



Grey Sauble
CONSERVATION

INGLIS FALLS CONSERVATION AREA VISITOR SUMMARY

April 2021



PROTECT. RESPECT. CONNECT.

237897 Inglis Falls Road, Owen Sound ON, N4K 5N6

519-376-3076

www.greysauble.on.ca

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of number of people visiting Inglis Falls Conservation Area and their thoughts on the current state of the property and ideas for the future. Data on property visitation is a combination of gatehouse tally records and data collection by TRAFx counters. A public survey was available on GSCA’s website and promoted through social media between April and August 2018 to gain feedback from the public on their visit and what they value at Inglis Falls Conservation Area. In total, 21 people responded to the survey. All of the postal codes provided started with N4K, N0H, N0G, or N4L (local). 11 of the participants were ages 45-64, 8 were ages 65-74 and 1 was 25-34. 11 were female, 6 were male. This information was voluntary. Additionally, letters were sent to neighbours within a 120 km radius of Inglis Falls Conservation Area as well as partners and stakeholders. The letter requested input on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the property. This information will be used to guide the initial draft of the Inglis Falls Management Plan, with additional public consultations taking place throughout the planning process.

Part 1: Visitor Numbers

Information on the number of visitors has been collected by gatehouse staff from May-October since 2004 (with a gap from 2007-2010). This information in Figure 1 indicates that 2004 was the busiest over the 11 years where there is gatehouse data available.

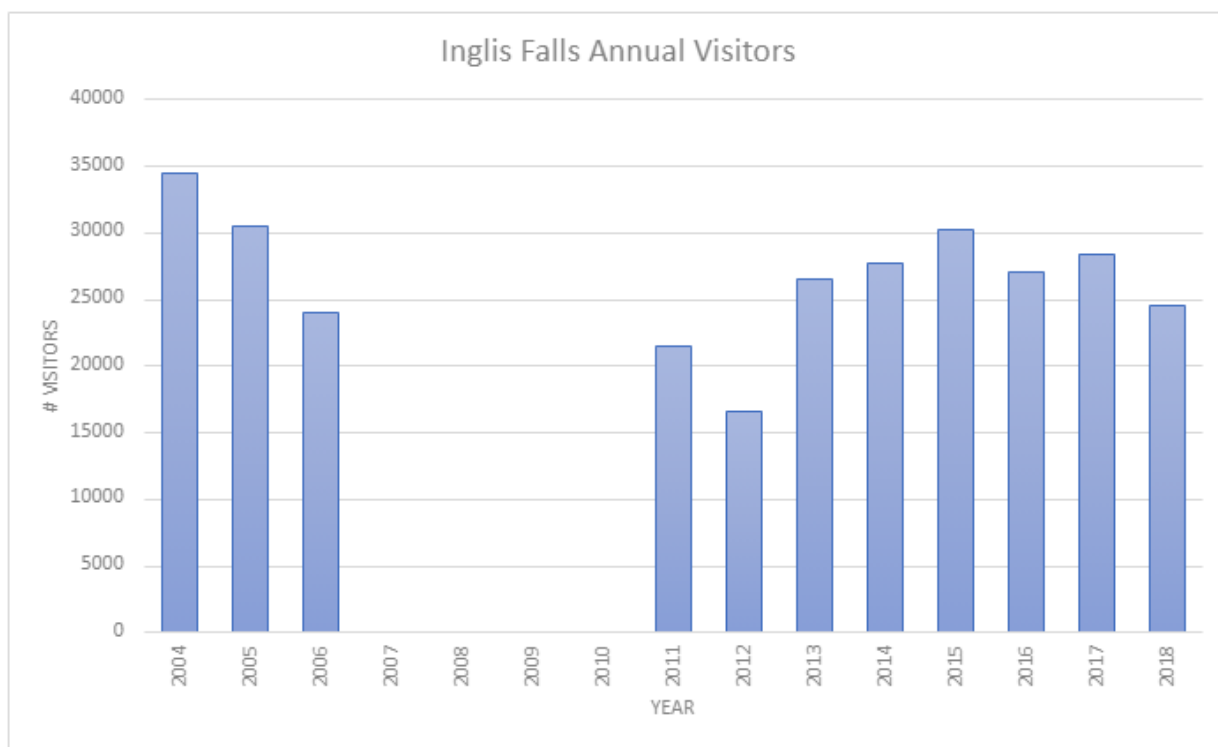


Figure 1. Inglis Falls Annual Visitors 2004-2018, Gatehouse Records

In 2019, trail and car counters were installed throughout the property (Figure 2). This data is shown in Figure 3. In the Arboretum section of the property, there is a car counter and two trail counters and at the top of Inglis Falls, there is one car counter and one trail counter (Figure 3). This information is very helpful for us to understand the number of visitors and the difference

between the Arboretum section versus the Falls section of the property. This also showcases that many visitors are just staying to see Inglis Falls and not necessarily hiking the property. This data provides an estimate of 85,158 visitors to Inglis Falls in 2019, however this number is likely underestimated. It is important to note that the car counter at the Administration Centre is skewed due to staff.

