

DRAFT  
Recreational  
Facilities Study:  
Summary Report

# Land Conservation and Resource Strategy



October 2024

## BACKGROUND

Provincial regulations require MVCA to plan and develop its properties while considering the lands, programs and services available from other organizations within our jurisdiction.

*...how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,*

- i. augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction, and*
- ii. integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.*

Section 10. (1) 3. of O. Reg. 686/21

This study was carried out to answer the following questions:

- What walking/hiking, camping, and boat launch facilities are available in the watershed?
- What amenities do those sites provide?
- Which properties are getting used the most?
- Are the popular facilities meeting the needs of the community?
- What do people value about those sites?
- Are more conservation area “type” facilities needed, and if so what should they focus on?

The study had three components:

1. Desktop review of existing hiking, camping, and boat launch facilities in the watershed.
2. Comparison of current facility availability versus data collected by MVCA in 1982, and Master Plans carried out between 1972 and 1989.
3. Survey of the public regarding their hiking, camping and boat launch use.

The following sections summarize the findings of this study.

NOTE: there are inconsistencies in some data that are being reviewed. The document and analyses will be finalized once data inconsistencies are resolved.

## Recreational Facilities Within MVCA’s Jurisdiction

Tables 1-4 list available facilities and their amenities, as found via a web search in 2024. DRAFT.

<b>Table 1: MVCA Sites</b>	<b>Walking Trail</b>	<b>Parking</b>	<b>Washrooms</b>	<b>Signage</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Camping</b>	<b>Boat Launch</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Dogs Allowed</b>	<b>Picnic Areas</b>	<b>Biking Trail</b>	<b>ATV Trail</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>Lookout</b>	<b>Boardwalk</b>	<b>Canoing</b>	<b>Playground</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Hunting</b>
Mill of Kintail CA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y					Y		
Morris Island CA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y		Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y			
Purdon CA	Y	Y		Y					Y		Y	Y					Y	Y				
Palmerston-Canonto CA	Y	Y	Y	Y													Y					
Carp River CA	Y			Y					Y		Y	Y			Y							
K&P Trail	Y	Y		Y							Y		Y	Y	Y							

<b>Table 2: Land Trust Sites</b>	<b>Walking Trail</b>	<b>Parking</b>	<b>Washrooms</b>	<b>Signage</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Camping</b>	<b>Boat Launch</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Accessible Area</b>	<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Dogs Allowed</b>	<b>Picnic Areas</b>	<b>Biking Trail</b>	<b>ATV Trail</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>Lookout</b>	<b>Boardwalk</b>	<b>Canoing</b>	<b>Playground</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Hunting</b>
Blueberry Mountain	Y	Y	Y								Y	Y					Y					
High Lonesome Nature Reserve	Y	Y																				
Marble Woodlands	Y										Y											
Poole Family Nature Sanctuary	Y			Y																		

<b>Table 3: Linear Trails</b>	<b>Walking Trail</b>	<b>Parking</b>	<b>Washrooms</b>	<b>Signage</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Camping</b>	<b>Boat Launch</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Accessible Area</b>	<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Dogs Allowed</b>	<b>Picnic Areas</b>	<b>Biking Trail</b>	<b>ATV Trail</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>Lookout</b>	<b>Boardwalk</b>	<b>Canoeing</b>	<b>Playground</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Hunting</b>	
Trans Canada Trail - Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail	Y								Y		Y		Y	Y									
Trans Canada Trail - Lanark Link	Y								Y		Y												
Trans Canada Trail - Carleton Place Trailway	Y								Y		Y												
Trans Canada Trail - Ottawa Carleton Trailway	Y										Y												
Trans Canada Trail - Capital Pathway	Y								Y		Y												
Tay Havelock Trail	Y	Y									Y		Y	Y									
Ottawa Valley Rail Trail	Y							Y			Y		Y	Y									
Riverside Trail, Almonte	Y	Y	Y	Y							Y		Y										
Riverwalk Trail, CP	Y	Y	Y								Y												
Riverside Park Trail, CP	Y	Y					Y	Y			Y		Y			Y					Y		

