

Modernizing Park and Campground Regulations for Yukon

Description of proposed regulations under the
Parks and Land Certainty Act

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Yukon

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Part one: Introduction

The Yukon's territorial parks are established and managed through the *Parks and Land Certainty Act* and its Regulations.

From April to September 2018, we engaged First Nations, Yukon communities, park users and stakeholders at more than 20 events as part of the Talking Yukon Parks engagement to help us begin the process of developing the Yukon Parks Strategy. In Fall 2019, we re-engaged Yukoners on the Draft Yukon Parks Strategy. During the Talking Yukon Parks engagement, people told us they want better management of issues that affect park ecosystems and their enjoyment of parks. During public review of the Yukon Parks Strategy, Yukoners expressed strong support for updating regulations.

Did you know?

During engagement on the *Yukon Parks Strategy*, 78 per cent of respondents stated that enforcement of park regulations was important to them.

The Government of Yukon released the *Yukon Parks Strategy (2020-2030)* in September 2020, which sets the direction for the Yukon's system of territorial parks. Modernizing regulations was identified as one of the 10 priorities in the Strategy to effectively manage the Yukon's system of territorial parks. These regulations will address operational concerns and preserve and enhance many of the environmental, economic, social and health benefits, as outlined in the *Yukon Parks Strategy*.

Regulations made with public input will help us develop fair, transparent and appropriate rules governing activities in territorial parks and campgrounds. We value your input and look forward to hearing your perspectives in shaping how park users can enjoy our Yukon's territorial parks and campgrounds now and into the future.

Regulations are specific rules made under the *Parks and Land Certainty Act* that help park managers carry out the intent of the Act.

Quick facts

The Yukon has 57 territorial parks:

- forty-eight recreation parks that include most of our 42 campgrounds and 11 day-use recreation sites like Five Finger Rapids;
- three natural environment parks: Tombstone, Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk and Kusawa;
- three natural environmental parks are in the process of designation: Asi Keyi, Agay Mene, and Daadzaii Vàn;
- one wilderness preserve: Ni'iinlii Njik (Fishing Branch); and

- two ecological reserves: Coal River Springs and Ni'iinlii Njik (Fishing Branch).

The different types of parks have different objectives, ranging from protecting pristine wilderness to providing recreational opportunities.

Within these parks, the Government of Yukon provides about 1,100 campsites, including four designated backcountry camping areas.

Why are modernized regulations needed?

Campground Regulations under the Parks and Land Certainty Act have not been significantly updated since 1984. A lot has changed over the years, and we are managing more than just campgrounds. The Government of Yukon also now has more parks and more kinds of parks that come with more management responsibilities. These require regulations that apply throughout all types of territorial parks like there are in other jurisdictions, in addition to regulations specific to campgrounds.

Parks are also being used more intensively, so we need to manage them more proactively, to protect the environment and the quality of visitor experience.

During public engagement, people told us they wanted better management of issues that affect parks or their personal enjoyment of parks. The best way to manage these issues is through regulation. Clear regulations and the consistent application and enforcement of them will help people better understand what is expected of them while visiting parks, what to expect of others, and what to expect of park managers.

The intended outcome

Proposed regulations are intended to achieve three major outcomes:

- ensuring public safety and quality visitor experiences;
- protecting natural and heritage values; and
- efficient operation and administration.



This document describes the regulations we are proposing, based in part on the feedback we received during previous engagements. Now, we are seeking the public's input on these proposed regulations.

How can I share my views?

You can share your thoughts about any or all of the proposed regulations online at [Yukon.ca/engagements](https://www.yukon.ca/engagements).

For more information, please contact the Government of Yukon's Parks Branch at 867-667-5648 or 1-800-661-0408, or Yukon.Parks@yukon.ca.

Part two: Proposed regulations

This section describes proposed regulations that would apply throughout all territorial parks (recreation parks, natural environment parks, wilderness preserves, and ecological reserves).

Noise

One of the main complaints received from campground visitors is about excessive noise, primarily from generators and parties, which prevents getting a good night's sleep. We propose to make the existing regulations about noise more clear and straightforward.

Proposed regulations would:

- During the hours of 11 pm to 7 am prohibit:
 - making noise that is likely to disturb the peace and quiet of an occupant of another campsite in a campground; and
 - operating a generator (medical exceptions by special permit).
- Prohibit at all times:
 - making excessive noise that is likely to interfere with another person's enjoyment of a park; and
 - the use of fireworks.
- Prohibit operating a generator in a designated quiet area at all times.
- Prohibit accommodation units such as RVs, campers and trailers within a designated tenting-only area.