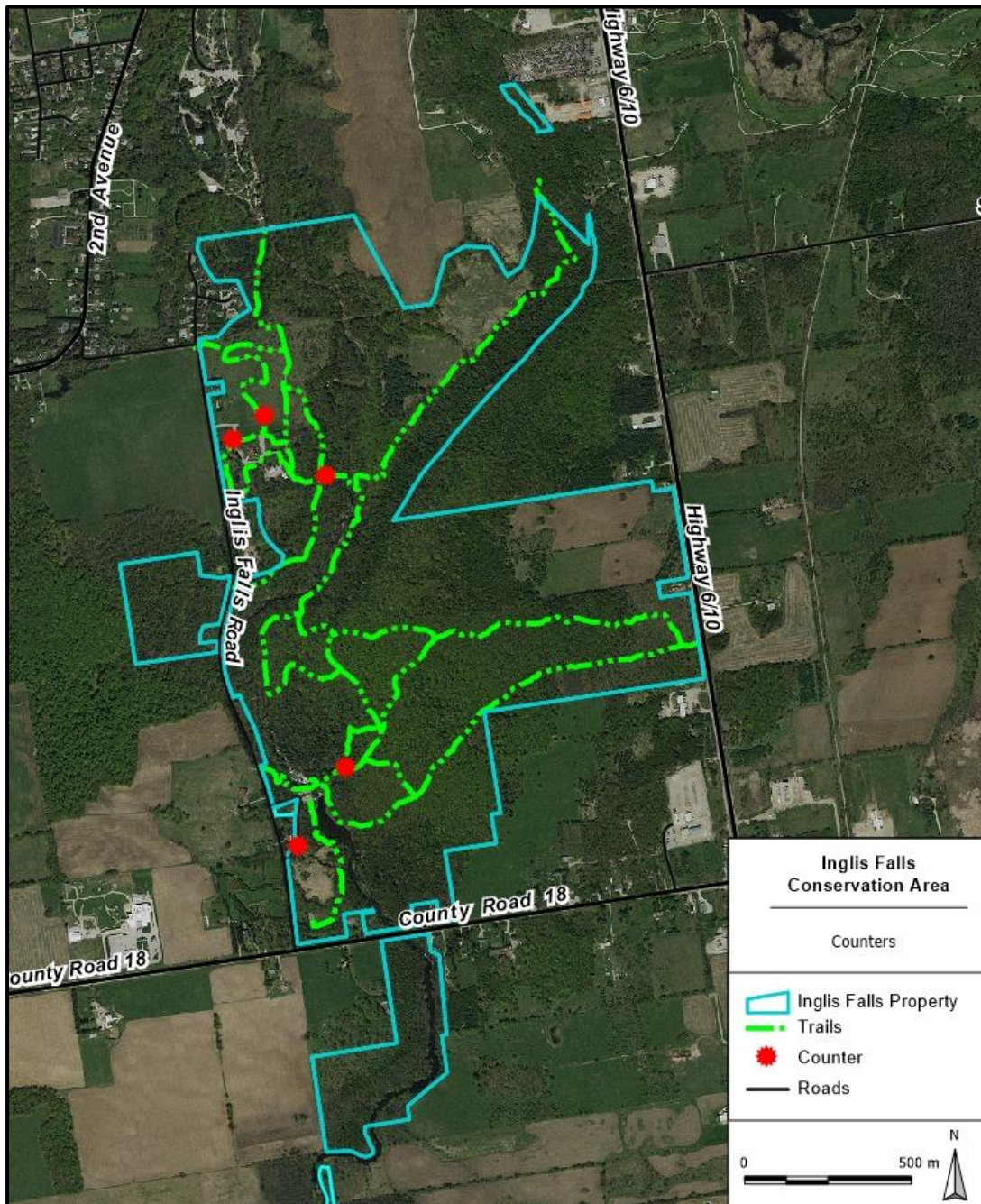


Figure 2. Counter Locations at Inglis Falls Conservation Area

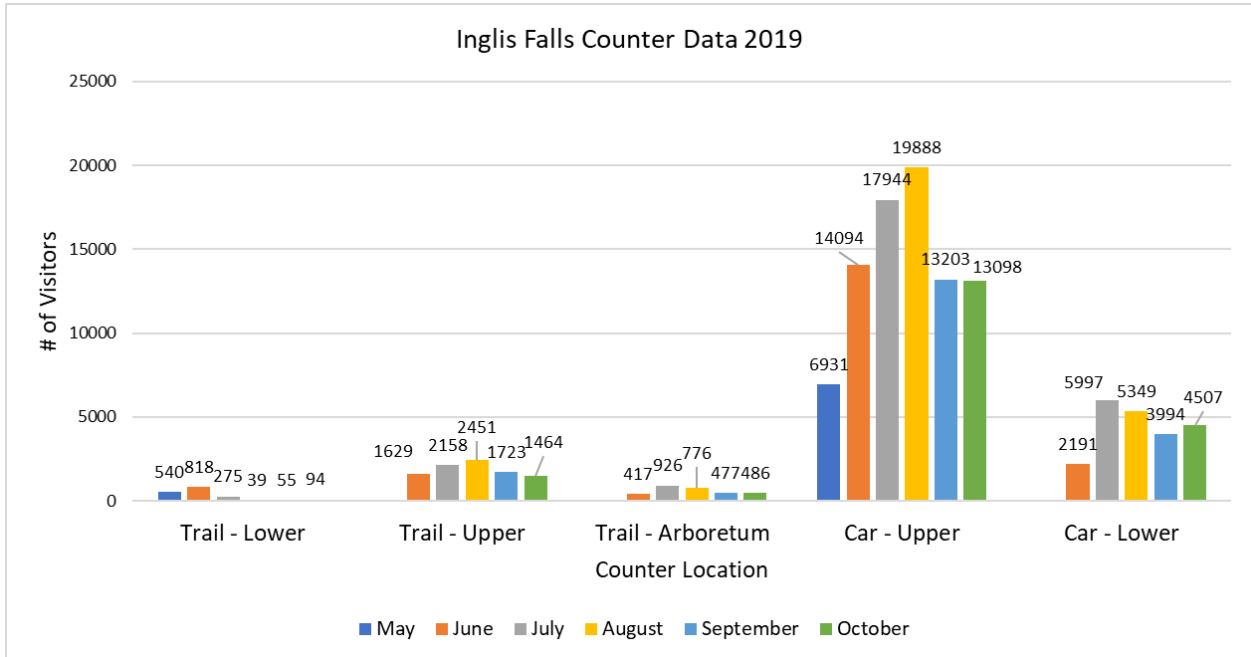


Figure 3. Inglis Falls Counter Data, 2019

Unfortunately, the counters were not collecting data in 2020, which was the busiest year for property use. As a result of the pandemic, gate staff were not collecting payments or information, so the only information available as a rough estimate is MacKay Pay parking transactions and revenue. Figure 4 shows the number of transactions by month, which totals 18,903. If we assume there is on average 2.7 people per car, this would be a visitation of 51,038 people. If we assume parking compliance was 30% that would mean that there were 169,956 visitors in 2020, which is probably a more accurate estimate.

