

Prospect Lake Public Access Survey Results

October 25, 2011

Background

Victoria area residents are seeking recreational activities more locally than they did in the past, making Prospect Lake more popular than ever. Functional lake access points are few, and only one location accommodates trailer boat launching. Accommodating heavy day-use and access is becoming increasingly difficult, and increasing power boating is controversial.

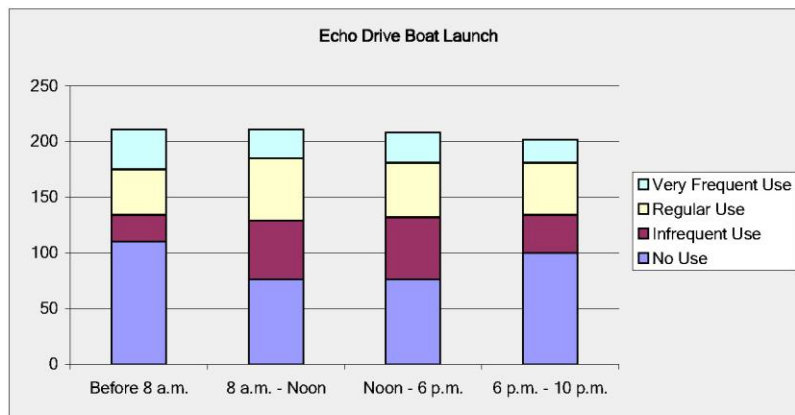
The Prospect Lake and District Community Association formed a Lake Access Committee in June 2011 to examine this issue. A public survey was conducted jointly by Saanich Parks and the Committee, and ran from late July 2011 to September 11, 2011. The survey dealt with general lake use and access, and with the lake's four main access points: Echo Drive Boat Launch, Whitehead Park, Estelline Park and South Prospect Lake Park. The Echo Drive Boat Launch accommodates trailer boat launching, Whitehead Park and Estelline Park accommodate carry-in boat launching, and South Prospect Lake Park is walk-in with no boat launching ability. These are the most functional of all existing lake accesses, and the only ones endorsed by the PLDCA.

Survey Results

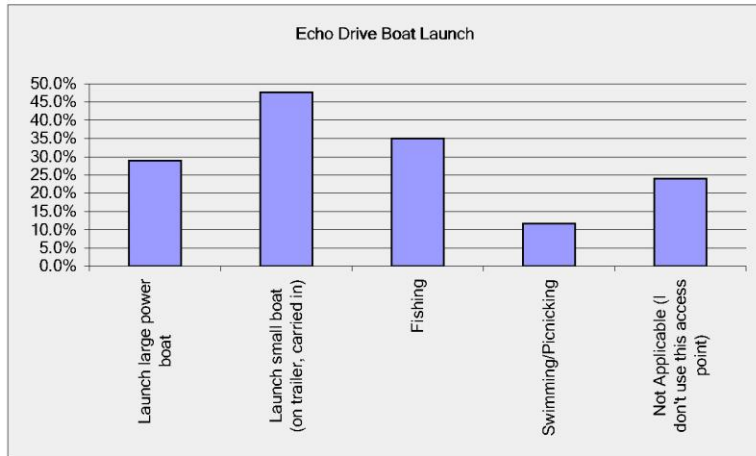
Approximately 280 people completed the survey; 201 from Saanich, 21 from Langford/Colwood, 19 from Victoria, 11 from North Saanich/Saanichton/Brentwood Bay, 6 from Oak Bay, 3 from Sooke, 8 from up-island (Shawnigan Lake, Duncan, Nanaimo, Courtney, Parksville, Port Alberni), 1 from Kamloops and 1 from Yellowknife. The balance are from untraceable postal codes or did not give a code.

Survey results indicate that lake use spikes in the summer, that 94% of lake users are over 26 years old (70% over 40), and 70% are men. In order of popularity the four access points are: Echo Drive, Whitehead Park, South Prospect Lake Park and Estelline Park.

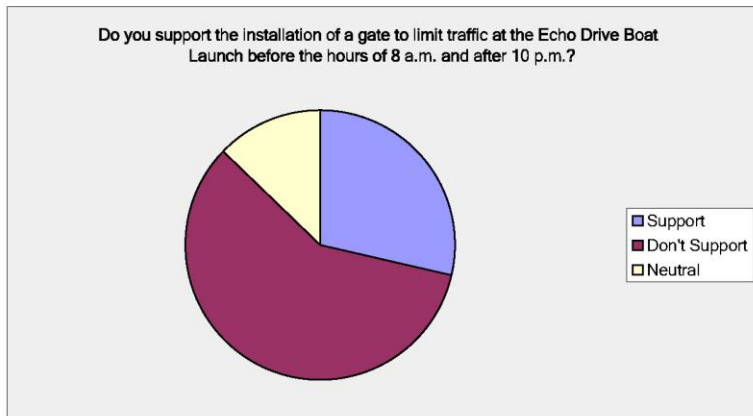
Echo Drive:



Echo Drive is well used throughout the day, with heaviest use occurring before noon.

