

# Witty's Lagoon Regional Park



management plan

nov 1994



Capital Regional District Parks  
490 Atkins Avenue,  
Victoria, B.C. V9B 2Z8  
(604) 478-3344 FAX 478-5416

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

BY-LAW NO. 2256

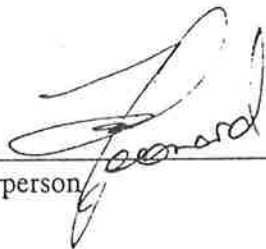
\*\*\*\*\*  
A BY-LAW TO ADOPT A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WITTY'S LAGOON  
REGIONAL PARK  
\*\*\*\*\*

WHEREAS the Board of the Capital Regional District deems it necessary to adopt a by-law for the Management Plan for Witty's Lagoon Regional Park:

NOW THEREFORE the Board of the Capital Regional District in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. The Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan, marked as Schedule "A" attached hereto and forming part of this by-law, is hereby designated as the Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan.
2. This by-law may be cited as the *"Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan By-law No. 1, 1994"*.

READ A FIRST TIME THIS	9th	day of	November	1994
READ A SECOND TIME THIS	9th	day of	November	1994
READ A THIRD TIME THIS	9th	day of	November	1994
ADOPTED THIS	9th	day of	November	1994

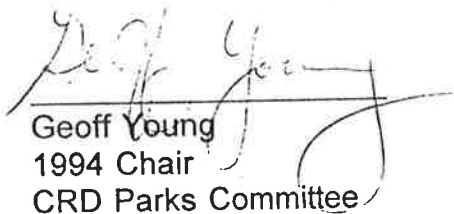
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chairperson

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan was prepared with the assistance of a public planning advisory team. This group was made up of ten individuals who represented various interests regarding the future of the park. This group spent many hours debating the issues. On behalf of the Capital Regional District, I would like to thank them for their work and time in providing advice to the Capital Regional District Parks Committee.



Geoff Young  
1994 Chair  
CRD Parks Committee

1910

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Glossary of Terms  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1966, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park was one of the first areas established as a CRD Park. Today, it is one of CRD Parks' premiere nature appreciation parks. The park has many regionally significant natural and archaeological resources and provides regionally significant outdoor recreation opportunities.

As land manager, CRD Parks role is to protect and manage natural and archaeological resources and visitor activities in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. Careful planning and management are required to ensure that the resources of the park are protected and visitors have a positive outdoor recreation experience. In the 27 year history of this park, no management plan has been prepared to guide the protection and management of the park's natural and archaeological resources and development of park facilities.

The overriding theme of the management plan is that protection and management of the park's natural and archaeological resources will be given priority over outdoor recreation use. The level and type of visitor use will reflect this protection theme. Outdoor recreation activities will generally be maintained at present levels although in certain instances, restrictions will be applied to help ensure long-term protection of the park's natural and archaeological resources. To ensure this long-term protection, the following actions are recommended:

- prepare a detailed inventory of sensitive natural resources and a protection and management plan for these resources;
- prepare a detailed inventory of archaeological resources and a protection and management plan for these resources;
- rehabilitate disturbed natural areas;
- remove non-native plant species;
- eliminate use of unofficial trails;
- restrict access to sensitive natural and archaeological areas;
- provide facilities such as viewing platforms and boardwalks to protect natural and archaeological areas; and
- acquire and protect some surrounding lands.

The plan identifies land adjacent to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park that has potential for CRD Parks purposes, and provides a variety of methods for securing land. The methods fall into three categories: transferring title, dividing responsibility and separating management. With respect to purchase, the plan identifies four adjacent parcels of land that have potential for CRD Parks purposes. The reason for identifying these parcels is to provide guidance for the overall CRD Parks land acquisition plan. Acquisition of these parcels must be assessed in conjunction with other land acquisition needs of the CRD Parks system. The identification of these parcels does not bind the CRD Parks Committee or CRD Board to purchase.