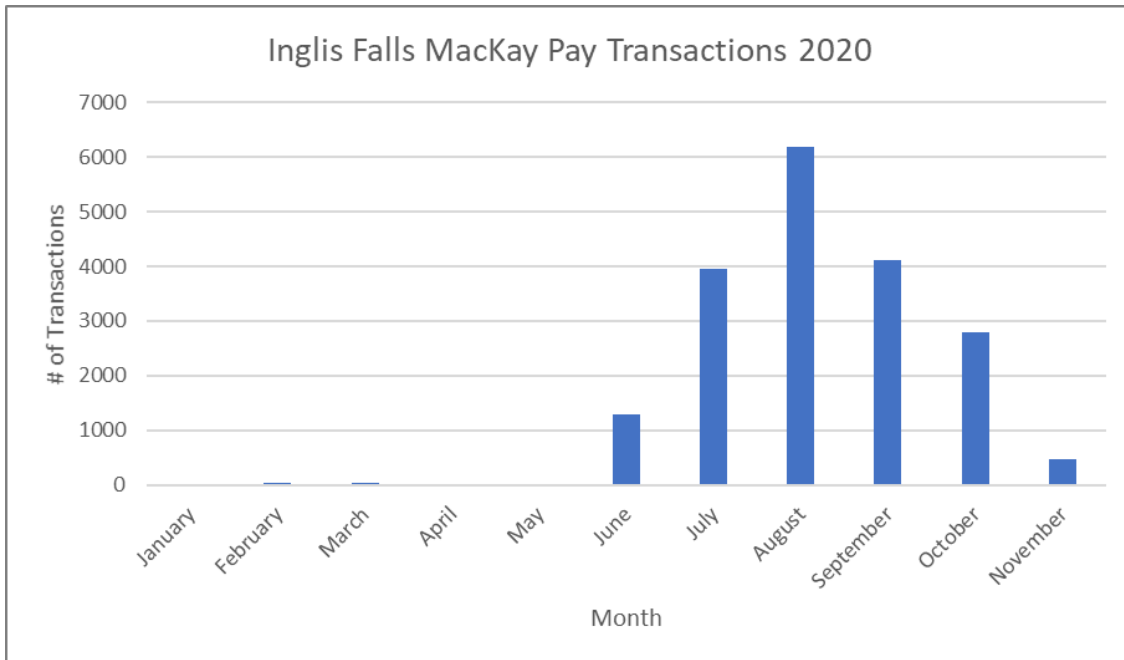


Figure 4. MacKay Pay Parking Transactions for Inglis Falls, 2020.

Part 2: Survey Results

The Visitor and their Visit

The most popular month to visit Inglis Falls was July and August, with 100% of survey participants having visited Inglis Falls before. 38% of survey participants visit Inglis Falls weekly. A large majority of responses were from the Thursday morning walking group. 62% of people stated they typically visit for 1-2 hours at a time and mornings were the most popular time to visit, with 9 people selecting “early morning” and 4 people “late morning”. The number of people in a group varied. The results are as follows: 1 person in a group (1), 2-3 in a group (6), 4-6 in a group (2), 7+ (7). The category of 7+ was likely influenced by the Thursday morning walking group. The majority of survey participants do not buy a season pass. Of those that do buy one, the main reason was to support GSCA.



