

2024 Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report



Making a difference...together

April 2025

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CRD conducts its business within the Territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEL (Malahat), paaʔčiidʔatx (Pacheedaht), Spuneʔluxutth (Penelekut), Scʔianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SʔÁUTW (Tsawout), TʔSou-ke, WJOLÉŁP (Tsartlip), WSIKEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations, all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.



Dancing Dragonflies by Chris Paul

The CRD commissioned WŚÁNEĆ artist Chris Paul to create an image based on the idea of First Nation and Settler communities living side by side and our governments making a difference together.

Dragonfly is a symbol of change, transformation and swiftness. He represents a symbol of change in the view of self-understanding and the kind of change that has its source in maturity and insight into the deeper meaning of life.

It is our hope today that our work to change and transform will be swift, that as we mature we will develop insight that allows us to be poised for reconciliation and that we continue to build strong and meaningful relationships with local First Nations.

Cover photos:

Front: Francis/King Regional Park

Back: Mill Hill Regional Park

Organizational Overview

The Capital Regional District (CRD) delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and all levels of government to enable sustainable growth, foster community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure, while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region.

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Regional Parks & Trails Overview

The CRD has committed to annually reporting on regional park and regional trail-related activities. This report summarizes 2024 activities and annual indicators identified in the CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032, approved by the CRD Board on July 12, 2023.

History & Governance

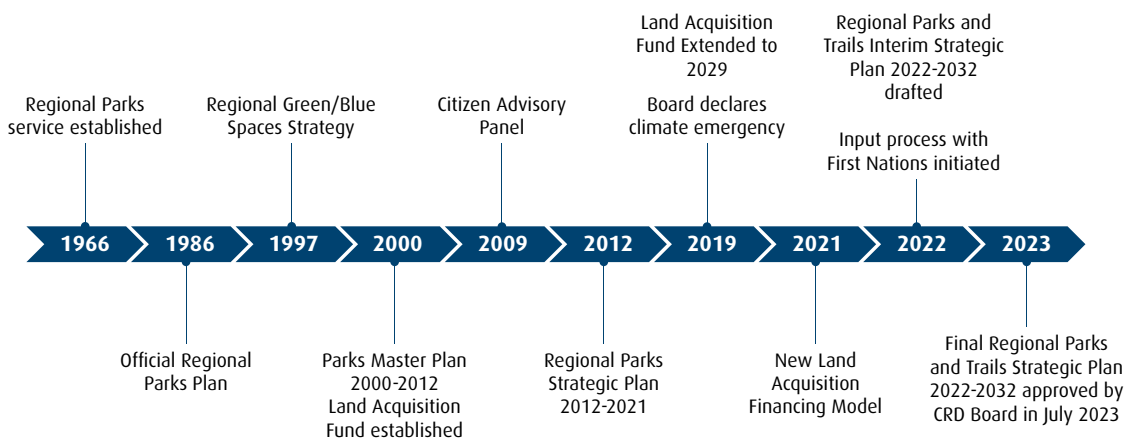
The CRD's regional parks system was established in 1966 (Figure 1). Since then, the CRD has provided a service for the provision and maintenance of regional parks and regional trails to all municipalities and electoral areas in the CRD, as per the *Regional Parks Extended Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 1989*, CRD Bylaw No. 1749. The authority to provide a regional parks and regional trails service is granted by the Province of British Columbia (BC) to the regional district primarily through provisions outlined in the *Local Government Act*.

The CRD Board is the decision-making authority for the regional parks and trails service. The CRD Regional Parks Committee provides input to the Board on matters pertaining to regional parks and regional trails.

Since 2022, the CRD Transportation Committee has also been providing input to the CRD Board on regional trail matters such as mobility, recreation, trail management and operations.

The timeline below reflects both historical and current policy documents, processes and decisions that have helped to shape the present day form of the CRD Regional Parks Division.

FIGURE 1. REGIONAL PARKS TIMELINE





Funding & Service Delivery

The regional parks and regional trails service is funded primarily through a regional property tax requisition. In 2024, the annual operating budget for regional parks and regional trails was \$19.7M.

Non-tax revenue also provides a portion of the funding stream for regional parks and trails. Non-tax revenue is generated through the fees and permit provisions, such as camping and pay parking, in CRD Bylaw No. 3675, *Capital Regional District Regional Parks Services and Facilities Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1, 2010*. Other sources of non-tax revenue may include donations, facility rentals or lease agreements. Additionally, grant funding enhances the overall budget but is dependent on available opportunities and successful applications.

The CRD actively expands the regional parks system through use of the Land Acquisition Fund (LAF). Through the LAF and with the support of partners, the CRD has acquired nearly 5,000 hectares (ha) of regional park land since 2000.

The management of regional parks and trails is divided into three service areas:

CRD Regional Parks & Trails

Planning & Development:

- First Nations, Interest Holder and Government Engagement
- Park Management Policies & Planning
- GIS Mapping
- Land Acquisition
- Capital Planning & Asset Management
- Interest Holder & Government Relations

Operations:

- Operating & Maintaining Regional Parks & Trails
- Sign Development, Installation & Management
- Asset Monitoring, Repair & Replacement
- Fleet Services
- Safety Programs

Visitor Experience & Stewardship:

- Conservation & Recreation Partnerships
- Interpretive Education
- Compliance & Enforcement
- Volunteer Management
- Visitor Information
- Data Collection & Monitoring

