



Northwest
Territories Industry, Tourism and Investment

CAMPGROUNDS CONSULTATION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION: TERRITORIAL PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS

INTRODUCTION

The NWT has an excellent park system that covers all regions in the territory. It comprises 18 campgrounds, 16-day use areas and 3 visitor centers. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) manages the system under the authority of the *Territorial Parks Act* and *Territorial Parks Regulations*.

ITI is currently soliciting public and stakeholder input on three major topics including park fee increases, extended stay sites, and the online reservation system. Input will be used to help guide changes to the *Territorial Parks Regulations* for the upcoming camping season.

PARKS FEES

The taxpayer heavily subsidizes the Parks System in the NWT. Operational costs have increased significantly since the last increase in Parks fees in 2000. Compared to other jurisdictions, the \$15/20 per night rate for non-powered/ powered sites is among the lowest in Canada. This raises the following questions:

What is a reasonable fee increase given: the levels of service; increasing costs in the NWT? The last fee increase was eight years ago. What is the appropriate charge for:

- Day use?
- Over night?
- Extended Stays?
- Groups of 10 or more?
- For people only wanting to use shower facilities?
- Should there be a senior's discount?

EXTENDED STAY SITES

Historically, 20 seasonal sites have been offered at both Prelude Lake and Reid Lake Territorial Parks in the North Slave Region. The cost for a full season of camping is \$500 and an annual lottery draw determines the site holders. The practice raises a number of issues:

Extended stay sites are only available in two North Slave Parks.

The current per night costs are inequitable with seasonal site holders paying \$4/night vs. \$15/night for daily campsite users. Demand exceeds supply. The lottery system to allocate sites is subject to abuse. Campground capacity is limited. How do we accommodate tourists and casual users, particularly in the peak season?

Stakeholders may want to consider the following questions:

- Should extended stay sites exist only in two North Slave Parks?
- How do we balance: tourism use; local, recreational use; and extended stay use?
- Should extended stay holders: pay a premium; pay the same as other users; receive a discount? If so, how much?
- Should a variety of extended stay options be made available? One month? Two months? More?
- Can extended stays be accommodated with other pricing options? Weekly or monthly rates? Shoulder and peak season pricing?

ON-LINE RESERVATION SYSTEM

An independent contractor operates the On-line Reservation System on a for-profit basis. The system was implemented in three North Slave Parks in 2005 and expanded territorially to include eleven Parks in 2007.

Campers can reserve a campsite on the Internet and pay for bookings using their credit card via a secure network. The current rate to reserve a campsite is \$5/night to a maximum of \$15. This is consistent with rates charged in other jurisdictions.

The system is currently under review; any significant changes will be made in time for next year's camping season.

There are a number of issues associated with the reservations system:

- It is on-line use only.
- Predominant use is by North Slave Parks (over 90% in 2007).
- Predominant use is by local campers (71% of reservations in 2007 were made by people from Yellowknife for Fred Henne alone).
- Low volume compared to systems in other jurisdictions.
- Accessibility issues for those without computers or credit cards.
- Issuance of refunds.
- Perceived as costly.

Stakeholders may want to consider the following questions:

- Given use patterns, should ITI continue to offer the on-line reservation service?
- Should it be a NWT wide user-pay system?
- Should the on-line reservation system be subsidized by government? If not, how should the costs be covered?
- Should any additional features be added to the system?
- Should ITI investigate alternative approaches to reserving a campsite?
- Telephone?
- In-person?

WE WANT YOUR INPUT

INDIVIDUALS CAN COMPLETE A SURVEY CARD AVAILABLE AT ALL CAMPGROUNDS OR ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.ITI.GOV.NT.CA](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca) AND CLICK ON THE PARK USER SURVEY OR E-MAIL YOUR COMMENTS TO [PARKS@GOV.NT.CA](mailto:parks@gov.nt.ca). OR COMPLETE OUR TELEPHONE SURVEY SHOULD YOU BE CONTACTED.

TOURISM INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS CAN COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO YOU OR SEND AN E-MAIL WITH YOUR COMMENTS TO [PARKS@GOV.NT.CA](mailto:parks@gov.nt.ca).

ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE INVITED TO MEET WITH REGIONAL ITI STAFF FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS.