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# What we heard Alberta's Plan for Parks

Phase 1 engagement summary



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## Introduction

In June 2024, Alberta began engagement to help develop a new Plan for Parks. Engagement is being completed in phases. Phase 1 engagement collected feedback from Albertans from June 19 to August 18, 2024, to inform the development of a new draft Plan for Parks. This engagement sought input on the perspectives, preferences and needs of Albertans for the provincial parks system. During Phase 2 engagement, scheduled for 2025, Albertans will review and provide input on the new draft Plan for Parks.

Feedback, along with government direction, research, analysis, and lessons learned from the original plan, will help shape the new Plan for Parks so that current and future generations can continue to discover, value, protect, and enjoy Alberta's parks and the benefits they provide.

This report provides a summary of the Phase 1 engagement approach for the public, Indigenous communities and organizations, and stakeholders, and what was heard during engagement.

# Engagement approach

## Engagement on the Plan for Parks:

- ensures the new plan is informed by feedback from Albertans across the province;
- explores opportunities for advancing reconciliation in parks;
- seeks to understand new and emerging trends in recreation and camping;
- enables sustainable development of programs and services in parks; and
- supports the long-term success of parks, in an environmentally responsible way.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

	Public Engagement	Indigenous Engagement	Stakeholder Engagement
Approach	Online survey Engagement Guide Interactive map of Alberta’s <i>Provincial Parks Act</i> site Fact Sheet Print promotional materials in parks and pop-up events Social media postings	Notification letter, with email/ phone follow-up Online survey Written submissions Meetings upon request Forestry and Parks contacted 76 Indigenous communities and organizations to provide input.	Email and/or phone notification Written submissions Meetings upon request Forestry and Parks contacted more than 200 stakeholder and partner organizations to provide input.
Results	A total of 4,940 online surveys were completed between June 19 to August 18, 2024.	Twenty-six Indigenous communities and organizations participated in engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five in-person meetings</li> <li>• Seven virtual meetings</li> <li>• 13 online surveys completed</li> <li>• One written submission</li> </ul>	In addition to the more than 200 contact emails and phone discussions, Alberta Forestry and Parks heard from five stakeholders in total and received input from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two virtual meetings</li> <li>• Four written submissions</li> </ul>

## Key feedback themes

In reviewing the consolidated engagement feedback (on-line survey, written, and meetings), the following themes were identified:

- **A majority of those who provided input into the new plan place a high value on both conservation and recreation benefits of Alberta's parks.** Though opinions differ on areas for prioritization within the new plan, more than 70% of respondents value both conservation and recreation opportunities within the provincial parks system.
- **There is limited support for the proposed updated Plan for Parks vision statement.** Though far more say they are in support (47%) than not (16%), more than one-third of respondents are neutral or unsure about the proposed updated vision statement.
- **There is broad support for the principles of Sustainability, Accountability, and Equitable Access principles; more than half also support the Reconciliation principle.** Many suggestions for additional guiding principles emphasize a focus on conservation.
- **In achieving the vision, feedback emphasized the need to conserve natural environments and ecosystems.** In addition, many favoured maintenance or expansion of existing opportunities over new development.
- **A quarter (25%) of Albertans expressed support for additional user fees.** However, Albertans expressed a desire to see user fees in parks reinvested in park facilities and programs.
- **Feedback indicated unfamiliarity with the role of partnerships in Alberta's provincial parks and would need more information to decide whether they support expanding them.** In support (33%), Not in support (18%) Unsure (47%).
- **Feedback expressed support for increasing access and providing new or expanded recreation opportunities provided they are done in a manner that is sustainable and keeps things basic.** There was a preference for basic and low-cost options for campsite development over higher-service levels.





## Development of a new draft Plan for Parks

Phase 1 engagement informed development of a new draft Plan for Parks that Albertans will review and provide input on as part of Phase 2 engagement. Below is a summary of how Phase 1 engagement informed the new draft plan:

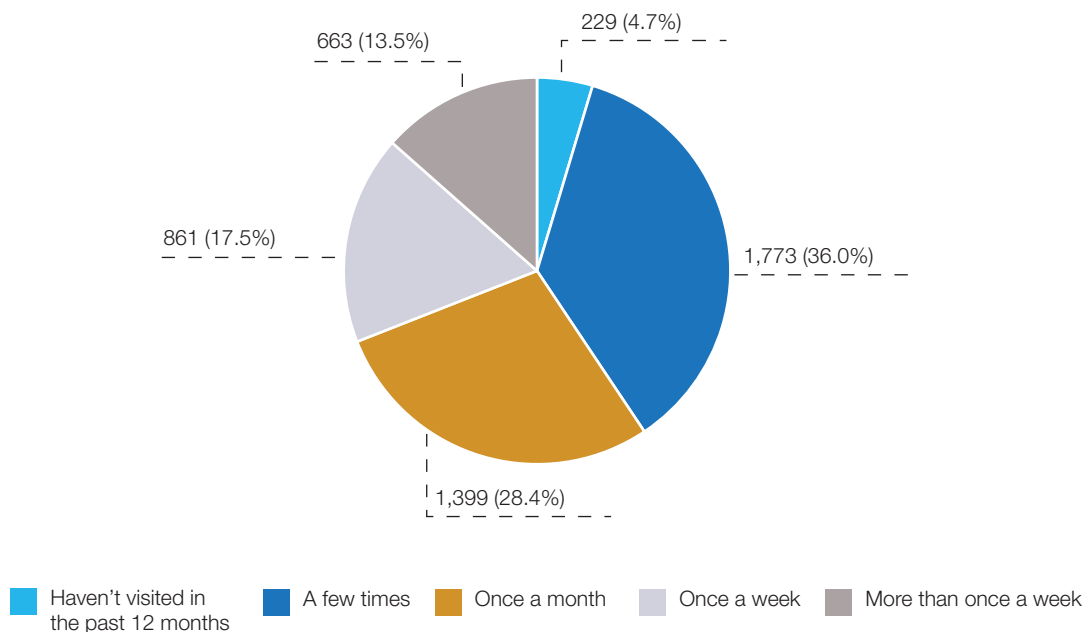
- Engaging on an updated draft vision statement informed the decision to return to the original vision statement, and to clarify “provincial parks”, so that: Alberta’s provincial parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.
- Engaging on four potential guiding principles (Accountability, Equitable Access, Reconciliation, and Sustainability) informed the development of the enduring goals and outcomes presented in the new draft plan.
- Engaging on options related to programs, services and partnerships informed the development of supporting actions presented in the new draft plan.

## Appendix A: Online engagement survey results summary

The following results are from all closed-ended questions in the online engagement survey.

### Question 1

Over the past 12 months, how often have you visited provincial parks, provincial recreation areas or wildland provincial parks?

