



## Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda Regional Parks Committee

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Wednesday, November 22, 2023

9:30 AM

6th Floor Boardroom  
625 Fisgard St.  
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

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C. McNeil-Smith (Chair), J. Brownoff (Vice Chair), C. Coleman, S. Goodmanson, G. Holman,  
L. Szpak, M. Tait, S. Tobias, K. Williams, R. Windsor, C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio)

The Capital Regional District strives to be a place where inclusion is paramount and all people are treated with dignity. We pledge to make our meetings a place where all feel welcome and respected.

### 1. Territorial Acknowledgement

### 2. Approval of Agenda

### 3. Adoption of Minutes

#### 3.1. [23-888](#) Minutes of the September 27, 2023 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

**Recommendation:** That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of September 27, 2023 be adopted as circulated.

**Attachments:** [Minutes - September 27, 2023](#)

### 4. Chair's Remarks

### 5. Presentations/Delegations

*The public are welcome to attend CRD Board meetings in-person.*

*Delegations will have the option to participate electronically. Please complete the online application at [www.crd.bc.ca/address](http://www.crd.bc.ca/address) no later than 4:30 pm two days before the meeting and staff will respond with details.*

*Alternatively, you may email your comments on an agenda item to the CRD Board at [crdboard@crd.bc.ca](mailto:crdboard@crd.bc.ca).*

#### 5.1. Presentations

##### 5.1.1. [23-912](#) Presentation: Neil Arason, Island Health; Re: Water Safety in CRD Lakes

**Attachments:** [Presentation: Water Safety in CRD Lakes - Island Health](#)

#### 5.2. Delegations

- 5.2.1. [23-913](#) Delegation - Rob Thomas; Representing South Island Disc Golf Society;  
Re: Agenda Item 6.1.: Regional Parks - Interim Management Guidelines

## 6. Committee Business

- 6.1. [23-898](#) Regional Parks - Interim Management Guidelines

**Recommendation:** There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

**Attachments:** [Staff Report: Regional Parks – Interim Management Guidelines](#)  
[Appendix A: Pathway for RP&T Mgmt Planning \(Mar 2006\)](#)  
[Appendix B: Mill Farm RP – Interim Mgmt Guidelines \(Nov 2019\)](#)

- 6.2. [23-870](#) Pay Parking at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes Regional Parks

**Recommendation:** The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That pay parking continue at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks, with a gradual rate adjustment to fair market value starting in 2025 over three years and the introduction of a short-term rate.

**Attachments:** [Staff Report: Pay Parking at Thetis Lake & Sooke Potholes RPs](#)

- 6.3. [23-896](#) Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey - Update

**Recommendation:** There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

**Attachments:** [Staff Report: Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey - Update](#)  
[Appendix A: Regional Parks & Trails Resident Survey - Methodology](#)

## 7. Notice(s) of Motion

## 8. New Business

## 9. Adjournment

The next meeting will be held in 2024.

To ensure quorum, please advise Tamara Pillipow (tpillipow@crd.bc.ca) if you or your alternate cannot attend.

## Meeting Minutes

### Regional Parks Committee

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Wednesday, September 27, 2023

9:30 AM

6th Floor Boardroom  
625 Fisgard St.  
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

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#### PRESENT

Directors: C. McNeil-Smith (Chair), J. Brownoff (Vice Chair), C. Coleman, S. Goodmanson, G. Holman (EP), L. Szpak (9:55 am) (EP), M. Tait (9:32 am) (EP), S. Tobias, K. Williams, R. Windsor, C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio)

Staff: T. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer; N. Chan, Chief Financial Officer; L. Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks and Environmental Services; J. Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks; M. Medland, Senior Financial Advisor, Financial Services; E. Sinclair, Senior Manager, Regional and Strategic Planning; M. MacIntyre, Manager, Planning, Resource Management and Development, Regional Parks; M. Lagoa, Deputy Corporate Officer; T. Pillipow, Committee Clerk (Recorder)

EP - Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am.

#### 1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Director Brownoff provided a Territorial Acknowledgement.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

Director Tait joined the meeting at 9:32 am.

**MOVED** by Director Coleman, **SECONDED** by Director Brownoff,  
That the agenda for the September 27, 2023 Regional Parks Committee meeting  
be approved.

**CARRIED**

#### 3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. [23-674](#) Minutes of the June 28, 2023 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

**MOVED** by Director Brownoff, **SECONDED** by Director Goodmanson,  
That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of June 28, 2023 be  
adopted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

Chair McNeil-Smith thanked the Regional Parks team for their numerous accomplishments this past year.

#### 5. Presentations/Delegations

**MOVED by Director Plant, SECONDED by Director Brownoff,  
That late delegation R. Dupass, be permitted to speak.  
CARRIED**

- 5.1. [23-703](#) Delegation - Anna Maria Laughlin; Resident of Saanich: Re: Agenda Item 6.2.: Regional Parks Service - 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Item 6.3.: CRD Regional Parks & Trails - Non-Tax Revenue Options

A. Laughlin spoke to Item 6.2.

- 5.2. [23-705](#) Delegation - Chris LeTourneur; Resident of Saanich: Re: Agenda Item 6.2.: Regional Parks Service - 2024 Operating and Capital Budget

C. Letourneur spoke to Item 6.2.

The late delegation did not participate.

#### 6. Committee Business

- 6.1. [23-666](#) Service Planning 2024 - Regional Parks Community Need Summary

L. Hutcheson spoke to Item 6.1.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- creating a natural asset management program
- clarification of the First Nations funding
- advancing recreation facility opportunities
- installing First Nations territory markers along regional trails
- informing the public of invasive species removal work completed

**Director Szpak joined the meeting at 9:55 am.**

**MOVED by Director Plant, SECONDED by Director Tobias,  
The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole  
recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:  
That Appendix A, Community Need Summary - Regional Parks, be approved as  
presented and form the basis of the Provisional 2024-2028 Financial Plan.  
CARRIED**

**6.2.**     [23-673](#)     Regional Parks Service - 2024 Operating and Capital Budget

L. Hutcheson and J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.2.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- future parking fee revenues being reflected in the final budget
- impacts to the budget by switching to electric fleet vehicles
- First Nations participation in this committee
- the impact to residents of the Beaver Lake area in relation to planned work site improvements
- staff contacting Saanich staff regarding an analysis of Beaver Lake Road

**Director Tobias left the meeting at 10:51 am.**

**MOVED by Director Windsor, SECONDED by Director Plant,  
The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole  
recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:  
That Appendix A, Operating & Capital Budget - Regional Parks Service be  
approved as presented and form the basis of the Provisional 2024-2028 Financial  
Plan.**

**CARRIED**

**OPPOSED: Holman**

**6.3.**     [23-671](#)     CRD Regional Parks & Trails - Non-Tax Revenue Options

J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.3.

**Referral Motion:**

**MOVED by Director Plant, SECONDED by Director Windsor,  
That this item be referred to the Capital Regional District Board at the October 11,  
2023 meeting.**

**CARRIED**

**7. Notice(s) of Motion**

There were no notice(s) of motion.

**8. New Business**

There was no new business.

**9. Adjournment**

**MOVED by Director Windsor, SECONDED by Director Brownoff,  
That the September 27, 2023 Regional Parks Committee meeting be adjourned at  
11:14 am.**

**CARRIED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
RECORDER

# Presentation to CRD Regional Parks Committee

November 22, 2023

Presented by: Neil Arason, BC Centre for Disease Control, and  
Lead, Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, Island Health

With: Joanne Lum, Senior Environmental Health Officer, Island Health

*Excellent health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time.*

# Injury is:

## The #1 cause of death for British Columbians aged 1 to 44

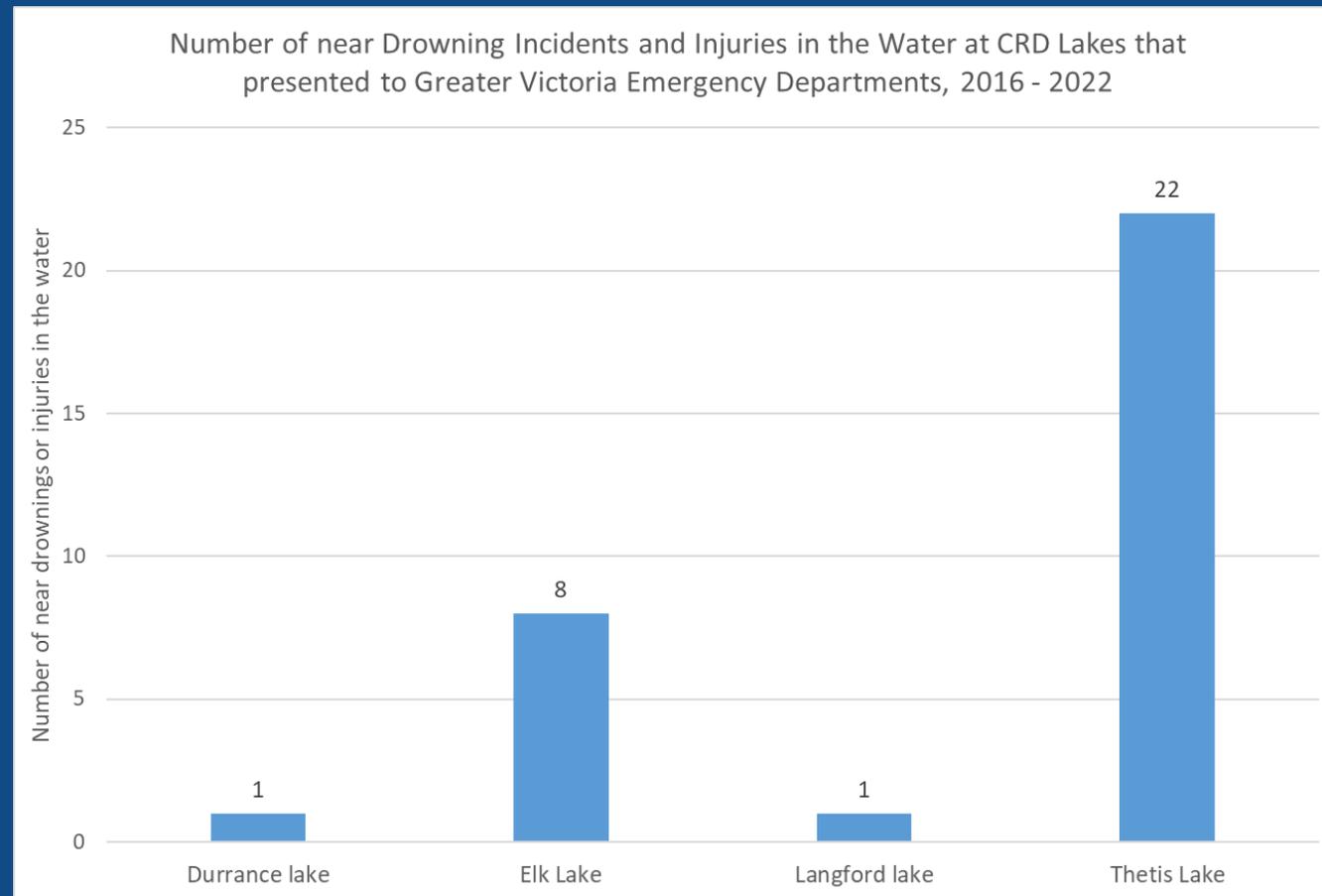
# The numbers are only part of the picture...

