

# **KAWARTHA TRANS CANADA TRAIL USER SURVEY**

## **SUMMER 2017**

### **A SUMMARY REPORT**

#### Introduction

The Kawartha Trans Canada Trail (KTCT) is a multi-use, all season recreational trail. It runs from Uxbridge via Lindsay to Peterborough, Ontario.

Effective management of the trail requires regular consultation with users to identify patterns of use, levels of satisfaction, and issues of concern. So, a survey of users of the Kawartha Trans Canada Trail was conducted in the summer of 2017.

Interviews were conducted at weekends and Monday holiday on seven days between 9 July and 20 August, 2017. The interviews were conducted at: Doube's Bridge, Omemee Bridge, Fleming College and Eldon Road-Pick Seed shelter south of Oakwood. Not all those interviewed answered all questions, as is evident from the response rates indicated below.

A summary of the responses to each question is given below. The complete results are provided in the appendix.

#### Results

1. What is your permanent place of residence?

Of 73 respondents, 23 came from Peterborough, 12 from Lindsay and 12 from Omemee. A few respondents had come further, one being from Belgium, one from Winnipeg and one from Quebec City, the rest being from Ontario.

2. Are you going to be traveling more than 80 km from home or staying the night on this trip?

A majority of respondents (65 of 76) were not traveling more than 80 kilometers or staying overnight on this trip.

3. How many different Ontario trails did you use in the past 12 months?

A majority (54 of 87) had only used one to three different Ontario trails in the last 12 months. Only 11 of the 87 respondents had used more than 5 different trails in Ontario in the last 12 months.

4. How many times did you use a trail outside of Ontario in the past 12 months?

A majority (45 of 77) respondents had not used a trail outside Ontario in the past 12 months.

5. What kind of experience were you seeking on the trail today?

The experience sought by far the most (63) respondents was mental and physical health benefits. Next in importance were pleasure-fun (38), experiencing wilderness (27) and a family outing (24). Other experiences sought were mentioned by less than 14 respondents.

6. Do you live within a 30 minute car drive from this trail?

The vast majority (60 of 71) of respondents lived within a 30 minute car drive from this trail.

7. How much influence, if any, would you say this particular trail had in determining your visit to this area?

A considerable number (39) of respondents indicated that this trail was a major influence in determining their visit to the area, although 12 said it was not influential.

8. How did you find out about the KTCT?

The most common way by far that respondents (51) found out about the KTCT was by word of mouth. The next most important ways were: internet (14), signage-driving past (12) and Google maps (10).

9. How much time did you spend on KTCT?

The most frequently mentioned (17) amount of time respondents said they spent on the trail was one hour. Other popular amounts of time were: 2.5., 2, 1.5 hours, and 20-45 minutes. No respondents spent less than 20 minutes on this trail, and a few (9) spent 4 hours.

10. How many times did you use the KTCT in the last 12 months?

The proportions of respondents used the KTCT in the last 12 months were: 1-49 times (54), 50-99 times (14) and over 100 times (13).

11. How often do you use the KTCT?

A majority of respondents were using the trail “daily” up to “once a week” in all seasons except winter. The most popular individual frequency of use cited by respondents for all seasons was “once a month”. The number using the trail daily was under 10% in all seasons. A majority (45 of 86) stated that they never used the trail in winter, whereas only 9 or 10 reported not using the trail in the other seasons.

12. Check off whether you did the following activities on the KTCT today.

The most popular activities by far on the trail that day were biking (35) and walking (28). Dog walking came next (16), with other activities being mentioned by respondents less than 10 times.

13. Are there any other activities you generally undertake on trails?

The main other activities respondents mentioned undertaking on trails were: walking (34), and cycling (27). Next in popularity were: photography, hiking, jogging, wildlife viewing and dog walking.

14. Including yourself, how many males-females in your group fall into the following age categories?

A substantial majority of the people represented in the survey (77 of 118) were over 45 years old, with 5 being over 75 years. Very few (12) were between 15 and 24 years.

15. Out of province visitors. How many nights are you planning to stay in Ontario?

The three out-of-province respondents were staying in Ontario 5, 14 and 28 nights.

16. Ontario resident visitors. How many nights will you be staying away from home?

Of the eight respondents from Ontario who were staying overnight, five were staying two nights, one for four nights, one for 16 nights, and one for 20 nights.

17. Local area spending.

Twenty-two people responded to the question about their expenditures on food. Of these, six spent up to \$50, six from \$51-100, eight from \$101-200, and two said \$700. Four people reported overnight expenditures ranging from \$50 to \$4000. The average expenditure reported was \$150 per day.

18. Trail condition reports.

Respondents were asked to evaluate various aspects of the KTCT. Almost all considered the location of the trailheads, trail signage and trail condition were adequate. However some respondents expressed concern about the narrowing of the trail due to vegetation growth, and overhanging branches, as well as the condition of bridges and the adequacy of parking at trailheads.

19. Are there any other improvements, additions or changes that you would like to see on the KCTC?

A minority of respondents made suggestions to improve the KTCT. The most common suggestions were to improve maintenance of the edges of the trail and its surface. Next were eight requests for better parking at trailheads, then provision of more seats. Some respondents urged more effective prevention of use of the trail by ATV operators. A complete list of suggestions is provided in the Appendix.

20. What category best describe your highest level of education?

About half (42 of 85) of respondents had completed university, and 32 of 85 had some Tech. School, College or University education. Very few, 11 of 85, had less education.

## 21. Total household income?

A great majority (62 of 76) respondents had a household income of \$50,000 or more. Indeed, 32 of 76 respondents had a household income exceeding \$80,000.

## 22. Where did you access the trail?

The places where the most respondents accessed the trail were: Jackson Park (10), Omemee Bridge (10), Emily Park Road (9) and the Pickseed Shelter (9).

## Conclusions

Given that the sample of KTCT users interviewed was small and surveying was limited to weekends in summer, only some tentative conclusions can be offered until more substantial research is undertaken. However, the findings can be summarised as follows:

The majority of users are local, within a 30 minute drive, especially from Peterborough and use relatively few other trails. The main reason for using the trail was for mental and physical health benefits. A substantial majority of users were over 45 years old, had completed college or university and had a household income over \$50,000. One hour was the most popular amount of time spent on the trail, and the most popular uses were biking and walking. Most users found out about the trail from someone else. Only a minority suggested improvements, especially maintenance of the trail edges and surface, and control of ATV use. Regular assessments of use, user characteristics and user satisfaction should be undertaken.