<b>Table 4: Municipal, Provincial &amp; Federal Sites</b>	<b>Walking Trail</b>	<b>Parking</b>	<b>Washrooms</b>	<b>Signage</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Camping</b>	<b>Boat Launch</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Accessible Area</b>	<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Dogs Allowed</b>	<b>Picnic Areas</b>	<b>Biking Trail</b>	<b>ATV Trail</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Fishing</b>	<b>Lookout</b>	<b>Boardwalk</b>	<b>Canoing</b>	<b>Playground</b>	<b>Beach</b>	<b>Hunting</b>
Pinhey's Point	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y			Y	Y										
Carp Hills	Y												Y									Y
Shiela McKee Park	Y	Y									Y							Y			Y	
South March Highlands Conservation Forest	Y	Y		Y							Y		Y									
Kizell Pond Natural Reserve	Y	Y									Y		Y									
NCC Greenbelt	Y																					
Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area/Bird Sanctuary	Y	Y	Y				Y					Y										
Bon Echo Provincial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
Fitzroy Harbour Provincial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y	Y	
Silver Lake Provincial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y	Y	
Sharbot Lake Provincial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y		Y	
Marsh Trail, Silver Lake	Y	Y	Y																			
Roy Brown Park Trail, CP	Y			Y							Y	Y	Y									
North Frontenac Parklands	Y					Y																
Crotch Lake Trail	Y	Y		Y			Y				Y		Y			Y			Y			
Schooner Trail	Y		Y				Y															

## 1982 to 2024 Comparison

Tables 5 provides DRAFT 2024 metrics where data was available.

<b>Table 5: Key Metrics of Recreation Facilities, 2024</b>	<b>Trails (km)</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>	<b>Camping Sites</b>
Mill of Kintail CA	7.55	62	
Morris Island CA	6	73	
Purdon CA	1.655	26	
Palmerston-Canonto CA	4.395	95.7	
Carp River CA	4	32	
K&P Trail CA	40	95	
Blueberry Mountain	4.7	506	
High Lonesome Nature Reserve	8.53	85	
Marble Woodlands	3.7	80	
Poole Family Nature Sanctuary	2	44	
Trans Canada Trail - Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail	28.7		
Trans Canada Trail - Lanark Link	4.2		
Trans Canada Trail - Carleton Place Trailway	6.8		
Trans Canada Trail - Ottawa Carleton Trailway	23.3		
Trans Canada Trail - Capital Pathway (not in watershed)	25.7		
Tay Havelock Trail	22		
Ottawa Valley Rail Trail	62.46		
Riverside Trail, Almonte	7.5		
Riverwalk Trail, CP	1.89		
Riverside Park Trail, CP	0.5		
Pinhey's Point	3.5	33	
Carp Hills	10	1000	
Sheila McKee Park	2	47	
South March Highlands Conservation Forest	15.2	450	
Kizell Pond Natural Reserve	3	19	
NCC Greenbelt	17	862	
Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area/Bird Sanctuary	3	300	
Bon Echo Provincial Park	17	8294	623
Fitzroy Harbour Provincial Park	3	173.1	406
Silver Lake Provincial Park / Marsh Trail,	0.5	48.8	148
Sharbot Lake Provincial Park	1.7	82.0	194
Roy Brown Park Trail, CP	2.1	10.6	
North Frontenac Parklands / Crotch Lake Trail and Schooner Trail	14.2654	tbc	tbc
Torbolton Forest	30	260	
	<b>400.4454</b>	<b>12765.42</b>	<b>1371</b>

## Population Change

The following population assumptions were made to allow for the comparison of current versus historical levels of services:

- 1988 population: 80,000<sup>1</sup>
- 2023 population: 264,000<sup>2</sup>

This represents a population growth rate of approximately 228% over 35 years, or an average of 5% per year.

## DRAFT Analysis

Tables 6-10 compare current facility data against data collected by MVCA in 1982 and for Master Plans completed between 1972 and 1989. For each metric, a service level is provided based upon the estimated population of the watershed at the time the data was collected.