Figure 5. Visitation by Month

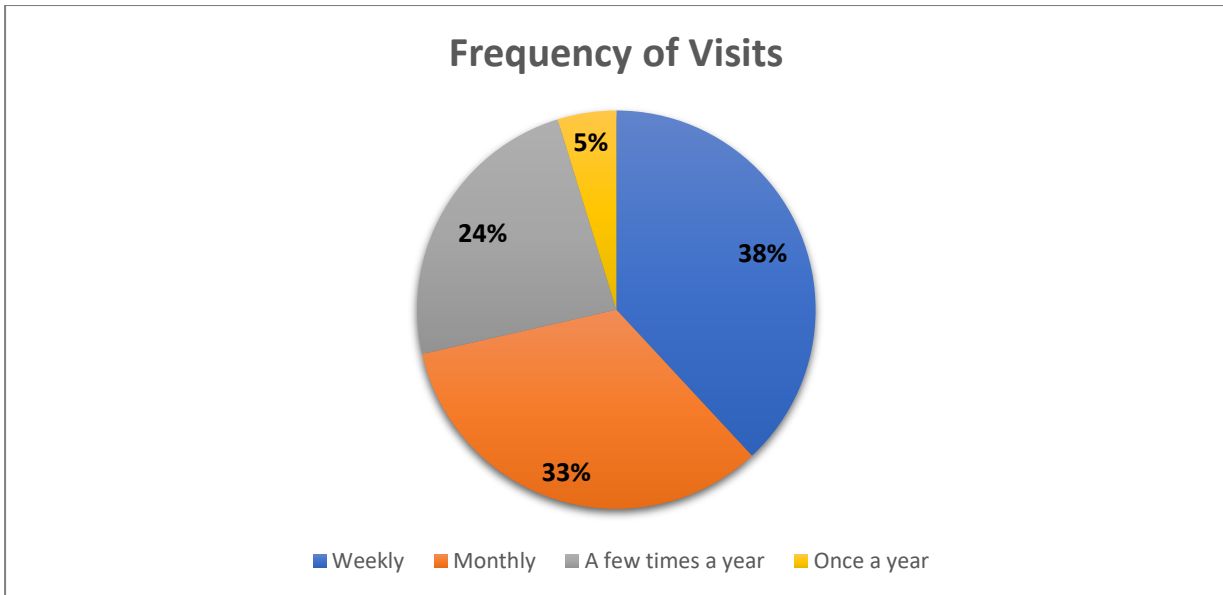


Figure 6. Frequency of Visits

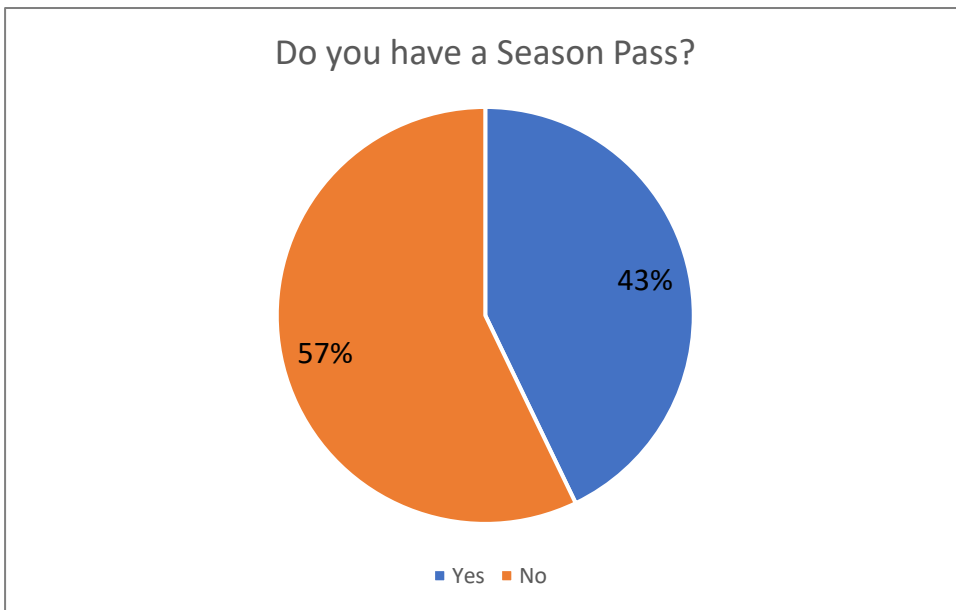


Figure 7. Season Pass Membership

The number one reason survey participants were visiting Inglis Falls was for the trails, and for recreational purposes. The top two activities selected were hiking/walking/running and snowshoeing. When asked what other activities should be added, self-guided interpretive hikes and wetland boardwalks were the top two answers. It is important to note the bias, as if the survey was presented to visitors on the weekend at Inglis Falls gatehouse, the majority of responses would be to see the waterfall. Just based on this response, it is evident that most survey participants were local.

Table 1. Reason for Visit

Reason for Visit	# of Responses
Trails	10
Waterfall	3
Spend time with others	3
Recreational	8
Enjoy nature and scenery	5
Volunteering at native tree nursery	1
Grey County Gardeners Plant Sale, GSCA Board meetings, Arboretum	1
Participated in an organized event	1

Table 2. Typical Activity Participated In

Typical Activity Participated In	# of Responses
Hiking/Walking/ Running	20
Snowshoeing	14
Cross Country Skiing	2
Photography	5
Mountain biking	3
Organized Education Program (OSFN outings)	1
Volunteer events (tree planting, garbage cleanup, BioBlitz)	3
Observe Nature (Flora & Fauna)	1
Picknicking	1
Fishing	1
Volunteering for Arboretum planning, maintenance of Inglis Falls gardens	0

Table 3. Activities that should be added to Inglis Falls Conservation Area

Activities that should be added to Inglis Falls Conservation Area	# of Responses
Mountain biking	4
Fat biking	4
Self-guided interpretive hikes	12
Wetland boardwalks	10
More trails	6
More Signage	1
Food service	1

Geocaching	5
Workshops or guided hikes	7
Trail connecting with the museum	1
Accessible trail network	4
Better wayfinding	1
Additional viewing platforms	3
More benches on trails	1
More garbage cans, or more frequent pickup of garbage	1
Kept as Natural - less infrastructure development	2
Wedding and Event facilities	1
Food Service	1

Feedback on the State of Inglis Falls Conservation Area

Participants were also asked about the current state of the Conservation Area on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent”. These results are shown in Figures 8-12. The overall state and quality of trails were rated as “good”. Most people selected “not very good” for the quality of signage throughout the property, which could include interpretive signage or wayfinding signs. When asked about parking, the majority of people selected “acceptable/ok” for the availability of parking spaces as well as the cost of parking. Once again, it is important to note that many of these responses were from the Thursday morning walking group, who park at the Administration Centre where there is no charge and availability of spaces is higher than if it were a weekend at the top of Inglis Falls.