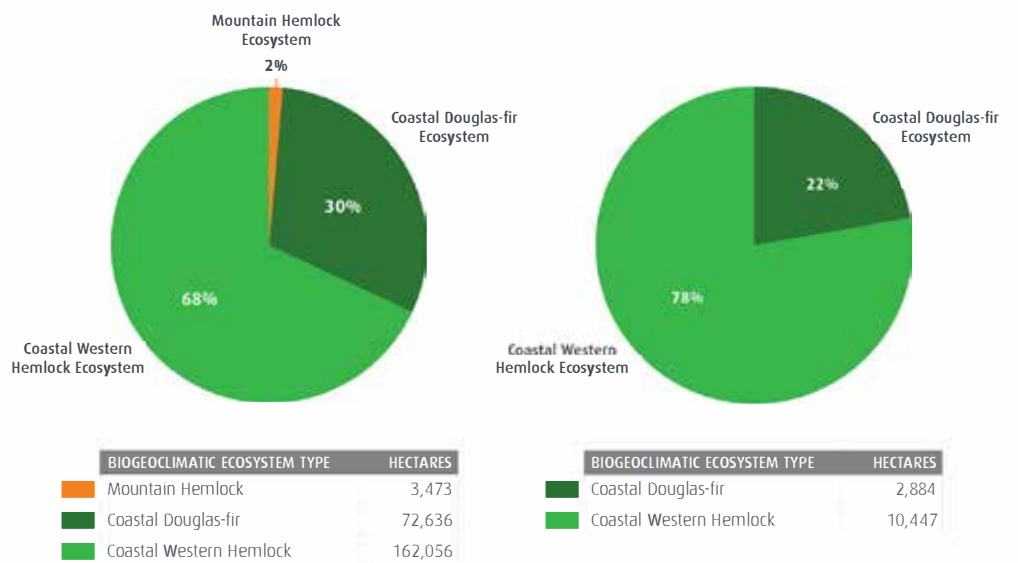
System Information

As of December 31, 2024, there were 33 regional parks and four regional trails in the CRD’s system, comprising over 13,350 ha of land. The regional trails system grew in 2024, with construction of the Mayne Island Regional Trail completed.

Regional parks protect land and ecosystems in two of the three biogeoclimatic zones that occur within the CRD (Figure 2). The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone is home to the highest number of species and ecosystems at risk in BC, of which many are ranked globally as imperiled or critically imperiled. Only 0.3% of BC consists of CDF zone and it is the least protected zone in BC, with many of the protected areas being small, isolated parcels surrounded by development.

As of December 31, 2024, the CRD protects 4% (2,884 ha) of the CDF occurring within the region, which comprises approximately 22% of the regional parks system as a whole.

FIGURE 2. BIOGEOCLIMATIC ECOSYSTEMS IN THE CRD & IN REGIONAL PARKS IN 2024

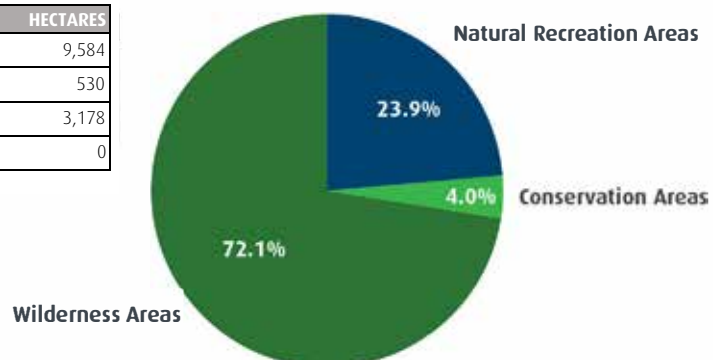




The regional parks system by park classification as of December 31, 2024 was as follows:

FIGURE 3. PARK CLASSIFICATIONS BY HECTARE IN 2024

PARK CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF PARKS	HECTARES
Regional Wilderness Areas	3	9,584
Regional Conservation Areas	12	530
Regional Natural Recreation Areas	18	3,178
Regional Conservancy Areas	0	0



As part of the CRD's commitment to climate action, tracking began in 2022 to determine the levels of energy consumption by regional parks and associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Going forward, the CRD has committed to annually tracking GHG emissions with the end goal of reducing GHGs across the organization, including regional parks' operational GHGs.

In 2024, regional park and trail operations consumed 5,647 gigajoules of energy and the total emissions were about 296 tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent (e) (tCO₂e) - both slight increases over 2023. This was primarily due to the growing number of staff and fleet vehicles within the Regional Parks Division, and it is expected these numbers will decrease as internal combustion engine fleet vehicles are replaced with electric models. Emission sources were predominantly generated from gasoline-powered vehicles in the regional parks fleet (67%), followed by diesel-powered fleet vehicles and generators (28%), propane-heated buildings (3%) and electrically-heated buildings (2%).

In the CRD, regional parks and regional trails serve to protect biodiversity and cultural heritage and to offer quality visitor experiences. Figure 4 highlights some of the 2024 visitor use and conservation statistics in regional parks and on regional trails.

FIGURE 4. 2024 CONSERVATION AND VISITOR USE DATA



CRD Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032

History and Overview

The management of regional parks and regional trails has been guided by various plans and strategies over the years. In 2019, the CRD Board made it a priority to update the former Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012–2021. Through engagement with First Nations, the public and interest holders, the CRD developed the Interim Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 between December 2021 and June 2022.

On July 13, 2022, the CRD Board adopted the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan on an interim basis for one year while engagement with First Nations continued.

Much of the focus for the remainder of 2022 was on continuing to engage First Nations on the Interim Strategic Plan. Feedback received was incorporated into the final Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032, which was approved by the Board in July 2023.

The 2022–2032 plan updates the former strategy with a lens on First Nations reconciliation to reflect current challenges and opportunities affecting the region, as well as to incorporate recent CRD initiatives and priorities. The success of the Plan relies on relationships with First Nations, a commitment to superior service delivery and cooperation with partners.



Jordan River Regional Park

Plan Vision, Mission & Values

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 vision statement identifies the desired future state of regional parks and regional trails in 2032:

We have an expanded and connected system of regional parks and regional trails that are rich in biodiversity, respect Indigenous cultural heritage and use, inspire stewardship, are resilient to change, and provide enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.