- Many small numbers add up to larger ones.
- Focusing only on 'large number' problems can carry missed opportunities including not addressing injury inequity.
- Injury prevention work should be guided by not only the data that describes the problem but also by the existence and availability of proven solutions.

# *Injuries Associated with CRD Lakes*

- An analysis of Island health emergency department (ED) at three South Vancouver Island Hospitals (Victoria General Hospital, Royal Jubilee Hospital and Saanich Peninsula Hospital) found that 32 ED visits due to injury in water or near drownings at CRD lakes were reported between January 2016 and March 2023.
- 11 CRD lakes were identified as being a CRD lake and a key word search of all ED records for any mention of those lakes were selected and analysed for mention of drowning or injury occurring in or around the water. The CRD lakes are as follows:
  - Thetis Lake,
  - Elk/Beaver Lakes,
  - Durrance Lake,
  - Florence Lake,
  - Langford Lake,
  - Sooke Lake,
  - Wrigglesworth Lake,
  - Matheson Lake,
  - Humpback Reservoir,
  - Magic Lake, and
  - Prior Lake.

# Figure 1: Visits to Greater Victoria Emergency departments due to near drowning incidents or injuries in the water at CRD Lakes, 2016 – 2022.



# Drowning fatalities in CRD lakes

There were 4 reports of deaths in CRD lakes:

- 3 were in Thetis Lake (2008, 2013, 2018). 1 additional fatal drowning on Sept 29, 2023, making new total of 4.
- 1 was in Florence Lake (2012)

# Injury – Changing Views

## OUTDATED VIEW

Injuries are simply unfortunate accidents that just happen and there is little we can do



## MODERN VIEW

Injuries are system failures that can be managed and reduced in systematic ways

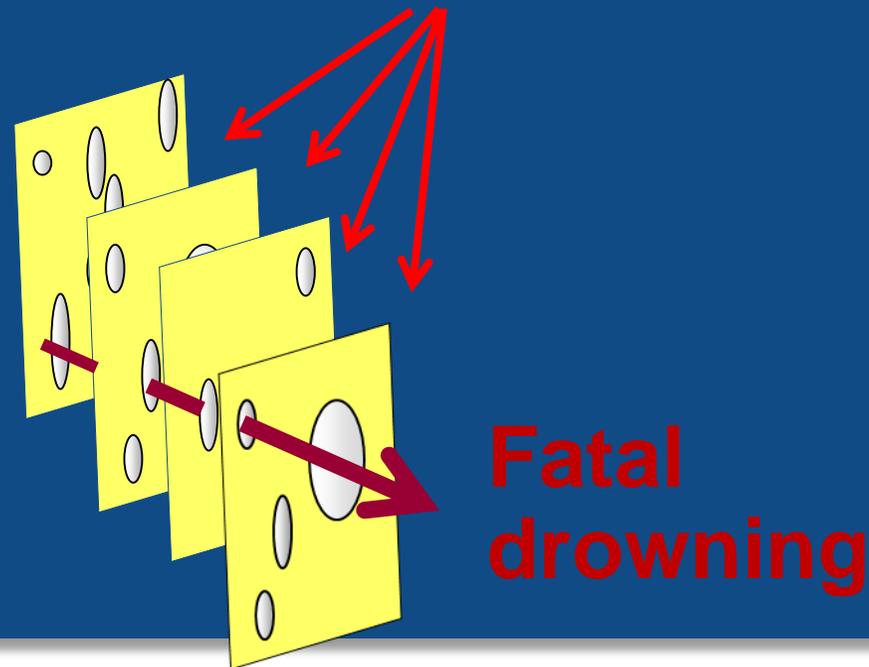
A major injury prevention principle involves:

Building redundancy

# Current Situation

- Too few levels of protection, too much focus on the individual

Safety highly dependent on individual human behaviours including the idea that people must simply take responsibility for their own safety

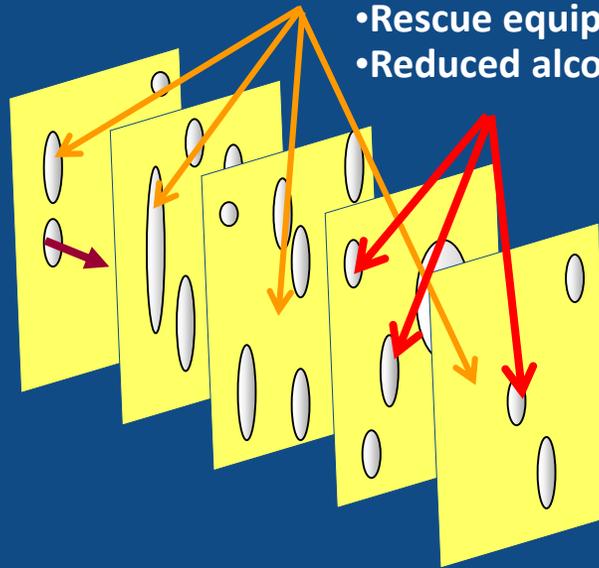


Concept adapted from James Reason  
and Fred Wegman

# The Safe System Approach

- Water safety literacy programming incl. not swimming alone
- Swim lesson programs
- Programs to support use of personal floatation devices
- Signage and information
- Bylaw enforcement
- Lifeguard programs
- Rescue equipment (even when lifeguards not on duty)
- Reduced alcohol consumption

**SERIOUS WATER  
RELATED INCIDENT  
CANNOT GET  
THROUGH**



# Evidence for lifeguard effectiveness

- 1 in 18 million chance of drowning at a lifeguard supervised beach (*Branche, CM., Stewart, S. eds. Lifeguard Effectiveness: A Report of the Working Group. Atlanta: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001*)
- Lifeguard and tracking/planning reporting regulations associated with 33% and 45% reduction in open water drowning rates overall and among those aged 0-17 years (*Quan, L., Mills, B. Chau SS. et al. Inj. Prev., BMJ., 2020*)

# Testimonial (Thetis Lake)

Tony Toriglia worked at Thetis Lake for seven seasons when the City of Victoria employed lifeguards and taught National Lifeguard Courses. Based on his experience at Thetis Lake, he taught lifeguards that they could expect the following at Thetis Lake each year:

- 30 to 40 water contact rescues,
- 5 to 10 of them required paramedic support and removal to hospital,
- 200 first aid treatments for various minor injuries (e.g., wasp bites, heat exposure, minor cuts), and
- 5 to 10 medical emergencies requiring paramedic support.

In the past, the Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch has recognized heroic rescues at Thetis Lake during their Honour and Rescue Awards. Thetis Lake has long had a reputation for high-risk activities within the British Columbia aquatic industry.

*The above information courtesy of Tony Toriglia and Len Manuel of the Lifesaving Society of BC & Yukon Branch.*

# The Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch:

- “The Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch strongly supports the reinstatement of lifeguards for Thetis Lake and Elk/Beaver Lakes. Lifeguards not only save lives through rescues, but they also prevent incidents from occurring, providing water safety knowledge that is applicable for times when there is no lifeguard on duty.”