<b>Table 6: Provincial Parks - campsites</b>	<b>Bon Echo</b>	<b>Sharbot Lake</b>	<b>Silver Lake</b>	<b>Fitzroy</b>
1982-1989	530 <sup>3</sup>	185 <sup>4</sup>	170 <sup>5</sup>	251 <sup>5</sup>
2024	623 <sup>6</sup>	194 <sup>7</sup>	148 <sup>8</sup>	406 <sup>9</sup>

Total Campsites 1989 = 1,136 or 70 persons/campsite

Total Campsites 2024 = 1,371 or 192 persons/campsite

<b>Table 7: Provincial Parks - area (ha)</b>	<b>Bon Echo</b>	<b>Sharbot Lake</b>	<b>Silver Lake</b>	<b>Fitzroy</b>	<b>Pinhey's Point</b>
1977-1989	6,644 <sup>3</sup>	68.5 <sup>4</sup>	32 <sup>5</sup>	185 <sup>10</sup>	31 <sup>11</sup>
2024	8,294 <sup>6</sup>	81 <sup>7</sup>	43 <sup>8</sup>	198 <sup>9</sup>	35

Total Ha. Provincial Parks 1989 = 6,960.5 or 11.8 persons/ha.

Total Ha. Provincial Parks 2024 = 8,651 or 30.5 persons/ha.

<sup>1</sup>MVCA Annual General Reports for 1988.

<sup>2</sup> MNR Development and Hazard Policy Branch. Apportionment Data for 2025. August 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Bon Echo Provincial Park Management Planning Background Information & Issues. 1988.

<sup>4</sup> Sharbot Lake Provincial Park Management Plan. November 1988

<sup>5</sup> MVCA Recreation Study, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> Ontario Parks, Bon Echo Provincial Park, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Ontario Parks, Sharbot Lake Provincial Park, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Ontario Parks, Silver Lake Provincial Park, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Parks, Fitzroy Provincial Park, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzroy Provincial Park Management Plan, 1984.

<sup>11</sup> Pinhey Heritage Park Master Plan Study, 1977.

<b>Table 8: Conservation Areas - area (ha)</b>	<b>Mill of Kintail</b>	<b>Morris Island</b>	<b>Purdon</b>	<b>Carp River</b>	<b>Palmerston- Canonto</b>
1979-1986	62	73	26	-	104
2024	62	73	26	32	95.7

Total Ha. Conservation Areas 1989 = 265 or 302 persons/ha.

Total Ha. Conservation Areas 2024 = 289 or 913 persons/ha.

<b>Table 9: Conservation Areas - trails (km)</b>	<b>Mill of Kintail</b>	<b>Morris Island</b>	<b>Purdon</b>	<b>Carp River</b>	<b>Palmerston- Canonto</b>	<b>K&amp;P</b>
1982-1987	7	1.8	1.2	-		
2024	6	6	1.7	4	4	35

Total Km. of CA Trails 1988 = 10 or 8,000 persons/km.

Total Km. of CA Trails 2024 = 56.7 or 4,656 persons/km.

<b>Table 10: Trails in watershed (km)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Snowmobile</b>	<b>Groomed</b>
1982	353	553	353
2024	400		

Total KM of Trails 1982 = 353 or 226 persons/ha.

Total KM of Trails 2024 = 400 or 538 persons/ha.

Existing “Conservation Area-Type” Land in the Watershed, 2024

The following DRAFT estimates are based upon available GIS data for sites with known hiking/walking trails.

<b>Conservation Area-type Lands in Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Ha</b>
Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves	19,543
MVCA	401
MMLT	1,266
Baird Trail	36
Greenbelt and Ottawa Land	2,392
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,638</b>
Watershed size	435,322
% of jurisdiction	5%
<b>2023 Population</b>	<b>264,000</b>
<b>Population/ha.</b>	<b>11 per/ha.</b>



## Recreational Facilities Survey

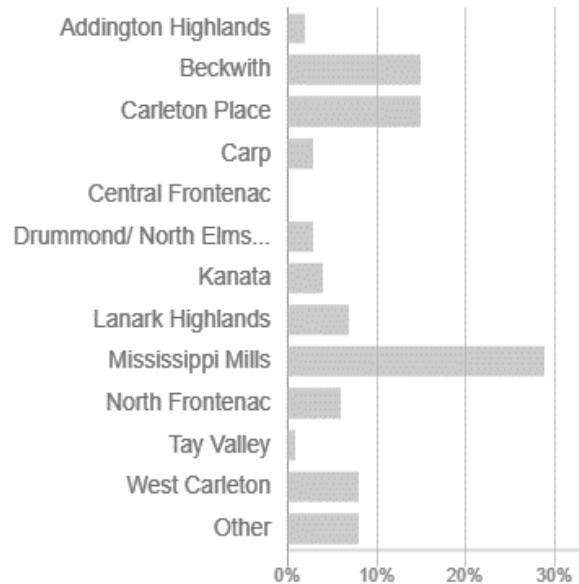
### Overview

MVCA developed and distributed a survey to gain an understanding of the recreational facility needs within the Mississippi River watershed. The survey included a list of 34 local sites and asked questions about individual's use, favourite features and satisfaction.

