

Questionnaire Series: Development of a New Discovery Centre

Background

During the months of May to September of 2021, the Kootenay-Columbia Discovery Centre Society released 4 Questionnaires to our Membership via enewsletter, KCDCS website and social media.

These questionnaires are part of a larger process to develop a master plan and design for a new Centre. KCDCS aimed to gather Members thoughts on various elements related to the development of a new Discovery Centre at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

The topics of the 4 Questionnaires were:

- Questionnaire 1: Space and Design
- Questionnaire 2: Programs
- Questionnaire 3: Displays and Exhibits
- Questionnaire 4: Outdoor Space, Accessibility and Trails

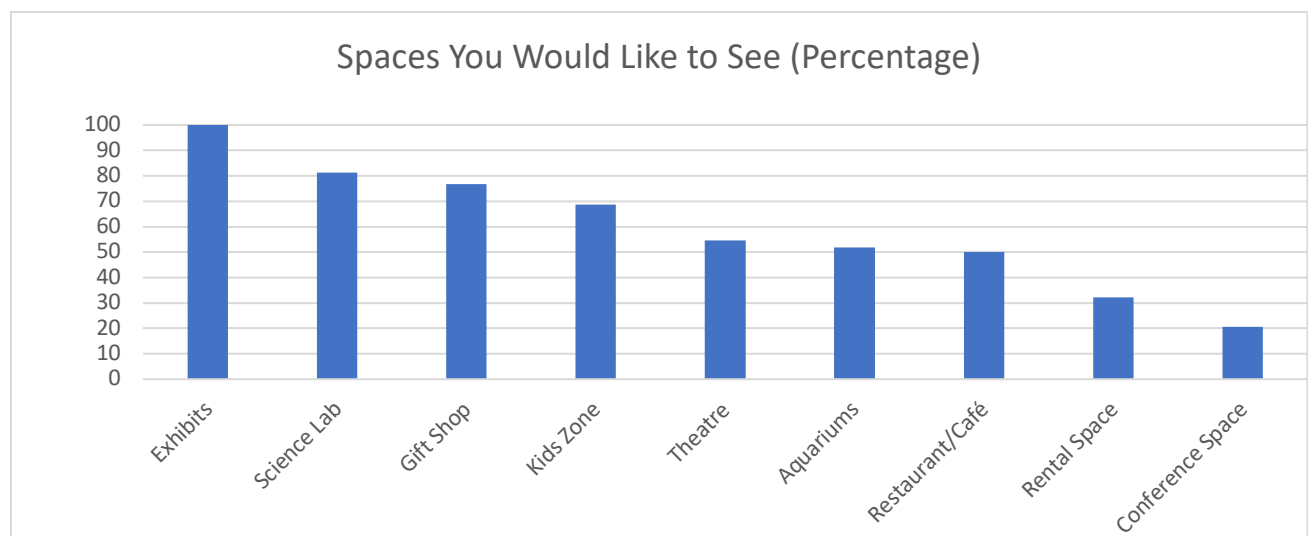
Each questionnaire took approximately 5 minutes to fill out. We collected 314 responses.

If you were not a Member, you could still complete the questionnaire. We encouraged participants to become a Member so they could be kept up to date on progress related to the development of a new Centre and current operations.

Questionnaire Results

Questionnaire 1: Space and Design

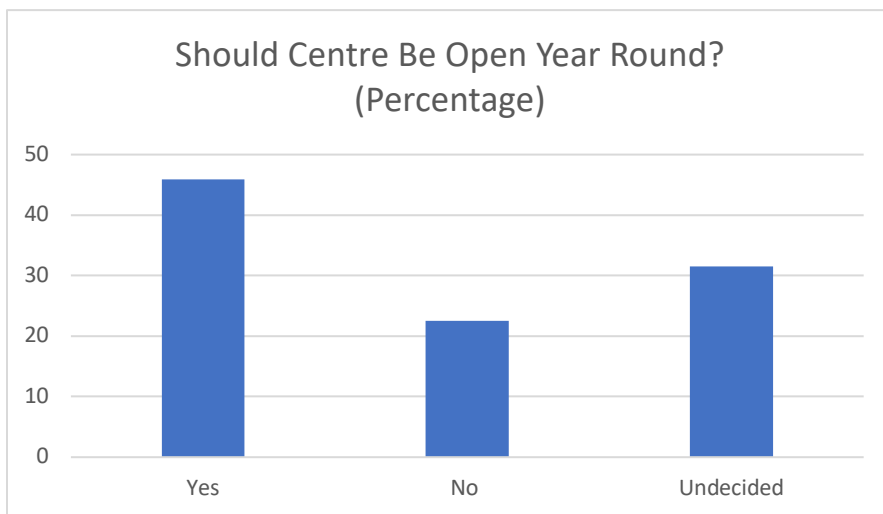
1. Types of Spaces You Would Like to See (Check all that apply)?



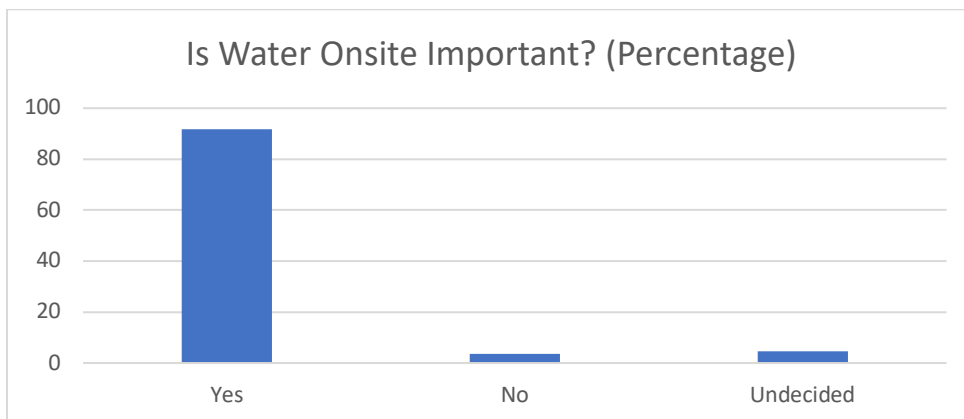
Other Suggestions/Comments:

- Hands-on learning space
- Small tuck shop for snacks
- Place for speakers (doesn't have to be a large theatre)
- An upper deck for wildlife viewing and relaxing
- Combine rental and conference space
- Donation Names put on the wall of building for donations in memory of people and people that donated that was on the old building. or railing
- How will this facility contribute to the valley's environmental, cultural and economic goals? An answer would help identify what amenities the facility should have. First nations should be involved in the design process if not already.
- The design should make people say Wow when they see it - i.e., it should be beautiful as well as functional.
- Dining/drinks patio area overlooking wetlands. Ability to rent out to third party users.

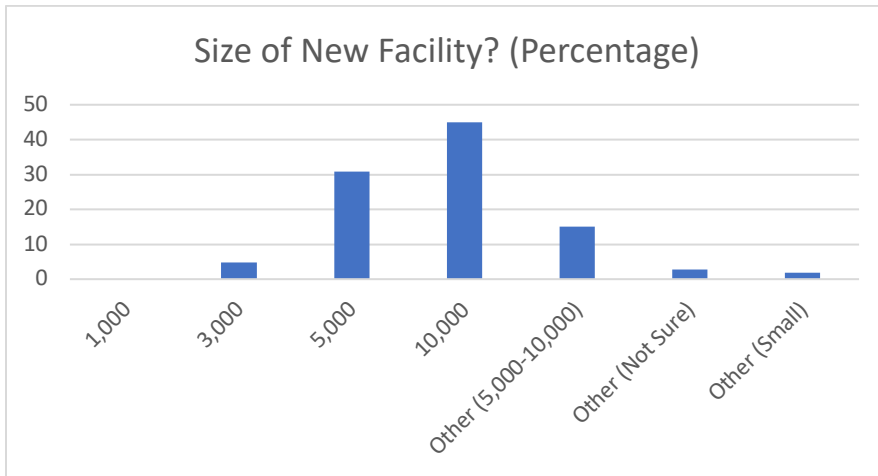
2. Would you like to see the facility open year-round?



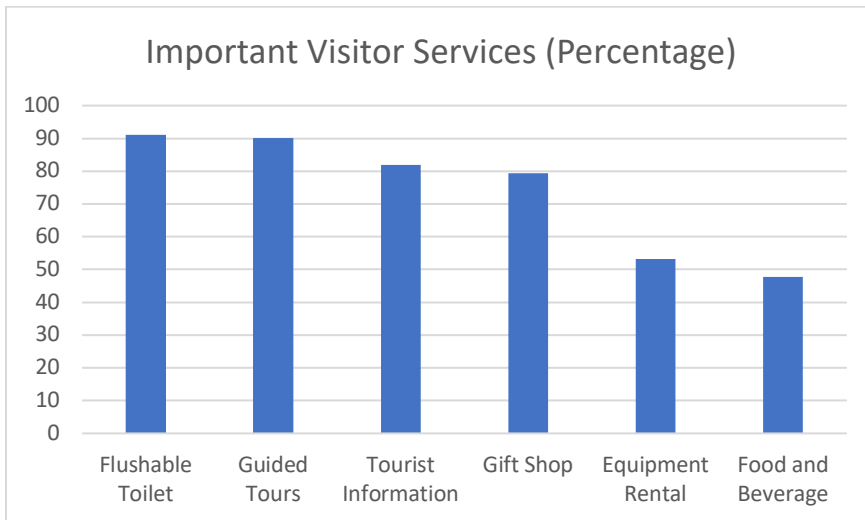
3. Is having access to water onsite important to you (flush toilets, ability to wash hands)?



4. Approximately what size (square footage) do you envision for the new facility? For reference, the old Wildlife Centre was 6,000 square feet.



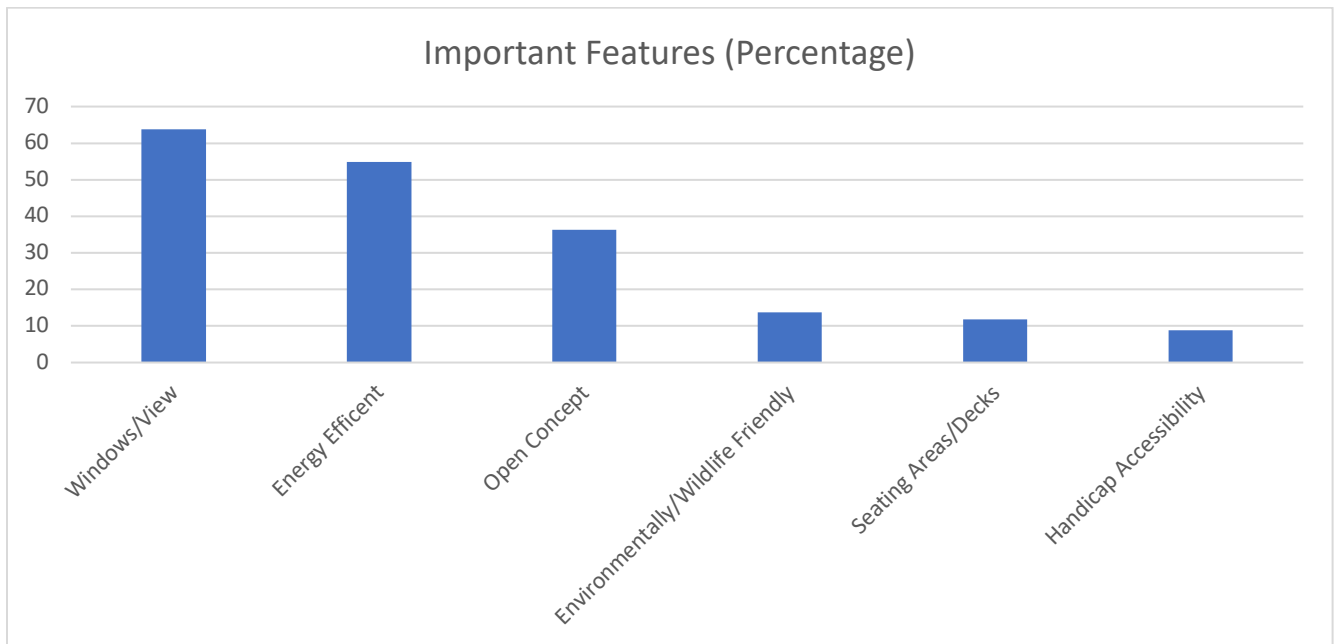
5. What Visitor Services would you like to see? Check all that apply.