Reaching the desired vision will be successful if the CRD works closely with First Nations communities, other levels of government, organizations, institutions and residents in the region. A focus on equity and accessibility in the Plan is aimed at encouraging broader and safer participation in regional parks and trails.

The mission defines the fundamental purpose of the regional parks and regional trails system, describing why it exists, what it does and the level of performance to be met or surpassed. The mission for regional parks and regional trails is to:

- **Operate and manage a connected system of regional parks for public enjoyment.**
- **Foster stewardship of biodiversity by learning from and working with science and long-term land stewards and by connecting people to nature.**
- **Operate and manage a regional trail network for active transportation and recreation.**
- **Foster reconciliation by collaborating with First Nations in the operation and management of regional parks and regional trails through the establishment of traditional use agreements.**
- **Be fiscally responsible and accountable in decision-making.**





The following values and guiding principles were also identified during the development of the 2022–2032 Strategic Plan. Values and principles define what is important to the CRD and help guide the implementation of the Plan:

Access: Regional parks and regional trails can be accessed by transit, micro mobility, cycling and walking.

Accountability: Decision-making processes and financial management are transparent and based on the best available information.

Connectivity: Biodiversity depends on connected natural area corridors and complete communities depend on connected trail corridors and active transportation networks.

Conservation: Regional parks protect, restore and enhance the region’s cultural heritage, biodiversity and rare and unique ecosystems.

Education: Promoting literacy of the region’s natural and cultural heritage increases awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and the nature and impacts of climate change.

Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive, culturally safe, and accessible to visitors of all ages, abilities and income levels.

Outdoor Recreation: Outdoor recreation benefits our health and well-being, connects us to each other and immerses us in nature.

Partnership: A commitment to developing meaningful partnerships with First Nations that respect Indigenous knowledge, First Nations governance and cultural use, as well as collaborating with other government partners and organizations in the region.

Reconciliation: A commitment to take action towards Indigenous reconciliation by respecting Indigenous laws, creating opportunities to collaborate in the operation of parks and trails, and strengthening relationships with First Nations communities by applying the principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility.

Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails adapt to change by incorporating solutions that take action on climate change, recognize the value of Indigenous cultural knowledge, ensure sustainable service delivery and aim to benefit future generations.

Stewardship: A commitment to learning from and implementing approaches from First Nations, who are the long-term land stewards, and inspiring residents and visitors to be stewards of the region’s natural and cultural heritage by leading by example and showcasing best practices.

Goals & Priorities

The CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan was developed to guide the CRD towards its desired vision for regional parks and regional trails. The Strategic Plan establishes five goal areas where the CRD focuses its efforts.

Each of these goals includes strategic priorities with supporting actions and timelines for implementation. Overall, there are 13 strategic priorities and 57 supporting actions.

GOAL	PRIORITIES
Reconciliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate First Nation worldviews and knowledge in the ongoing management and operation of regional parks and regional trails. • Work with First Nations Governments in service delivery initiatives.
Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to increase protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity and natural assets in the region through improved knowledge, proactive stewardship and land acquisition. • Respect and protect cultural heritage sites and traditional cultural use practices. • Work with partners in taking care of the region's species, habitats and natural areas.
Visitor Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer compatible outdoor recreation experiences that are enjoyable, healthy, safe and immersed in nature. • Foster stewardship through program delivery, knowledge sharing and collaboration.
Climate Action & Resiliency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance regional active transportation opportunities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction. • Support the development of complete and connected communities by improving access to regional parks by transit, electric vehicles, micromobility, walking or cycling. • Align service delivery and infrastructure improvements in regional parks and regional trails with climate action. • Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas. • Strategically acquire and manage natural areas to address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population.
Access & Equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance health and well-being by providing equitable access to regional parks and regional trails.



Island View Beach Regional Park

Tracking Our Progress

Over the 10-year term of the CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, the actions contained within it form the basis of service plans and work plans that are approved by the Board annually as part of the financial planning process. Collaboration with First Nations governments, municipalities, other park agencies, CRD divisions and interest holders is integral to this process.

As progress is made in the implementation of this Plan, knowledge and understanding of impacts to regional parks and regional trails will continue to develop. To remain flexible and adaptable, and to support consistent implementation over time, CRD staff will:

- continue on a journey of reconciliation with First Nations.
- prepare funding strategies to accompany implementation.
- continue to identify opportunities for external grant funding and partnerships.
- share knowledge and best practices with others.
- participate in professional development to improve service delivery.
- continue to monitor data to track progress over time.
- evaluate progress and adjust actions, as needed.
- continue to improve on current practices.

Annual Reporting

Progress on the implementation of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan is reported annually. Reporting indicators have been identified for each strategic priority area. For each goal area, an action status reflects general progress made towards all actions supporting that goal. This helps to summarize at-a-glance progress made on actions that may not be easily measurable or reflected in another indicator, such as actions that are ongoing or taking place over a long period. For other measures, an icon is provided to indicate the desired direction of the indicator over time (increasing or decreasing), if applicable.

The following section is intended to provide a high-level, easy-to-understand overview of the CRD's performance and progress related to regional parks and regional trails and to summarize progress made in the 2024 year for each goal area.

Detailed information on each goal, its related action items and progress on those action items is contained in Appendix A: Report Card.



Ayum Creek Regional Park



2024 Overall Strategic Plan Progress

On Track

Goal Areas



Reconciliation: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.



Visitor Experience: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Conservation: Protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Climate Action & Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.



Access & Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.

Legend: Goal Status



On Track: 75% or greater of yearly target progress



Opportunity for Improvement: 50% - 75% of yearly target progress



Attention Required: less than 50% of yearly target progress



Future Action

Legend: Indicators



Direction of arrow indicates **current trend direction**



Indicator is trending in the **desired direction**



Indicator is trending in the **wrong direction**



Indicator is intended to provide **contextual information**



Reconciliation



Goal 1: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.