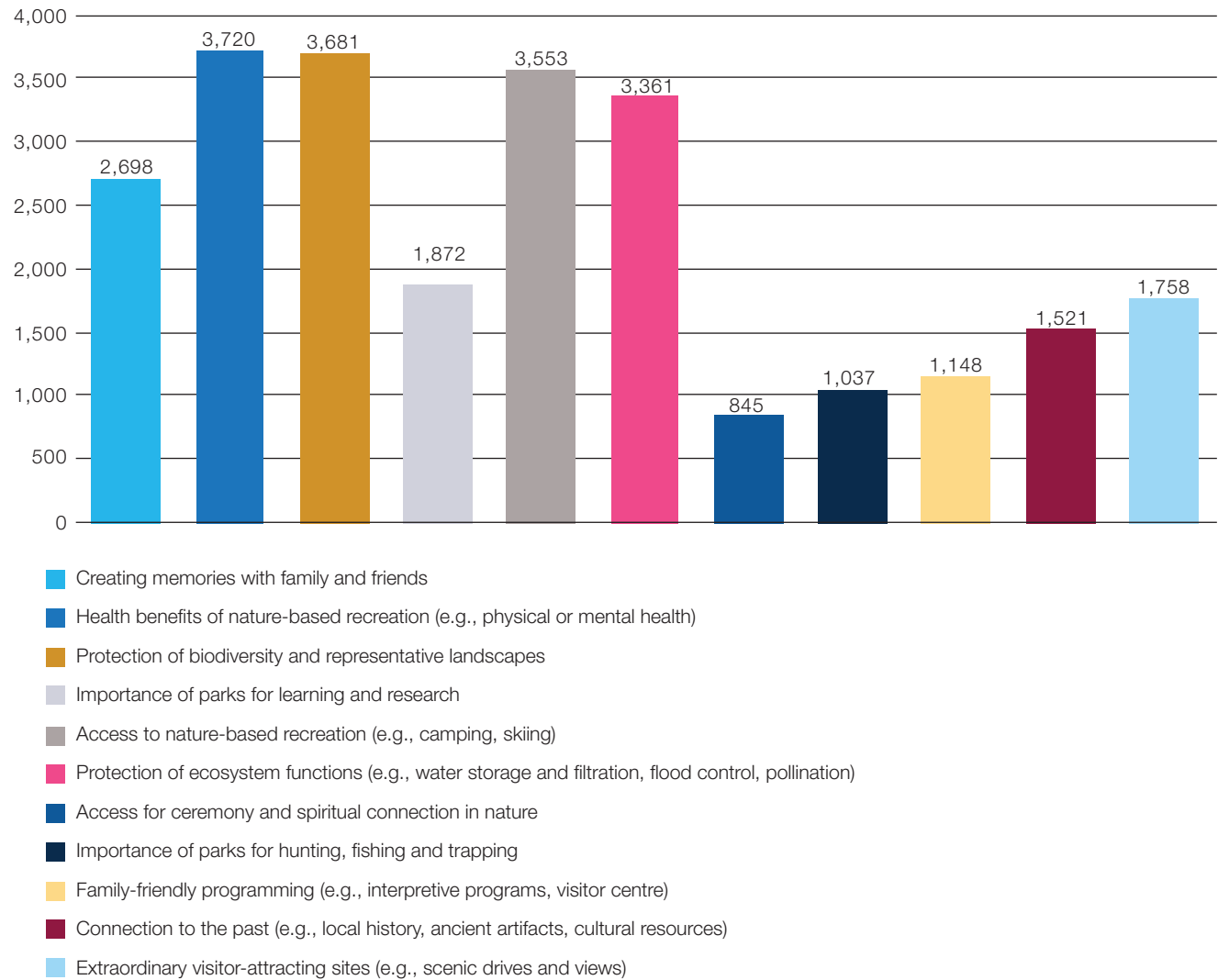


Optional question (4,923 response(s), 13 skipped)  
Question type: Radio button question



Question 2

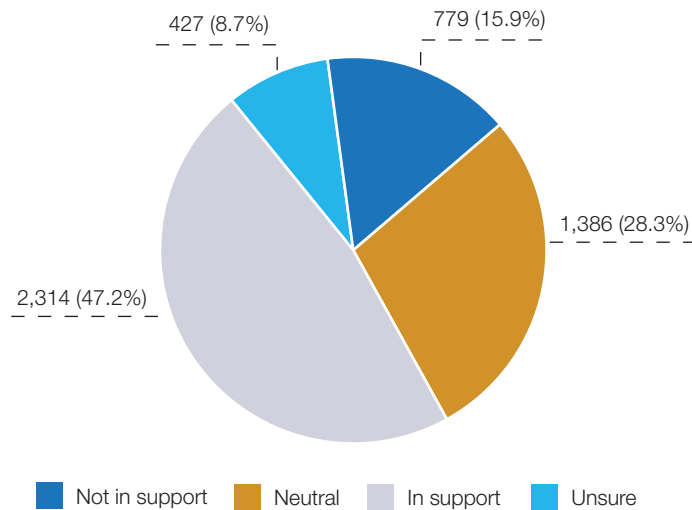
Which of the following do you most value about Alberta's parks? Select all that apply:



Optional question (4,929 response(s), 7 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox question

Question 4

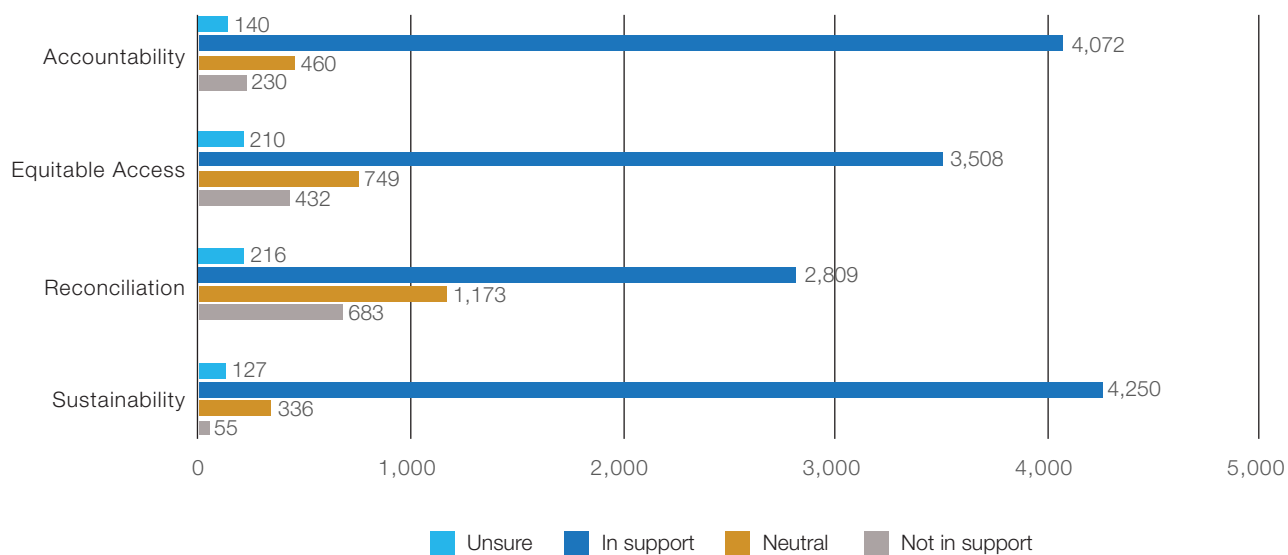
Thinking about the updated vision statement for Alberta’s parks, I am:



Optional question (4,906 response(s), 30 skipped)  
Question type: Radio button question

Question 6

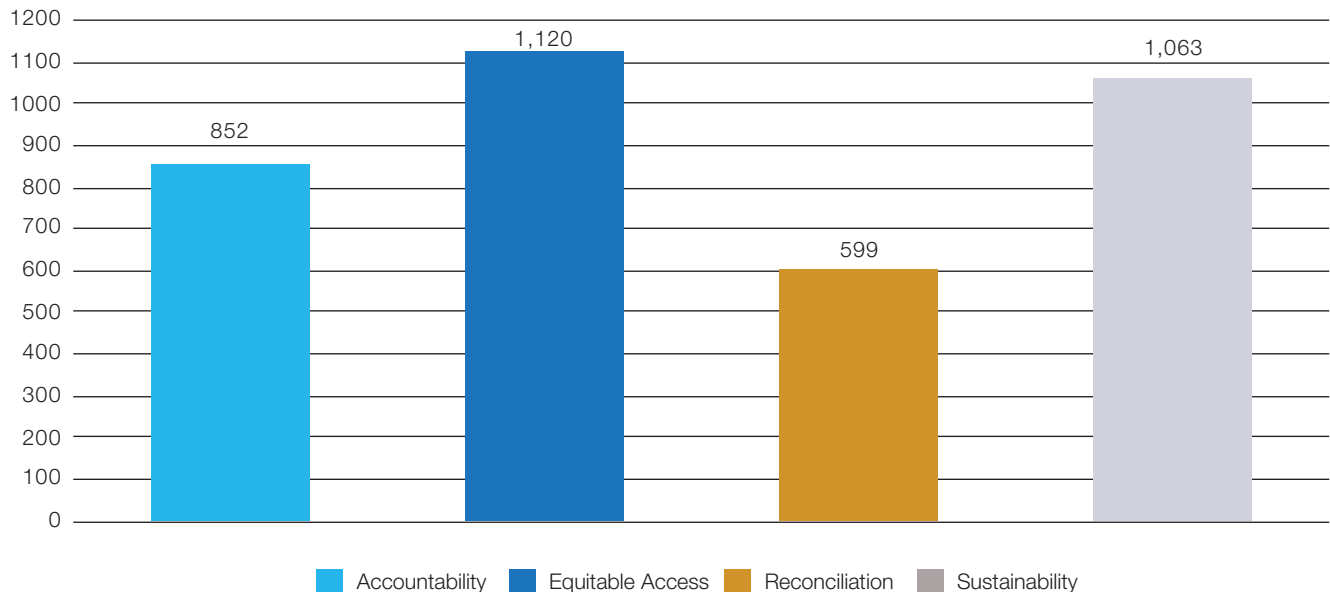
To what degree do you support the proposed Guiding Principles for Alberta’s parks?



Optional question (4,918 response(s), 18 skipped)  
Question type: Likert question

Question 7

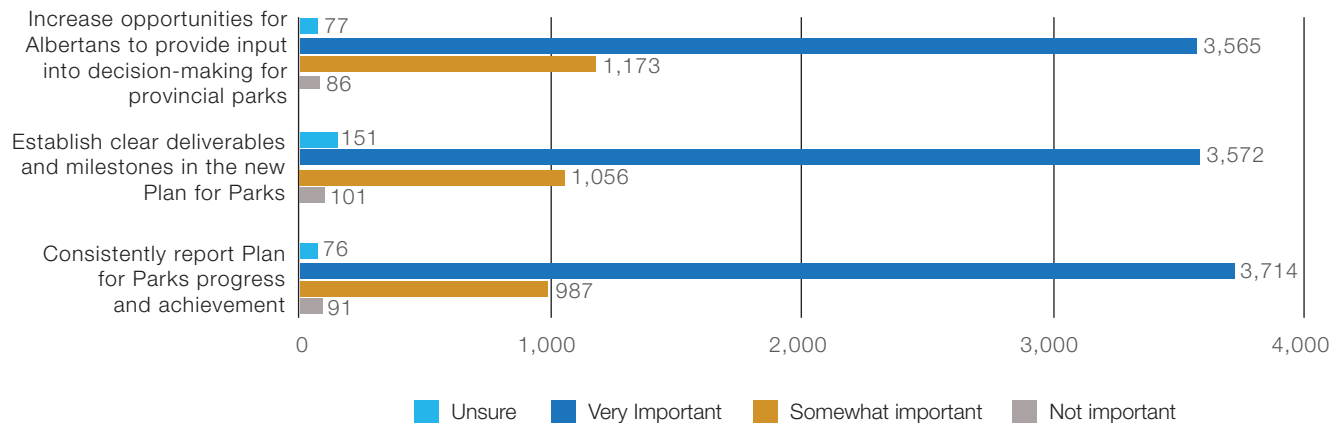
Do you have any suggestions for any of the Guiding Principles? Only select those that apply:



Optional question (2,543 response(s), 2,393 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox question

Question 9

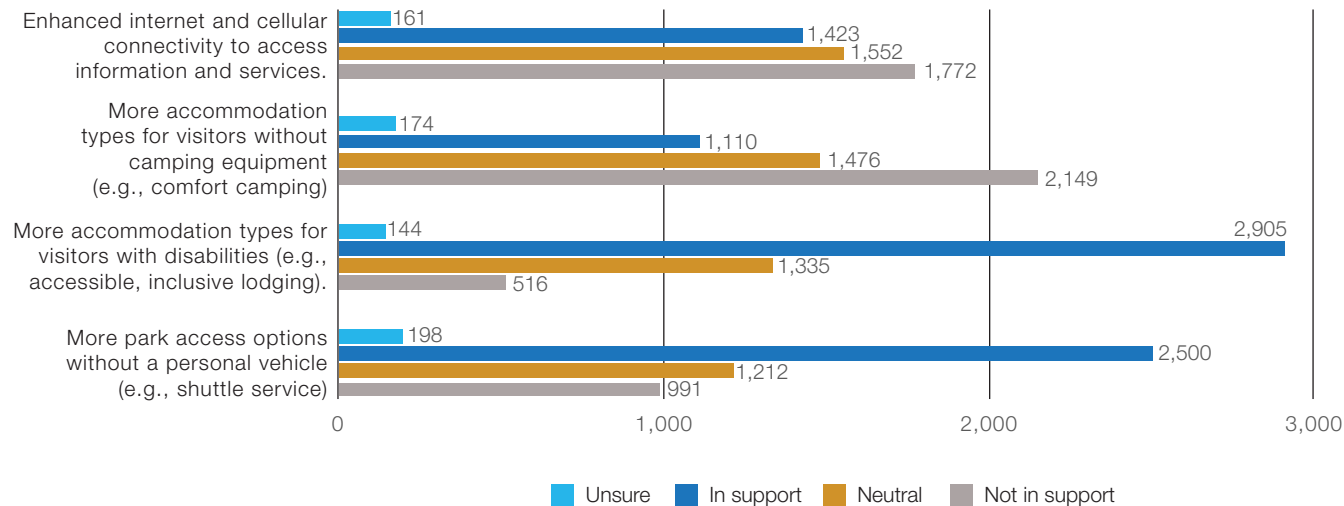
Which of the following ways to enhance accountability and transparency around planning for Alberta’s provincial parks are important to you?



