



# Hydrocut User Experience Survey Report

Sarah Laurie, Melissa Riddell and Natasha Symons

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

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## Integrated Project Supervisors

Karla Boluk, PhD  
kboluk@uwaterloo.ca

Kelsey Johansen, PhD (ABD)  
kelsey.johansen@uwaterloo.ca

UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**



FACULTY OF HEALTH  
Department of Recreation  
and Leisure Studies







**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary..... 1

SWOT Analysis & Social Media Breakdown .....2

Problem Identification .....3

Economic Impact of the Hydrocut on Waterloo Region .....4

Grant Applications and Pump Track Information .....4

Recommendations .....5

Conclusion.....6

References .....7

Appendix A .....8

Appendix B: Infographic ..... 14



## **Executive Summary**

The following is a report on a newly updated User Experience survey, created for the use of the Hydrocut Committee in order to better understand their user demographics, needs, preferences, and feedback. The goal of this survey is to solve the problems brought to us by the Committee, namely, to gain insight on the community's preferences regarding the pump track and merchandise offerings, and to collect up-to-date information regarding users of the Hydrocut. In order to solve these problems, we have created a survey made up of both quantitative and qualitative questions surrounding these topics and related areas. The use of both quantitative and qualitative questions will provide much needed statistics regarding the users of the trails while also allowing the community to provide input and feedback in their own words so that they feel that their needs are being met effectively. Together, this collection of data can be utilized to solve the aforementioned problems presented by the Committee while also providing additional information that can be used in future developments and in grant applications. Economic impacts are also considered in this report and through the survey to provide an insight for the Committee on just how much of a tourism draw the trails are. This information can be used in several ways, such as proving economic worth to the City of Waterloo for funding and in creating partnerships with local businesses in the area, aside from the ones that are currently partners. This report also dives into some social media strategies that, using the data collected, can make the material promoted more relevant and engaging for members of the community, whether or not they currently use the Hydrocut. The goal with these social media recommendations is to mold the Hydrocut's image into one of inclusive, fun, outdoor activity that is open to everyone in not only the Waterloo community, but many surrounding communities as well.

## SWOT Analysis & Social Media Breakdown

Our goal in creating the community engagement survey for the Hydrocut Trail system is to better understand their strengths and weaknesses to identify potential future opportunities or threats. Some of the questions we include in the survey focus on getting a sense of how visitors travel to and from the Hydrocut, how often they visit, average length of visit, who they visit with, their motivation for visiting and what season they visit in. These questions will provide insight to gain a sense of how people spend their time and how we can improve their experience. For example, if people tend to come for longer periods of time, this could be an opportunity to add washrooms or rest areas for people to access easily. If people tend to visit with others and use it as a social experience, this could be an opportunity for large picnic tables to be added for people to gather pre- or post-ride to hang out.

We are also looking to gather information of how much people spend on a trip to the Hydrocut, if they require hotels and visit local restaurants, if users attend trail ride events, and get a sense of their overall satisfaction with the trails. Understanding how much money is spent on a trip to the Hydrocut will help identify the economic impact that the trails have as a tourist attraction for the City of Waterloo. If people tend to go out and spend money when they visit the Hydrocut, this is an opportunity to show the city the positive impact that the trails have on generating revenue for the local economy. This is information that could be an opportunity for the Hydrocut to get more funding from the city to be able to expand and increase their current offerings. The result of this question could also be a threat if we discover that a trip to the Hydrocut does not generate much economic value to the region. This could pose challenges for getting grant funding, however, could be an incentive to find ways to partner with local businesses to increase dollars spent. One way to do this could be through coupons, where someone who visits the Hydrocut and scans a code can get a discount coupon to use at a local business. We are also interested in finding out where the users primarily come from and how many users are locals engaging in proximity tourism when they visit the Hydrocut. Proximity tourism is when a person engages in a tourist activity in a place that is close and familiar to them (Diaz-Soria, 2016). Therefore, users of the Hydrocut would be engaging in proximity tourism each time they visit this attraction.