Overall Goal Status
On Track

CRD Roles

First Nations Engagement

Park Management &
Planning

Cultural Heritage
Protection

Interpretive Education

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 focuses on strengthening government-to-government relationships and understanding between the CRD and First Nations in the region.

The CRD is committed to maintaining an open dialogue with First Nations to confirm that Indigenous cultural values and cultural uses are respected and that the priorities and actions remain relevant and meaningful.

The Plan supports ongoing engagement with First Nations in the management and operation of regional parks and regional trails in years to come and ensures that parks and trails remain culturally safe and inclusive.

Goal Progress Snapshot

- Cultural monitors from multiple First Nations were involved with capital and infrastructure projects at several regional parks.
- Staff participated in the Island View Beach working group, which included representation from Tsawout First Nation, District of Central Saanich and the CRD. The group discussed areas of overlapping interest, identified issues, shared information and partnered on joint initiatives, including mosquito management, accessibility and restoration.
- Restoration projects in multiple regional parks were planned and/or undertaken in partnership with First Nations, including Tsawout, Pauquachin, Scia'new and T'Sou-ke.
- Staff from T'Sou-ke First Nation's KWL-UCHUN Spring Salmon Place Campground supported site securement efforts during the Old Man Lake Wildfire.
- The CRD's Exploring Indigenous Perspectives cultural programming was offered to a growing number of park visitors throughout 2024, including participants from special request, public and school groups.

This goal contains

5

indicators



Indicators



Reconciliation workplans are developed with each First Nation

- Engagement continued with Tseycum and Tsartlip First Nations on a reconciliation work plan for Mount Work Regional Park.



Traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region

- Engagement continued with Tseycum and Tsartlip First Nations on a traditional use agreement for Mount Work Regional Park.



Increased participation in Indigenous perspectives programs and presentation

- Indigenous Perspectives programs were offered as part of regular interpretive programming.
- Staff presented at Tsawout First Nation's Indigenous Peoples Day event as well as Pauquachin First Nation's Community Day event.
- Staff led activities and public engagement at the Royal Roads Indigenous People's Day event.



Increased number of conservation and restoration projects in partnership with First Nations

- Invasive species were removed in an area of high cultural sensitivity for plant gathering by staff and members of the Tsawout First Nation.
- A culturally significant Saskatoon Berry bush at Coles Bay Regional Park was salvaged and relocated to Pauquachin land by staff and Pauquachin First Nation members.
- Funding was secured to support a joint shoreline restoration project at Coles Bay Regional Park with Pauquachin First Nation.



Increased number of economic opportunities made available to First Nations

- Cultural monitors from WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council were involved in the Beaver Beach Waterline Replacement project at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
- Cultural monitors from T'Sou-ke First Nation were involved in projects at Sea to Sea, Sooke Potholes and Jordan River regional parks.
- A campground operating agreement was maintained with T'Sou-ke First Nation.
- First Nations engagement occurred on the cooperative development of the Mount Work Management Plan.



Conservation

Goal 2: Regional parks protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Overall Goal Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Conservation Partnerships

Volunteer Program
Management

Interpretive Education

Land Acquisition,
Management & Planning

This goal contains

6

indicators



Howell's triteleia

Regional parks contribute to a large, complex system of connected and protected natural areas. This system is vital to ensuring long-term viability of natural areas, conserving biodiversity and building resilience to the changing climate.

Protected natural areas help maintain ecological health, function and integrity and provide important space for a diversity of species, from the small and endangered sharp-tailed snake, to large carnivores like wolves, bears and cougars.

Additionally, regional parks help contribute to the protection of the region's cultural heritage and archaeological sites protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

Goal Progress Snapshot

- A State of Natural Features Report was completed in 2024 that compiled all available data and provided a preliminary assessment of the ecological health of regional parks and regional trails. The report will help inform the development of the future CRD Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan.
- Fencing was installed in multiple regional parks around sensitive habitat for endangered plant species.
- Staff implemented actions that mitigate threats to plant species at risk in multiple regional parks and supported mitigation efforts for fauna like western painted turtles, sharp-tailed snakes and blue-grey tailed slug.
- In 2024, the Regional Parks Volunteer Program collaborated with five corporate groups, five community groups, three schools and youth groups to host a total of 18 ecological restoration events with outside partners.
- Staff facilitated and issued 17 permits for academic, government or eNGO biodiversity and ecology research in regional parks.

Indicators



Increased area of regional park land protected

- Several properties were analyzed for future purchase under the updated Land Acquisition Strategy; however, no new land was acquired in 2024.



Increased area of regional park land restored

- Twenty hectares of regional park land was restored in 2024.



Increased protection of at risk species and ecosystems in regional parks

- Twenty actions were implemented that mitigate threats to 11 plant species at risk in 11 regional parks. Mitigation efforts were undertaken for western painted turtles, sharp-tailed snakes and blue-grey taildropper habitats through invasive species management, fencing and signage.



Increased percentage of First Nations collaborating with CRD on cultural heritage protection projects

- Representatives from the T'Sou-ke and Scia'new First Nations were engaged for infrastructure upgrade and restoration projects in East Sooke Regional Park throughout 2024.



All staff receive cultural awareness training

- Chance Find Training was used to help CRD staff and contractors make educated decisions to identify potential archaeological sites and heritage sites.
- Chance Find Training was provided for CRD Regional Parks volunteers.



Increased conservation and research partnerships

- As of 2024, there were two partnerships in place between the CRD Regional Parks team and local conservation groups and four official license agreements in place with recreation groups.