A total of 198 surveys were completed. Results were analyzed where a minimum of 25 responses were received to a question.

### Who participated?

- 29% were from Mississippi Mills
- 15% were from Carleton Place
- 15% were from Beckwith Township



*1 Survey Demographics Chart*

- 47% were born between 1946-1964 (Boomer),
- 33% were born between 1965-1967 (Gen. X)
- 14% were born between 1980-1994 (Millennial).

## Highlights: Recreational Habits & Needs

Respondents throughout the watershed participate in walking/hiking activities more often than boating/watercraft activities and tent camping. The survey results showed that in the past 5-years:

- 92% of respondents have been walking/hiking
- 82% of respondents have participated in boating/watercraft activities
- 32% of respondents have participated in tent camping

Regarding their usage:

- 87% of respondents do not belong to a club or group that organizes activities.
- 98% have easy access to a car for outdoor recreation activities.

Regarding the need for more facilities:

- 53% of respondents agreed and 35% disagree that more facilities are needed in the watershed to support walking/hiking activities.
- 44% of respondents agree and 41% disagree that more facilities are needed in the watershed to support boating and other watercraft activities.
- 57% of respondents agree and 28% disagree that more facilities are needed in the watershed to support tent camping.

## Comments Received

### Improve accessibility.

- Public washroom facilities needed.
- Increased and updated signage needed.
- Parking access.
- Improved access to trails.
- Seating/Rest Areas.
- Lighting on trails.

### Partner with other organizations.

### Dog Policies.

- There are mixed opinions on dog policies, with some wanting more off-leash areas and others emphasizing the need for dogs to be on-leash for safety.

### Facilities and Maintenance

- More staff/funds required for increased maintenance (hazard removal)

### Recreational Opportunities

- More walking/hiking trails.
- Extend and improve current trails.
- Need for boat launches/access points for kayaks/canoes.
- Better upkeep of the current launches

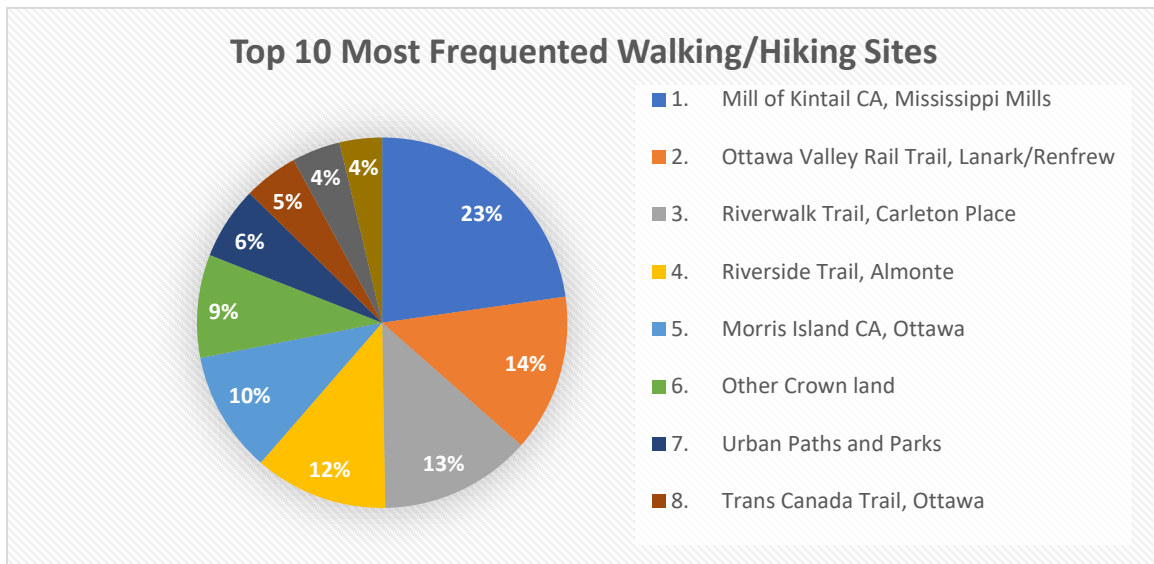
### Non-motorized craft/activities with low impact on the environment.