# Benefits of lifeguards are multi-layered

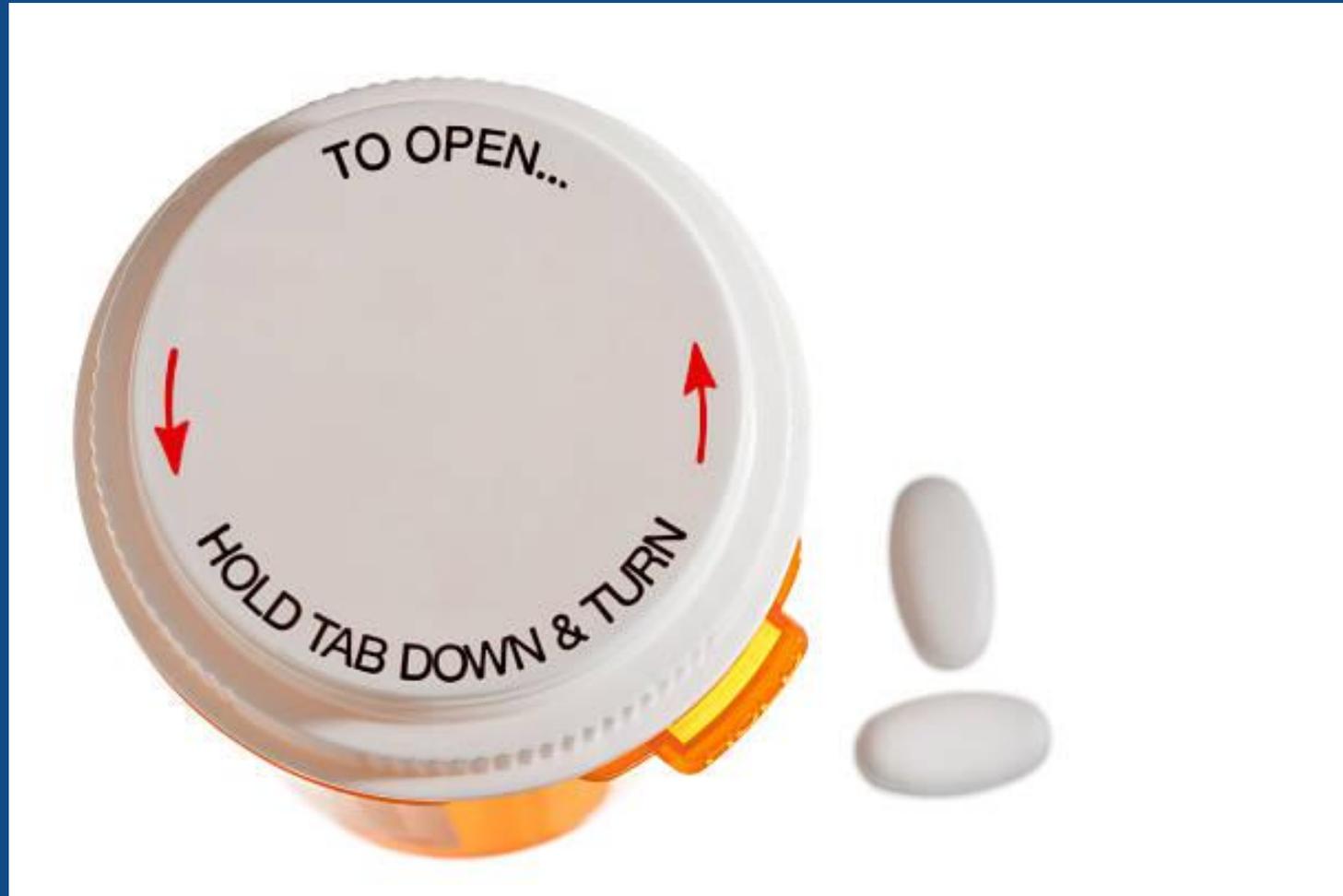
- Provide a range of services and actions including:
  - Development of a water front safety plan (including audit functions),
  - Prevention, advice, guidance, enforcement of rules,
  - Identification of hazards,
  - Assistance in early, low risk stage,
  - Rescue, responding to a person at high risk,
  - Public address/announcements,
  - Use of signs and flags to inform of specific time or space bound risks,
  - Face-to-face interactions, advice provided, and
  - Various tracking and reporting functions (log book).

## And still other benefits include:



- Provision of lifesaving equipment (even when lifeguards not on duty, e.g., PALs, PDF loaners, etc.)
- Trained in CPR and First Aid (can also respond to other medical emergencies such as a heart attack)
- Provide Naloxone
- Provide employment opportunities
- Create community connections

# What works?



# Potential Next Steps

Upon request the Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch Aquatic Safety Management Services can be contracted to conduct Comprehensive Audits to access the waterfront to make recommendations concerning:

- The waterfront conditions for safe water activities,
- Identify potential danger areas,
- Strategic locations for emergency signage,
- Lifeguard positioning for swimmer super,
- Emergency equipment needed to manage emergency,
- Lifesaving equipment for use when lifeguards are not on duty,
- Public information and education signage, and
- Review the Waterfront Safety Plan.

Island Health can support next steps as required.

# Thank you for your time

Questions/comments?



Making a difference...together

## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

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**SUBJECT**     Regional Parks – Interim Management Guidelines

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide information on interim management guidelines that are used to inform the management of CRD-owned parkland prior to a park management plan being in place.

### **BACKGROUND**

The CRD established a management planning process in 2006 with the development of The Pathway for Regional Parks and Trails Management Planning (see Appendix A). Utilizing this process, management plans take on average 3+ years to develop from project initiation to completion. Depending on the number of management planning processes underway, it may take multiple years before a management planning process can be initiated after a new acquisition.

To guide the development and use of CRD-owned parkland prior to a management plan being in place, staff develop interim management guidelines (IMGs) for each newly-acquired park. IMGs provide direction for engagement with First Nations and gathering information needed to inform the development of a park management plan, while protecting and promoting park values.

To date, IMGs have been developed for Ayum Creek, Sooke Potholes, and Mill Farm regional parks. The Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve Interim Management Guidelines (see Appendix B) were the last IMGs approved by the Parks & Environment Committee in 2019. Plans are in place to develop a set of similar IMGs for Wrigglesworth Lake, Mountain Forest and Royal Oak Golf Course regional parks.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### *First Nations Reconciliation*

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (Strategic Plan) establishes that the CRD is to form *strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership*. The use of IMGs supports this goal by providing guidance and expanded timelines to engage with First Nations to learn how First Nations knowledge and practices can be incorporated into the future management and operation of regional parks. This includes maintaining an open dialogue with First Nations to confirm that cultural values and traditional uses are respected, and management priorities and actions are relevant and meaningful. The CRD is having active discussions with local First Nations on the future of the Royal Oak Golf Course regional park.

#### *Social Implications*

While an IMG is in place, a precautionary approach is taken when considering developing park infrastructure and sanctioning visitor uses to ensure park values are protected. A broader range and higher intensity of development and use may be considered after sufficient site information

has been gathered and vetted through a management planning process.

#### *Financial Implications*

Identifying budget allocations to implement interim management actions will occur through the CRD's regular annual budgeting planning process.

#### *Service Delivery Implications*

The IMGs improve service delivery in the following ways:

- Management direction is provided that guides the development of basic park infrastructure and sanctioning of low-impact visitor uses that utilizes existing infrastructure until such time that a management planning process is undertaken;
- A public-facing IMGs document is prepared for each park, which includes a park development concept drawing and list of interim management actions that are to be completed; and
- Interim park management is standardized and incorporates direction from the Strategic Plan.

#### *Environmental & Climate Implications*

The IMGs are intended to ensure environmental values are identified and not negatively impacted through interim development or public use. The IMGs also outline ecological and archaeological information that will be gathered in advance of the development of a future park management plan.

#### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The use of IMGs supports the following Strategic Plan Climate Action & Resiliency priority:

- 4-4 Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas.

The following action was developed to meet the above priority, and is further supported by utilizing IMGs:

- 4.4b Engage and involve First Nations governments, stakeholders and the public in the preparation and implementation of park management plans to ensure transparency, knowledge sharing and adaptability.

An IMG is monitored, evaluated and revised, as necessary, to ensure alignment with ongoing First Nations engagement and to adapt to new information or changing priorities.

### **CONCLUSION**

CRD staff prepare IMGs to guide the development and use of newly acquired parkland. IMGs prioritize relationship-building with First Nations, information-gathering, and protecting park values until such time that a management planning process is undertaken, and a greater diversity and intensity of uses may be considered. Plans are in place to develop IMGs for Wrigglesworth Lake, Mountain Forest and Royal Oak Golf Course regional parks and will be brought to the Regional Parks Committee for decision.

**RECOMMENDATION**

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: The Pathway for Regional Parks and Trails Management Planning (March 2006)  
Appendix B: Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve – Interim Management Guidelines (November 27, 2019)

**1** CRD Regional  
Parks Management  
Planning  
Context of Regional  
Parks Management  
Planning

**2** Regional Parks  
Management  
Planning Model

**3** Regional Parks  
Management  
Planning Process  
Regional Parks  
Management  
Zone Guidelines

**4** Writing the Plan  
Regional Parks  
Management Plan  
Template

# the pathway

MARCH 2006

## FOR REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS MANAGEMENT PLANNING

“Guidance for regional park management requires formal plans that clearly state goals, objectives, and standards and prescribe specific actions necessary for meeting those objectives and standards.”

## CRD Regional Parks Management Planning

### INTRODUCTION

The CRD Parks Master Plan (Master Plan) sets out broad strategic goals for regional parks. It is system-wide in scope and provides the vision and purpose of CRD Parks. The Plan establishes a framework for managing regional parks and trails through the creation of park management plans.

Park management plans describe goals, objectives, and actions for protecting the natural environment and cultural features in a regional park or regional trail. The plan also identifies the types of permitted outdoor recreation uses and where they will be allowed, the types and locations of park facilities, and types of services. Lack of a plan leaves parks without management direction. This can negatively affect the protection of natural and cultural features, visitor services, facilities management, and budgeting.