Understanding how many users attend trail ride events will display a sense of community as well as identify the number of people who do not attend and determine positive changes that can be made to increase attendance at these events. This is an opportunity for users to learn more about trail ride events, as some may not be familiar with them and to feel more engaged with the Hydrocut community. One open-ended survey question is a review on users experiences at the Hydrocut and any feedback or comments regarding what they would like to see and suggestions for improvements. This is an important question as it allows users to express their thoughts and share any positive or negative feedback. This will help identify things that are being done well that make users want to stay, as well as changes that can be made to improve the overall experience. This feedback is valuable as it will identify opportunities to capitalize on, to strengthen the experience for users, as well as offer feedback so improvements can be made to avoid future threats.

One area that is an opportunity to expand and focus on is social media. We have included survey questions to ask users what social media platforms they use, and an open-ended question on what types of posts they want to see on social media. There is an opportunity to increase the Hydrocut's social media presence and it is important to do so by sharing content that is of interest

to the users. Posting more pictures and videos could be an opportunity to share with a wide audience what the trails have to offer and, more specifically, what mountain biking is all about. It can be a way to show off the trails being used for mountain biking, hiking, and trail running in all seasons, to encourage users to participate in anything that interests them. By highlighting users of all genders and ages, it will showcase that the trails are for everyone. No matter one's riding ability, the trails are a place for them to learn on and gain confidence. The media tends to highlight the work and play of men over women (McCormack, 2020) so it is important to share the perspectives of females as well to display the inclusivity of the sport.

Another future opportunity is on the topic of women in mountain biking. It is well known that "mountain biking is portrayed as a male-domain whereby mountain-biking products are to be developed for and used by men" (Huybers-Withers & Livingston, 2010), so it is necessary to give females some attention in the sport as well. Women are often viewed as inferior to men, especially when it comes to the sporting world. It is crucial to treat women as equals and show that they are just as much a part of the sport as men. Continuing to host and expand women's trail ride events is a future opportunity to get more women involved in the sport. McCormack (2020) states that "women describe finding other women to ride with as freeing, allowing not only for the development of camaraderie and trust, but for a different style of riding" (p. 122), which allows women to feel more comfortable and creates a space where women feel less judgement from others. McCormack (2020) goes on to say that "women described their groups as more supportive than mixed groups" (p. 122) which highlights the importance of having these events available for women. Creating a time and place for women to hang out, be social, and practice their skills will allow them to be a part of a tight-knit community. This is an opportunity to grow the sport of mountain biking to include more women in a predominantly male sport.

This survey is designed to get user feedback to identify areas that can be improved upon as well as areas the Hydrocut is doing well in that users want to see continued. We hope that the findings of the survey will provide valuable insight to the economic value that the Hydrocut provides to the City of Waterloo.

### **Problem Identification**

The current problem being faced by the Hydrocut can be broken down into three sections. Firstly, the Hydrocut Committee is looking to expand on the amenities offered through the Hydrocut Trail system by developing a new pump track. This track will function as a skatepark for bikes, teaching new and existing users skills required for the trails. This includes trail speed, bike control, and anaerobic fitness. Second, the Hydrocut Committees is trying to gather more information on its user base through the development of a new User Experience survey. The last survey performed by the committee was conducted in 2017. Since then, the ridership at the Hydrocut trails has increased exponentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic which caused many people to take up new forms of outdoor recreation such as biking (Doubleday et al., 2021). This large increase in ridership means that the data gathered in 2017 no longer represents their user base effectively. Therefore, a new User Experience survey has been developed to meet the growing need for data on trail users. Lastly, the Hydrocut Committee would like to expand their merchandise line to capture more of their user base. By gathering more up-to-date user data, the Hydrocut Committee will better understand the demographics they are targeting with their merchandise and can better tailor their merchandising to those specific groups. Given the three main problems stated above, the solution we have designed is a new User Experience Survey

which captures information on demand for a pump track, updated demographic data, usage data, and economic impact data.