Optional question (4,913 response(s), 23 skipped)  
Question type: Likert question

## Question 11

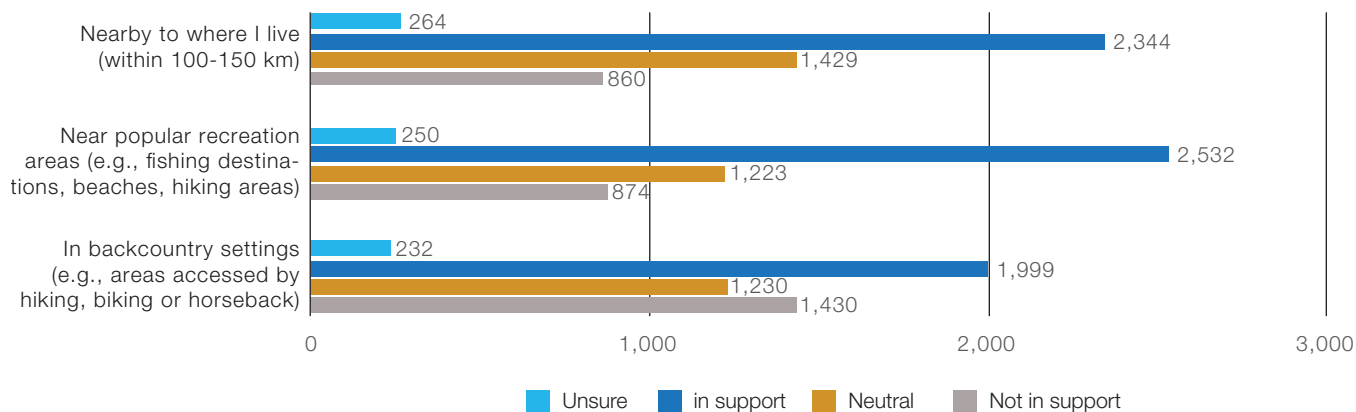
To what degree do you support creating more equitable access in Alberta's parks in the following ways?



Optional question (4,925 response(s), 11 skipped)  
Question type: Likert question

## Question 12

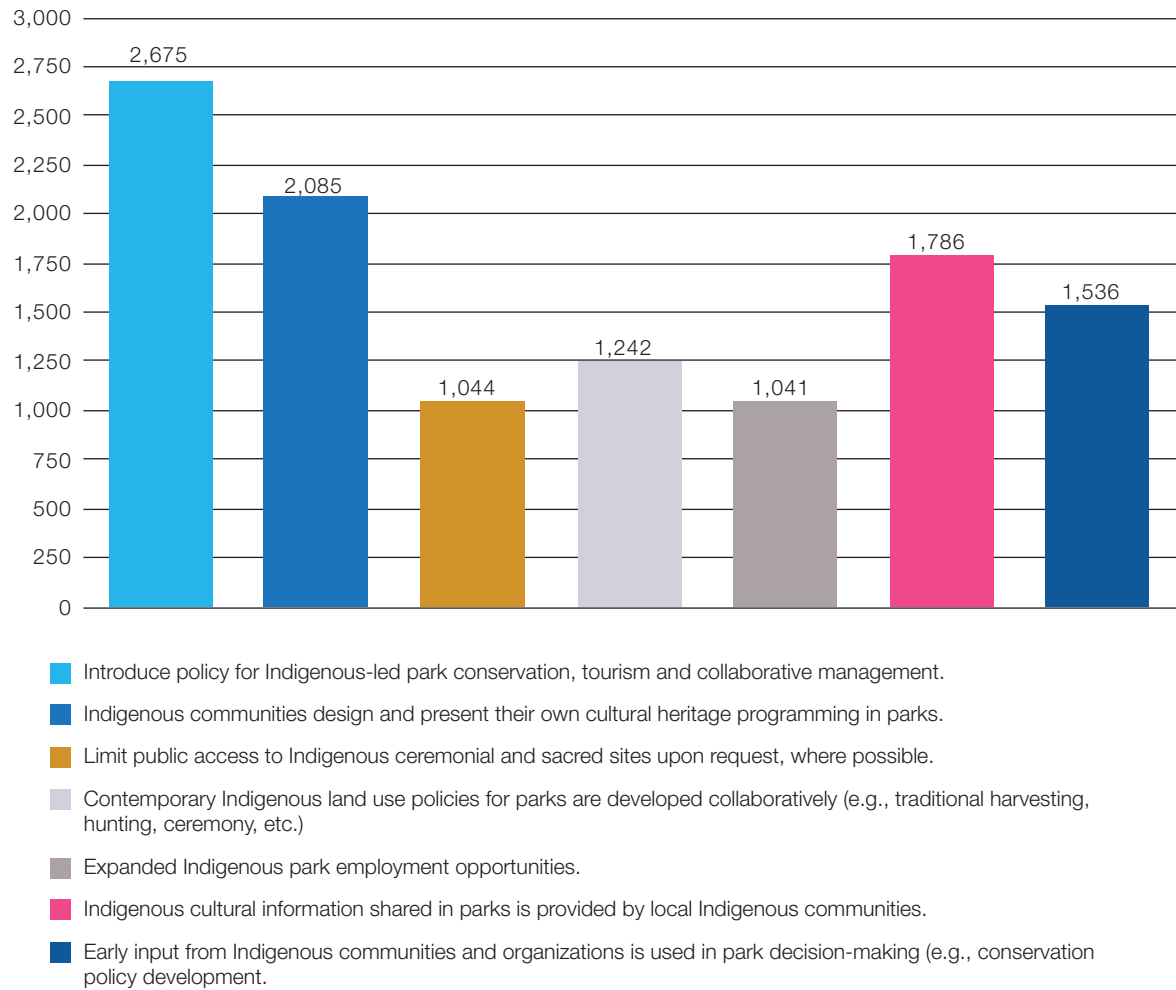
To what degree do you support increasing campsite availability in Alberta's parks in the following areas?