One of the key issues addressed in the plan is replacement of the nature house. For many years the nature house at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park was an attraction for visitors and the centre for public education programs in the park. In 1992, the nature house was closed because it was found to be structurally unsound. Throughout the management planning process, the Witty's

Lagoon Regional Park Advisory Planning Team and public have expressed a desire for a new nature house similar in character and location to the old one. Although the need for and future location of a nature house are addressed in this management plan, it is not possible to make a firm recommendation at this time. A CRD Parks System Interpretive Plan and an interpretive plan specific to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park must be in place first. In this light, the following actions are recommended:

- develop a system interpretive plan for the CRD Parks;
- develop a park interpretive plan for Witty's Lagoon Regional Park within the context of a CRD Parks system interpretive plan; and
- maintain the information trailer in the main parking area as a information center until a decision about a nature house is made.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In 1966, Witty's Lagoon was one of the first areas to be established as a CRD Park. Today, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is one of CRD Parks premiere nature appreciation parks. Located in the Municipality of Metchosin the park is 56 hectares in size (see Maps 1 and 2). To the south the park is bounded by Juan de Fuca Strait, to the west by rural residential lots, a poultry farm and a church, to the north by Metchosin Road and to the east by agricultural land and residential lots.

The most important natural features of the park are remnant Douglas-fir and Garry oak forests, rare plants, pillow lava formation, a waterfall, a lagoon, a spit, salt water marsh and sand beach. The park also has four known archaeological sites: three shell midden sites and one fortified defensive site. The park is also a popular recreation destination for residents from throughout the CRD. The most popular outdoor recreational pursuits are hiking, nature study, and beach activities. Witty's is also an important part of CRD Parks' public nature education programs, especially those related to the marine environment.

The park fulfils an important natural environment and cultural protection role within the CRD Parks system. It provides protection for many regionally significant natural and cultural resources, including a spit and salt marsh. The occurrence of several rare plant species further underscores the parks' unique and special character. Therefore, careful planning and management are required to ensure that natural and cultural resources of the park are protected and that visitors have a positive recreation experience. In the 27 year history of the park no management plan has been prepared to guide the protection, use, management and development of the park.