### **Economic Impact of the Hydrocut on Waterloo Region**

Through the development of our new survey, the Hydrocut will be able to gain more data on the impacts their users have within Waterloo Region. Firstly, Question 14 refers to the economic impacts of users (Appendix A); by asking how much participants typically spend on a trip to the Hydrocut we get a sense of what economic benefits the Hydrocut brings to the Region. Question 4 breaks down some of the ways that money is distributed within the community by asking which amenities they use on a trip to the Hydrocut. For example, if someone with a Halton Region postal code says they go to a restaurant with friends after their ride, we can see that they are bringing money into the Region from out of town. This can help the Hydrocut leverage themselves as a tourist attraction which draws people into Waterloo leading them to spend money at local businesses in the area. Another example could be a person from Barrie, Ontario, visiting the Hydrocut and identifying that they stay overnight using accommodations in Waterloo Region during their trip. This not only shows that the Hydrocut is economically valuable to the Region, but also that the Hydrocut itself drives tourism in the Region.

### **Grant Applications and Pump Track Information**

Another important element of the new Hydrocut User Experience survey is Section C which focuses on questions regarding the development of a new pump track. Section C is important in two ways; firstly, the information gathered in this section will help to provide data when applying for grants and secondly, it provides the community an opportunity to voice their opinions on future development ideas. This creates a stronger connection to the Hydrocut and its future developments within the local community.

The Hydrocut is currently in the process of applying for a grant which they will use to fund the development of a new pump track. This grant application is through the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, which is focused on supporting communities in creating and adapting public spaces to meet the needs of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, 2021). Some important elements of this grant application are a description of the relationship the Hydrocut has with their community, proof of community engagement within the Hydrocut, and why the specific project they are applying for is important (Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, 2021). For that reason, the updated User Experience survey has been created to capture data on these topics and ensure the Hydrocut has all the information they need for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative grant and other similar grants going forward.

The Hydrocut has a great community. This is clear from the many races and events they host in a given year, as well as their many ties to businesses within the Waterloo Region. However, for grant applications, the Hydrocut needs to be able to point not only to their partnerships, but also to their participants to display their relationship within the cycling community. The User Experience survey provides this data by quantifying how often people ride, who they ride with, what events they participate in, and more. By having two-way communication in the form of comment boxes, the Hydrocut can show that they have a strong relationship with their community.

The new User Experience Survey will also provide great data for proof of engagement with the community. Community engagement is a major section on the Application Guide for the Canada Health Communities Initiative Grant. The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative describes community engagement as the opportunity to get feedback from the community, as well as outreach to the community for their input (Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, 2021). Section C provides this opportunity for feedback through questions regarding interest in the pump track, and the types of features participants want included in the track. Some relevant and important questions regarding community engagement and the development of the pump track include questions 28, 29, and 30. Firstly, Question 28 asks who would use the pump track? This question will help to quantify the demand for the pump track and can be used in the application to show that there is a desire for a pump track within the Hydrocut. Secondly, Question 29 identifies the different elements of the pump track and provides participants the opportunity to select relevant features of the track, as well as use a comment box to describe any other features of interest. This shows that the community has been consulted on the project and that input will be an asset when applying for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative. Lastly, Question 30 demonstrates that the community was given the freedom to give meaningful qualitative feedback on the issue via the comment box. Participants were not made to only choose from a list provided by the Hydrocut Committee, but instead had the freedom to express their interests in their own words.