Until now, CRD Parks has not had a defined process for preparing park management plans. Although the general process and goals for park management planning is presented in the Master Plan, the specific process for preparing individual park management plans has been defined in the terms of reference for each planning project. Although this provided guidance for individual planning processes, there was no over riding specific policy about park management planning. At its June 1, 2005 meeting, the Parks Committee approved a Terms of Reference (TOR) for conducting a review of the park management planning process including:

- reviewing how other agencies conduct their planning processes
- consulting with municipal, provincial, and federal parks and planning staff
- consulting with the Parks Committee to ensure that the plans meet the committee's needs and
- consulting with the staff of CRD Parks

The Parks Committee also directed staff to report back with the results of the review and provide recommendations for a new planning process that would:

- be within the staff and financial resources of CRD Parks
- meet professional planning values
- reach for excellence in planning, and
- be efficient, effective and inclusive

The park management planning process review is now complete. CRD Parks has developed a planning process that meets the required criteria and incorporates the results of the consultation process and other agency best practices. This document highlights the key features of the recommended CRD Parks management planning process. It gives an overview of the context for and logic of park management planning and describes the planning process model, park management zones, and the framework for the planning document.

## Context of Regional Parks Management Planning

### NEED FOR PARK PLANNING

Guidance for regional park and trail management requires formal plans that clearly state goals, objectives, and standards and that prescribe specific actions necessary for meeting those objectives and standards. The park management plan translates the more general direction of the CRD Parks Master Plan into direction that guides management of individual parks and trails.

Through planning, managers can reconcile differences in management philosophy and ideas before taking actions that have long-range effects on the park resource. Good plans have a stabilizing influence on management. Consistent outcomes in park management depend on plans that establish clear, attainable, measurable, and acceptable objectives and standards for a park and the actions involved in pursuing such objectives. In the coming decades, successful park management will depend a great deal on the quality of plans that guide management actions.

### LINKS WITH OTHER PLANS

Park management plans comprise only one part of an agency's strategy for managing park systems. They roll out of strategic plans that define the overall agency mandate, purpose, vision, and focus. They

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

also spur the development of implementation or action plans. Implementation plans describe methods for achieving objectives in the park management plan, whereas park management plans describe the basic management philosophy for the entire park unit and provide strategies for addressing issues and achieving management objectives for a ten-year period.

### PLANNING VALUES

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) has adopted a set of values that provides a useful foundation for CRD Parks planning. The values of the CIP are based on the assumption that planners work for the public good; that planning includes a concern for equity, efficiency, and a respect for the land as a community resource; and that planning contributes to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, promotes healthy communities, and improves the quality of life for all people. In order to achieve excellence in planning, CRD Parks has embedded its management planning process within these core values.

### PLANNING PRINCIPLES

In addition to the above set of core values, CRD Parks will adhere to the following set of planning principles:

- Procedural fairness
- Consultation before action
- Access to information
- Systematic procedure
- Plans address issues
- Plans are science-based
- Defined decision-making authority
- Responsive to changing conditions

These planning principles provide the foundation for the development of consistent and useful park management plans that are in line with the overall purposes of the regional park system.

### CONSULTATION

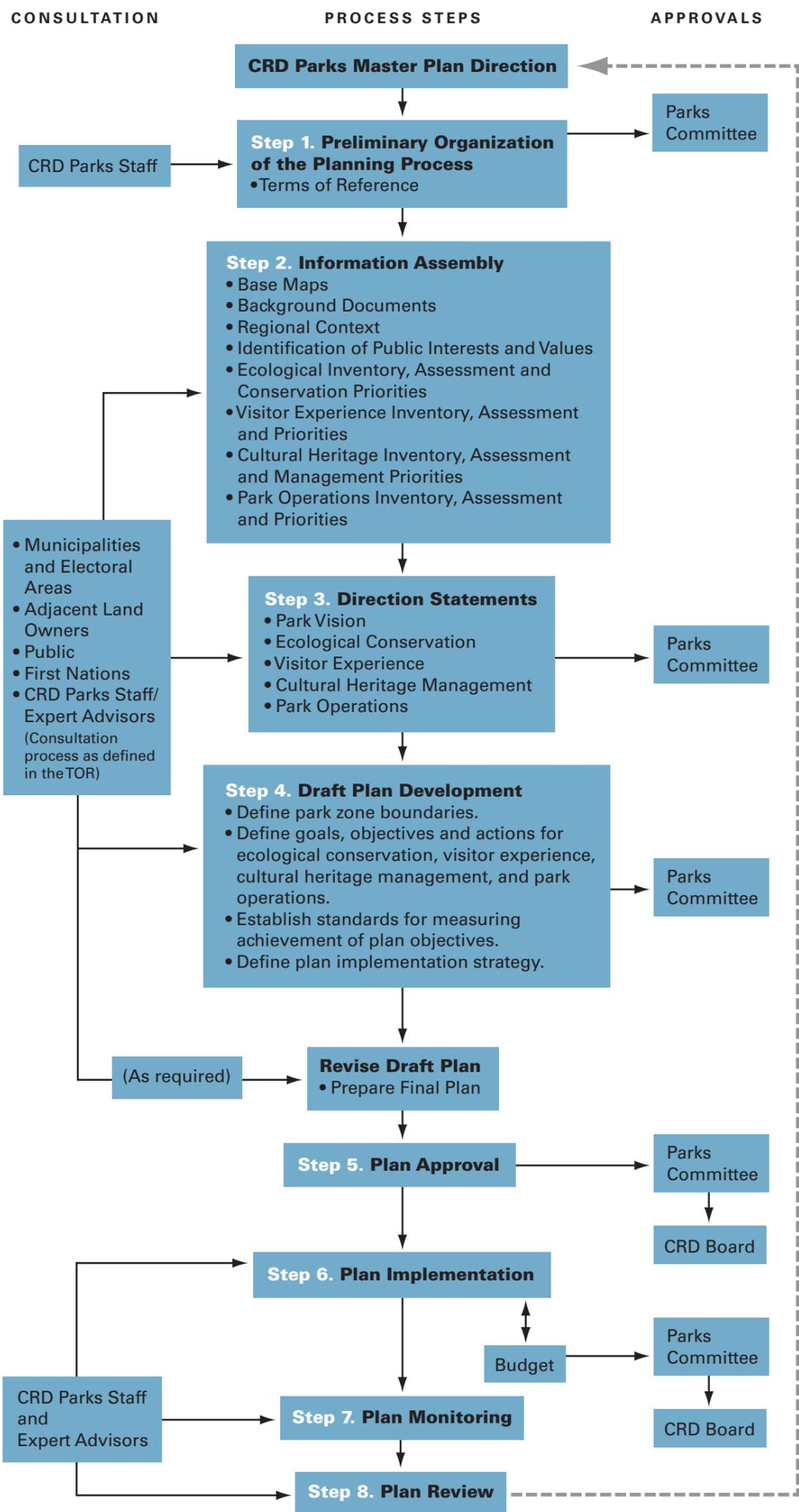
Consultation is especially important for the management of regional parks and trails. If park management plans are to have credibility and acceptance, the public must have an opportunity to help formulate these documents. Involving the public is an integral part of the CRD's park management plan decision-making process.

### FIRST NATION PARTICIPATION

CRD Parks encourages First Nations participation in its management planning processes to ensure that decisions are sensitive to aboriginal interests. It is important for CRD Parks to participate in meaningful consultation and address First Nations interests in its regional parks and trails when CRD Parks planning processes affect these interests. One of the best ways to accomplish this goal is to build solid, lasting, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations.

*Photographs (L to R):  
Sooke Hills; On top of  
Mt. Manuel Quimper*

## REGIONAL PARKS MANAGEMENT PLANNING MODEL



# Regional Parks Management Planning Process

CRD Parks is adopting a park management planning process based on three main activity streams: (1) consultation; (2) process steps; and (3) approvals. The CRD Parks Management Planning Model on page 2 highlights these activity streams. The Planning Model illustrates how the CRD will conduct the process of park management planning and incorporates the principle of flexibility as fundamental in designing a planning process. The principle of flexibility exists to adjust planning and public involvement procedures to suit specific situations and the requirements of various planning participants.

Each project's Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the scope of consultation. Consultation can range from simply informing the public about the planning process to full collaboration with the public in the decision-making process. Consultation may include the creation of an advisory committee. The project's TOR defines the advisory committee's selection process and decision-making authority and requires the approval of the Parks Committee. Municipalities and Electoral Areas in which the

park or trail is located will be directly involved throughout the consultation process.

First Nations consultation is important to the management planning process. The planning project's TOR will define how CRD Parks and First Nations will work together on the park management plan.

Planning projects involve CRD staff and may involve outside consultants. The project's TOR defines the nature and scope of this participation. For each project, CRD Parks will put together a core project management team and a technical team. These teams provide supervision and advice throughout the planning process and during the implementation of the plan. CRD Parks may also hire expert advisors to provide professional advice and services as required.

Consideration and approval by the Parks Committee and CRD Board is an integral component of the planning process. There are key stages in each planning process that require Committee or Board approval. The Parks Committee must approve the project's TOR, direction statements, draft plan, final plan, and

budget. The CRD Board approves the final plan and budget when recommended by the Parks Committee.

Although the steps in the planning process follow a logical sequence, the planning group may undertake a number of activities concurrently depending upon the nature of the project.

## WHAT'S KEY?

CRD Parks' planning process is distinctive in at least four fundamental ways:

- More time is spent up-front collecting information and establishing park management priorities based on science
- The public consultation process is customized to fit each planning situation in the recognition that every planning situation is unique
- Once background information and priorities have been established through consultation, the planner sets to the task of preparing the plan
- Plan implementation is built into the planning process to ensure that plan implementation is timely and efficient

# Regional Parks Management Zone Guidelines

The CRD Parks Master Plan sets out the general management direction for each regional park through park classifications. Providing more precise land management for particular areas within a park requires more detailed reviews of different areas that take into account specific environmental needs and unique features. A specific park management unit, or park management "zone," may include regional parks with natural areas that have common ecological factors. Zones define which activities the park or trail can accommodate and what type of visitor experience the management of the zone aims to provide.