Mount Work Regional Park



Visitor Experience

Goal 3: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Overall Goal Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Recreation Partnerships

Interpretive Education

Compliance & Enforcement

Volunteer Program
Management

Visitor Information

This goal contains

4

indicators



Spring Fling Event

Accessing natural spaces and compatible recreational opportunities benefit not only mental and physical health but also promote social and community connectivity while being a relatively low barrier activity to enjoy for people from all walks of life.

Additionally, outdoor recreation opportunities and educational nature programming both play an important role in the quality of life that attracts people to this region.

Goal Progress Snapshot

- A State of Outdoor Recreation Report was drafted that provided a summary of existing recreation opportunities, recreation infrastructure, visitation trends and identified physical and environmental barriers to accessing CRD regional parks and trails. The report will help inform the development of the future CRD Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan.
- An Outdoor Recreation User Monitoring Program was started to support the development of activity-specific guidelines.
- The 2024 Resident Survey results and final report were compiled and published on the CRD website. The survey had a 23% response rate.
- The Regional Parks Volunteer Program continued to support diverse opportunities for participation and contribution to regional parks, as well as ongoing partnership development with community organizations.
- Ongoing work with Outdoor Recreation License Agreement holder groups took place to enhance existing outdoor recreation opportunities through trail restoration, trail re-routing and infrastructure maintenance.

Indicators



Maintain high rates of visitor satisfaction

- The Regional Parks and Trails 2024 Resident Survey indicated that 79% of visitors were satisfied with their experience in regional parks and on regional trails.
- 5,009 CRD Park Ranger and Bylaw Officer patrol hours were logged across the regional parks and trails system.
- Visitation to regional parks and trails in 2024 was 9,348,527, an increase of 4.8% from 2023.



Increased area available for compatible outdoor recreation

- The Island View Beach campground season was formally extended to Thanksgiving weekend as per Board direction, based on a 2023 pilot extension.



Review and update interpretive program content every four years

- Two new school programs were launched as well as four new public programs and one new event.
- Staff developed a new public program series in partnership with the City of Victoria.



Increased number of volunteer hours

- There was an increased number of conservation volunteer hours in 2024. In 2024, a total of 711 volunteers contributed over 6,600 hours compared to 2023 when 665 volunteers contributed 5,760 hours.



Regional Parks Nature Programming



Climate Action & Resiliency



Overall Goal Status
On Track

Goal 4: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.

CRD Roles

Regional Trail
Management & Planning

Regional Park
Management & Planning

Land Acquisitions

Interpretive Education

Conservation

This goal contains

9

indicators

The CRD Board declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has since committed to take action to address climate change within operations at the regional level and to take a leadership role to pursue carbon neutrality.

The CRD can contribute to regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions in regional parks and trails by integrating the corporate climate lens framework, making operational choices that reduce GHG emissions, and through the planning, design and operation of the regional trails system, which serves as the anchor of the region's active transportation network. Additionally, the CRD can ensure the long-term and consistent management and acquisition of regional park land and protected natural areas to help address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population.

Goal Progress Snapshot

- The 100 kilometres of regional trails continued to be well used for walking, rolling and riding throughout the CRD in 2024.
- The first electric vehicle chargers for public use were installed in CRD regional parks.
- Construction of the Mayne Island Regional Trail was completed. This expansion to the regional trail network into the Gulf Islands increases multi-modal access across the region.
- Provincial Active Transportation grant funding was secured to support the implementation of Section A Phase A of the Regional Trestle Renewal, Trail Widening and Lighting Project.
- Staff undertook a Regional Trail Use Study to better understand the proportion of e-bikes and micromobility devices currently using the regional trails. In addition, as part of the State of Outdoor Recreation Report, a review of regional parks accessible by public transit was undertaken.

EV Charging Station



Indicators



Increased use of regional trails

- The 100 kilometres of regional trails received 4.1 million visits in 2024, up from 3.9 million in 2023.



Completed regional trail priorities

- Mayne Island Regional Trail - Phase 1 opened, construction started on Selkirk Trestle Phase 1 and repaving was completed on priority areas of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails.
- Funding was secured to support the implementation of the Regional Trestle Renewal and Trail Widening and Lighting Project. Project planning was started.



Minimized regional trail service disruptions

- Staff coordinated with third-parties on projects that impacted regional trails to synchronize construction schedules and to minimize the number and duration of closures.



Increase electric vehicle charging stations at park access

- Two public electric vehicle chargers were installed at Beaver Beach in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.



Reduced operational greenhouse gas emissions

- An electric ride-on mower and six electric vehicles for the Regional Parks fleet were acquired to replace internal combustion engine vehicles as they are phased out.
- Regional Parks Division CO2 emissions increased in 2024.



Maintain critical infrastructure in good condition

- New software was deployed to enhance dam surveillance reporting and staff continued to build on the existing dam portfolio and work plan.
- Condition assessments were completed for five bridges in regional parks and annual inspections were completed on eight dam structures.



Increase the percentage of parks with management plans less than 15 years old

- Interim Management Guideline documents were completed for Wigglesworth Lake Regional Park, Mountain Forest Regional Park and the Royal Oak Golf Course lands.



Increased area of regional park land

- Several properties were analyzed for future purchase under the updated Land Acquisition Strategy; however, no new land was acquired in 2024.



Increased representation of all regional park classifications

- Several properties were analyzed for future purchase under the updated Land Acquisition Strategy; however, no new land was acquired in 2024.



Access & Equity

Goal 5: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.



Overall Goal Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Recreation Partnerships

Data Collection &
Monitoring

Interpretive Education

Visitor Information

The benefits of experiencing and interacting with nature for physical and mental well-being are felt by many and regional parks and trails are a public good that belongs to everyone. Medical professionals from the World Health Organization to Doctors of BC regularly advocate for equitable access to nature to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of residents. Factors such as lack of access to transportation and distance to parks can be barriers preventing members of society from enjoying the benefits of regional parks and regional trails.