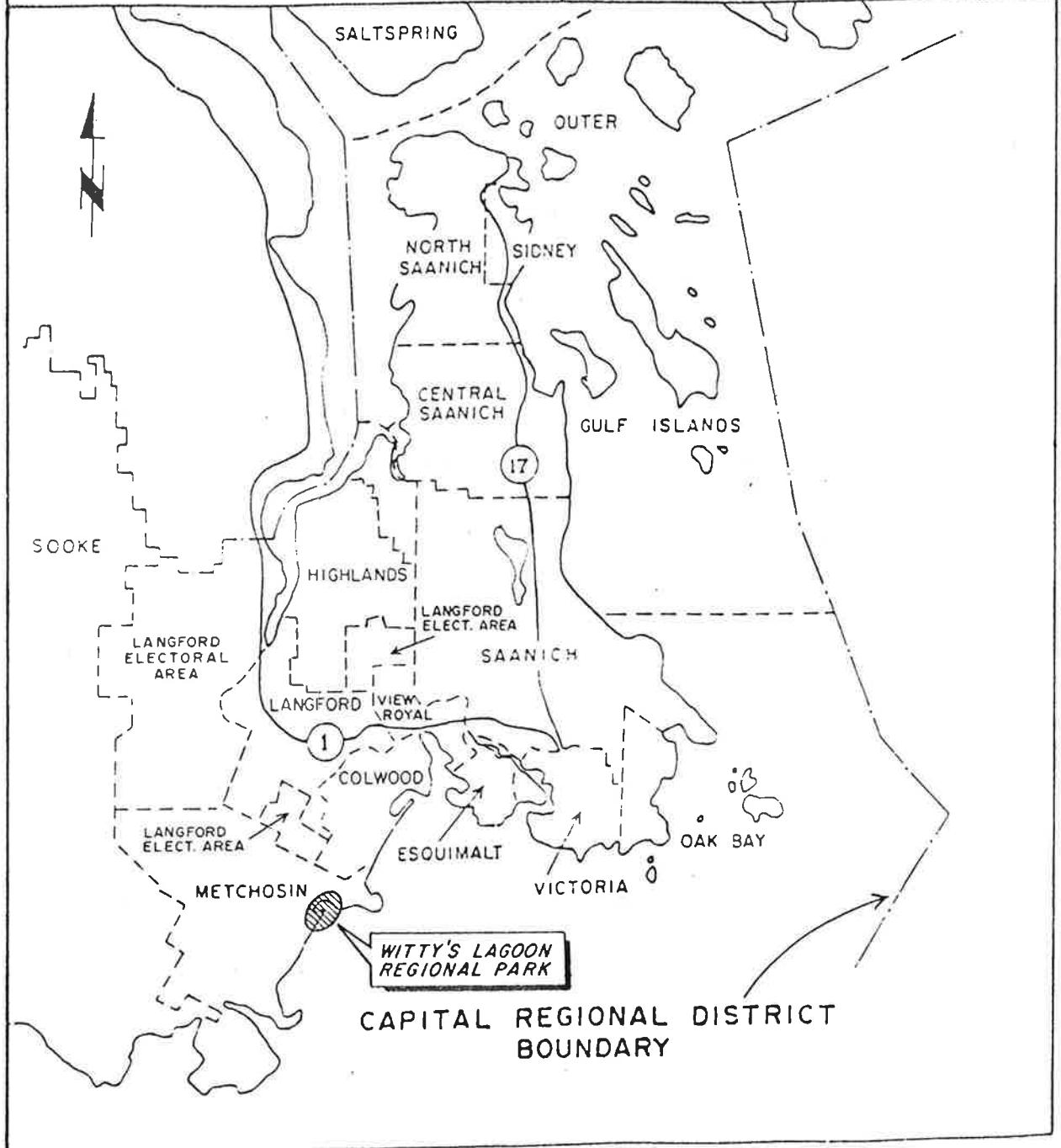
### **1.1 PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