Optional question (4,920 response(s), 16 skipped)  
Question type: Likert question

Question 14

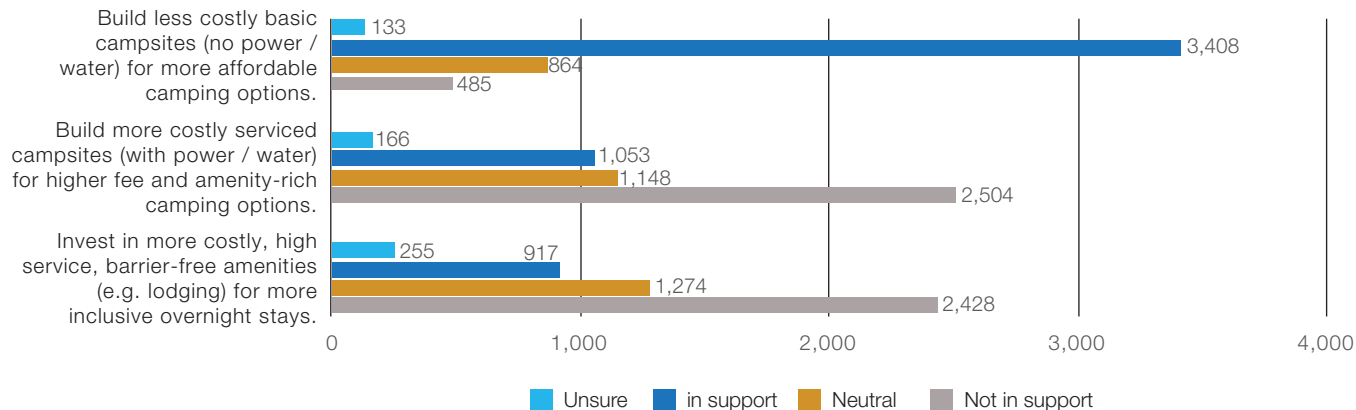
Which of the following three (3) options are most important for Indigenous reconciliation in Alberta’s parks?



Optional question (4,248 response(s), 688 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox question

## Question 16

Which of the following campsite development options would you support in Alberta's parks?

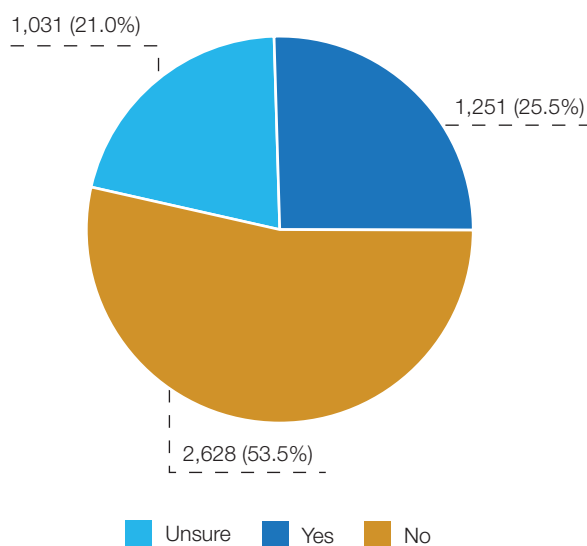


Optional question (4,919 response(s), 17 skipped)

Question type: Likert question

## Question 17

Would you be willing to pay additional user fees where visitor and recreation demands are greatest in Alberta's parks? Note: Exemptions to fees may be considered for identified categories of individuals or activities.

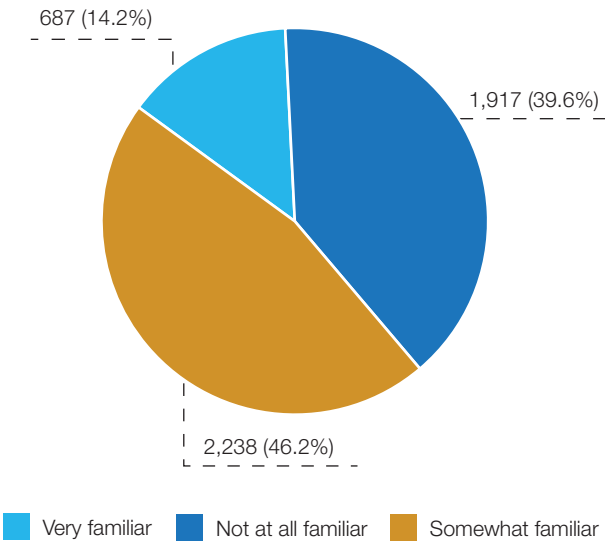


Optional question (4,910 response(s), 26 skipped)

Question type: Radio button question

**Question 18a**

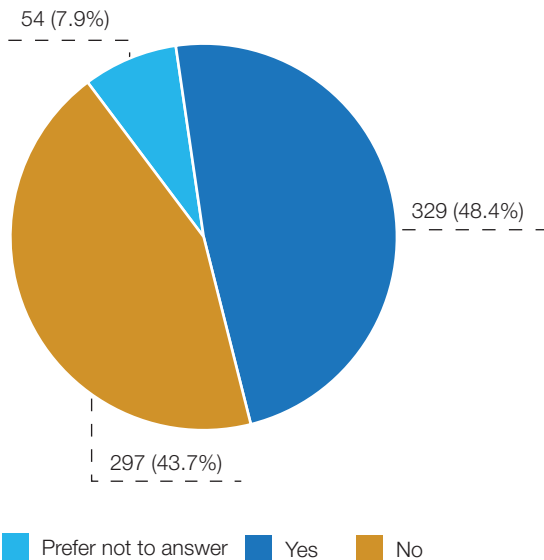
Are you familiar with the role “Friends of” partner groups play in enhancing Alberta’s provincial parks?



Optional question (4,842 response(s), 94 skipped)  
Question type: Radio button question

**Question 18b**

Are you currently, or have you previously, been involved with a “Friends of” provincial park group?

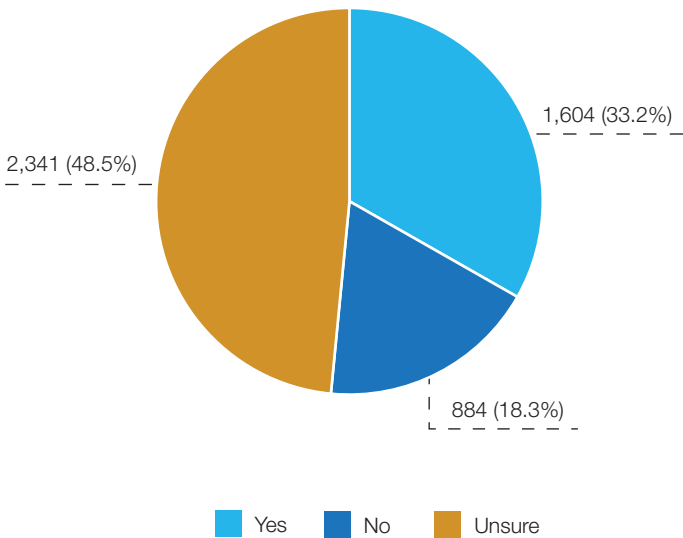


Optional question (680 response(s), 4,256 skipped)  
Question type: Radio button question



