



CORPORATE REPORT

To: CAO for the Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2019-01-09

From: David Urban, Manager of Outdoor Recreation Planning

File No: 1855-20-Outdoor Rec

Subject: FVRD Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis Update

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Regional and Corporate Services Committee of information pertaining to FVRD Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

PRIORITIES

Support Environmental Stewardship

Priority #5 Outdoor Recreation

Support Environmental Stewardship

Priority #4 Tourism

Foster a Strong & Diverse Economy

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Fraser Valley Regional District hosted a facilitated multi-stakeholder visioning workshop to discuss the future potential of outdoor recreation and tourism in the region. In alignment with the outcomes of this workshop, the priorities outlined by the FVRD Strategic Plan 2014-2018, and with the support of the Board, last year the FVRD was successful in receiving \$282,000 through the Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) program.

The application consisted of two projects, when combined, will comprise the FVRD Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Infrastructure Management Plan. Currently underway is the first component of this plan, which is the the region-wide outdoor recreation economic impact analysis.

As there is no guiding outdoor recreation strategy for the FVRD as a whole, the second component of this plan will be a region-wide outdoor recreation asset management strategy which will begin in early 2019. This strategy will be highly collaborative, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders,

including federal and provincial agencies, local government, First Nations, and user groups from throughout the region. This strategy will focus on the impacts of increased visitation, policies and procedures necessary for long-term sustainability, establishing roles and responsibilities, issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and establishing an operational framework for the ongoing management of the region's recreational assets.

DISCUSSION

The FVRD is currently working on a year-long outdoor recreation economic impact analysis. The goal of this project is to quantify the value of outdoor recreation activities, both motorized and non-motorized, in the region. The information collected will address a critical need, as there is currently no data available specific to this region. This data will inform us about the spending patterns, travel behaviours and characteristics of outdoor recreation users in our region, which will be essential to future planning and infrastructure development. The information collected from the project will help guide FVRD strategic planning, and support both regional Destination Marketing Organization's (DMOs) and Destination BC's planning process for the Fraser Valley.

Peter Larose from Larose Research & Strategy along with Align Consulting, Laura Plant Consulting and input from the project working group has developed the methodology and work plan to undertake this ambitious collection of data. This information will be primarily collected through intercept surveys at several key outdoor recreation locations. As well, an online survey will be done to help round out the data.

Sampling winter activities such as snowmobiling, cross-country/backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing has already begun. As the seasons change, the focus will then shift to sampling spring and summer activities such as:

- motorized trail activities e.g. dirt bike, all-terrain vehicles;
- non-motorized trail activities e.g. hiking, scrambling, rock climbing, trail running, road cycling, mountain biking, horseback riding;
- water activities e.g. canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddleboard, boating;
- sport fishing e.g. guided, salmon, sturgeon, lake based;
- paragliding skydiving, and
- animal viewing e.g. bald eagles;
- hunting;
- First Nation's cultural tourism.

Engaging user groups has begun since they will be critical to the success of this project. These groups know where the various activities occur, so already some winter based groups have been asked to help identify priority survey locations. Also, all these groups can assist in spreading the word about this initiative within their communities.

COST

The SPF funds up to 100% of eligible costs. The FVRD received the full amount requested of \$282,000 for the FVRD Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis and Management Plan.

CONCLUSION

The outdoor recreation economic impact analysis project is advancing on schedule. The sampling of winter activities began in December and the other activities will be surveyed as they start happening.

COMMENTS BY:

Barclay Pitkethly, Director of Regional Programs

Reviewed and supported.

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services

Reviewed and supported.

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed and supported