Considerations:

- The quiet hours of 11 pm to 7 am are the same as those currently posted in campgrounds.
- Quiet zones could be designated in new or redesigned campgrounds.

Domestic animals

Being able to have domestic animals with you in a territorial park or campground can be part of the park experience. This could be the family dog, cat or another type of pet, including registered service animals. They can also include livestock expressly used for transportation and packing in supplies such as horses, donkeys and alpacas.

These domestic animals, however, have the potential to cause concerns and complaints related to visitor safety, environmental protection and visitor experience. Current campground regulations require "animals" to be under control such that they do not disturb other people, damage property or molest wildlife. New regulations would be more clear and apply across the parks system.

Proposed regulations would:

- Require domestic animals to be:
 - physically restrained (e.g., on a leash or in a crate) at all times in campgrounds and recreation sites;
 - physically restrained in any areas where a posted sign requires it; and
 - under control (e.g., able to be quickly recalled and obey other commands) at all times in territorial parks.
- Enable certain domestic animals to be prohibited from certain territorial parks or areas of territorial parks (e.g., llamas may be prohibited from sheep habitat) or the whole parks system.

Considerations:

- During public engagement on the Yukon Parks Strategy, people told us they wanted better management of issues that affect their enjoyment of parks, including domestic animals.
- Proposed changes would increase public safety. For example, the proposal reduces the potential for not just attacks on people and other animals by a domestic animal, but also the potential that a domestic animal might chase a bear into a high-use public area.
- Reduces conflict between users in campgrounds. For example, not all domestic animals get along with other domestic animals, and not all people are comfortable around domestic animals.
- Reduces the potential that diseases carried by some domestic animals, such as livestock, are not transmitted to wildlife populations in parks.
- Physical restraint of domestic animals, in particular dogs, reduces the opportunity for wildlife harassment in territorial parks.
- Allows domestic animals such as dogs to be off-leash in some areas of parks, if under control, which is important to many users.
- The proposed approach would be consistent with existing regulations regarding registered service animals.

Liquor

Current regulations addressing liquor consumption in territorial parks and campgrounds are out of date and do not allow effective management in accordance with public expectations. For example, consumption of liquor is currently only allowed in a tent, RV, trailer or other accommodation unit. However, in practice, it is permitted anywhere on a registered territorial campsite (for example, around a campfire).

Proposed regulations would:

- Allow the consumption of liquor anywhere on a registered territorial campsite, not just inside an accommodation unit (RV, tent, trailer).
- Clarify the authority to temporarily ban liquor consumption in certain campgrounds. This is an effective practice to proactively manage known party times, such as at the Yukon River Campground during the Dawson City Music Festival.
- Provide authority for park officers to seize, report and dispose of liquor from minors within parks and from adults in areas where it has been prohibited.

Considerations:

- Helps to ensure that legislation is consistent with current practice and public expectations.
- During the Talking Yukon Parks engagement, people told us they wanted better management of issues that affect their enjoyment of parks, including liquor consumption. This is also a common visitor complaint received at campgrounds.
- Approach would be consistent with the approach to managing liquor consumption elsewhere in the Yukon.
- Aligns with standards established in other jurisdictions when responding to liquor consumption in parks.

Smoking including cannabis

The public has expressed concerns about second-hand smoke, particularly from cannabis, in shared spaces within territorial parks.

Proposed regulations would:

- Prohibit smoking in public areas such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, beaches, and boat launches. This would apply to all smoking (e.g., tobacco, cannabis, vaping, etc.).
- Continue to allow smoking, including cannabis, on a registered territorial campsite.

Considerations:

- During public engagement on the Yukon Parks Strategy, people told us they wanted better management of issues that affect their enjoyment of parks, including second-hand smoke from cannabis and tobacco.

On-road and off-road vehicles

Improper operation of vehicles, including passenger vehicles, off-road vehicles (ORVs) and snowmobiles, as well as various non-motorised means of travel, can negatively impact the park environment, visitor safety and visitor experience.

Proposed regulations would:

- Clarify the legal authority to install directional signage in territorial parks such as speed limits, stop signs and trail designations.