Management Zones	Objectives	Environmental Values	Visitor Experience and Activities	Typical Infrastructure
<b>Environmental Protection Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect ecologically significant areas within regional parks through long term science-based land stewardship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with rare or endangered species and ecosystems needing the highest degree of ecological protection</li> <li>• In some areas, visitor access may be restricted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature study</li> <li>• Environmental interpretation</li> <li>• Visitor experience is centered around appreciation of natural features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-impact nature trails and other infrastructure that enhance appreciation of the natural feature(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Heritage Protection Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect culturally significant areas and features through a long term cultural resource management strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological features associated with culturally significant sites may be protected as part of the culturally significant features of the park or trail (e.g. heritage orchards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural appreciation and interpretation</li> <li>• Historical appreciation</li> <li>• Visitor experience is one of appreciating and understanding the cultural context of the feature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-impact nature trails and other infrastructure that enhance appreciation of the cultural feature(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Wilderness Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To keep large natural systems functioning and provide a regional wilderness experience for park visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contiguous land areas large enough to protect the natural values</li> <li>• Areas with outstanding natural features that create a memorable visitor experience</li> <li>• Ecosystems are functioning in a sustainable fashion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities dispersed over a wide area</li> <li>• Some backcountry areas could be available for hiking, cycling, and horseback riding</li> <li>• Visitor experience is one of being in a wilderness setting</li> <li>• Backcountry camping may be permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long distance hiking, equestrian and cycling trails</li> <li>• Trails to viewpoints</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Environment Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide easily-accessible natural areas within the parks</li> <li>• To provide areas within the parks that can be used for more active recreational pursuits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas where outdoor activities take place in conjunction with protection of natural features</li> <li>• Less remote than wilderness</li> <li>• Can act as a buffer between wilderness and recreation zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities less dispersed than in a wilderness zone, and more accessible to visitors</li> <li>• Horseback riding, cycling and hiking, shoreline activities</li> <li>• Visitor experience is one of participating in outdoor activities in a natural setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking, walking, equestrian and cycling trails</li> <li>• Viewpoints</li> <li>• Pathways</li> <li>• Picnic areas</li> <li>• Open fields</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor Recreation Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide areas within a regional park that can accommodate concentrated recreation use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding recreation features</li> <li>• Natural values may be compromised to allow higher level of activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities more concentrated-e.g., beach activities, swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, multi-use trails, group picnic areas</li> <li>• Visitor experience includes active participation in outdoor recreation activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change rooms</li> <li>• Concessions,</li> <li>• Boat launch sites</li> <li>• Beaches</li> <li>• Group picnic shelters</li> <li>• Nature houses</li> </ul>
<b>Park Services Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide areas within a park needed to support park services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural values secondary to park service needs</li> <li>• Considerable landscape modification allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor-oriented and park operation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking lots</li> <li>• Storage areas</li> <li>• Washroom buildings</li> <li>• Park operations buildings</li> </ul>

# Writing the Plan

## GOAL-ACHIEVEMENT FRAMEWORK

CRD Parks has adopted a goal-achievement framework for park management. This framework emphasizes planning as a process for making decisions that will enable management to achieve clearly stated goals and objectives. Goals and objectives serve two purposes within a plan: (1) they are criteria for determining what management policies and actions are necessary, and (2) they are the targets against which to measure the effectiveness of park management.

The goal-achievement framework that CRD Parks has adopted for organizing and writing park management plans is a framework that supports a management-by-objectives approach. It features clear statements of goals and objectives followed by the management actions needed to achieve them.

## PLANNING LOGIC AND TERMINOLOGY

Regional parks and trails management planning incorporates basic planning concepts. These concepts provide a terminology for discussing the direction of management, from goals and objectives to specific actions. The relationship among the components of the framework—the planning logic—is important; for example, planned actions are the means of pursuing goals and objectives. The planning concepts are as follows:

**Goals** are general portraits of ideal ends or effects. They limit the range of potential objectives by providing direction and purpose. Goals are often lofty statements of intent.

**Objectives** are attainable in the short-term and are more specific than goals. The goals shape the objectives. Clearly stated objectives are the key to effective park management plans.

**Actions** are specific management policies and practices used to achieve objectives within the constraints of agency policy and regulations.

**Policies** are explicit expressions of intent that describe what management will do to attain objectives. Sometimes a policy describes what management will not do or otherwise prescribes constraints on management activity.

**Standards** are measurable statements—based on the objectives—that define minimally acceptable conditions. They serve as reference points that can trigger corrective management actions if conditions are not acceptable.

Most of the substantive content of CRD Regional Parks management plans will consist of goals and objectives and associated actions to achieve these objectives.

# Regional Parks Management Plan Template

CRD Parks has developed a template for writing park management plans. The intent of the template is to serve as a basis for preparing park management plans while retaining enough flexibility to adapt to the needs of a particular planning project.

As much as possible, planners will follow the template in order to make CRD Parks management plans comparable and ensure that each plan includes core information necessary to provide management direction.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

### Introduction

1. Introduction – provides a brief description of the plan area, the purpose for undertaking the plan, and the organization of the plan.

### Background

2. Relationship to the Regional Parks and Trails System – states how the park or trail fits into the overall system.
  - 2.1. Role of the Park or Trail – describes the role of the park within the regional system.
  - 2.2. Park Classification – defines the park classification according to criteria set out in the CRD Parks Master Plan.
3. Background Information – provides necessary background information on the history of the park, ecological values, visitor use, cultural resources, regional context, demographics, and other information that may affect the park.
4. Consultation – describes the consultation process.
5. First Nations Consultation – describes the process for consultation with First Nations and any agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with First Nations.
6. Links to Other Plans – states how this park management plan links to other CRD Parks plans, including the Master Plan, conservation plan, infrastructure plan, communications plan, universal access plan, interpretive plan, and volunteer services plan. It may also link this plan to outside management plans prepared by other agencies.

### The Plan

7. Park Direction Statements – defines the management direction for ecological conservation, visitor experience, cultural heritage management, and park operations.
8. Park Vision – defines the vision for the park.

9. Planning Principles – lists the principles used to guide the planning process.
10. Park Zoning – provides a description and map of park zones.
11. Management Goals, Objectives, Actions, Policies, and Standards – the bulk of the planning document. Defines management goals, objectives, actions, policies, and standards for the following major areas.
  - 11.1. Ecological Conservation
  - 11.2. Cultural Heritage Management
  - 11.3. Visitor Experience
    - 11.3.1. Visitor Experiences and Activities
    - 11.3.2. Visitor Services
    - 11.3.3. Communications
  - 11.4. Park Operations
    - 11.4.1. Park Infrastructure
    - 11.4.2. Park Maintenance and Development
    - 11.4.3. Other Operational Issues

### Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Review

12. Plan Implementation – describes the plan's implementation strategy.
13. Plan Monitoring and Evaluation – describes the plan's monitoring and evaluation strategy.
14. Plan Review – describes the method and time frame for reviewing the plan.

## Summary

The vision of Regional Parks is to protect our natural environment while giving us the means to remain in close touch with nature. Regional Parks will continue to serve as a leading advocate for the protection of the region's green and blue spaces, fostering in all of us a better understanding of nature, our place in the natural environment, and a healthy lifestyle through outdoor experiences and activities.



Regional Parks

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# Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve Interim Management Guidelines

November 27, 2019



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# 1 Context

## **Purpose**

These Interim Management Guidelines (IMGs) provide management direction for the protection, development and use of the park reserve until a park management plan is approved. They also provide guidance on research, development, and other actions needed or anticipated in the next five years.

