

Point Young Community Survey: **Summary of Results**

In September 2021 the BC Parks Foundation purchased the Point Young property, a large tract of mostly undeveloped waterfront land on the southeast tip of Lasqueti Island. The property was acquired to provide



recreational access as well as conservation of sensitive habitats. The Point Young Conservation Area (known locally as Young Point) is 103.6 hectares in size, including 5 km of waterfront. This exceptional conservation property contains a wide variety of habitats including rocky shoreline bluffs, unique plant occurrences,

old growth Coastal Douglas-fir forests, wetlands and expansive views of the Salish Sea. At the time it was one of the largest habitat conservation acquisitions in the Salish Sea.

In January 2023 an on-line survey of the Lasqueti community was conducted to ascertain the opinions of local residents regarding future uses of the Point Young Conservation Area (PYCA). The survey is not a representative sample of the Lasqueti population, since respondents self-selected to participate. Based on responses to demographics questions, the results predominantly reflect the opinions of people who are: 1) interested in land use, recreation and conservation on Lasqueti Island, and; 2) who live nearby the PYCA.

The survey was active on-line through a Google Form survey template for two weeks in January 2023 and was advertised on-line through the local Lasqueti Island email list and the local Lasqueti Island Facebook page. Paper copies were also made available at two locations on the island. A total of 119 people responded, 115 completing the on-line survey and 4 completing paper copies. The survey contained a combination of multiple choice, single choice and open-ended, free form questions. Open-ended

responses were categorized by the topics raised by respondents for further analysis. Responses to these questions are useful in that they reflect respondents' priorities and give a more nuanced understanding of attitudes and concerns, but the tallies obtained by categorizing responses are not equivalent to an exhaustive poll on the topics brought up and should not be interpreted as such. For example, the fact that 57 respondents mentioned motorized activities as undesirable likely does not imply that the remaining 59 respondents would welcome motorized activities.

The majority of the people responding to the survey (68%) said they were year-round residents of Lasqueti Island and 56% said they had lived here for more than 25 years. Respondents ranged in age from less than 30 to over 80. Twenty-six percent (26%) said they were 50 to 60 years old while 25% of the respondents placed themselves in the 60 to 70 range. Twenty-two percent (22%) identified themselves as between 70 and 80 years of age. (Figures 22, 23, and 24).

Fifty percent (50%) of those responding said they expect to visit the PYCA once or twice a year while 35% said they would visit perhaps once a month. Most people arrive at PYCA by car (70%) (Figures 2. and 3.).

Summary of Results

Respondents favored conservation and limited development of the PYCA over any type of active recreation activity or development. Conservation, in general, was favored over recreation by a wide margin with 72 respondents favoring Conservation Priority while only 13 favored Recreation Priority. The remaining responses fell between Conservation and Recreation priority (See Figure 4.). Fifty-six (56) respondents highlighted conservation and/or no development as key concerns (Figure 5. and Table 1.). Emphasis on conservation also came through clearly in the responses to other questions. For example, responses to free form questions indicated that respondents triaged recreational activities and improvements by their likely conservation impacts, favoring those that were seen as having the least impact (Figures 5, 6, and 7). In response to the free form question about desirable improvements, 49 respondents favored trails, 14 wanted interpretative signage while 13 respondents rejected all types of improvements as generally undesirable. This was the third-most-common response to this question (Figure 8. and Table 4.). When respondents were asked if there were any other management actions they would like to see

implemented the majority favored no other actions and leave the PYCA alone. Only five people favored keeping human structures (Figure 21 and Table 6.). This type of response (“leave alone”, “no improvements”, and “do nothing”) was noted in several of the free form questions (see below).

Nonetheless, access to the PYCA for low-impact recreation was important to many respondents. Respondents clearly did not support the idea of excluding recreational use altogether (Figure 17). Just under 75% mentioned hiking or walking as activities that should be encouraged, (Figure 6, Table 2) just under half (49) would like to see a limited maintained trail system established (See Figure 8 Table 4.). Other recreational activities frequently mentioned as desirable and viewed predominantly as consistent with low-impact recreation included paddling (16), and activities that would typically occur in combination with walks or hikes, such as wildlife viewing, picnic, and forest bathing (Figure 6 and table 2.).