Engaging the community on the development of the new pump track is not just beneficial for grant applications. It also benefits the community as a whole, by creating a stronger sense of ownership for those who participate in the survey. This is important as insufficient community engagement when designing a new park space is considered a barrier to creating a sense of ownership amongst communities (Mullenbach et al., 2019). To combat this, it is important that the Hydrocut use the User Experience survey as an opportunity to have meaningful engagement with its community. Meaningful engagement means that participants feel heard, feel valued, and feel represented within the space (Mullenbach et al., 2019). By specifically asking what users want and following through with building plans, the Hydrocut can ensure users feel heard, valued and represented through the development of future trails and pump tracks within the Hydrocut.

### **Recommendations**

There have been a variety of recommendations suggested throughout this report, which will be summarized here. By using the data collected from the survey, decisions can be made regarding creating permanent washroom facilities or large picnic tables on site to better meet the needs of the community, partnering with local companies through the use of a coupon scan code found at the entrances to the Hydrocut, as well as seeing what has been well received by the community so that can be continued or continuously developed. Another prominent area that could be improved is social media use - the data from the survey will help to focus the Hydrocut's efforts on specific platforms. It may also encourage them to invest more time and energy in promoting the trails to both male and female athletes through the use of diverse age, gender, and ethnic depictions and videos to portray inclusivity, rather than only using social media to show whether the trails are open or closed. Throughout the report, there are a variety of other suggestions for how to best utilize the data collected from specific questions including incorporating community input, especially regarding the pump track, and tracking the economic impact that the trail's users have on the Region to receive more funding.

In terms of recommendations that have not been mentioned previously, two areas include how to gain more survey respondents than the current Hydrocut community and a few ideas for merchandising that may not have been explored yet. By having the survey conducted online through a link, many more people will have the opportunity to provide their input and feedback than the 2017 survey which was conducted in person on physical paper at the entrance to the Hydrocut. An online version will allow respondents to be able to complete the survey from the comfort of their home and with no time pressures. It is also much easier to share the link between people through word of mouth and by offering the survey for an extended period of time rather than having it available for a day or two. In terms of the best way to distribute the survey, social media will likely reach the most people, but another effective idea may be having a scan code available on the billboard at the entrances to the trails to allow every person that visits the Hydrocut to provide their input, even if they are not following the Hydrocut on social media. Seeing as the Hydrocut is partnering with the City of Waterloo for the pump track, it is possible that they will allow the survey link to be shared on their website under the news and notices section to reach more of the Waterloo Region population, even those that have never heard of the Hydrocut. One last idea is to use a sponsored ad on social media which will spread the word about the survey with even more people, namely those that are not currently following the Hydrocut. It is no secret that social media is one of the most popular forms of communication, so reaching as many people as possible is far more likely while using social media effectively.

The Hydrocut Committee had done an amazing job with merchandising thus far by offering a wide variety of products and by offering those products through local companies that help to promote their business as well, thus stimulating the local economy in several ways. Two ideas for possible merchandise include stickers and dry-fit shirts. Stickers are inexpensive, often placed on laptops or water bottles, and are an easy way to get their name out into the community. Dry-fit shirts, either long sleeve or short sleeve, will cater more to the active population by providing something that they can wear while riding or while living their activity-centred lives. By having sweat-wicking materials rather than cotton, they will be more comfortable and provide free marketing for the Hydrocut while they wear it.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the new and improved Hydrocut User Experience Survey will provide a strong base for future growth within the Hydrocut. The data itself will help to provide proof of community engagement and economic impact for grant and funding applications, make improvements to the pump track plan so that it is more beneficial to the community, and ensure that their social media use is both accurately utilized and inclusive to the trail users demographics. The survey results will help to guide the Hydrocut Committee with any future developments that they have planned by providing information about their audience, their opinions, and their economic impacts. The changes that were made to the survey have addressed the problems mentioned previously - there are questions to address the needs and wants of the community regarding the pump track, questions to better understand the demographics of the Hydrocut community, and questions regarding merchandising interests and community opinions of the current offerings.

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## Appendix A

### **Title of the Study: 2021 Hydrocut User Experience Survey**

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study conducted by the Hydrocut Committee. Thank you for considering participating in our survey.