Other Suggestions/Comments:

- Sleeping space for overnight programs
- Beverage vending machine
- Lots of parking
- Outsourced cafe and restaurant with a large summer patio and a view. Space to hold markets/fairs.

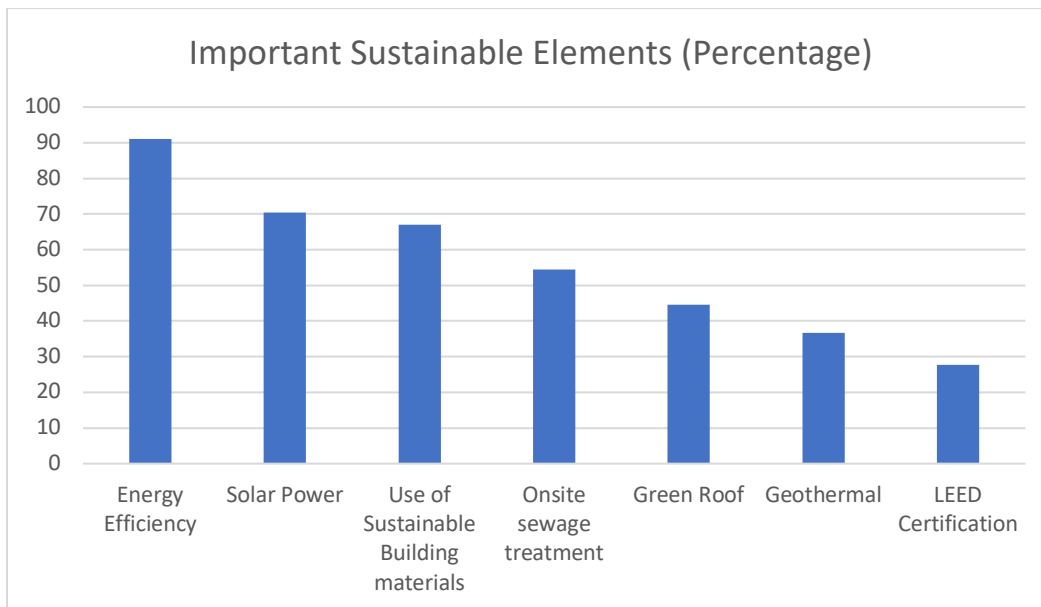
6. What features of a new building do you think are important (i.e. lots of windows to see the wetland view, open concept, energy efficient)?



Other Suggestions/Comments:

- First Nations grand entry
- Composting toilets

7. Are any of the following sustainable elements important to you?



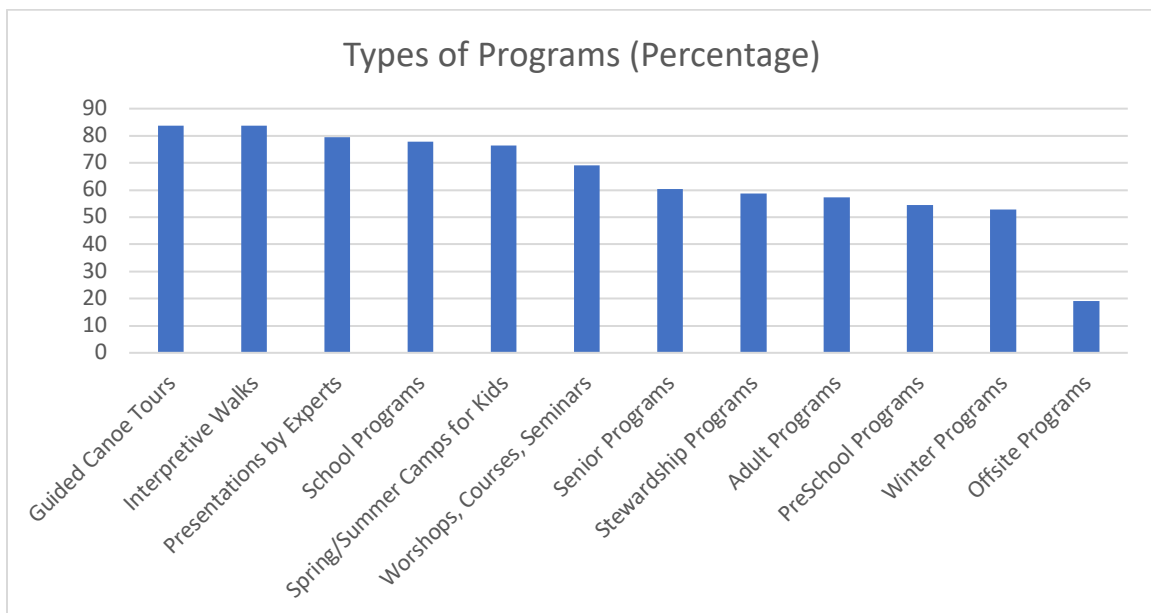
Additional Suggestions/Comments:

- Many comments alluded to the fact the sustainable /green building is great, but also have to balance costs
- Having a green building would be a draw

- Would be so awesome for this project to be a leader in our community to show how we can build our buildings to work with nature as well as possible. Show us what is really possible!
- A passive or living building would be amazing! I like the idea of lots of windows but I really think the main goal should be building an example of a building that shows how we can live in nature without damaging or taking from it. A passive/living building gives as much or more than it takes.
- Wetland view is significant. I'd like to see a beautiful, green facility that can be a draw for the community as a whole and the wetlands in particular. Such a facility should be able to generate some revenue that will help offset the cost.
- Do whatever has the least environmental impacts and gives back to the environment the most
- Carbon neutrality. Important to leave a small footprint; keep building and maintenance costs down.
- All of the sustainable elements will make it possible to better protect the wildlife and marshlands we all need for a healthy environment. The initial cost may seem high but over the long run of the life of the centre, it will be cheaper and so much cleaner and safer.
- what about a series of domes? Dome homes? One could be a theatre or have 360 windows?

Questionnaire 2: Programs

1. What type of programs would you like to see offered?



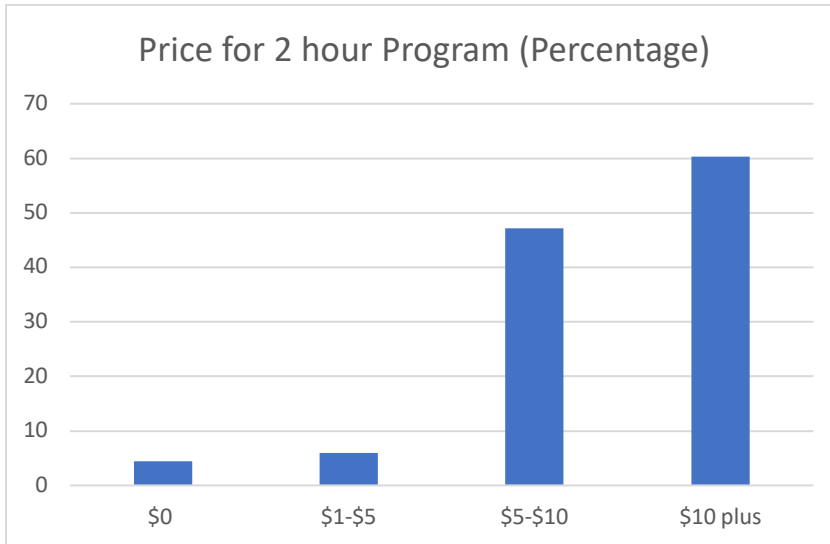
Additional Suggestions/Comments

- There is no program in this list that you shouldn't do. The key to this is finding the right management and staff, and identifying the sources of funding that can support those programs. (ie, partner with the College of the Rockies and the school district for some of

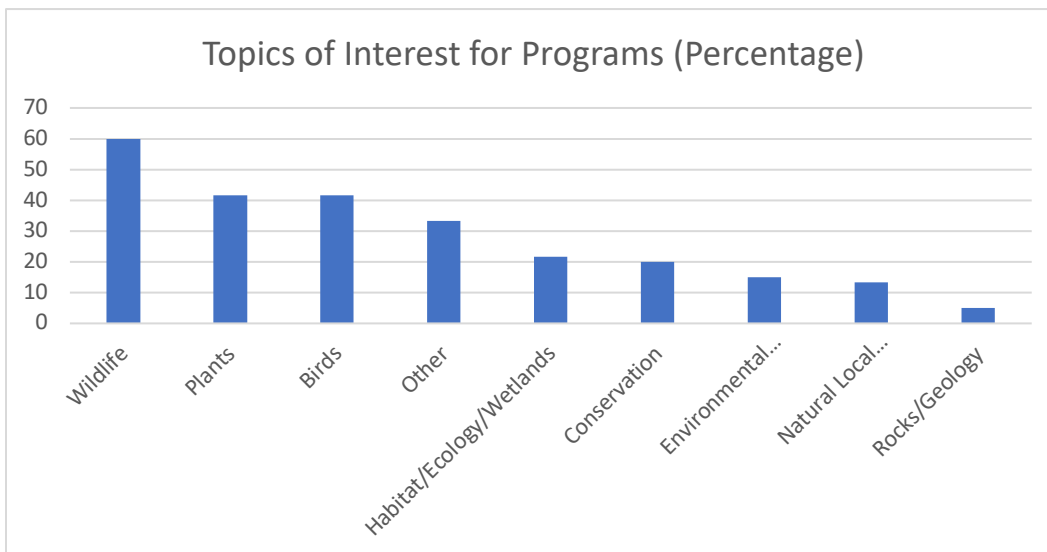
the programs, and with funding agencies for those programs that require a higher level of care, such as camps for kids)

- Open to whatever programs get uptake from the community/public and have the goal to educate about and enhance the wetland experience

2. What price are you willing to pay (per person) to participate in a 1-2 hour program?



3. What topics are of interest to you for programs?

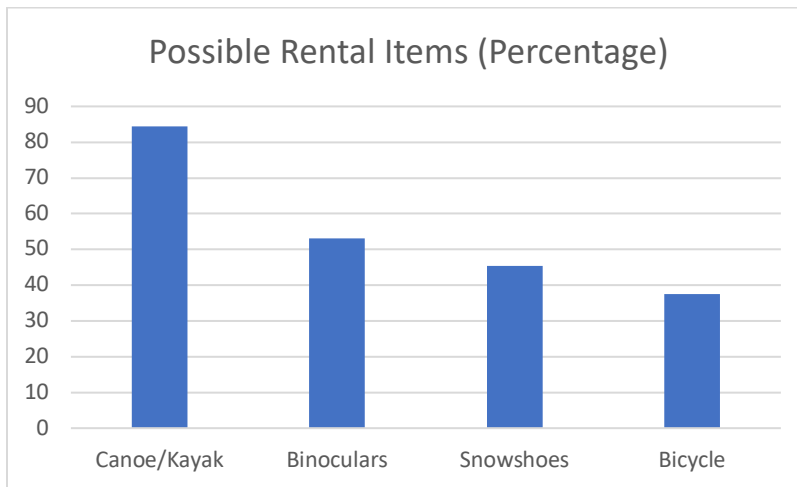


Other Suggestions Included:

- Endangered Species
- Photography
- Astronomy
- Gardening
- Outdoor Safety

- Climate Change
- Foraging
- Cooking/Crafts
- Animal tracks
- Mushrooms
- Indigenous Knowledge

4. Which of the following would like to see available for rent at the centre:



Other Suggestions:

- Walkers, Wheelchairs, Walking Sticks
- Field guides
- Don't make it too commercial
- Upkeep and maintenance of rentals can be costly

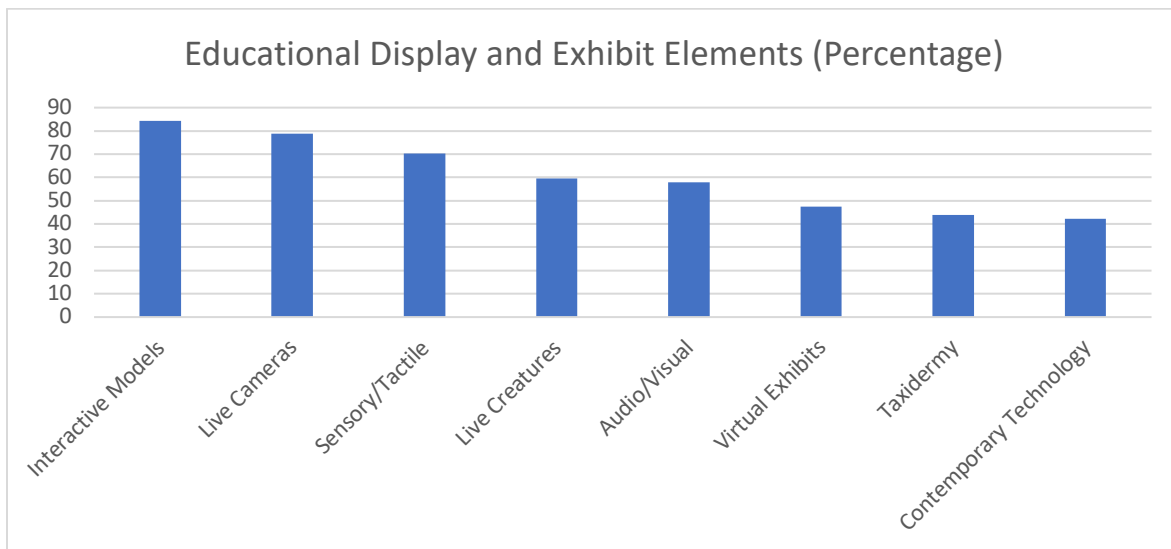
5. Please provide any other input related to the types of programs and events you would like to see offered at the new Centre

- Regularly guided walks and self-guided options
- Online presentations
- Some events at more centrally located venues and/or transportation to West Creston
- Quarterly publication for kids, art projects for display, yearly bursary for high school students
- Programs that are modified for special need persons
- Guided hikes within the entire CVWMA - Balancing Rock, Summit Creek, etc.
- Better and more accessible detailed maps of trails within CVWMA.
- Keep school programs (this comment came through multiple times about the importance of school programs)
- Overnight programs for kids
- Approach school board to see if you can become a standard/required component of elementary and secondary school curricula.

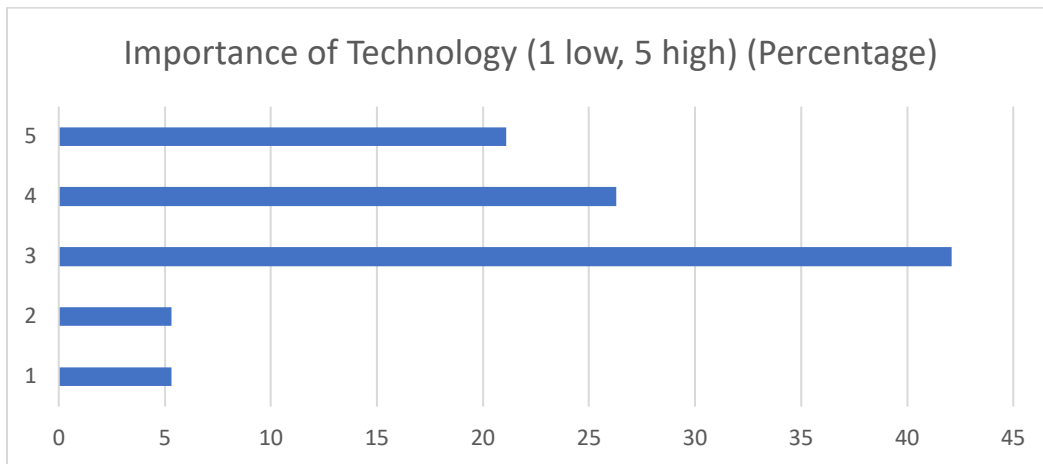
- More educational/hands on opportunities for adults – a combination of self-guided programs and guided programs. It would be nice if there was something to do for anyone who drops in.
- Winter programs for youth
- Nature based clubs that could develop out of programming (birding group, kids nature club, teen hiking club)
- Let people use their own canoes/kayaks
- Bird Alert website/resource for what is being seen now
- Start carefully, Pick off the "low-hanging fruit" that you can achieve as you get programming dollars in place first. Watch for trends and requests for additional services, and add them as you have long-term funding. Don't try to be all things to all people at first, but build on the incredible resources you already have. People will come. Give them a reason.
- Hold fundraising events and photo competitions
- A weekly seminar in the summers on ecological topics
- Hobby courses
- Grandparent/Grandchild joint programs