## **Mill Farm Land Acquisition**

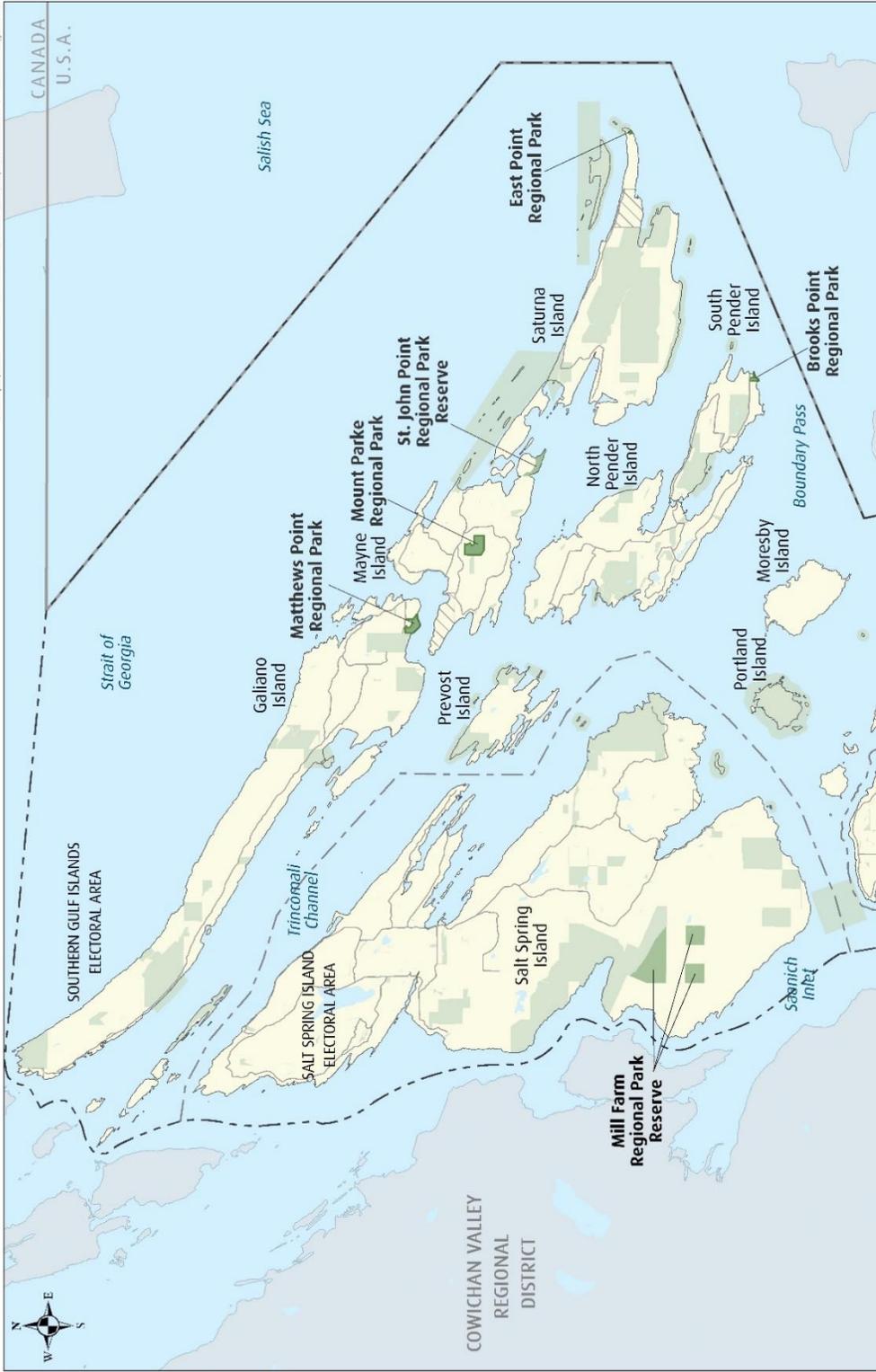
Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve is 315 hectares in size and one of six regional parks/park reserves in the Gulf Islands (Map 1). The initial parcel was acquired in 1996 (southwest block), with additions in 1999 (triangular Mount Sullivan parcel), 2001 (northeast slopes of Mount Sullivan/Mount Bruce, later transferred to the Province for provincial park purposes), and 2004 (southeast block, acquired through the land transfer with the Province). The Province of BC holds a covenant over the southwest block, requiring that it be used, managed and maintained for park purposes.

The establishment of Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve was part of a larger conservation vision developed by the Salt Spring Island Conservation Partnership in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The Conservation Partnership was a consortium of all levels of government and several conservation organizations working together to establish parks and protected areas. At that time, the vision for Salt Spring Island included a regional park stretching north from Musgrave Landing to Burgoyne Bay and east-west connecting Hope Hill, Mount Bruce and Mount Sullivan and a provincial park linking Burgoyne Bay with Mount Maxwell Provincial Park, Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve and other protected lands to the north of Burgoyne Bay.

## **Park Values**

First Nations peoples have used Burgoyne Bay, Fulford Harbour, the Burgoyne Valley, and associated uplands for thousands of years to access fish, wildlife and plants. These areas may also have included a village site or ceremonial sites. Areas of high potential for archaeological features exist within all three parcels that make up the regional park reserve.

The southwest block of the park reserve is in the Coastal Douglas fir biogeoclimatic zone. The other two blocks are within the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone. Currently, the park reserve includes a mix of young, mature and old Douglas fir and cedar forests, fir-arbutus woodlands, wetlands,



**Map 1**  
Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve  
Context

**Legend**

- Regional Park
- Regional Park Reserve
- Other Park/Protected Area
- First Nation Reserve
- Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary
- Lake / Ocean
- Capital Regional District Boundary
- International Boundary
- Major Road

**Scale**

0 2 4 6 Kilometers

Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83

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and rocky outcrops with sensitive soils and vegetation. The park reserve provides climate change resilience by providing ecological services (e.g., clean water, carbon storage and sequestration) and a range of habitat gradients (elevations) for of flora and fauna. Limited species surveys have been undertaken on the park lands but the southwest section of Salt Spring Island is known for its ecological values, including many species of significance under the *Species at Risk Act*.

The regional park is part of a larger protected area network and links to other protected areas—Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park to the north, Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve (Salt Spring Island Conservancy) to the south, and Crown land between the three parcels of Mill Farm Regional Park.

A network of former logging roads and informal trails exist in the regional park reserve. Some of them provide recreational value and are used informally by hikers, cyclists and equestrians. Because of the elevations in the park, scenic vistas over Samsun Narrows exist in some areas.

## 2 Park Classification & Role

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 classifies Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve as a regional natural area. The natural area classification protects key greenspaces that are important to the natural character of the region.

The role of regional natural areas is to protect the natural environment and provide opportunities for a range of appropriate outdoor experiences and activities. Any sensitive or threatened ecosystems within a regional natural area are to be identified and conservation is to be the priority in those areas.

## 3 Issue Identification

Existing issues include:

- access and unmanaged use, including various access points, unauthorized motorized use, informal trails, opportunistic cutting/removal of downed trees
- little or dated ecological information
- a changing climate regime impacting ecosystems and forest ecology
- little knowledge of First Nations use
- limited knowledge of current level of use
- the park has been in reserve status for 23 years with no development and limited management or consideration of emergency needs

## 4 Interim Goals

### Protecting Ecological Values

- 1) Protect ecologically sensitive areas from disturbance from development and use.
- 2) Gather baseline ecological information needed for park management planning.

### Protecting Cultural Values

- 3) Protect known archaeological sites and key archaeological areas from disturbance from development and use.
- 4) Gather baseline archaeological information needed for park management planning.

### Providing Visitor Opportunities

- 5) Provide interim/base opportunities for low-impact, non-motorized outdoor recreation experiences.
- 6) Gather baseline social science information needed for park management planning.

### Identifying and Building Relationships

- 7) Build working relationships with key First Nations and provincial staff (BC Parks, FLNRO, and Transportation & Infrastructure).
- 8) Build relationships with key Salt Spring Island groups needed for park management planning.

## 5 Interim Management Direction

During the interim period:

- 1) A multi-disciplinary team approach will be used for decision-making and management of the park reserve.
- 2) Until adequate environmental and archaeological data are in place, a precautionary approach will be used to ensure that park values are protected.
- 3) Visitor facilities will be limited to those identified in the interim development concept.
- 4) Where visitor facilities are, or are proposed, proximate to known archaeological features, areas with high potential for archaeological features, or known species at risk or sensitive habitats, additional study will be undertaken to determine the appropriate location and any mitigation measures.
- 5) Hiking, cycling and equestrian use will be permitted on the designated interim park trails.
- 6) Regional park regulations/prohibitions (e.g., no fires, no camping, no alcohol, no motorized vehicles, dogs under control) and standard enforcement practices will apply.

- 7) The Musgrave Road access will be considered the primary access to the park reserve, with Mount Bruce Road and Burgoyne Bay park trail as secondary accesses.

## 6 Interim Management Actions

- As necessary, undertake research regarding archaeological and cultural values.
- Assess public safety hazards (fire, emergency services, park terrain) and undertake actions and establish protocols needed to address them.
- Work with provincial staff to consider options relating to the existing informal trail across provincial land that links the proposed regional park trail, as shown in the development concept.
- Prepare all mapping products.
- Prepare public information and messaging, as needed.
- Implement the interim development concept.
- Undertake research to identify significant/sensitive ecological or habitat areas within the park to ensure on-going protection (e.g., species at risk).
- Conduct a baseline visitor survey and levels of use information in advance of development of the management plan.

## 7 Interim Development Concept

The interim development concept outlined below is illustrated on Map 2. It includes a small amount of parking and an orientation sign at the primary access on Musgrave Road and three designated, signed interim trails—Mill Farm Trail, linking the Musgrave Road regional park access to the Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, Lookout Trail, leading from Mill Farm Trail to the lookout location on the northwest side of the park and Forest Trail, leading from Mount Bruce Road to Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve.

More specifically, interim developments includes:

### Gates/Barriers

- In addition to existing gates and rock barriers, additional gates/barriers may be added at key locations, including the park entrance from Mount Bruce Road, to preclude motorized access to the park reserve.

### Trail System

- Formalize a base trail system to link the Musgrave Road primary access point to Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, to the viewpoint on the northwest side of the regional park, and through the east block of the park reserve, connecting Mount Bruce Road to the Conservancy's Alvin

Indridson Nature Reserve, using former logging roads. Minor reroutes will be used where best addressed or where the reroute is an alternative along a former logging road. Ecological assessments should be considered when determining the best location for any reroutes.

- Assess the potential to create a loop trail opportunity between the viewpoint and the trail access to/from Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park.
- Work with the Province of BC regarding the trail that crosses Crown land and links two sections of Mill Farm Trail.
- Install limited wayfinding signs at key decision points, including an orientation map for those accessing the regional park reserve at the Musgrave Road parking area, from Mount Bruce Road and from Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park.
- Install regulatory and other cautionary or information signs as needed.
- Install trail counter(s) to monitor interim use levels.