**Question 19**

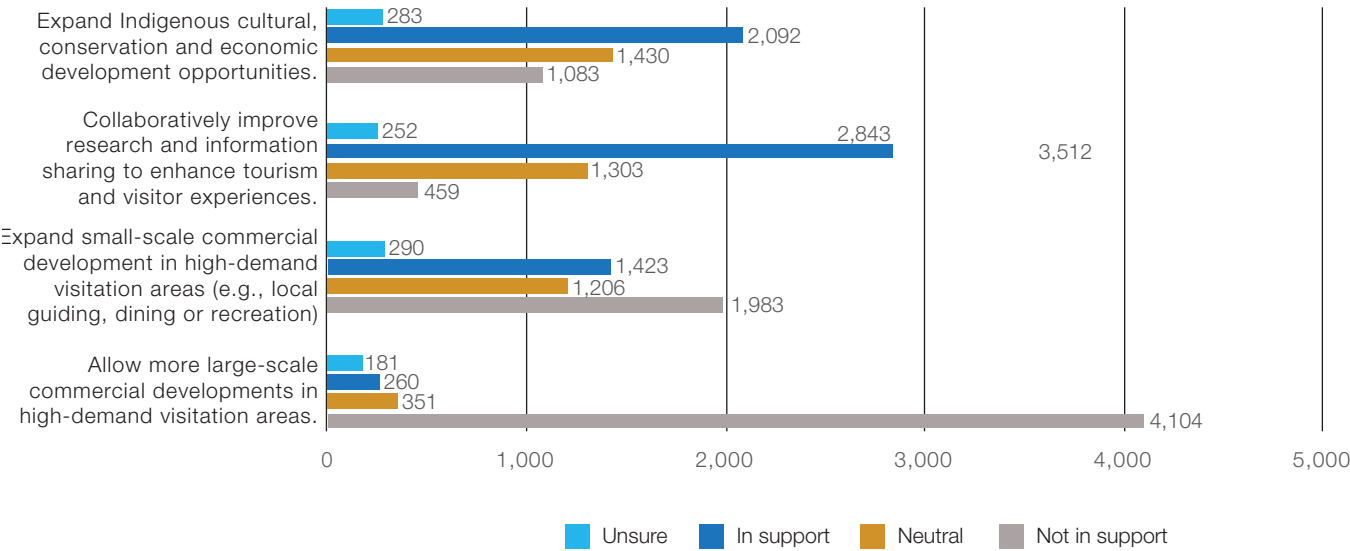
Do you support expanding the role of partner-provided services, programs and conservation efforts in Alberta's parks? (e.g., "Friends of" groups, facility operators)



Optional question (4,829 response(s), 107 skipped)  
Question type: Radio button question

**Question 21**

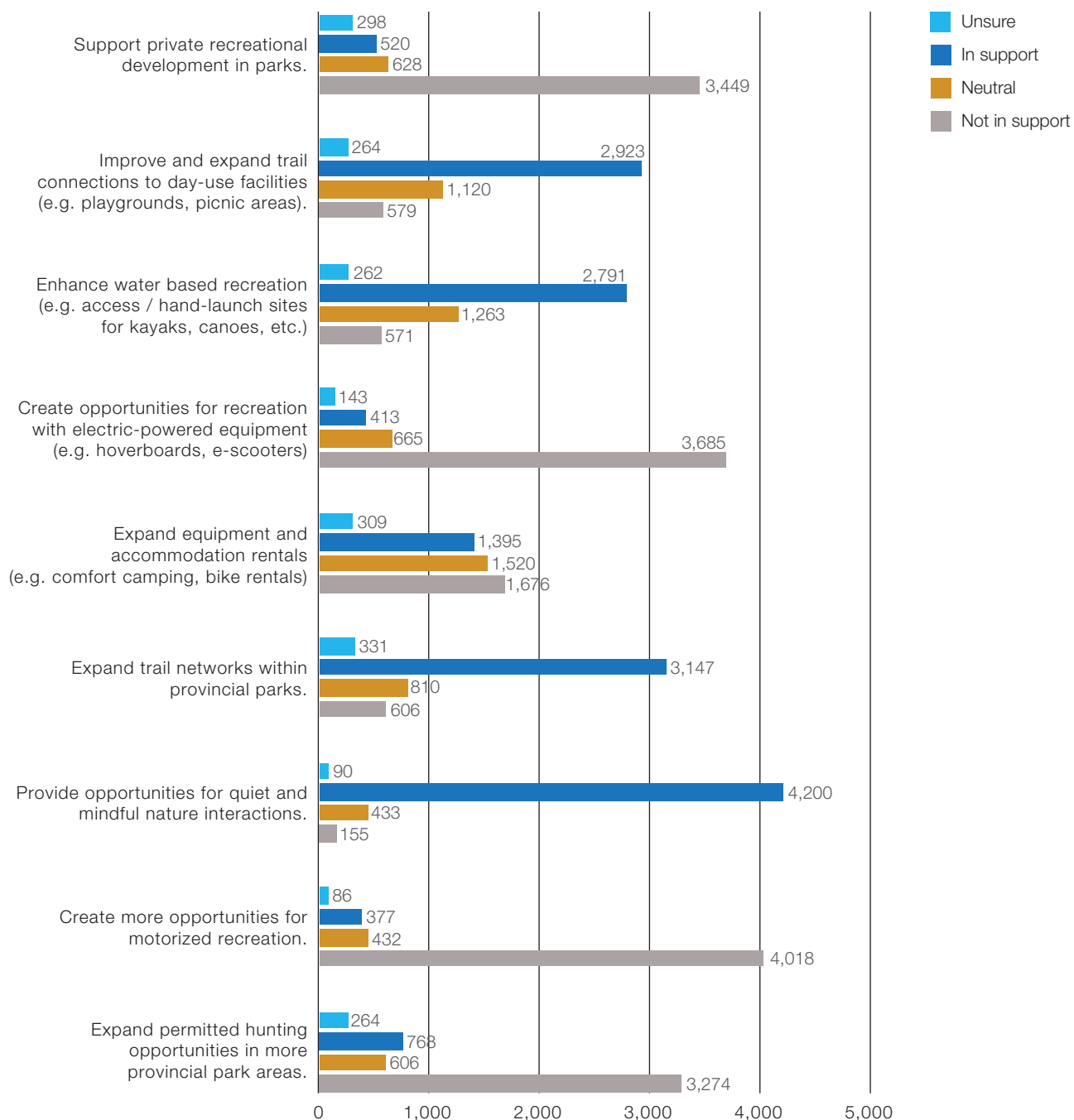
Which of the following options to enhance tourism and local visitor experiences would you support in Alberta's parks?



Optional question (4,918 response(s), 18 skipped)  
Question type: Likert question

## Question 23

Which of the following options to improve the diversity of recreation opportunities available in Alberta's parks would you support?