Increased benefits of accessing nature and public spaces can be realized when they adapt to the needs of diverse populations, such as people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, mobility levels and income brackets.

Goal Progress Snapshot

- Staff implemented an annual accessibility maintenance audit to identify maintenance defects that impact accessibility within day-use areas and trails designated as user-friendly or accessible.
- Accessible Facility Guidelines for regional parks were developed to ensure an accessibility lens is applied to all parks project planning and development.
- Staff created and published enhanced accessibility information on the CRD website for five regional parks, including pictures and descriptions of key park features.
- Interpretive staff offered dozens of accessible public programs and events throughout regional parks and worked closely with partner organization “Power To Be” to deliver multiple partnered programs and events to provide equitable outdoor access to participants living with disabilities.

This goal contains

2

indicators



Lochside Regional Trail

Indicators



Improved accessibility to regional parks and regional trails

- Three day-use areas were resurfaced to improve accessibility.
- Accessible parking stalls were upgraded to new standards at 11 regional parks, as well as at regional trail parking lots.
- Accessibility improvements were made to access points at two locations on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail.
- Staff created and published detailed accessibility information for five regional parks on the CRD website.
- Forty-three accessible public nature programs and events were offered by staff, who also worked closely with partner organization “Power To Be” to deliver seven partnered programs and events.
- Accessibility improvements were made to the trails at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Regional Park to increase opportunities for people with disabilities.



Cultural awareness information is incorporated into new park kiosks

- New kiosk panels with cultural acknowledgements and information were added in Sooke Potholes Regional Park, Witty’s Lagoon Regional Park, Mayne Island Regional Trail, Gonzales Hill Regional Park, Mount Wells Regional Park and Sea to Sea Regional Park at Harbourview parking lot.



*Thetis Lake Mobi Mat
Thetis Lake Regional Park*



*TrailRider Mobility Device
Nature Program Partnership with Power To Be*

Looking Ahead – 2025

In 2025, the CRD will continue to work with First Nations to better understand and respect Indigenous cultural heritage and use, focus on the protection of biodiversity, further inspire stewardship in parks, offer desirable outdoor recreation experiences, develop an expanded, improved and connected system of regional parks and regional trails and prepare for and adapt to climate change.

Initiatives planned for 2025 include, but are not limited to:

First Nations Engagement: The CRD will continue to invite and work with First Nations to identify, develop and implement priority initiatives in regional parks and regional trails, as well as engage with First Nations on major projects.

Equitable Access: A Cultural Use and Safety Policy will be finalized for Board approval, which will aim to improve cultural use and safety for Indigenous peoples in accessing and enjoying regional parks and trails. This policy will help to inform planning operations, management and training opportunities for CRD staff and support meaningful engagement. Work will also continue to finalize the Regional Parks and Trails Accessibility Construction Guidelines, a set of comprehensive guidelines to provide direction for service delivery, signage and wayfinding, pedestrian and vehicle circulation and park facilities.

Regional Trail Enhancement Projects: Design work will take place for two bridge replacements on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and a feasibility study for the construction of a regional trail between Vesuvius Bay and Fulford Harbour on Salt Spring Island will be completed.

Active Transportation Initiatives: Critical repairs to the Selkirk Trestle will be completed, enabling detailed design for deck widening through the Regional Trestles Renewal, Trail Widening and Lighting Project. In addition, the detailed designs for the full six kilometres of the Regional Trestles Renewal, Trail Widening and Lighting Project will be finalized and engagement will take place.

Stewardship Plan: Work will get underway to draft and initiate First Nations engagement on a Stewardship Plan, which will provide an integrated park management approach that balances outdoor recreation opportunities with conserving the unique natural and cultural heritage values of the region.

Management Plans: A draft of the Mount Work Management Plan will be finalized for Board approval as well as a Management Plan Prioritization List, which will establish evaluation criteria and processes to prioritize regional parks for management plan development.

Land Acquisition Strategy Update: An updated Land Acquisition Strategy will be drafted that aligns with the strategic plan's priorities, including reconciliation. Collaboration with First Nations will also take place in 2025 on feedback to the draft strategy before a final version of the strategy is solidified in 2026.



Appendix A: Regional Parks & Trails – 2024 Report Card

The Regional Parks and Trails Report Card is intended to provide a high-level overview of the CRD’s progress and performance towards achieving the five goals in the Strategic Plan by highlighting the actions taken in 2024 towards the Plan’s 13 strategic priorities.

Methodology

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 identifies specific actions to guide the CRD’s efforts over the lifespan of the Plan. These include 13 strategic priorities with 57 actions and associated timelines. Section five of the Plan establishes a monitoring and reporting system and a set of performance indicators.

The Regional Parks and Trails Report Card compiles the reporting indicator performance relative to the baseline year. It is important to note that changes in year-to-year performance do not always equate to a long-term trend, and that while performance in any given year may be positive or negative, it may take years to complete the actions and achieve the desired results.

For each goal area, an overall priority status reflects general progress made towards all actions supporting that goal and its related strategic priorities. This helps to summarize at-a-glance progress made on actions that may not be easily measurable or reflected in another indicator, such as actions that are ongoing or taking place over a long time period.

For 2024, indicators are reported from the beginning of January to the end of December.



2024 Overall Strategic Plan Progress

On Track

Goal Areas



Reconciliation: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.



Visitor Experience: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Conservation: Protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Climate Action & Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.



Access & Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.

Legend: Priority Status



On Track: 75% or greater of yearly target progress



Opportunity for Improvement: 50% - 75% of yearly target progress



Attention Required: less than 50% of yearly target progress



Future Action



Reconciliation

Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.