Questionnaire 3: Exhibits and Design

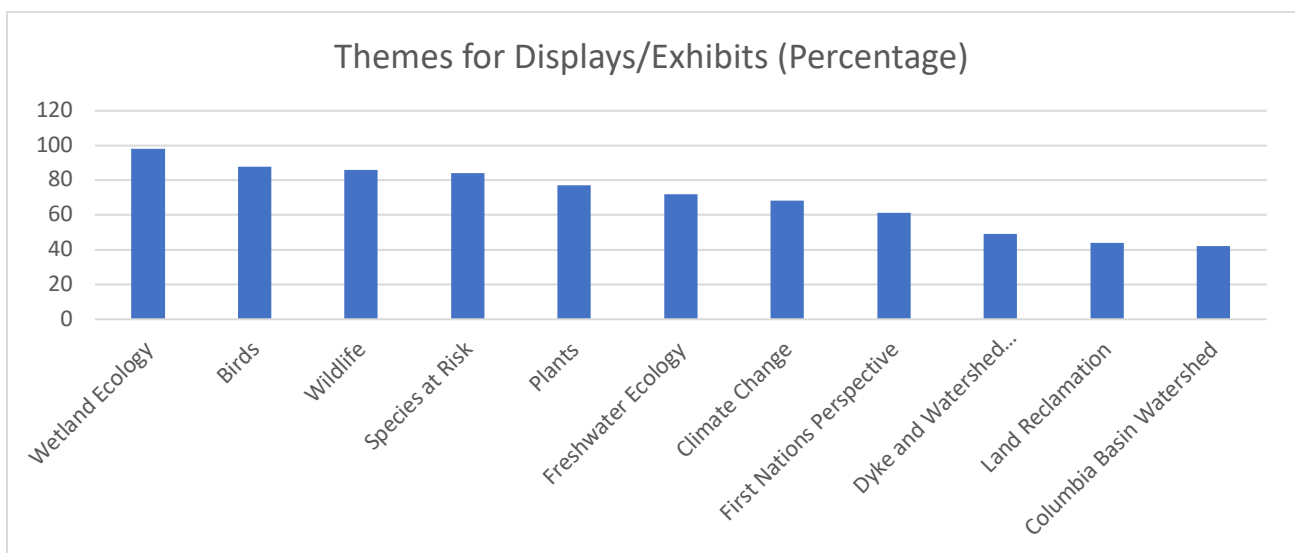
1. What elements would you like to see incorporated into the educational displays and exhibits?



2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high) how would you rate the importance of the use of technology in exhibits?



3. What themes/topics would you like to see covered in the displays and exhibits?



Other Suggestions:

- History of the Area
- Geomorphology
- Outdoor Safety
- Human perspectives/impacts
- Invasive species
- Insects

4. What additional features are important for you to see incorporated into the displays and exhibits?

- Activities for all ages
- Interactive Dioramas, limited tv/computer screens
- Hands on, and three dimensional
- Things that are specific to the Creston Valley area
- Info on our local watershed areas but I think you need to prioritize local information
- 3D relief map of the Creston valley or Columbia basin would be beautiful

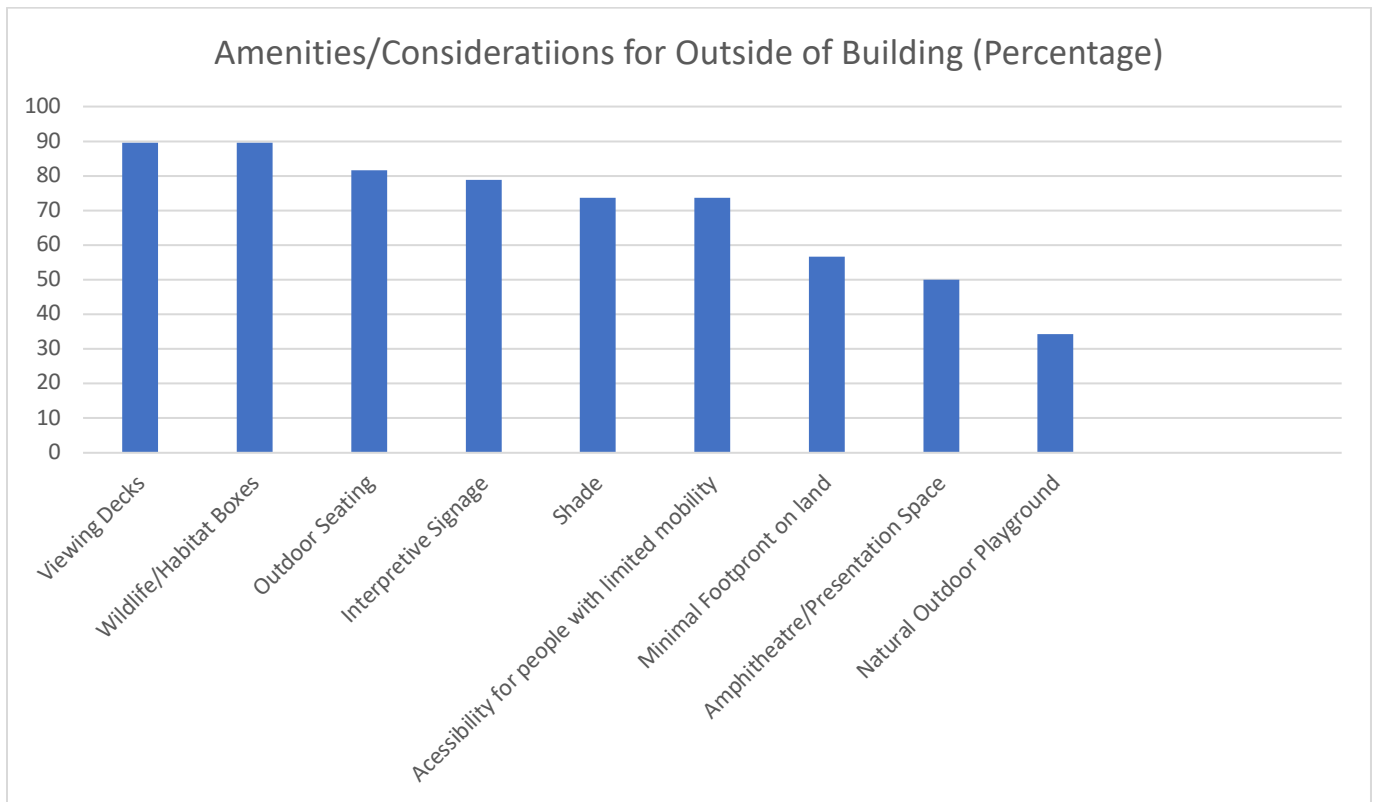
- Travelling exhibits
- Open top shallow aquariums where kids can touch and feel small plants and animals
- Variety in types of exhibits, fun for all ages, self-guided
- I think a mix of different types of media / mediums to deliver information is entertaining for visitors to get them engaged in the importance of wetland habitat