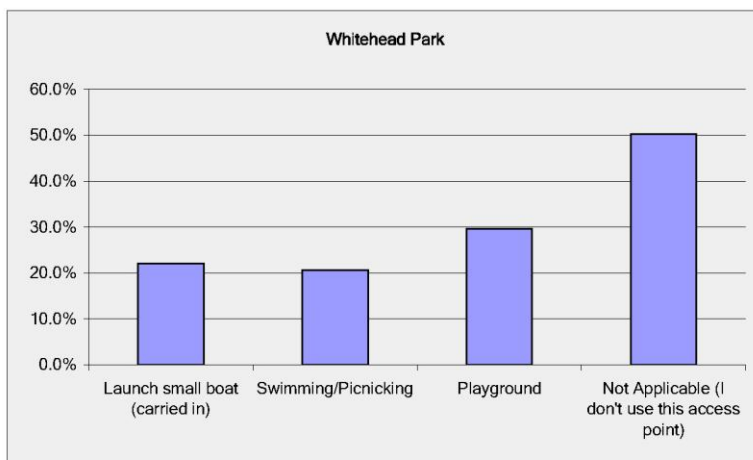


Boat launching and fishing are the main activities at the Echo Drive launch.



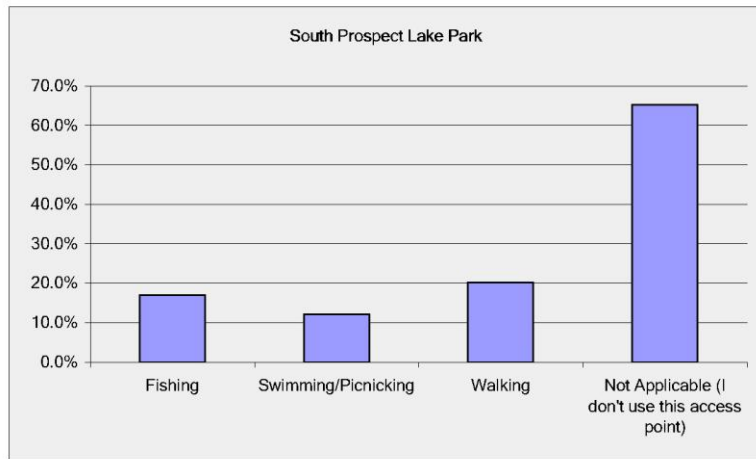
Most oppose gating Echo Drive.

Whitehead Park:



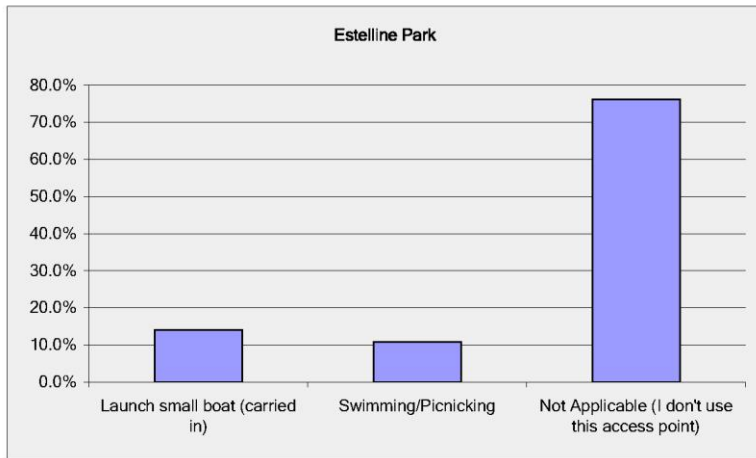
Whitehead Park has some carry-in boat launch and swimming/picnicking use, most use is of the playground.

South Prospect Lake Park:



South Prospect Lake Park is used primarily for fishing, walking and nature appreciation.

Estelline Park:



Estelline Park is used mostly for walking and nature appreciation.

Summary

Due to the lack of reasonably suitable locations for development, functional public access is limited to these four locations for the foreseeable future. The survey reveals strong support for public access, and confirmed that Echo Drive is heavily used by boaters and fishers throughout the day, especially in the summer. Most oppose limiting access to this location. Improvements to the three other lake access locations are necessary to accommodate more users and reduce demand on Echo Drive.

Recommendations

South Prospect Lake Park is a good fishing location, and Parks is currently investigating BC Conservation Foundation funding for a recreational fishing dock, together with improved parking and access at this location. Saanich Parks and the PLDCA to submit a joint proposal for funding. A multi-use dock (including carry-in boat launching) at Whitehead Park would be well used and is indicated in the park's approved Concept Plan. Saanich Parks to pursue 2012 Capital funding for the dock.

These improvements will attract fishers and swimmers to South Prospect Lake Park, and small boats to Whitehead Park, reducing the load on the Echo Drive boat launch.