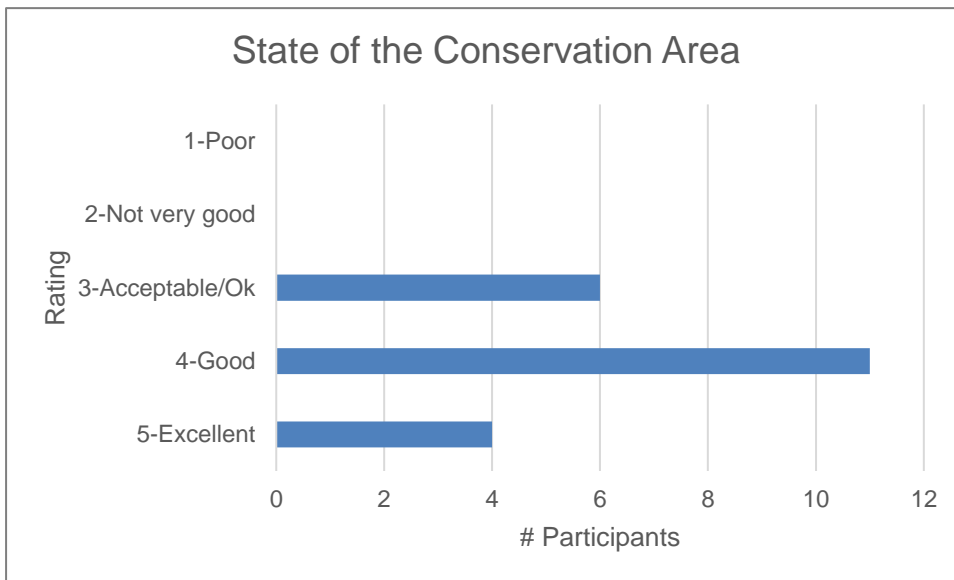


Figure 8. State of the Conservation Area

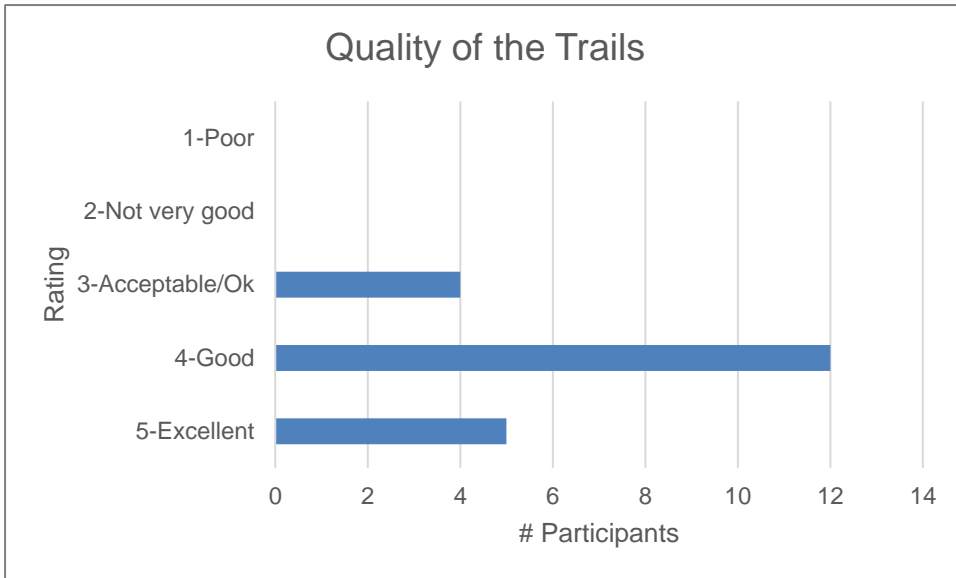


Figure 9. Quality of the Trails

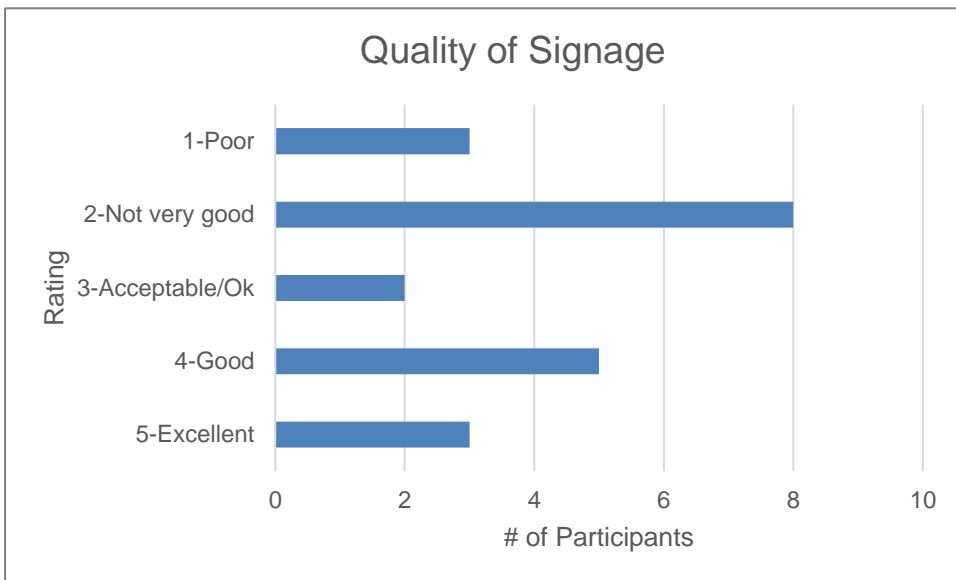


Figure 10. Quality of Signage

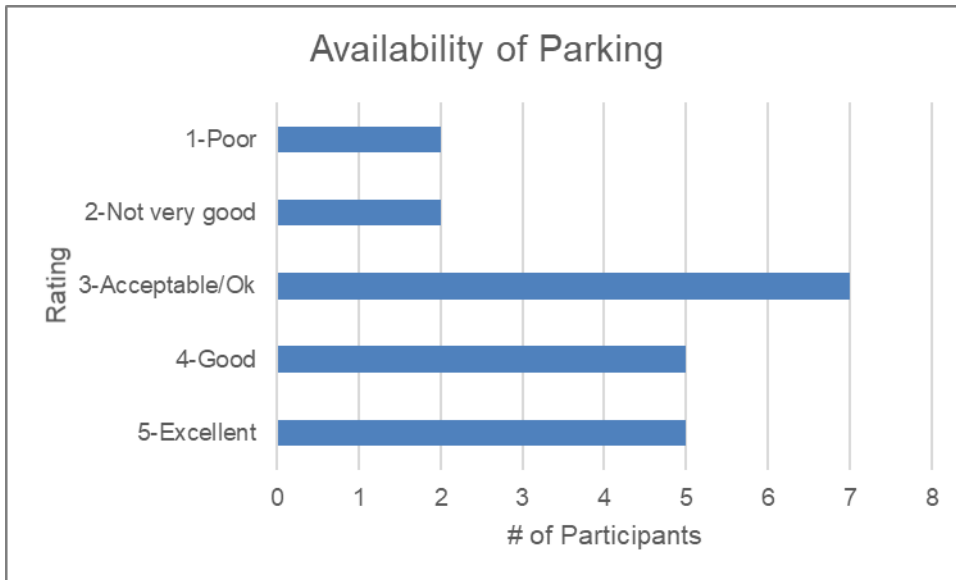


Figure 11. Availability of Parking

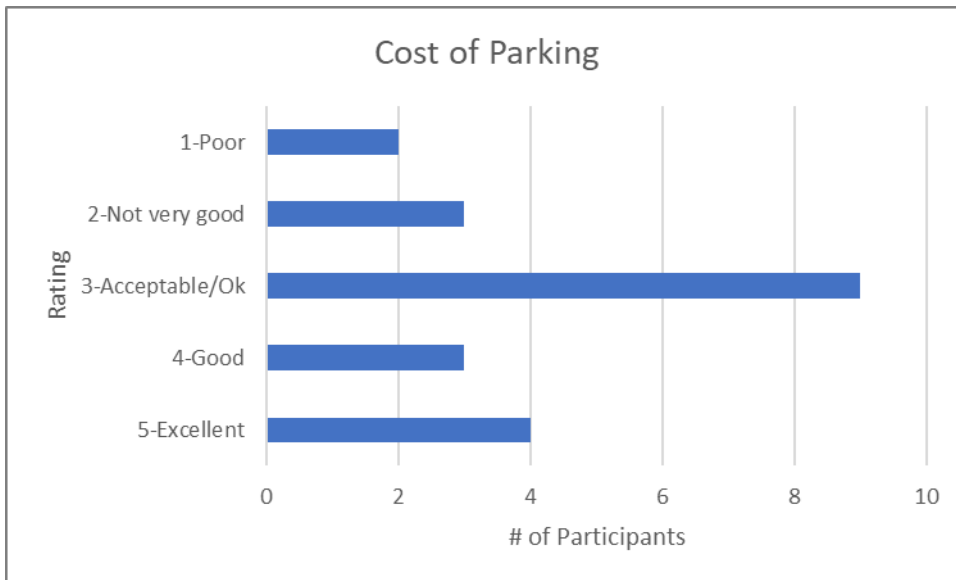


Figure 12. Cost of Parking

Future Recommendations

Based on the below responses (Figures 13-21), it appears that survey participants are not interested in a staff presence at Inglis Falls Conservation Area, as they rated access to friendly staff and weekend programming as “very unimportant”. The categories of accessibility and access to picnic tables and benches were ones that people had very mixed opinions on. Written materials and self-serve experiences such as clear information about rules and safety, visitor guides/maps and interpretive signage were scored primarily as “very important” to the survey participants. Well-kept roads scored as “somewhat important” and access to clean washrooms received mixed reviews as the top two responses were “not important” (6) and “very important” (8).

