person in your community?

27. What does being 'environmentally friendly' mean to you? What do you personally do to give action to this phrase? [RECYCLING, DRIVE A SMALL CAR...] Do you consider the environment in the actions you do or your lifestyle choices?

Do you encourage others to be environmentally friendly? [IF NO] why not?

28. Do you consider the environment when you visit a park, for example, Prince Albert National Park? Why / why not?

29. What do you take into account in terms of the environment when visiting a park? [LIST & PROBE WITH]

- Avoid harassing wildlife
- Do you take your garbage with you / watch you do not litter? Will you take it with you right out of the park
- We spoke earlier of catch 'n release. Is concern for the environment a reason for this?
- Noise pollution from boating
- Limit the operation of the motor
- Trampling of grass or underbrush off the beaten paths

30. Do you consider your actions / one's actions when deciding what activities to do, such as boating, hiking or fishing? Would you choose not to do certain activities out of respect for the environment?

Would you ever consider not using the Park to preserve its natural environment?

31. My last question on this is, are you more environmentally conscientious at PANP compared to other parks? [IF YES] Why?

Communications, Information & Literature (10 minutes)

32. Does PANP provide you with enough information to have a pleasurable visit? What does PANP provide? Is PANP providing too much / not enough / right amount / right type / not right type of information?
33. What information do you expect / want from PANP when you visit? Should you receive these messages each time you visit? Should there be specific communication tools for first time visitors versus repeat visitors? What? Why?
34. Do first-time visitors / novices have different communication needs than regular visitors (*based on frequency of visits to PANP and frequency practiced the activity – hiking, fishing, boating*)? What are they?
- Should more basic safety information be available vs. more detailed info depending on the experience level of the visitor? Is this important?
35. Are you interested in learning more about Prince Albert National Park? [IF YES] What information would be of interest and value? (Prompt: level of preparedness, knowledge about park)
- Any suggestions for improvements to literature? How do they want to receive this information?
36. Do you want to be educated on environmental / sustainable development and practices? What environmental themes might be of interest?
- What would be a good way to get you this information? Do you think this would be appreciated by visitors? Is it important?
37. What specific messages would you like to receive about Prince Albert National Park? Why? What is best method of delivering these messages?

Park Brochures (10 minutes)

I have a questions about some specific communication objectives.

38. What is the best method for you to get information on PANP in terms of lake / fish conditions, etc.? (brochure / print available at park, website, direct mail, etc.)

([IF BROCHURE MENTIONED ASK] What information would you like to see and that would be relevant in a brochure? Why this info? Anything else?

Aided – show “**Fishing Regulations Summary** for Prince Albert National Park of Canada” brochure to participants – pass around a copy for each participant in angling groups

Aided – show “**You are in Bear Country**” and “**Routes to Grey Owl’s Cabin**” to hikers – pass around a copy for each participant

Aided – show “Bladebone Wilderness **Canoe Route** – Kingsmere Lake to Nova Lake” and “Bagwa Canoe Route” brochures to boating groups – pass around a copy for each participant

39. Have you seen this brochure before? Did you read it? What did it say? Why didn’t you read it? What kind of information was inside?

What was good / bad / missing from the brochure? How did you receive this brochure? Do you use / read brochures of this nature? Why / why not?

40. Does it provide you with the type of information you would like? What other info would you like to know?

41. Who is the brochure’s target audience? Why? Do you think you are the brochure’s target audience? Why / why not?

42. Is the brochure format the type of medium the best way to provide you with this info (versus online or other formats for the information)? Why / why not?

43. When should this information be given to visitors – once they enter the park / when go to the Visitor’s Centre / when purchase a fishing licence / at the boating launch, etc.?

44. What else could PANP do to make the brochure more relevant to visitors / you?

Wrap – Up

Any last thoughts for me?

Thank you very much for your time. Good night.