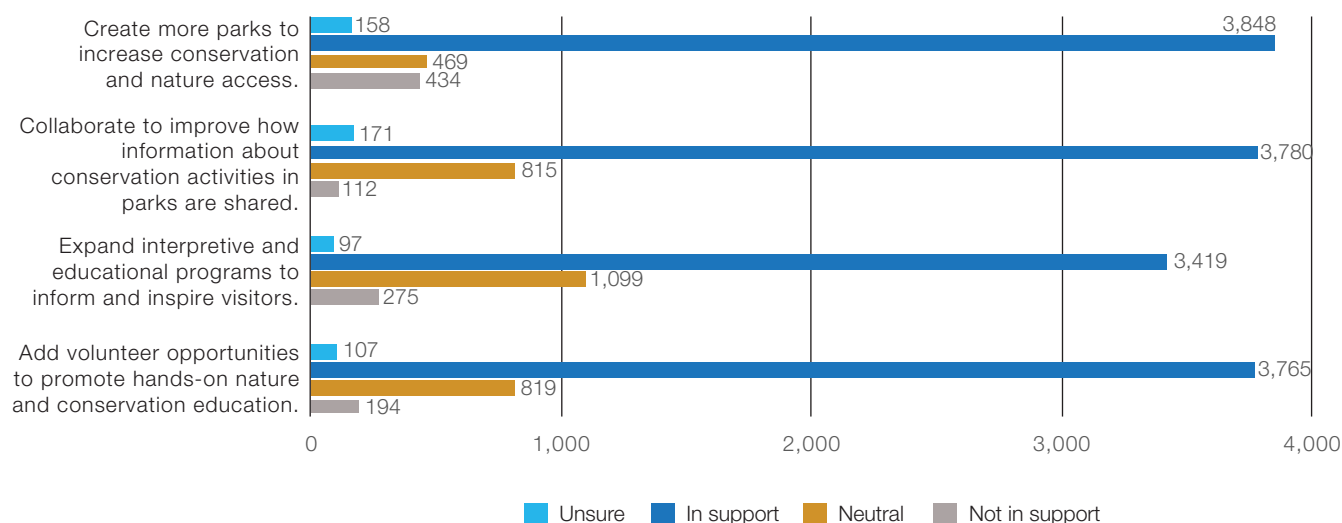


Optional question (4,930 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Likert question

## Question 25

Which of the following options to enhance nature conservation and education in Alberta's parks would you support?

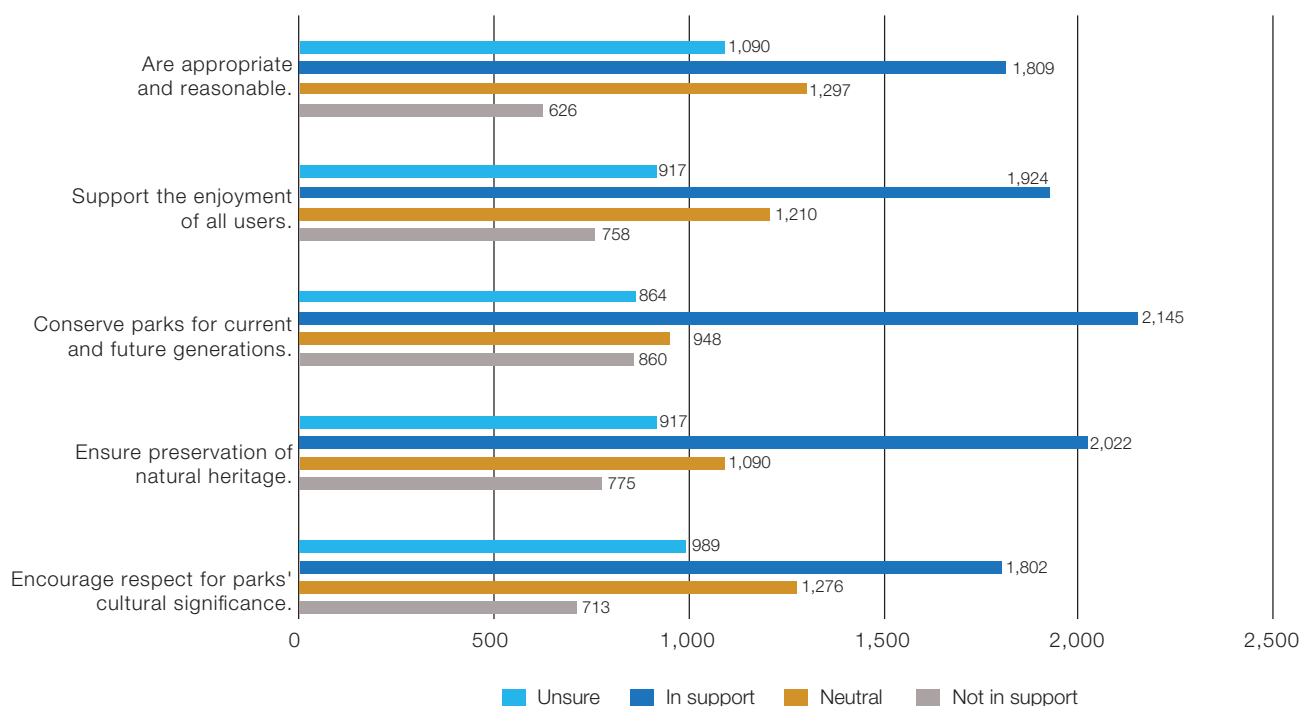


Optional question (4,921 response(s), 15 skipped)

Question type: Likert question

## Question 27

The legislation and its regulations that set the intent and rules for activities in Alberta's provincial parks and recreation areas:

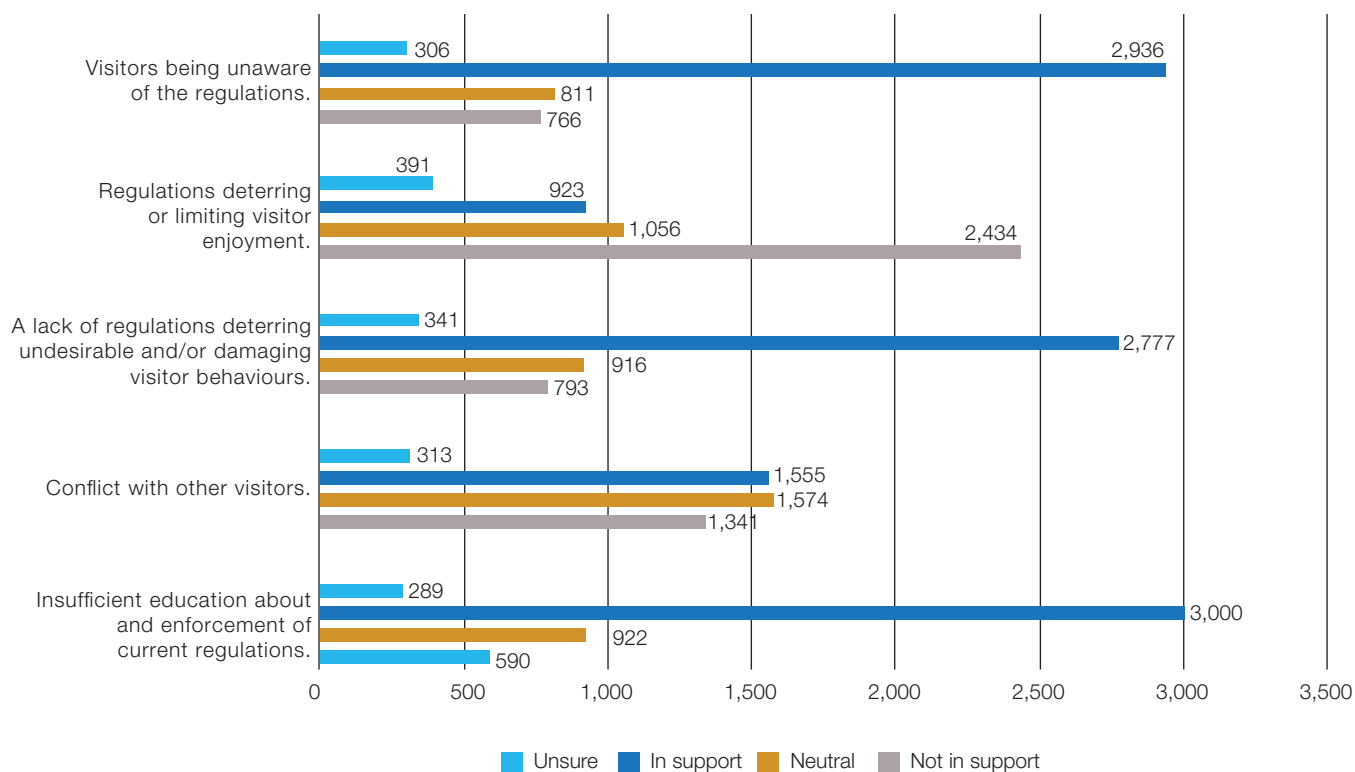


Optional question (4,845 response(s), 91 skipped)

Question type: Likert question

## Question 28

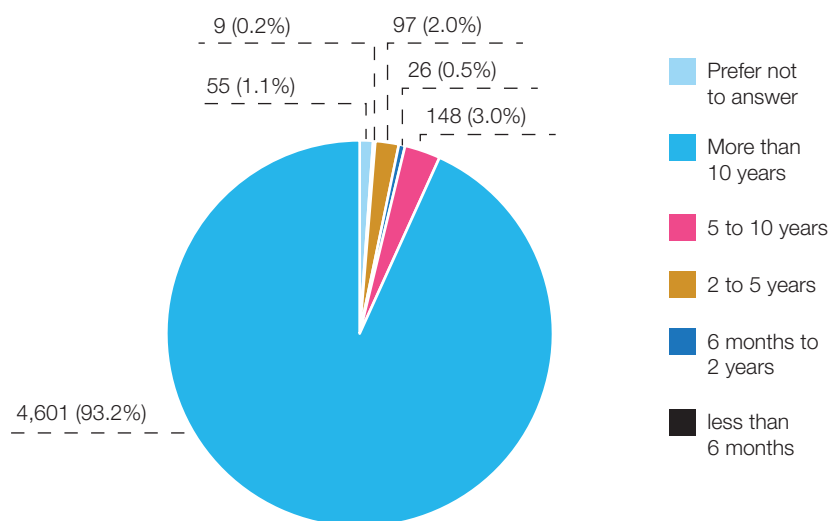
I have experienced barriers to enjoying certain recreational activities in Alberta's provincial parks because of:



Optional question (4,863 response(s), 73 skipped)  
 Question type: Likert question

## Question 32

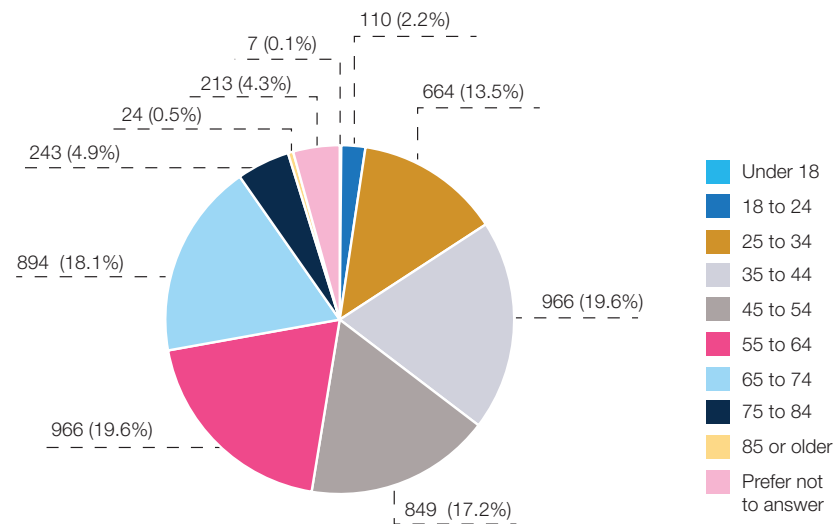
How long have you lived in Alberta?



Mandatory question (4,936 response(s))  
 Question type: Radio button question

**Question 33**

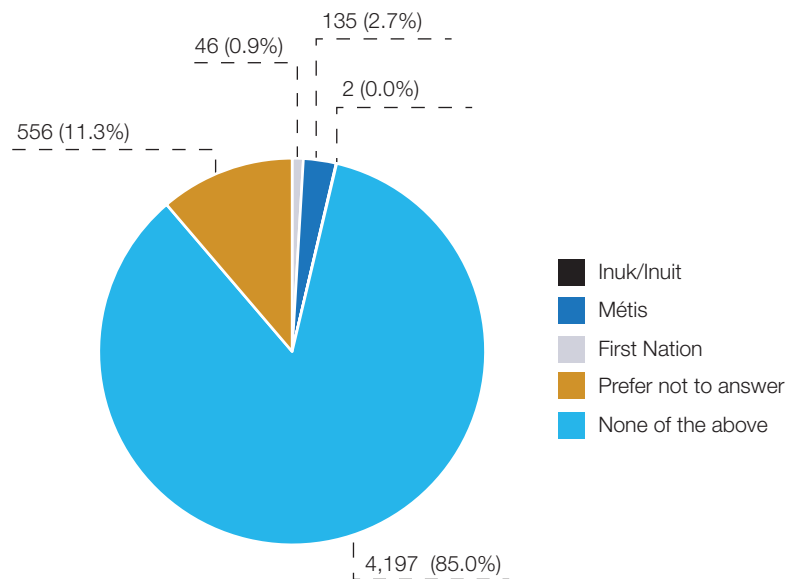
What is your age?



Optional question (4,936 response(s))  
Question type: Radio button question

**Question 34**

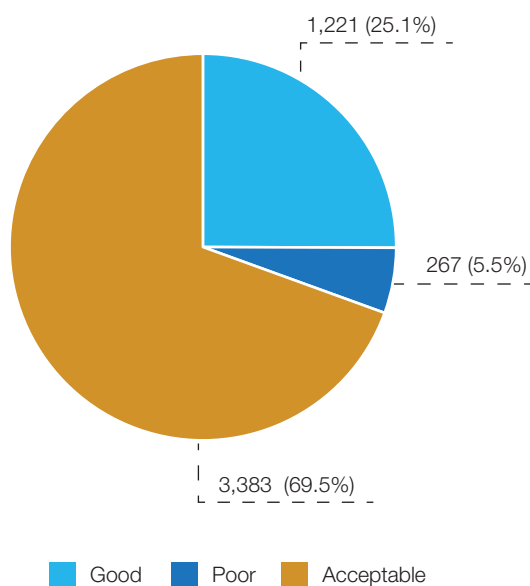
Do you identify as Indigenous?



Optional question (4,936 response(s))  
Question type: Radio button question

### Question 36

How was your experience sharing your input today?



Optional question (4,871 response(s), 65 skipped)

Question type: Radio button question