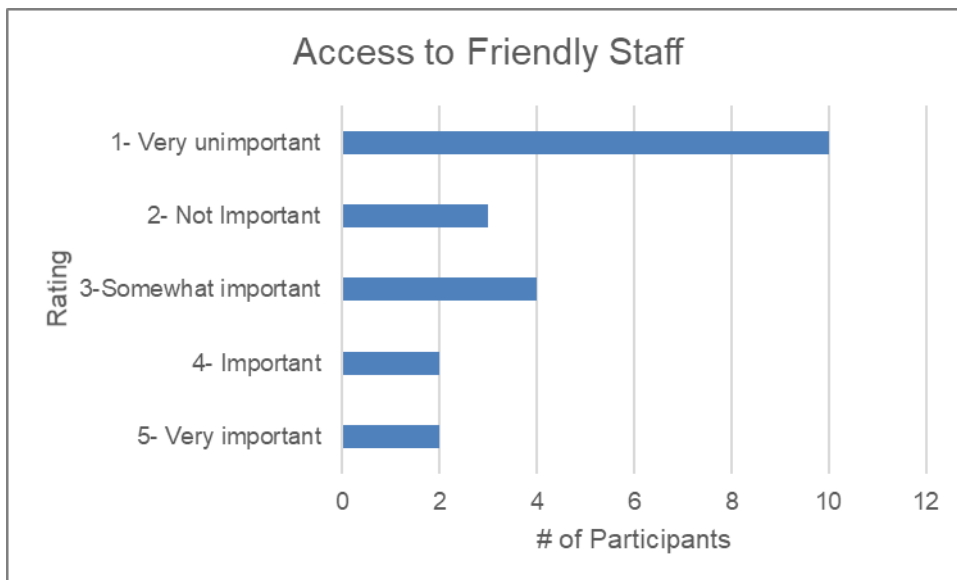


Figure 13. Access to Friendly Staff

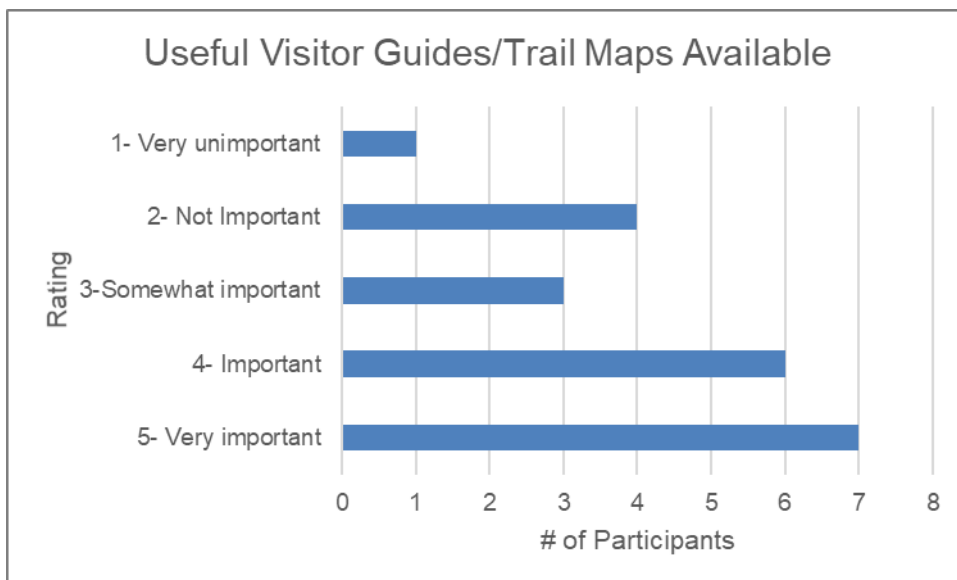


Figure 14. Useful Visitor Guides/Trail Maps Available

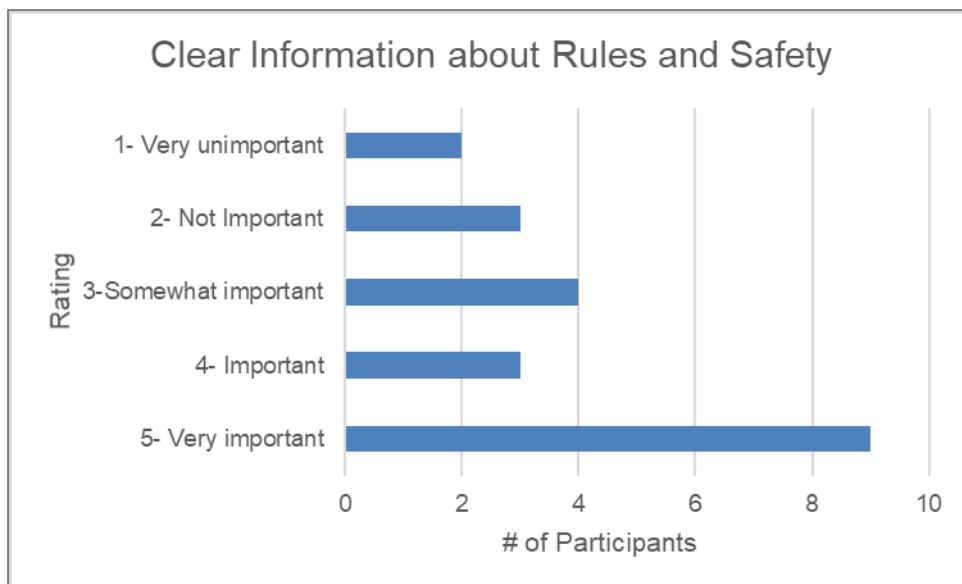


Figure 15. Clear Information about Rules and Safety

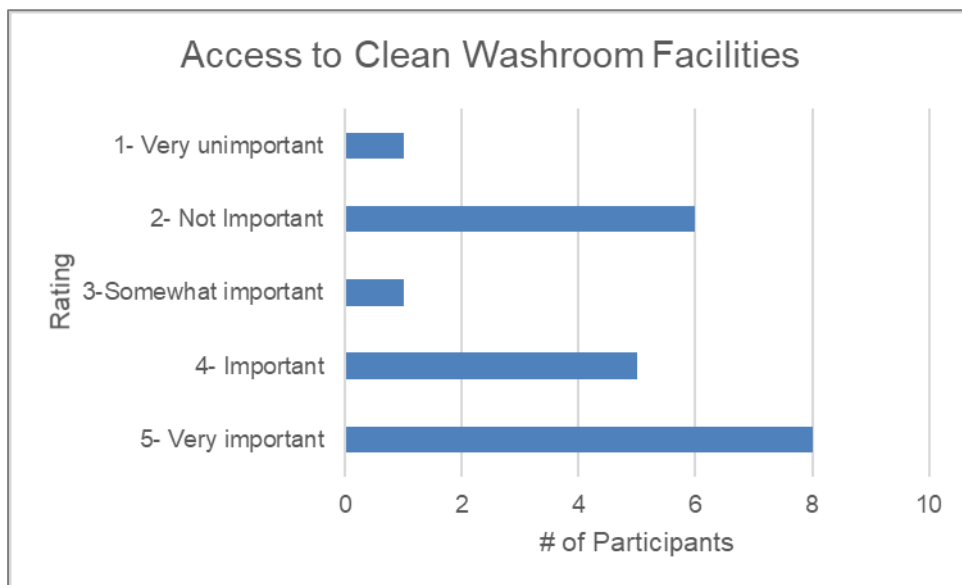


Figure 16. Access to Clean Washroom Facilities

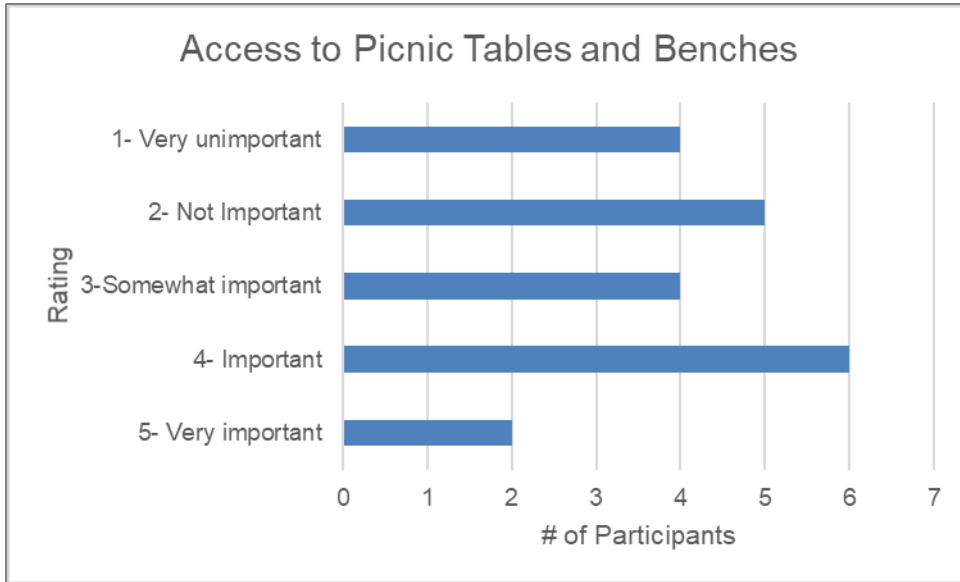


Figure 17. Access to Picnic Tables and Benches

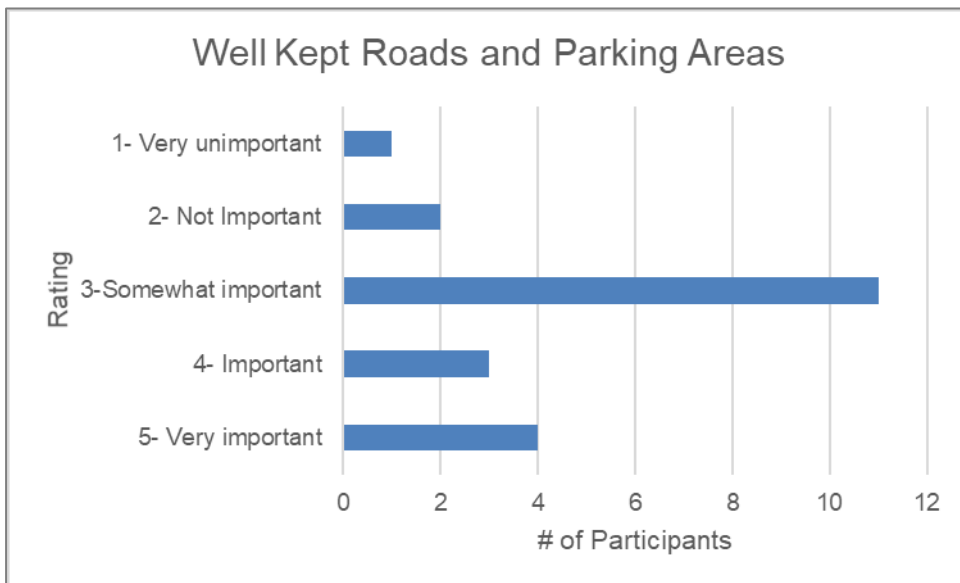


Figure 18. Well Kept Roads and Parking Areas

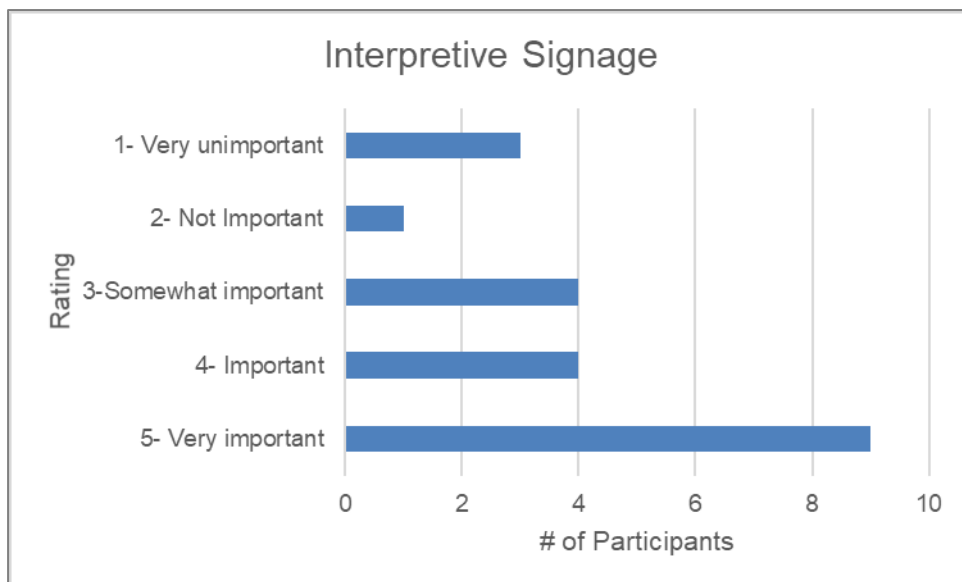


Figure 19. Interpretive Signage

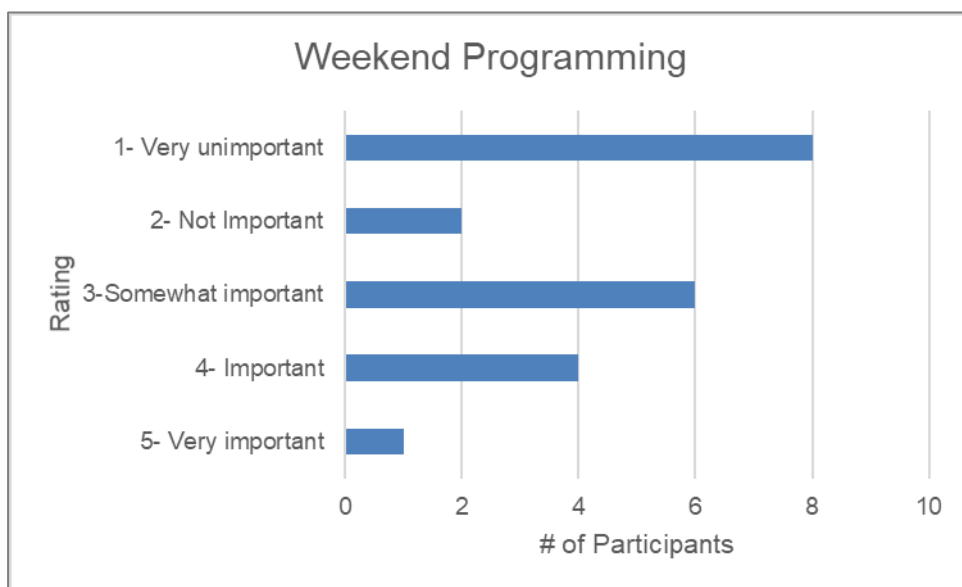


Figure 20. Weekend Programming

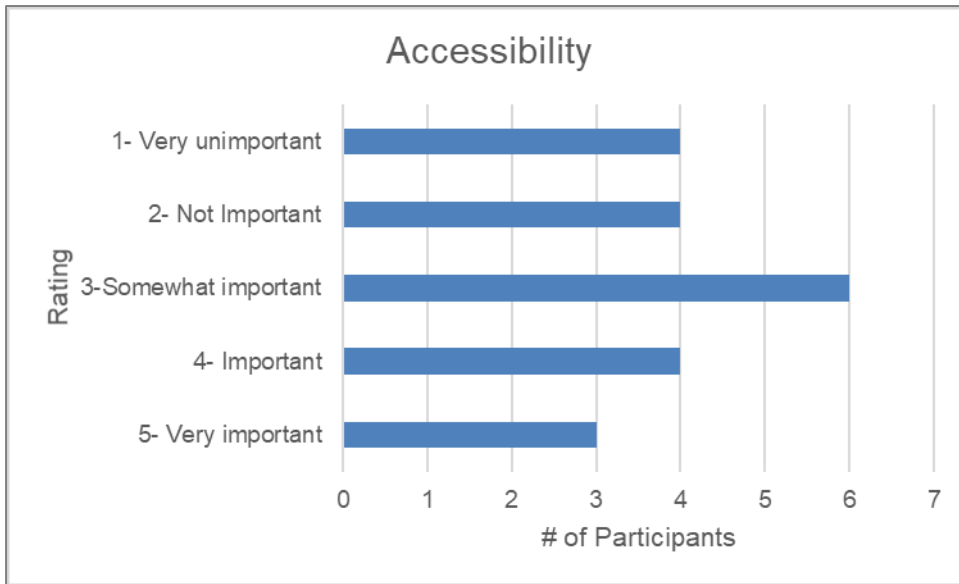


Figure 21. Accessibility

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Written responses were also submitted from neighbours, partners and stakeholders. These results are summarized as a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) by common themes below.