Overall Priority Status
On Track

Status	Priority	Update on Actions
	1-1 Incorporate First Nation worldviews and knowledge in the ongoing management and operation of regional parks and regional trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff participated in the Island View Beach working group which included representation from Tsawout First Nation, the District of Central Saanich and the CRD. The group discussed areas of overlapping interest, identified issues, shared information and partnered on joint initiatives, including mosquito management, accessibility and restoration.• Feedback was sought from First Nations to develop a draft updated Land Acquisition Strategy. Input was received from 17 First Nations, informing the draft Land Acquisition Strategy, including updated process, criteria for land selection and principles. The input and changes will go for further First Nations engagement in 2025.• Staff applied First Nations knowledge to identify features that may be linked to heritage or archaeological sites.• A Cultural Use and Safety Policy was initiated to be adopted in 2025.• Staff engaged with First Nations on project planning for parking lot and washroom upgrades at East Sooke Regional Park - Aylard Farm. Project design modifications were made to align better with Archaeological Impact Assessment recommendations.• Staff collaborated with a number of First Nations and incorporated guidance from the Nations and Elders to identify culturally important plants, restore native habitats and inform future ecological monitoring efforts.
	1-2 Work with First Nations Governments in service delivery initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Indigenous Cultural Programmer and other interpretive staff delivered 104 programs featuring Indigenous perspectives to the public and school groups.• Staff engaged with First Nations throughout the region to support land-altering works projects, including on-site cultural monitors.• Interpreters presented educational displays and activities at Tsawout First Nation’s Indigenous People’s Day event, Pauquachin Community Day and the Indigenous People’s Day event at Royal Roads University.• Staff worked with Scia’new and T’Sou-ke First Nations on restoration projects at East Sooke Regional Park and engaged with T’Sou-ke First Nation to support restoration planning at Ayum Creek Regional Park. Engagement with W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council was also undertaken to support conservation initiatives at St. John Point Regional Park with Mayne Island Conservancy.• Four workshop sessions were presented at the provincial Indigenous youth conference, Gathering Our Voices, by the Indigenous Cultural Programmer.• Invasive species were removed from an area of high cultural sensitivity for plant gathering at Island View Beach Regional Park.• Staff worked with Pauquachin First Nation on the initial stages and funding of a shoreline restoration project at Coles Bay Regional Park and on multiple other restoration events in 2024. Staff also collaborated with Pauquachin First Nation staff to support the salvage of culturally important plants (including Saskatoon berry) from Coles Bay Regional Park.• T’Sou-ke First Nation campground staff supported the CRD’s site securement efforts during the Old Man Lake Wildfire.• Staff worked with cultural monitors at regional parks on a variety of projects, including at St. John Point, Island View Beach, East Sooke, Elk/Beaver Lake and Devonian regional parks.






Conservation

Regional parks protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations



Overall Priority Status
On Track

Status	Priority	Update on Actions
	2-1 Take action to increase protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity and natural assets in the region through improved knowledge, proactive stewardship and land acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff completed workshops to identify environmental criteria for land acquisitions in the updated Land Acquisition Strategy.• A State of Natural Features Report was completed that compiled all available data and provided a preliminary assessment of the ecological health of regional parks and regional trails. This report will help to inform the future Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan.• The Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan was initiated, which combines the Conservation Plan and Recreation Plan outlined in the Strategic Plan.• Local specialists and staff established best practices for infrastructure projects that are conducted close to or within suspected western painted turtle nesting habitat.• Staff worked with CRD environmental personnel to identify species and habitat that may be at risk from construction projects.• The CRD Regional Parks Stewardship Team supported all development and infrastructure projects that required Impact Assessments.• Fencing was installed to protect sensitive habitat for endangered plant species at Island View Beach, Bear Hill and Witty's Lagoon regional parks.• Staff and volunteers restored 0.3 hectares of previously disturbed land at Devonian Regional Park.• Invasive species management and restoration of 47 sites within regional parks and regional trails was completed in 2024.• Species at risk surveys and assessments were completed, and as a result, 20 mitigation actions were taken in regional parks to better protect these species.
	2-2 Respect and protect cultural heritage sites and traditional cultural use practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff received training on the protection and conservation of heritage sites.• Volunteers and staff received training related to Chance Find Procedures.• Cultural monitors observed excavation work, infrastructure improvement projects and conservation projects in regional parks.
	2-3 Work with partners in taking care of the region's species, habitats and natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement was completed with municipal staff from around the region on the Land Acquisition Strategy update. Engagement with conservancy partners, special-interest groups and senior government officials will continue through 2025.• Staff supported ongoing knowledge sharing with conservation covenant partners, as well as the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership and ongoing informal discussions with First Nations.• The CRD Regional Parks Stewardship Team shared data with the Conservation Data Centre and the federal government to support wider species at risk recovery efforts.• Staff continued to attend Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership meetings and continued to collaborate with academic partners.• Research permits were facilitated and supported by staff for 17 academic, government, or eNGO biodiversity and ecology research projects in regional parks.• The Reginal Parks Volunteer Program collaborated with five corporate groups, five community groups, three schools and youth groups to host a total of 18 ecological restoration events with outside partners.• First Nations were engaged on restoration projects through relationship building and identifying opportunities for collaboration. Guidance was also received from First Nations on culturally important priority species to consider for ecological monitoring in 2025.



