

Strathcona Wilderness Institute – 2017 Annual Visitor Report Park Use Permit, Authorization 103312

Strathcona Park Wilderness Centre : Paradise Meadows Trail Head

The Centre was open from June 30th until October 9th in 2017 for a total of 93 days : 1 day in June, 31 days in July, 30 days in August, 24 days in September, 7 days in October.

The Centre was staffed by one student through the Canada Summer Jobs programme from July 6th to August 31st and by a cohort of 18 Volunteers. One director, B. Geddes, oversaw the management of the Centre and coordination of the volunteers.

8919 visitors were recorded at the Centre, with a daily average 87.5 (fewer than last year's 10,500 over 108 days, daily average 97.9). The early part of August saw less than half the number of visitors (perhaps as a result of the smoke from forest fires on the mainland) whereas in September with school field trips, on two days around 300 visitors were recorded . In addition, **160** participants & leaders were involved in the organized events (Hikes & Nature Walks etc - see below). The decline in total numbers involved in these events from last year's 250 was in part due to weather conditions, but our usually popular "Mushroom Identification Hikes" were severely curtailed by lack of specimens (again the result of adverse weather conditions).

Visitor Provenance Summary for 2017

Canada: -- 80.8% of total visitors

US: -- 4.5 % of total visitors (30 States)

Europe: -- 12.4 % of total visitors (19 countries)

Other overseas countries: -- 4.5 % of total visitors (20 countries)

Organized Summer Events

We scheduled a total of 22 guided Hikes on a variety of the Forbidden Plateau trails and Nature Walks mostly around Paradise Meadows, covering every weekend through July and August, plus on two weekends in September and one in October. Three cancellations occurred through uncooperative weather & smoke. We had one presentation at the Wilderness Centre on Bear Awareness. 12 volunteers led these Hikes and Nature walks, as well as two of the SWI Directors. (D. Andiel & A. Maingon)

School Groups

Two school groups formally approached SWI for guided tours, one the Bais Chana Women International Summer Retreat and the second , the grades 6 & 7 from Cumberland Community School. Two volunteers and one director (A. Maingon) were involved. There were several schools (local, Vancouver Island and beyond) touring the Meadows and beyond in September, including a group of 25 Japanese students. This December, as last year, we will have the tots from the Hand-in-Hand Nature Pre-school up at the Centre for a morning in the snow.

Wheelchair & TrailRider Use

Approximately a dozen visitors made use of the Wheelchairs for the Paradise Meadows Boardwalks. The TrailRider was taken out on 3 occasions for day-trips, plus one 3-day/ 2-night camping trip to Kwai Lake. It was also used to carry out an injured hiker on August 15th.

The Buttle Hut beside Park HQ at Buttle Lake

The information Hut at Park HQ at Buttle Lake was open every weekend but one from the Canada Day weekend until Labour day, staffed by 8 volunteers, as well as one Director (J Brocklebank). A total of 1117 visitors were recorded over 25 days (compare 525 for 15 days last year) . The provenance breakdown was Canadian – 74%, US – 8%, Overseas - 18% .

Organized events

New this year were two Nature Walks (on the Shepherds Creek and Wild Ginger trails) and 2 Hikes (Crest Mt and Upper Myra Falls) in the Buttle Lake area of the Park. There were 15 participants on the Nature Walks and 8 on the Hikes, with 4 volunteers as guides.