### Tent camping facilities need better upkeep

- Litter/Garbage issues.

## Highlights: Walking/Hiking Sites

The most popular sites for walking/hiking activities were the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area, the Riverwalk Trail in Carleton Place, the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail and Riverside Trail in Almonte.



The sites most frequently identified as a “top-three most frequented” property for walking and hiking activities were:

1. Mill of Kintail Conservation Area
2. Ottawa Valley Rail Trail
3. Riverwalk Trail in Carleton Place
4. Riverside Trail in Almonte
5. Morris Island Conservation Area
6. Crown land
7. Urban paths/parks.

The majority of respondents use these sites 2-6 times per year with the exception of the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail (OVRT) and Urban Paths/Parks that are used multiple times per week.

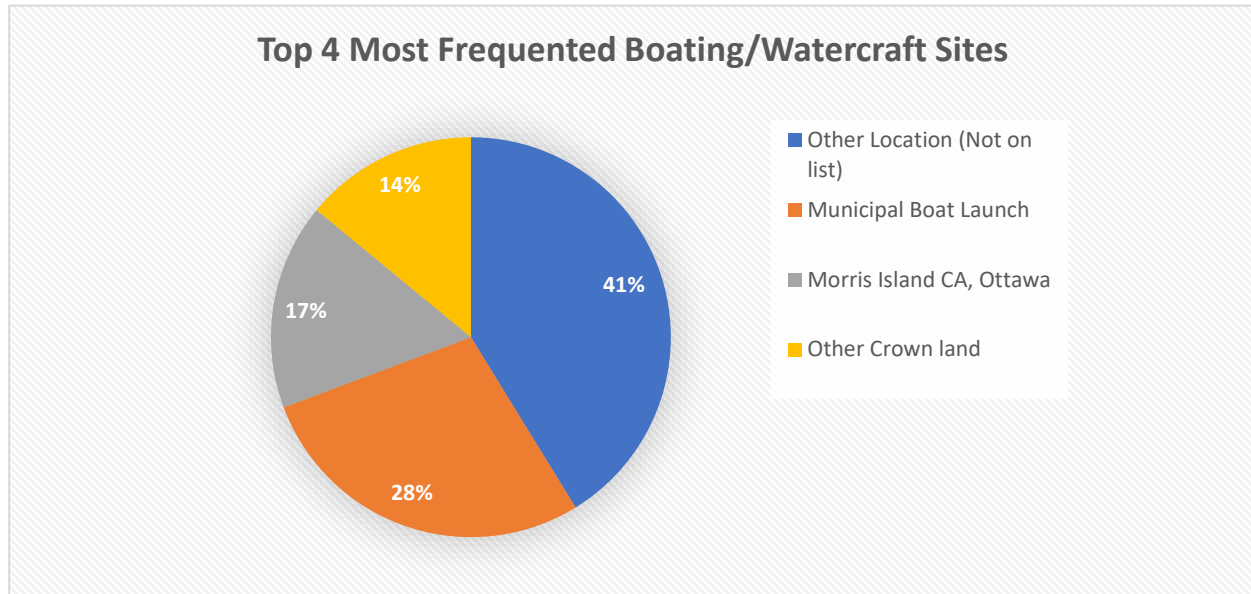
Respondents believe that public use of the top 10 walking/hiking sites has increased over the past five years.

Features that respondent identified as most important at the top 10 walking/hiking sites were:

- Drive from home less than 30 minutes,
- Presence of water features
- Quiet/seclusion/privacy
- Variety of trail routes and distances
- Easy parking access
- One or more vistas/look-outs
- Dogs on leash permitted on the trails
- Wildlife viewing opportunities
- Trails with challenging terrain

Top 10 walking/hiking sites have a high level of satisfaction with the majority of respondents. The majority of respondent’s satisfaction with these sites has stayed the same (pre and post COVID-19) over the past five years.

### Highlights Boating/Watercraft Sites



The most popular sites for boating and watercraft activities were Crown Land, Morris Island, various municipal boat launches, and numerous other locations throughout the watershed that included private docks at cottages.