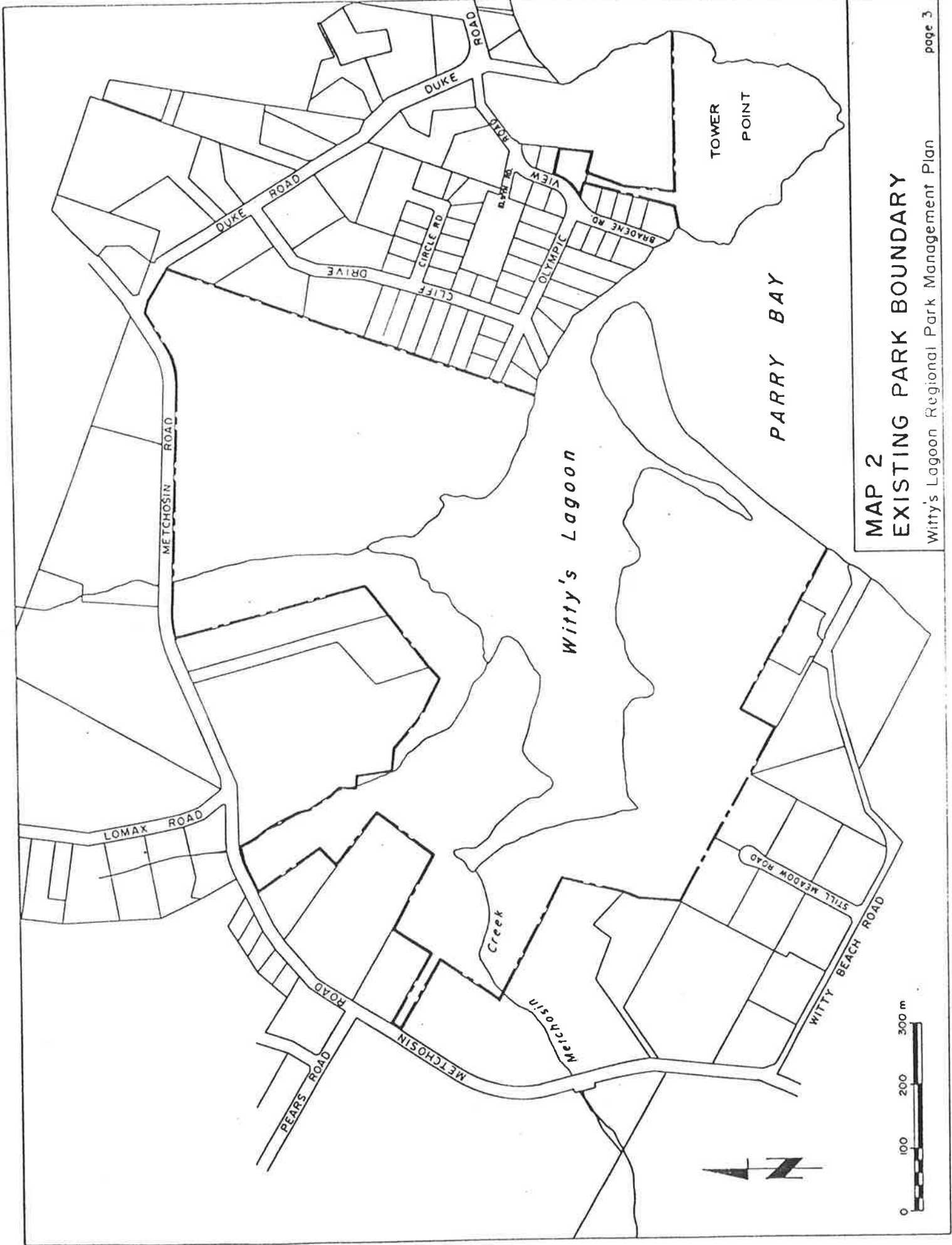
The management plan is a statement of how Witty's Lagoon Regional Park will be protected, used, managed and developed in the future. It states in a broad but comprehensive manner park management goals and objectives, and actions for achieving them. The plan also provides;

- a rationale and priorities for management, operation and maintenance programs and capital improvements;
- a record of public involvement; and
- a basis for monitoring management and development of the park.

# MAP I REGIONAL SETTING

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan





**MAP 2  
EXISTING PARK BOUNDARY**

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan

## **1.2 WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OFFICIAL REGIONAL PARK PLAN**

In 1987, an *Official Regional Parks Plan* (ORPP) was adopted by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board and approved by the Provincial Minister of Environment and Parks. The ORPP establishes a framework for the protection, development, management and operation of CRD Parks. This framework includes statements on the purpose and goals of CRD Parks.

### **1.2.1 Purpose and Goals of CRD Parks**

The purpose of CRD Parks is twofold:

- to provide a diversity of protected natural landscapes for the residents of the CRD to enjoy and appreciate; and
- to offer opportunities for residents of the CRD to incorporate outdoor activities in the natural environment into their lifestyle.

The goals of CRD Parks are:

- (i) to protect a system of diverse natural areas that will support appropriate recreational pursuits and which illustrate the natural characteristics of the region;
- (ii) to provide regionally significant opportunities for a variety of appropriate outdoor recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities;
- (iii) to provide regionally significant opportunities for park visitors to learn about the natural environment; and
- (iv) to provide park areas in proximity to all residents of the CRD.

### **1.2.2 Park Classification**

Within the ORPP, parks are divided into four classes: nature appreciation, recreation, wilderness-type recreation and park corridors. Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is classified as a nature appreciation park. As such, its primary purpose is "to provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness and knowledge of these special protected landscapes and natural environments of the CRD in general that they represent". Five goals are also defined for nature appreciation parks:

- (i) to protect the natural landscape and/or seascape of the park, particularly regionally significant representative or sensitive resources;
- (ii) to present and interpret, through the use of a thematic approach, the natural history of the park and the associated human history;
- (iii) to develop appropriate park facilities and to manage the park activities in order to avoid deterioration of the park's natural setting and features;

- (iv) to promote and encourage use of the park for the residents of and visitors to the CRD; and
- (v) to provide opportunities for environmentally compatible passive day use recreational activities.