- Provide the authority to designate trails for different types of uses such as ORV, snowmobiles, bicycles, horses, dogsleds, etc. and to restrict some of these uses on some trails.
- Provide specific authority to address dangerous driving, such as speeding and recklessness, as well as the removal of abandoned vehicles from a territorial park and penalize the owner for abandonment.

Considerations:

- Meets expectations of park users in addressing conservation and safety concerns in territorial parks due to vehicle use and other means of travel.
- Improves response to motor vehicle issues within territorial parks as park officers are more likely able to respond than are RCMP.
- Consistent with the approach taken to managing motor vehicles and ORVs in the Yukon outside of parks.

Aircraft use including drones

The use of drones is becoming more popular. Improper use of drones and other aircraft can negatively impact wildlife, be a hazard for other aircraft, and diminish visitor experience.

Proposed regulations would:

- Prohibit the use of drones and the landing of aircraft in any territorial park unless authorized by a permit.

Considerations:

- Requiring a permit to operate within a territorial park promotes use of aircraft and drones in ways that protect natural and cultural resources in parks and respect other park users.
- Addresses complaints expressed by park users that drones affect their privacy and peaceful enjoyment of parks.
- Complementary to Transport Canada regulations and management of drones and aircraft in national parks and other jurisdictions' regulations, such as Ontario and Alberta.

Park zoning

Zoning is used to establish area-specific rules to manage uses in parks around the world. In the Yukon, park zones currently exist in policy. Regulations would make them clear, consistent, and enforceable.

Proposed regulations would:

- Define the four types of park zones: multiple-use recreation, natural, wildland and special feature park zones, so they are consistent with existing approved territorial park management plans and policy.

- Define the allowable activities and development types within each type of zone, as well as which zones can be applied within each type of territorial park, so they are consistent with existing approved park management plans and policy.

Considerations:

- Will enable efficient park management through clear, consistent and enforceable zoning in territorial parks.
- Will ensure consistent zoning among all territorial parks making it easier for park visitors to know the rules.

Activities requiring permits

A permit is required to legally carry out most activities in a park. A territorial park use permit authorizes the person holding the permit to carry out an activity (such as camping), and may impose conditions (such as following campground rules).

Proposed regulations would:

- Specify that the activities requiring a park permit include such things as special events, commercial activities, scientific research and collection and landing an aircraft.
- Specify the activities not requiring a permit such as recreational day use, backcountry travel, and use of park facilities other than a campsite.
- Specify that a park permit holder must be at least 16 years old.

Considerations:

- Clear and transparent permit regulations will simplify compliance for individuals and businesses operating in territorial parks.
- Supports a more efficient permitting process and reduces administrative burden.

Other general park regulations

Proposed regulations would:

- Prohibit:
 - Actions that can contaminate water such as depositing waste within 30 metres of a water source.
 - Feeding wildlife or not securely storing food or other wildlife attractants.
 - Disposing garbage anywhere other than in a provided garbage receptacle.
- Prohibit, unless authorized by a territorial park permit:
 - Having a fire larger than the standard campground fire ring (0.6 m wide by 0.5 m high).
 - Camping where it is normally not allowed.
 - Release of non-native species.

- Storing or caching equipment or supplies.
- Having explosives, including fireworks.
- Actions that result in the removal, destruction, damage, disturbance or exploitation of natural or heritage resources in a park.
- Temporarily restrict or prohibit fires in a territorial park for safety reasons.

Considerations:

- These proposed regulations would be applicable within all territorial park types.
- These are common regulations used to manage parks across Canada.

Campground and recreation site regulations

This section describes proposed regulations that would apply only in territorial campgrounds and day-use recreation sites (found only in natural environment parks and recreation parks).

Proposed regulations include:

- Only registered campers are allowed in a campground from 11 pm to 7 am.
- Day-use recreation sites may only be used from 7 am to 11 pm.
- Firewood provided by the Parks Branch may not be stored in any vehicle.
- No more than four cubic feet (0.113 cubic metres) of firewood provided by the Parks Branch may be stockpiled at a campsite. This is an average stack of firewood, about two feet wide by 1.5 feet high of cut firewood.
- While firearms are allowed, loaded firearms are not.
- Cutting or damaging trees is prohibited.

Considerations:

- Improves visitor experience and safety, and protects the natural environment.
- Helps to prevent disturbances and combats firewood theft.
- Regulations like these are commonly used to manage issues specific to campgrounds and day-use areas across Canada.

Yukon Territorial Parks