5. Please provide any other input related to the educational displays and exhibits you would like to see at the new Centre

- Make the displays and exhibits sturdy enough to withstand a lot of use and interaction
- Hands-on is best for kids
- I think a mix of different types of media/mediums to deliver information is entertaining for visitors to get them engaged in the importance of wetland habitat.
- Link kids to real experiences, don't have everything relying on a computer or phone to engage them, shift away from having them rely so much on technology and focus on real things
- User friendly, 'take away' key points, comparison of things
- Make all exhibitions longevity oriented, industrial strength, and low maintenance when it comes to cleaning/repairing.
- Relationships between animals, large and small, and the impact a healthy environment has on both them and us. Understanding the seasonality of the area is important. So is the growing impact of mankind on the area, from farming and logging to urbanization and climate change. Use the centre to explain that.
- Taxidermy wildlife in a natural type setting and a theatre with different movies are exciting things for young and old to look at. I really liked the feel of the old interpretation centre...it felt like a mini provincial museum.
- Teaching our youth to be respectful of nature
- Q and A lift for answers, matchup, puzzles
- Art and cultural exhibits. No animals live or dead please!!
- Taxidermy displays – can get ratty and dusty looking over time and they are very static. An unstuffed pelt that can be handled (and replaced as needed) is preferable.

Questionnaire 4: Outdoor Space, Accessibility and Trails

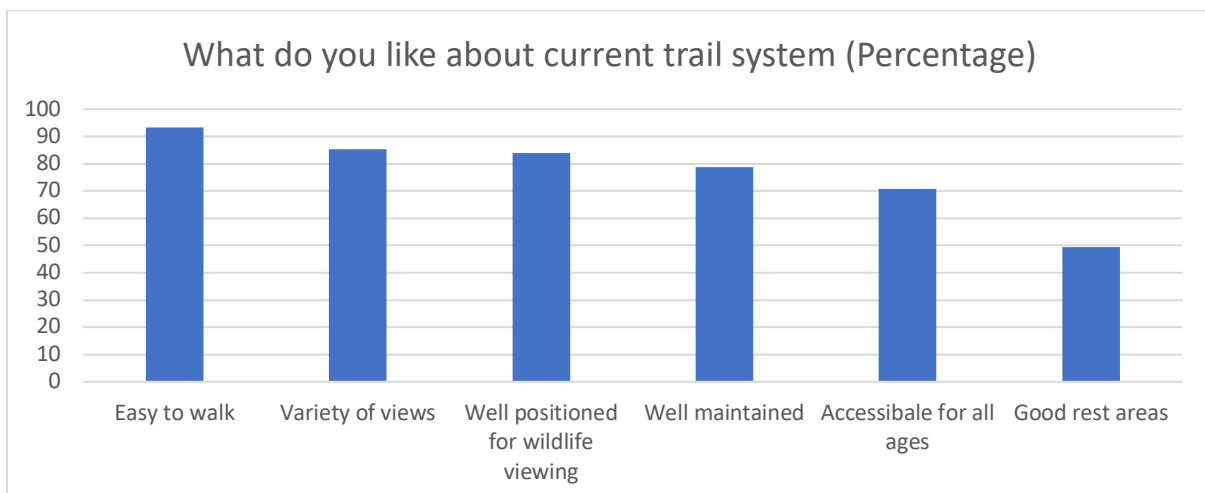
1. What type of amenities/considerations would you like to see outside the building? Check all that apply.



Other Suggestions/Comments:

- Water station
- Picnic area
- Paddle areas
- Bike racks
- Hummingbird feeders
- Projector and screen for movies
- No playground, too noisy