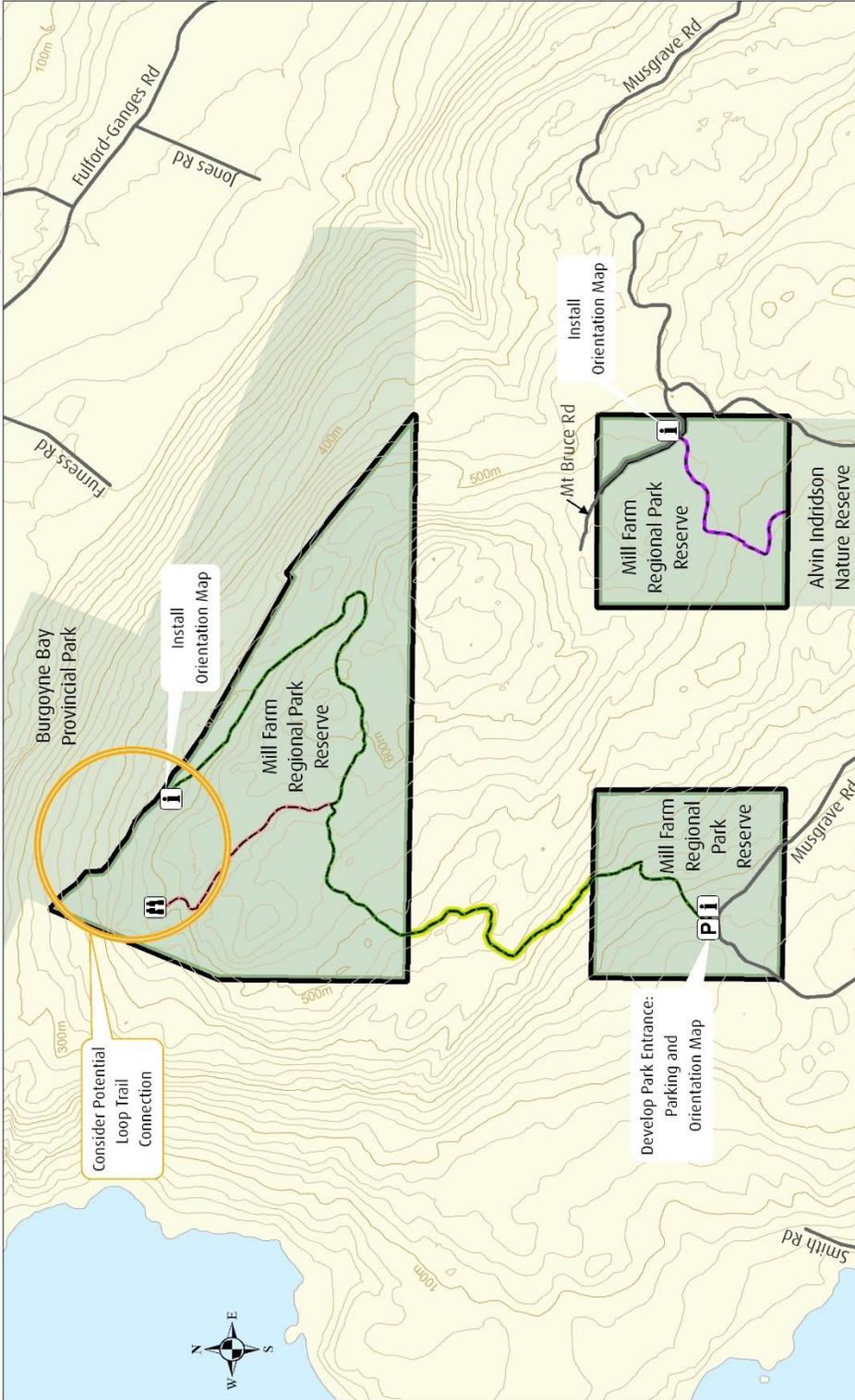
#### Parking

- Create a parking area for five vehicles at the Musgrave Road primary access (southwest block). The parking design should include parking for at least two vehicles with horse trailers.

#### Toilet

- A temporary toilet will be installed at the Musgrave Road access.





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**Map 2**

**Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve**  
Interim Development Concept

**Scale:** METRES  
0 250 500 750  
Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83

**Legend:**

- Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve
- Adjacent Parks or Protected Areas
- Unimproved Trail (on Crown Land)
- Contour - 20m interval
- Hiking Trail
- Hiking/Cycling/Equestrian Trail
- Forest Trail (965 m)
- Mill Farm Trail (4.9 km)
- Lookout Trail (960 m)
- Local Road

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## 8 Implementation Strategy

Implementation of the IMGs is subject to available resources and Regional Parks' capital and work planning processes.

Action	Anticipated Timeframe	Lead*
Undertake initial archaeological research (RADD)	2019	PRMD
Assess and address public safety hazards and danger trees along interim trail routes	2019	OPS
Add additional gates/barriers as necessary	2019-2020	OPS
Work with the Province (Crown Lands) regarding the trail across Crown land that links two sections of the Mill Farm Trail	2019-2020	OPS – initial operational discussions PRMD – if application for tenure on Crown Land is desired
Undertake initial ecological research	2020	PRMD
Undertake additional archaeological assessment as needed	2020-2022	PRMD
Develop park maps, orientation map and website information	2020	PRMD – maps VSCD – website text OPS - installation
Formalize two interim trails for multiple use (Mill Farm Trail and Lookout Trail). A third trail may be improved if necessary, for hiking only, but is lower priority (Forest Trail).	2020	OPS
Develop and install interim trail signage for three trails and access points	2020	OPS
Develop parking lot	2020	OPS

Install toilet at Musgrave Rd access/parking area	2021	OPS
Install trail counter(s)	2021	OPS
Undertake ecological surveys	2022	PRMD
Undertake social science research	2022	VSCD

\* PRMD-Planning, Resource Management & Development  
OPS-Park Operations Services  
VSCD-Visitor Services & Community Development

These IMGs should be reviewed, and updated as necessary, after five years if a management plan is not completed.



## Appendix 1: Interim Roles

Implementation of these interim management guidelines falls to all sections of the Regional Parks Division. The outline below identifies what each section takes the lead on.

### Planning, Resource Management & Development

- Gather needed ecological information.
- Develop mapping products for park reserve management and public awareness.
- Through the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy, consider potential land acquisition opportunities.
- Liaise with provincial staff regarding Crown land interests/tenures, as needed.
- Build relationships for park management and planning.
- Track implementation of the IMGs and review and update the IMGs as required.

### Park Operations Services

- Assess and address public safety needs.
- Formalize interim visitor and operational facilities.
- Provide operational services to monitor and maintain interim visitor facilities and enforce park regulations.
- Build relationships for park management and operations, including liaison with the Salt Spring Island Conservancy regarding the link to the Alvin Indridson Nature Reserve and any impacts and mitigation needed and provincial staff regarding regional park trail operations and implications for adjacent Crown lands.

### Visitor Services & Community Development

- Provide key communication services and products for public awareness and orientation.
- Gather baseline social science information.
- Identify opportunities and build relationships for future volunteer or visitor programming.



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**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023**

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**SUBJECT** Pay Parking at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes Regional Parks

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide background information and seek direction regarding the continuance of pay parking at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks.

**BACKGROUND**

At its August 9, 2023 meeting, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board considered funding options for the renewal of critical infrastructure and the widening and lighting of priority sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails. The Board moved that the Regional Trestles Renewal, Trails Widening and Lighting Project (the Project) be accelerated by the inclusion of the Project in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan and that project funds be secured by way of debt; and that staff continue to develop partnerships, pursue grant opportunities and report back to the Regional Parks Committee's September 27, 2023 meeting with options to generate additional funds through non-tax revenue, in addition to working with the province to secure opportunities for supporting the work identified.

At the September 27, 2023 Regional Parks Committee meeting, staff brought forward a report indicating that pay parking was the most reliable mechanism for non-requisition revenue in the regional parks system and sought direction for the expansion of pay parking to nine regional parks at fair market value. The committee did not have enough time to discuss the matter and moved that the item be considered at the October 11 Board meeting. During that meeting, the following motions arising were carried:

- 1) *That the Board reaffirms the appropriateness of the property tax requisition as the primary revenue source for Regional Parks' operating costs.*
- 2) *Refer the decision on the continuance of parking fees at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes to the Regional Parks Committee.*
- 3) *Direct staff to report back to the Regional Parks Committee on the barriers to equitable access to Regional Parks for CRD residents.*

Pay parking is currently in place in two regional parks. In 1994, the CRD assumed ownership of Thetis Lake Park from the City of Victoria, which had parking fees in place at the rate of \$1/day with pay parking in place May 1 to September 30 each year. In 1994, the CRD charged \$2/day at the main beach and \$4/day at the smaller lot and a service provider was contracted to implement the pay parking. For 1995, the CRD Board directed Regional Parks to continue with pay parking at Thetis Lake Regional Park at the rate of \$2 in both lots and with the introduction of a \$15 seasonal pass.

In 2005, when the CRD acquired and opened Sooke Potholes Regional Park to the public, the CRD Board considered the additional costs required to operate the park and approved the implementation of pay parking. A service provider was contracted to implement the pay parking at the same rates as Thetis Lake Regional Park.

It is notable that fees have only increased 25 cents for a day pass and \$5 for a season's pass since 1994.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That pay parking continue at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks, with a gradual rate adjustment to fair market value starting in 2025 over three years and the introduction of a short-term rate.

### *Alternative 2*

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That pay parking be discontinued for 2025 at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks and that lost revenue be compensated through tax requisition and an additional \$50,000 be added for traffic management.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Environmental & Climate Action*

Regional parks continue to see increased use and, in turn, increased demand for parking. Encouraging alternative modes of transportation, such as transit or active transportation, is key to alleviating pressures for increased parking lots.

Demand management in parks systems is often achieved through parking management, such as pay parking or day use permits. This has a positive impact on transit and shared vehicle use, which supports initiatives such as reducing car use, encouraging physical activity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As regional parks continue to gain popularity and see increased use, continually expanding parking lots to meet demand is not a sustainable option.

