

The Sea-to-Sky playground: individual outdoor recreation and commercial recreation on public land in winter

Wolfgang Haider, Jenifer Riley, Nina Mostegl

Abstract — The so-called “Sea-to-Sky Corridor” in British Columbia, Canada, spreads from Vancouver via Squamish beyond Whistler. Its superb scenery nestled between ocean and glaciers attracts residents of Vancouver and international visitors alike. Most of the area is public land, and a major regional landuse plan is just about to be completed. While forestry has been the main traditional use, now summer and winter recreation feature very prominently in these plans. The plans separate much of the motorized and non-motorized activities, but other potential conflicts such as between commercial recreation and independent outdoor recreationists have been addressed to a lesser extent. In order to obtain some insights into the number of visitors and describe some of their characteristics, we undertook an intensive user count at the main staging areas, combined with a short intercept survey about the types of activities pursued, distances travelled, specific locations and expenditures. In the presentation I will elaborate on the method used for estimating site specific and regional user numbers, associated expenditures, and perceived and actual conflict. The presentation will compare motorized and non-motorized users, as well as clients of commercial operations and independent travelers, and link these findings to the already existing zoning for the region. The presentation will conclude with identifying remaining shortcomings of information for future landuse decisions in light of expected future use increases, as both the demand from the metropolitan Vancouver as well as from the resort community of Whistler will continue to grow

Index Terms – Outdoor recreation, winter recreation, landuse.



Wolfgang Haider is with the School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University Burnaby, Canada. Email: whaider@sfu.ca

Jenifer Riley is with the School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University Burnaby, Canada

Nina Mostegl is with the School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University Burnaby, Canada.