Participation is open to those individuals who have used or plan to use the Hydrocut.

Participation will consist of an anonymous survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

### **What is this study about?**

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the Hydrocut's users, their preferences, and input regarding topics such as merchandising and the development of the pump track. The information collected will be used to further develop the Hydrocut as a brand, its social media presence, and future grant applications.

Your responses are anonymous, and you may decline to answer any questions in the survey. No personal information you provide will be shared in any reports or data sets. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any questions in the survey by leaving them blank and you may decide to stop participating in the survey at any time.

In appreciation of the time you have given to this survey, you may enter your name into a draw for the prize of (TBD by Hydrocut committee).

By completing and returning this survey, you are giving your consent.

### **Part A: Tell us about yourself**

**This information will provide insight on user demographics and impact on the community of Waterloo Region.**

#### **1. What gender do you identify with?**

- Male       Female       Non-Binary       Prefer not to say

#### **2. Age:**

- 18-24       25-34       35-49       50-64       65+

#### **3. What is your postal code?**

- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. What amenities do you use when visiting?**

- Accommodations  
 Restaurants  
 Local Shops  
 None  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. How did you hear about the Hydrocut?**

- Friend/Family     Bike shop     Other (Explain)     Website/Social Media  
(Which one?):

**6. Do you own any Hydrocut merchandise?**

- If yes, what do you own?
- If no, are you aware that there is Hydrocut merchandise?

**7. Is there any merchandise that you would like the Hydrocut to offer?**

- Open ended?

**Part B: Current user experience:**

**Knowing how the participants use the trails will help us plan for the future to best suit the needs in the community.**

**8. How did you arrive at the Hydrocut?**

- Bike     Automobile     Walk

**9. How often do you typically use The Hydrocut trails system?**

- Rarely, a few times a year     2-3 times a month     Once a week     Two or more times a week     Other

**10. When did you start visiting the Hydrocut?**

- 2017 or before  
 2018  
 2019  
 2020  
 2021  
 Other

**11. How long is your average visit to the Hydrocut?**

- Less than one hour  
 1-2 hours  
 More than 2 hours  
 Other

**12. Who do you visit with?**

- Friends  
 Family/ kids  
 Partner  
 Solo

**13. Have you participated in a trail ride event? If so, which one?**

- Monday Night Ladies Ride
- WCC/KSC Novice/Intermediate Ride
- King Street Cycles/WCC Wednesday Night Mountain Bike Ride
- WCC Wednesday Night Kids/Youth Ride
- Other (explain)

**14. On average how much do you spend on a trip to the Hydrocut?**

- Less than \$10
- \$11-\$25
- \$26 - \$50
- \$51-100
- \$100 + (Type amount)

**15. What do you do post visit?**

- Hang at parking lot
- Head home
- Other (What?):

**16. What seasons do you access the Hydrocut? (check all that apply)**

- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter

**17. What do you do when you visit? (rank all that apply)**

- Mountain Biking
- Hiking/Walking
- Trail Running
- Dog Walking

**18. Motivations for your visit? (up to 2 choices)**

- Improve Fitness
- Improve Riding Skills
- Enjoy Nature
- Have Fun/Socialize
- Other (Explain)

**19. How would you rate your technical riding skill level?**

- Beginner (Green Circle)
- Intermediate (Blue Square)
- Advanced (Black Diamond)
- Expert (Double Black Diamond)
- Other type of trail user
- Spectator

**20. Level of Satisfaction (rate from 1-10) \*Make a likert scale\***

- Overall Trail Experience \_\_\_\_\_
- Trail Conditions/Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_
- Ease of Navigation \_\_\_\_\_
- Trail Length \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Are you aware of how to check Trail Conditions prior to riding/hiking?**