In this respect, the management emphasis in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is;

- to protect natural and cultural resources,
- to provide interpretation and educational opportunities, and
- to allow recreational uses that are compatible with the educational emphasis and that have minimal impact on natural and cultural resources.

### **1.2.3 Regional Landscape Representation**

The ORPP identifies three types of CRD parks: ocean coastline, upland forest, and freshwater systems. Witty's Lagoon Regional Park offers mixed woodlands and grasslands, a tidal lagoon and salt marsh, a sandspit and extensive beach and rocky shorelines. Given this simplified typology, Witty's Lagoon is primarily an ocean coastline park.

### **1.2.4 Regionally Significant Natural Resources**

The following natural resources of the park are considered to be regionally significant:

- Pillow lavas located on Tower Point (considered by many geologists as textbook examples and popular feature for geological field trips);
- Witty's spit and beach (beaches of this type are generally scarce and comprise less than 5% of all shores in the CRD);
- Witty's Lagoon (this saltwater ecosystem provides important habitat for waterfowl and is one of the best bird watching areas in the region);
- Salt Marsh (many of the plants associated with this ecosystem provide critical feed for wintering waterfowl);
- Sitting Lady Falls (one of three waterfalls in the vicinity of Greater Victoria);
- Rare plant species located on Tower Point and Witty's spit; and
- Waterfowl and shoreline birds of Witty's Lagoon.

### **1.2.5 Regionally Significant Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is visited residents from throughout the region. The park provides many outdoor recreation opportunities that are considered to be regionally significant: hiking, nature study, and beach activities. People come to Witty's Lagoon to experience the park's natural environments such as the beach, lagoon, salt marsh, waterfall and to view the park's wildlife. Therefore, it is important to protect those experiences and the natural resources that enhance those experiences.



## 1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

In 1987, an preliminary inventory of archaeological resources was completed and, in 1990, a preliminary natural resource inventory and assessment was completed. The preparation of a management plan was initiated in 1992. The planning process is outlined in Figure 1.

### 1.3.1 Public Input

Public input was obtained through an advisory planning team, public workshops and meetings, and response forms. The Municipality of Metchosin Council was also kept informed throughout the process. The Advisory Planning Team represented a broad cross-section of groups that have an interest in the future management of the park. The purpose of the Advisory Planning Team was to provide recommendations through CRD Parks to the CRD Parks Committee about the protection, management and development of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park in conjunction with the preparation of the management plan. The members and the groups that they represent are:

- Joan Rosenberg  
Metchosin Environmental Advisory  
Commission
- Michael Harvey  
CRD Roundtable
- Anne Bell  
Garden City Horse Club
- John Cenknor  
Metchosin Equestrian Society
- Gladyce Craig  
Victoria Natural History Society
- Marion Edworthy  
Victoria Outdoor Club
- Don Tolson  
CRD Parks Volunteer Naturalist
- Ted Waring  
Sooke School District
- Ron Bradley  
Metchosin Museum School Society
- Bruce Rutherford  
Metchosin Parks and Recreation  
Commission

Public support for the plan alternatives varied in their intensity when considered as a whole. Support can be identified in three categories: very strongly supported (75% +) ; strongly supported (60 - 75%); and marginally supported (50 - 60%). A fourth category, 'inconclusive' can be used to characterize areas where opinion was divided among a number of alternatives. The alternatives which fit in each category are noted below. The written comments tend to emphasize those areas where strong reaction to the alternatives presented is felt in the public view. Concerns over dogs, parking and costs are more appreciated for the intensity of diverse feelings they create rather than the consistency of view across the public.