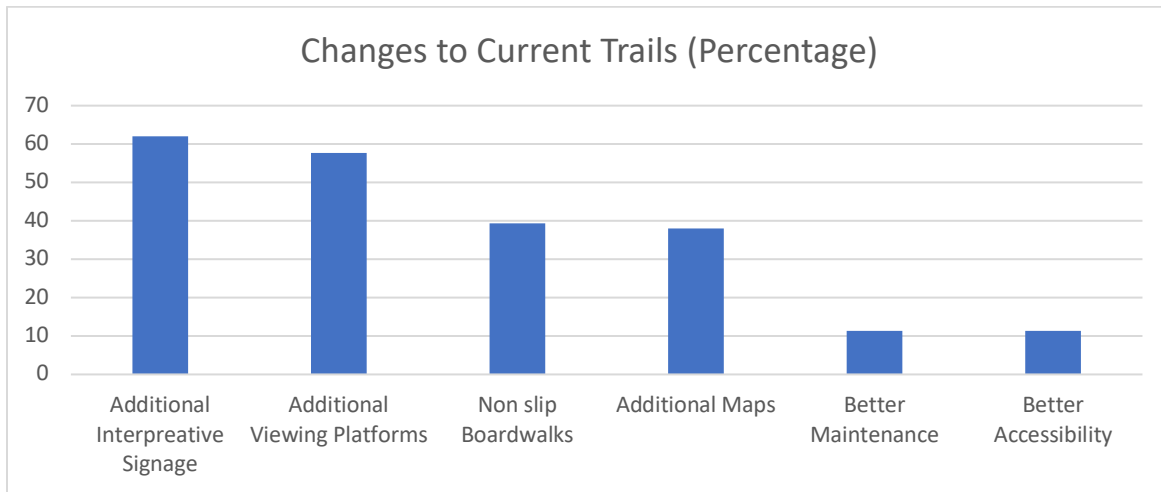
2. What do you currently like about the wetland trail system? Check all that apply



Other Suggestions:

- Boardwalks – nice and simple
- Accessible for all mobilities (mostly)
- Close to Creston
- Like to bike them
- An amazing variety of habitats

3. What, if any, changes would you make to the trails on the wetland. Check all that apply.



Other Suggestions:

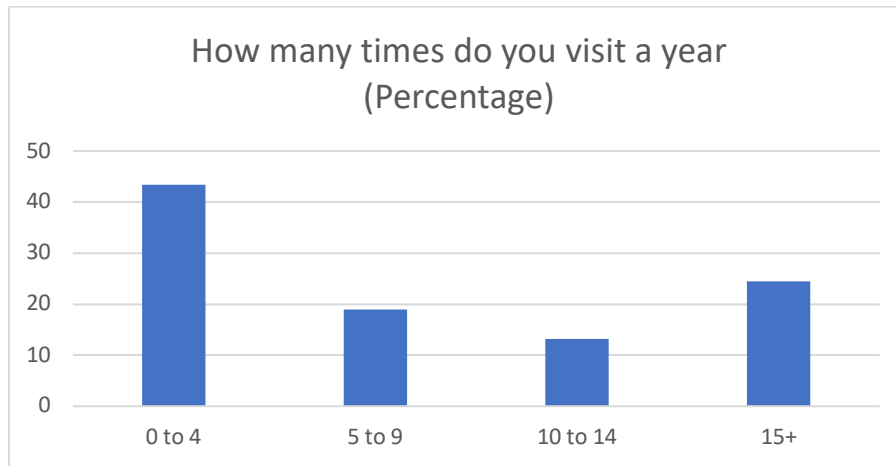
- More benches on trails
- Low profile garbage cans in more areas
- More parking
- Signage in both official languages and Spanish
- One completely wheelchair and stroller accessible loop
- Rails on narrow boardwalk
- Trail signage should show both estimated walking time and difficulty
- Directional Signage
- Would be great if the site could be developed for cross country skiing in winter time with groomed trails if we have the snow! Just another option to add maybe? I would gladly pay a membership fee to have groomed trails in Creston!
- More interpretive signage
- Map with rest areas/benches so those with limited mobility know where they are

4. What if any, improvements could be made to the parking lot and other amenities like water, toilets, seating, signage, etc.?

- Water Station
- Toilets (portables out on trail); Year round access to portables
- Toilets (Flushable)
- Shaded seating; Picnic areas
- Signage (direction and interpretive)
- Shaded parking

- Parking lines

5. Please tell us approximately how many times you visit the wetland in a year



6. Any other comments and suggestions related to outdoor space, accessibility and trails?

- Discounts or perks for people who don't drive a fossil fuel using vehicle to the site!
- Trailhead signage for trails that are on CVWMA property. Kayak launch point(s).
- Bird feeders that are visible
- More parking at secondary trail entrances (i.e. other than the main trail head)
- On the trails it was so bushy around the trails and you can't see well for viewing unless you up on the tower. Hope there is more sparrow houses/barns closer to the Centre so you didn't have to walk so far.
- Blinds for viewing birds closer
- There should be something interactive 'to do' (engage with) at all times of the year. Maybe some sort of signs outside the building, something wildlife-themed to take pictures with, painted wildlife footsteps' etc.

Additional Comments of Interest

- Be careful not to feel you have to do everything right now. Set out a modest program, finding the partner funding for elements you need to move ahead with now, and do it slowly and with purpose. You're doing a great job and you are stewards of an amazing wildland resource.
- Is it possible to add a designated crossing zone between the Balancing Rock parking lot and the wetlands? This parking lot is best suited to accessing (foot and bike) wetlands and trails on the north west side a designated crossing would be helpful for users as well as giving residents using the road a defined area to expect pedestrians and cyclists.
- Portable Washrooms at Summit Creek
- Leave it alone. Do not turn it into an expensive sterile bureaucratic building.
- Lots of the different features on your lists of possibilities sound enticing, but I would just want to be sure that the actual plans don't exceed the expected ability to staff and maintain the building over the coming years.

- Might consider making contact with Federal, Provincial, and Municipal personnel and also Canadian Colleges and Universities who have the knowledge and insight dealing with our environment for more ideas and their visions for the future generation.
- I work at the CDCC and would love for a mutually beneficial working relationship to be established between our facilities. Excited for the community and for all of you and the new building!
- This is a wildlife area--this should be the focus of all decision-making. Let's keep it small, efficient, and emphasize the outdoors. Some equipment rental may be necessary, but this place should not be a rec. centre or a MEC rental centre. It can't be everything to everyone. Trails need to be non-motorized for least impact to wildlife.
- All that you ask for is fairly costly and requires a significant financial commitment. Try to do this in phases. You also need to consider revenue operations such as a cafe and shop as providing ability to contribute to your annual operations budget.