- Yes/No

**22. Which social media do you use? (Check all that apply)**

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Tiktok
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**23. What do you want to see on social media? What types of posts do you want to see from the Hydrocut? (Open ended question)****24. Have you participated in volunteer work at the Hydrocut?**

- Yes/No
- If yes, what kind of volunteer work have you done?
  - Work parties
  - Maintenance
  - Volunteer Committee
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- If not, would you like to be added to our volunteer email list? yes/ no
  - Enter Email \_\_\_\_\_

**25. How would you rate your overall experience at the Hydrocut? Likert Scale**

**Please leave a review of your experiences and any feedback/comments regarding what you like or ways to improve your experience (open ended)**

### **Part C: Community Experiences**

The Hydrocut is always looking to expand user experiences and help the cycling community grow. With that in mind the Hydrocut is currently looking into building a pump track. A pump track is like a skate park, but for bikes and scooters. It is specifically designed with rollers, berms, and jumps, to create a track that does not require the rider to pedal. Pump tracks are an efficient way to learn the skills required for trail riding such as anaerobic fitness, bike control, and trail speed. This new feature will include a beginner track, advanced track, skills areas, and teaching areas for Hydrocut users. The following questions pertain to interest in the Hydrocut pump track and other user experiences.

26. Do you support the development of the pump track?

- Yes
- No

27. Would you use a pump track?

- Yes
- No

28. Would anyone in your household use the pump track?

- Yes

- If yes, how old are they? Select all that apply

- Under 10
- 11-14
- 15-18
- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65+

- No

29. What features would you like included in a pump track? (check all that apply)

- Beginner Track
- Advanced track
- Skills Areas
- Teaching Ares

- Log Overs
- Step up Progressions
- Other: Comment Box

30. What other biking experiences would you like to see from the Hydrocut?

- (Comment box)

**31. Other Comments/Suggestions?**

Thank you for filling out our survey!

If you would like to enter in our giveaway draw, please provide your email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Infographic

### 2021 HYDROCUT USER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to see how the Hydrocut is impacting the lives of their visitors and how they can improve their services for the future.

<p><b>SURVEY BENEFIT</b></p> <p>The Hydrocut survey was created to gather information about the Hydrocut community in order to best accommodate their needs and to provide feedback for grant applications.</p> <p>The Hydrocut survey digs deep into the impact the trails have had on the community and the value it has as a tourist attraction to the City of Waterloo</p>	 <p><b>HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN A TRAIL RIDE EVENT? IF SO, WHICH ONE?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday Night Ladies Ride</li> <li>• WCC/KSC Novice/Intermediate Ride</li> <li>• King Street Cycles/WCC Wednesday Night Mountain Bike Ride</li> <li>• WCC Wednesday Night Kids/Youth Ride</li> <li>• Other (explain)</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$ ON AVERAGE HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND ON A TRIP TO THE HYDROCUT?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than \$10</li> <li>• \$11-\$25</li> <li>• \$26-\$50</li> <li>• \$51-\$100</li> <li>• \$100+(Type Amount)</li> </ul>	<p><b>HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE HYDROCUT?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes/No</li> <li>• If yes, what kind of volunteer work have you done?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Work parties</li> <li>◦ Maintenance</li> <li>◦ Volunteer Committee</li> <li>◦ Other _____</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If not, would you like to be added to our volunteer email list? yes/no                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Enter Email _____</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**WHAT IS A PUMP TRACK?**

- A pump track is like a skate park, but for bikes and scooters
- It is specifically designed with rollers, berms, and jumps, to create a track that does not require the rider to pedal
- Pump track are an efficient way to learn the skills required for trail riding such as Anaerobic fitness, bike control, and trail speed
- This new feature will include a beginner track, advanced track, skills areas, and teaching areas for hydrocut users

<p><b>HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT THE HYDROCUT?</b></p> 	<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to recruit respondents                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Social media, scan code at entrance to trails, City of Waterloo website - news and notices section, word of mouth, sponsored as on social media</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
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