In contrast, motorized activities of any kind were frequently mentioned as human activities respondents wished to see discouraged at PYCA (57 mentions, see Figure 7 and Table 3.). After motorized activities, camping topped the list of activities respondents wanted to see discouraged with 46 respondents wanting to see camping discouraged (Figure 7 and Table 3.). Notably, there were only 15 mentions in favor of camping in a previous question (Figure 6. and Table 2.) Long-form responses indicated fire risk as a key motive for concerns around camping (mentioned in 22 responses). Bike use was less on respondents’ radar than camping or motorized access, but also predominantly seen as negative (12 vs 4 mentions; refer to Figures 6, 7 and Tables 2 and 3.).

Respondents indicated a significant personal identification with the PYCA and wished to see more of Lasqueti conserved. When respondents were asked to choose all the ways they are connected to the PYCA 92 people said they felt that more of Lasqueti Island needs to be protected from development and 82 people said they have a deep emotional connection to the Lasqueti landscape (See Figure 1).

Regarding respondent's conservation priorities for Young Point, there was strong support for protecting habitat for rare or endangered species (Figure 11), and for protection of cultural sites (Figure 12). Respondents were somewhat supportive of restoring impacted areas to a previous state (Figure 9) and planting species and other measures to adapt to climate change (Figure 10).

There was limited support for: education and signage (Figure 14); removal of buildings or other settler era structures (Figure 15.) and; having an on-site warden or park ambassador (Figure 18.).



Respondents were more favorably inclined to support limiting trails and human uses to less sensitive areas of the PYCA (Figure 16), establishing fenced enclosures to encourage native species (Figure 19), and removal of invasive species (Figure 20).

Apart from the desire to limit/minimize environmental impacts, other issues brought up in free form comments included: noise pollution, squatting, impacts of nuisance behavior on fellow visitors and impacts of off-island tourism (Figure 25, Table 7.).

Notably, there was a substantial group of respondents that favors a hands-off approach to management. Twenty-two (22) people preferred to keep the PYCA undeveloped (Figure 5, Table 1.) A total of 14 “leave it alone” type responses were generated by the question “Do you have any other conservation priorities” (Figure 13, Table 5). Thirteen respondents (13) felt that no improvements were necessary (Figure 8, Table 4), and in answer to the question, “Are there any other management actions you would like to see implemented?”, 6 respondents said leave it alone (Figure 21, Table 6).

Conclusions

Based on the survey results, several topics emerged around which there was largely agreement. Conservation of the PYCA is a clear priority for respondents, but they do not wish restricting recreational use altogether, but rather limit it to low-impact recreation. Hiking was largely seen as consistent with low-impact use, as was paddling, though mentioned less

frequently. Motorized recreational activities were seen as inconsistent with low-impact use. There was clear support for protecting habitat for rare or endangered species and for protection of cultural sites, as well as restricting trails and human uses to less sensitive areas of the PYCA and establishing fenced exclosures to encourage native species. Invasive species removal was seen as important to many people. Significantly, a number of free form responses, from four different questions, stated the wish to see the PYCA just left alone and presumably little or no management activity should occur. Though the PYCA includes 5 km of salt water frontage water-oriented activities were not mentioned as important to respondents. However, paddling was listed as the third most desirable human activity respondents wished to see encouraged at PYCA. Marine access was barely mentioned in the free form questions, and swimming was the seventh listed activity wished to see encouraged. The results were similar for biking activity.

Camping was an important consideration for many respondents, though it drew mixed responses. Many respondents wished to see camping discouraged at PYCA, likely due to concern about campfires and increased visitor impact on local services. However, a smaller number of respondents saw camping as consistent with low-impact recreation and emphasized the current lack of camping facilities on the island as a negative.

Responses provide little guidance on existing structures. Opinion was divided about retention or removal of buildings and other settler era development, though it may be noteworthy that apart from than trails there was limited support for providing recreational structures such as picnic shelters, outhouses, or other improvements such as educational interpretive signage.

The question of an on-site park ambassador or other type of formal staffing at PYCA received mixed responses, with the question ranking low on the list of improvements desired while eliciting a wide range of results for and against staffing when the question was asked directly.

Attachments:

- Complete Results 02212023
- Text tables