### *Social Implications*

The regional parks system has grown from just over 8,400 hectares in 2000 to more than 13,300 hectares in 2023. Visits to regional parks and trails have also increased by nearly 32%, from 6.1 million in 2013 to 8.1 million in 2022.

Regional parks and regional trails are a public good that belong to everyone in the region. The benefits of experiencing and interacting with nature for physical and mental well-being are felt by many. Park entrance fees, as utilized in other parks systems, can be a barrier for accessing nature and recreational opportunities.

Currently, only two regional parks have pay parking in place, which can be perceived as unfair to the communities in which these parks are located. However, these parks have had pay parking in place for many years and they continue to be some of the busiest in the regional parks system. Additionally, fees are only collected during the peak season to help offset operational costs and for the rest of the year residents have vehicle access without parking fees.

### *Financial Implications*

Presently, seasonal parking revenue from Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks provide approximately \$240,000 for the regional parks budget, which helps offset park maintenance and park improvement projects, as well as support the bylaw enforcement program in these two parks. CRD Bylaw Officers support CRD Park Rangers with increased patrols during peak summer months, and a large percentage of their time is allocated to both Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks, which these fees help support.

Major events at regional parks and attractions draw visitors from outside the region, putting additional pressure on the parks and trails system. Parking fees are one of the ways visitors from outside of the region can help contribute to offset the costs without an increased burden on regional taxpayers.

Bringing the price for pay parking in these two parks up to fair market value could ultimately generate \$400,000 in additional annual revenue. These estimates need to be considered cautiously because the introduction of the short-term parking option, the value of the seasonal pass, the fact that visitors with a seasonal pass may visit more than one park, the variability of modes of travel to different parks, and the change in visitor use patterns are all variables that can influence gross parking revenue projections.

There is a service delivery contract in place for pay parking services that does not expire until September 30, 2024. It is recommended that, should the Regional Parks Committee and Board decide to cease pay parking at these locations, it should align with the end of the current contract period. This will allow for adjustments to tax requisition amounts for the 2025 budget, as well as avoid additional costs to prematurely terminate the contract.

Removing pay parking in these two regional parks would result in the need to increase tax requisition in order to continue service delivery at the same levels.

### *Service Delivery Implications*

The current pay parking provider patrols the lots and contributes to traffic management. There would be an increase in parking issues and parking demand with no fees or pay parking contractor in place. This would result in a need to increase the core budget for additional staff presence at these locations to manage safety and access.

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The CRD Board-approved Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 identifies a climate action and resiliency goal priority action (4-2b) to align implementation of parking fees where regional parks can be easily accessed by transit, walking or cycling as a disincentive to motor vehicle use, excluding vehicle parking for people with disabilities.

## **CONCLUSION**

CRD Regional Parks has long had pay parking in place in two regional parks – Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes. In October 2023, the CRD Board considered the expansion of pay parking to other regional parks, but ultimately confirmed that property tax requisition is the appropriate

funding source for CRD Regional Parks' operating costs. In light of that decision, the matter of the continuance of parking fees at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks has been brought forward for decision.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:  
That pay parking continue at Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks, with a gradual rate adjustment to fair market value starting in 2025 over three years and the introduction of a short-term rate.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer



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## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

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**SUBJECT**     Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Update

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

To inform the Regional Parks Committee that a Regional Parks and Trails resident survey is being prepared in 2023 and will be mailed to 7,650 Capital Regional District (CRD) households in early 2024.

### **BACKGROUND**

CRD Regional Parks conducted resident surveys in 1992, 1998, 2005 and 2017. The surveys helped document public satisfaction, confirm visitor activities in the parks, assess understanding of the benefits of parks for conservation and recreation and to get feedback on priorities for park management and facilities.

Data collected through the surveys provided guidance for the conservation and management of natural environments (i.e., management plans), helped develop new recreational activities and transportation routes, and supported land acquisitions. Understanding public needs and interests, and monitoring changes over time, is key when setting priorities and being responsive to public expectations.

The last survey was completed seven years ago. In line with Priority Action 3-1c of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2023-2032, it is time to obtain up-to-date feedback through a statistically valid resident survey.

CRD staff have obtained a third-party vendor, Malatest, with expertise in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in the development of the 2024 survey. The survey will be approximately 30 questions (with multiple statements to be replied to) and is designed to take 15 to 25 minutes to complete. The survey will remain open for a minimum of four weeks and may be extended, depending on survey response rates.

The survey invitation will be mailed to 7,650 randomly selected households in the five geographic sub-regions of the CRD: Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island, Saanich Peninsula, Core Communities, Westshore, and the District of Sooke and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Based on past survey response rates, a 25-30% response rate is expected. All information collected will follow the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any incentives offered will adhere to the federal *Competition Act* and *British Columbia's Gaming Control Act*.

Results of the resident survey will be presented to the Regional Parks Committee in summer 2024.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### *Social Implications*

The aim of the resident survey is to better understand regional parks and trails use, and to measure public values, attitudes, expectations and satisfaction toward the protected area system and regional services, over time.

Following the adoption of the 2023-2026 Board Priorities and the approval of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032, residents will participate in a survey that collects up-to-date information about public priorities for outdoor recreation (visitor use) and environmental conservation, while gathering information on the additional strategic priorities of reconciliation, climate action and resiliency, and access and equity.

The survey will:

- estimate the frequency of use of regional parks and trails.
- document the type of activities residents participate in while in regional parks and on regional trails.
- assess understanding of the importance and benefits of regional parks and trails.
- determine residents' views about the management of regional parks and trails and management priorities.
- explore the role of regional trails as transportation routes.
- explore residents' support for the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2023-2032 priorities.
- include new and revised demographic questions on accessibility, income, gender and household type.
- include new questions that address access and equity, reconciliation and climate resiliency.

The survey methods described in the Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Methodology (Appendix A) offer the rationale behind the sample methodology, size and area proposed to conduct the survey with statistically valid results.

### *Financial Implications*

The estimated cost to complete the resident survey is \$65,000 and is being funded through the Regional Parks core budget. Costs include a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion review of the questionnaire and the production of a mail-out survey package (an invitation to a web-based or telephone questionnaire using a unique code, with an option for a physical questionnaire to be mailed on request). The physical mail-out will include a cover letter, frequently asked questions letter, reminder postcards, and the option for a physical questionnaire with a postage-paid return envelope. The third-party contractor will administer the survey, track the web, phone and physical questionnaire responses, and manage incentives, data entry, statistical analysis and reporting.

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

Initiating the resident survey is identified as a priority action in the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (3-1c), specifically to “Undertake resident surveys to assess visitor use satisfaction and emerging trends related to regional parks and regional trails” (every five years).

## **CONCLUSION**

The Regional Parks and Trails resident survey will collect up-to-date information about residents' use of regional parks and trails and their opinions about priorities for conservation, recreation (visitor experience), reconciliation, climate action and resiliency and access and equity. This will guide staff in planning for the future and adjusting delivery of services. Results of the resident survey will be presented to the Regional Parks Committee in summer 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION**

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Methodology

**REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS  
RESIDENT SURVEY – METHODOLOGY**

**November 2023**

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The resident survey will be a mail-out survey administered in early 2024 that follows a similar statistical sampling method to that used in the 1992, 1998, 2005 and 2017 surveys. However, to increase survey responses, provide a more diverse and inclusive set of options for delivering the survey and to reduce costs, a primarily online survey will be offered in 2024, with options for a telephone survey and a physical questionnaire. This approach differs from previous surveys in that the main response option was a physical questionnaire, with an online option offered for the first time in 2017.

The package will be mailed to 7,650 Capital Regional District (CRD) residents in early 2024. Based on past resident surveys conducted with a similar initial sample size and methodology, the CRD expects to obtain a response rate of approximately 25 to 30%, which allows the outcomes of the survey to be generalized to the whole CRD. A minimum of 400 responses are needed per selected area to obtain a sample that best represents all people living in the capital region.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire will include questions used in previous surveys, as well as new questions. The survey will include questions about values, attitudes, regional parks and regional trails use, satisfaction, management and demographic characteristics of respondents. Quantitative questions will be used to make it quick and easy for respondents to respond. Voluntary, open-ended questions will also be used to allow some respondents to expand on their comments, if they wish.

Sample Selection

It is not practical or necessary to send surveys to all residents of the CRD. Only a sample of the population is required. The survey sample will be representative of the region's population by geography, land use patterns, municipal and resident interests and demographics (i.e., age, gender, income, etc.).

The survey sample will be selected randomly by using postal codes and mailing addresses. No personal information will be included in the survey. For the purposes of the survey, the region will be divided into five sub-regions. This approach respects the different geographic areas, land-use patterns and municipal and resident interests, and aligns with Regional Planning. The five sub-regions are:

- 1) Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island
- 2) Saanich Peninsula (District of North Saanich, District of Central Saanich, Town of Sidney)
- 3) Core Communities (District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay, City of Victoria, Township of Esquimalt)
- 4) Westshore (Town of View Royal, City of Colwood, City of Langford, District of Highlands and District of Metchosin)
- 5) District of Sooke and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area

All information will be collected in compliance with the *Local Government Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Any incentives offered will adhere to the federal *Competition Act* and *British Columbia's Gaming Control Act*.

### Survey Data Analysis

A third-party contractor will administer the survey, including tracking the web, phone and physical questionnaire responses, managing incentives, data entry, statistical analysis and reporting. Social Science software will be used to analyze both qualitative and quantitative results. A summary and a technical report will be completed in spring 2024 and will be presented to the Regional Parks Committee in summer 2024.