Visitor Experience

Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences



Overall Priority Status
On Track

Status	Priority	Update on Actions
	3-1 Offer compatible outdoor recreation experiences that are enjoyable, healthy, safe and immersed in nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A State of Outdoor Recreation Report was drafted which provided a summary of existing recreation opportunities, recreation infrastructure, visitation trends and identified physical and environmental barriers to accessing CRD regional parks and trails. It will help inform the development of the future CRD Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan.• Staff developed and implemented Park Facility Service Standards and Snow and Ice Management Guidelines.• Regional Parks’ Trail Repair Program staff developed assessment criteria and a screening matrix for natural surface trails.• Web reporting was deployed to better capture regional parks infrastructure detail and condition (e.g., infrastructure data deployed to IntraMap) to help facilitate and assist in planning and decision-marking.• Staff established an Outdoor Recreation User Monitoring Program (observational and trail counter) to support the development of activity-specific guidelines.• The 2024 Resident Survey results and final report were compiled and published on the CRD website. The survey had a 23% response rate which made it statistically accurate.• The Island View Beach campground season was extended to Thanksgiving weekend as per direction from the Board based on the 2023 pilot.• Ongoing work with Outdoor Recreation License Agreement Holder groups took place to enhance existing outdoor recreation opportunities through trail restoration, trail rerouting and infrastructure maintenance.
	3-2 Foster stewardship through program delivery, knowledge sharing and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New nature programming content supported visitor compliance and education goals related to the importance of parks for mental health and climate change.• Interpretive staff partnered with several organizations for the delivery of education programs and community events. Partners included: Habitat Acquisition Trust, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea, Power to Be, Dino Lab and SeaChange.• Staff reviewed data from a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey and created a report which will help to inform an updated Volunteer Services Plan in 2025.• The cultural programmer delivered 104 Indigenous programs and events. Park naturalists continued to work closely with the cultural programmer to include a cultural lens in all interpretive programs and events.



Climate Action & Resiliency

Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change



Overall Priority Status
On Track

Status	Priority	Update on Actions
	4-1 Advance regional active transportation opportunities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A feasibility study was started for the Salt Spring Island Regional Trail project and the trail design phase was planned.• Phase 1 of Mayne Island Regional Trail opened, connecting Village Bay ferry terminal with Miner’s Bay village community hub.• Provincial Active Transportation funding was secured to support the Regional Trestle Renewal and Trail Widening and Lighting project.• Condition assessments were conducted for 10 bridges and trestles within the regional trail corridors.• Staff initiated the design phases for the renewal of Bilston #3, Firehall, Millstream, Interurban, and Wilkinson bridges.• The design and construction of girder repairs were completed for the Hereward, Helmcken, and Island Highway (at 4-Mile) bridges.• A Regional Trail Use Study was undertaken to better understand the use of e-bikes and micromobility devices on the trails.• Staff worked with the Transportation Working Group to enhance and standardize accessibility throughout the regional trails.
	4-2 Support the development of complete and connected communities by improving access to regional parks by transit, electric vehicles, micromobility, walking or cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CRD Board initiated a region-wide Transportation Service which will undergo an alternate approvals process in 2025.• Nine projects were completed related to the asphalt surface maintenance of the regional trails.• A review of regional parks accessible by public transit was undertaken as part of the State of Outdoor Recreation report. Additionally, an accessible parking standard was implemented to improve parking lot safety for people living with disabilities.• Electric vehicle chargers were installed at Beaver Beach in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
	4-3 Align service delivery and infrastructure improvements in regional parks and regional trails with climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A climate lens was included on three Interim Management Guideline documents for Wigglesworth Lake and Mountain Forest regional parks, as well as the Royal Oak Golf Course lands.• An energy study for Regional Parks headquarters at Mill Hill was completed in collaboration with Climate Action to support the transition to HVAC electrification at the facility. In addition, six new electric vehicles were added to the regional parks fleet.• Staff took part in workshops delivered by the Natural Assets Initiative and continued to support the Corporate Asset Management Team in their planning for the development of a Natural Assets Roadmap Program.
	4-4 Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff built on the existing dam portfolio and work plan. Staff also developed the Dam Surveillance Operational Guideline, which outlines operational commitments to regional parks’ Dam Program.• Plans were initiated for necessary updates to Dam Emergency Plans and contracts to finalize the Durrance Lake Dam, Dam Emergency Plan and the Operation, Maintenance and Surveillance manual were also initiated (to be completed in early 2025.)• Staff shared information with First Nation governments on the development of Interim Management Guidelines documents to provide the necessary groundwork for site securement and undertaking the future development of a park management plan.• Staff worked cooperatively with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and its designates on the development of the Mount Work Regional Park Management Plan, Traditional Use Agreement and reconciliation work plans.• A review of all recommended routes on AllTrails and Trailforks was undertaken to remove routes that enter the Water Supply Area.
	4-5 Strategically acquire and manage natural areas to address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ecological monitoring program has continued to gather important ecological data in regional parks and on regional trails.• Several properties were analyzed for future purchase under the updated Land Acquisition Strategy; however, no new land was acquired in 2024.



Access & Equity

Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible



Overall Priority Status
On Track

Status	Priority	Update on Actions
	5-1 Enhance health and well-being by providing equitable access to regional parks and regional trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff supported the development of project scope and project charters for infrastructure projects and ensured accessibility best practices were being met and an accessibility lens was being applied to all project planning and development.• An annual accessibility maintenance audit was implemented to identify maintenance deficiencies that impact accessibility within day-use areas and trails designated as user-friendly or accessible.• Accessible facility guidelines for regional parks were started.• A Cultural Use and Safety Policy was initiated and will be adopted in 2025.• New kiosk panels with cultural acknowledgements and information were added in Sooke Potholes Regional Park, Witty’s Lagoon Regional Park, Mayne Island Regional Trail, Gonzales Hill Regional Park, Mount Wells Regional Park and Sea to Sea Regional Park at Harbourview parking lot.• Three day-use areas in regional parks were resurfaced to improve accessibility and accessible parking stalls were upgraded to new standards at 11 regional parks, as well as at regional trail parking lots.• Accessibility improvements were made to access points at two locations on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail.• Detailed accessibility information was made available on the CRD website for five regional parks.• Staff offered 43 accessible public nature programs and events and worked closely with partner organization “Power To Be” to deliver seven partnered programs and events.• Accessibility improvements were made to the trails at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Regional Park to increase opportunities for people with disabilities.• An accessibility assessment was completed at Island View Beach Regional Park.



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