Table 4. SWOT Analysis

Themes	SWOT	# of Mentions
Better management of garbage cans	W	1
Accessibility (incl. trails and more benches)	W,O	4
Keep as natural as possible	S,O	3
Paid gate at entrance (with arm)	O	1
Increase safety around the falls with added fencing, there are too many openings	W,O,T	1
Add platforms with good views so that people aren't going on the other side of the wall	O	2
Events or functions to add revenue	O	3
Improved usage of the old stone mill room at the falls for information, treats, food, drinks, souvenirs	O	1
Manage invasive species	W,T	2
Signage	W,O	4

Trail connecting Grey Roots	O	1
Trail network	S	2
Bathrooms	W	2
Parking overflow is a hazard	W	1
Over development and promotion of the area	T	2
Balance between safety and people using common sense	T	1
Maintain what you have	O	2
Trail/bench maintenance	W	2
IFAA and upgrades to Arboretum	S	1
Operation of tree nursery	S,O	1
Smoke free park	W,O	1

Conclusion

This feedback is very important, but as mentioned throughout the report, there was bias in survey participants. Things that are not as important to locals may be extremely important to visitors that travelled a distance to come, for example washrooms, accessibility, and access to staff, whether through programming or general information. The SWOT analysis provides a lot of value for creating a vision for the property, especially as those participants were neighbours and partners that have a different connection to the property than other single day-use visitors.

This information on visitor numbers and feedback will be considered when drafting the management plan and the public will be able to provide further comments during the public consultation period.