The most popular locations identified for boating and watercraft activities were:

1. The Mississippi River
2. Mississippi Lake
3. The Ottawa River
4. Clayton Lake
5. Clyde River
6. Tay River

The most popular locations of municipal boat launches were:

1. Mississippi Lake,
2. Mississippi River
3. Locations within Carleton Place
4. Almonte
5. Kashwakamak Lake

Crown Land most often used by respondents for boating/watercraft activities is within Lanark County, followed closely by North Frontenac Parklands. For water access:

- Many sites “not listed” in the survey were used more than 10 times per year
- Municipal boat launches were typically used 4-9 times per year
- Morris Island and Crown Land are typically used less than 4 times per year

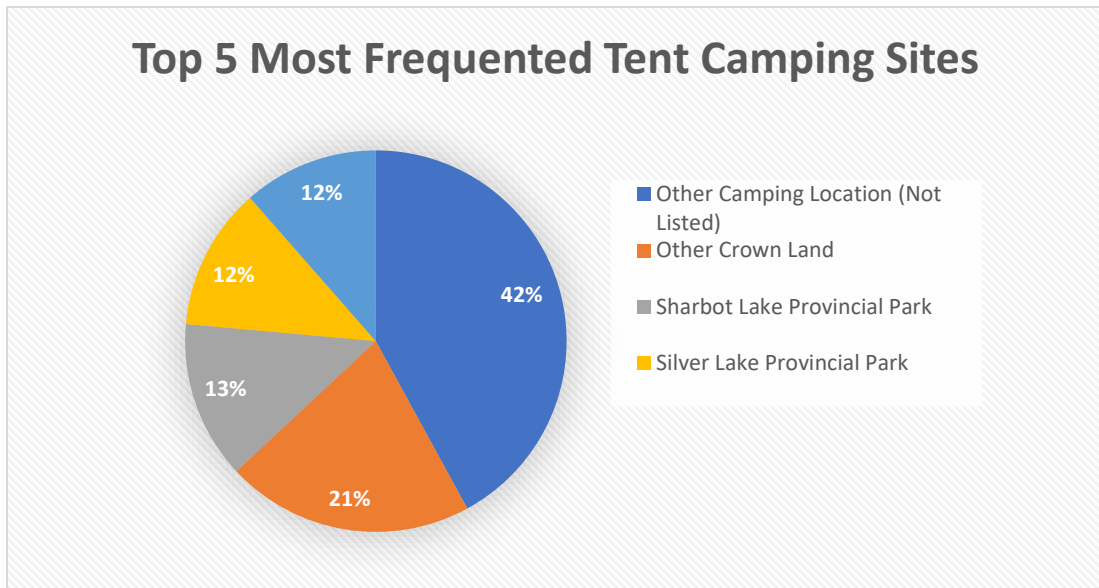
Respondents believe that public use of these most frequented sites has increased over the past five years.

Common important features identified by respondents for the top 4 boating/watercraft sites were:

1. The waterbody is not overused,
2. The waterbody has islands or other interesting landscapes,
3. The waterbody is easily navigated,
4. Drive from home less than 30 minutes; and
5. Limited shoreline development of the waterbody.

Respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the top 4 boating/watercraft sites. Their level of satisfaction has stayed the same (pre and post COVID-19) over the past five years.

### Tent Camping Sites



The most popular sites for tent camping were:

1. Locations “not listed” in the survey,
2. Crown land,
3. Sharbot Lake Provincial Park,
4. Silver Lake Provincial Park; and
5. Fitzroy Harbour Provincial Park.

Other popular sites identified by respondents were:

- Bon Echo Provincial Park
- Algonquin National Park
- North Frontenac Parklands
- Charleston Lake

On average, respondents use the top 5 tent camping sites less than 4 days per year. However, those using Crown Land tend to stay more than 8 days per year during the open season.

The majority of respondents believe that public use has increased at camping sites over the past five years.

Common important features identified by respondents for the top 5 most frequented tent camping sites include:

1. The property has affordable campsites,
2. The property has well defined campsites,
3. Drive from home less than 90 minutes; and
4. The property is largely in a natural state.

The top 5 tent camping sites have a high level of satisfaction, with the majority of respondents being either satisfied or very satisfied. The majority of respondent's stated that their level of satisfaction has stayed the same over the past five years (pre and post COVID-19).