The Public Advisory Planning Team endorsed the management plan on October 19, 1994, except for Mr. Bruce Rutherford. Mr Rutherford did not endorse the plan because of concerns about statements in the plan about the nature house and the buffer areas, particularly those along the east boundary of the park.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Planning Process**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
January 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Terms of Reference Approved by CRD Parks Committee</li> </ul>
May 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appointment of Public Advisory Group by CRD Parks Committee</li> </ul>
July 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collection and Analysis of Background Data. Identification of Issues</li> <li>● Distribution of Newsletter and Response Form</li> <li>● Public Meeting</li> </ul>
October 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Definition of Plan Alternatives</li> <li>● Presentation of Plan Alternatives to CRD Parks Committee</li> <li>● Distribution of Newsletter and Response Form</li> <li>● Public Meeting</li> </ul>
May 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft Management Plan</li> <li>● Draft Management Plan Reviewed by Advisory Planning Team</li> </ul>
September 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Presentation of Draft Management Plan to CRD Parks Committee</li> <li>● Presentation of Draft Plan to Metchosin Council</li> </ul>
October 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public Notice of Public Hearing</li> <li>● Public Hearing</li> </ul>
November 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Forward Public Hearing Results to Advisory Group</li> <li>● Forward Public Hearing Results to CRD Parks Committee</li> <li>● Finalize Management Plan</li> <li>● Forward Final Management Plan to Advisory Group for Review/Comment</li> <li>● Forward Final Plan to CRD Parks Committee for Recommendations to CRD Board for Adoption</li> <li>● Forward Management Plan to CRD Board for Adoption</li> </ul>

### Very Strongly Support

- Maintain current use levels.
- Maintain a nature house in the park that is small and rustic and which is comparable to existing one.
- Continue property acquisition.
- Reject bike use in the park.

### Strongly Support

- Use site of existing nature house for new nature house.
- Close unauthorized trails.
- Rehabilitate trails.
- Maintain present parking levels.
- Improve existing wheelchair access.
- Obtain legal agreement to ensure service vehicle access to beach.
- Use materials other than fine gravel for trail maintenance.

### Marginally Supported

- Maintain existing dog policy.
- Expand wheelchair access.

### Inconclusive

- Extent and location of horse use.
- Management of field areas.

## **1.4 JURISDICTION**

Jurisdiction over areas and activities within Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is divided amongst federal, provincial, regional and local governments.

- Capital Regional District operates regional parks under the Park (Regional) Act as authorized by 789 (g) of the Municipal Act. Section 4 - Powers of District - (a) and (b) of the Park (Regional) Act state:

A regional park district may,

- (a) within an area designated as a regional park on a regional park plan which has been approved by the minister, acquire land in or out of a regional park district for use as a regional park or regional trail and, unless otherwise declared, all land acquired by a regional park district shall be deemed to be declared to be dedicated for public use and enjoyment as a regional park or regional trail; and

(b) by bylaw, make rules and regulations governing the management, maintenance, improvement, control and use of any property in a regional park or regional trail.

These powers only apply to upland areas. The areas below the natural high water line are the responsibility of either the Government of Canada or Province of British Columbia.

- Municipality of Metchosin has authority in the area of zoning, noise and nuisance bylaws.
- Province of British Columbia has responsibilities relating to freshwater quality, natural resource management pertaining to freshwater courses, foreshore areas below the natural high water line, the bed of the lagoon and ocean and archaeological resources.
- Government of Canada has responsibilities relating to protection and management of migratory waterfowl, anadromous fisheries, shipping, and boat restrictions.



## 2.0 PARK CHARACTERISTICS

### 2.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

This section provides a brief overview of the natural resources contained in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, in particular, hydrology, vegetation, and highly visible and sensitive resources. A detailed description is provided in the report "*Witty's Lagoon Regional Park: A Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment/Evaluation, 1990*".

Most of the land that encompasses Witty's Lagoon Regional Park has been altered by humans. Sections of forest have been cleared for agriculture and/or logged. Although not in a pristine condition, the park still is an important natural area and contains many regionally significant natural resources. The topography of the park is shown on Map 3.

#### 2.1.1 Hydrology

##### (a) Freshwater

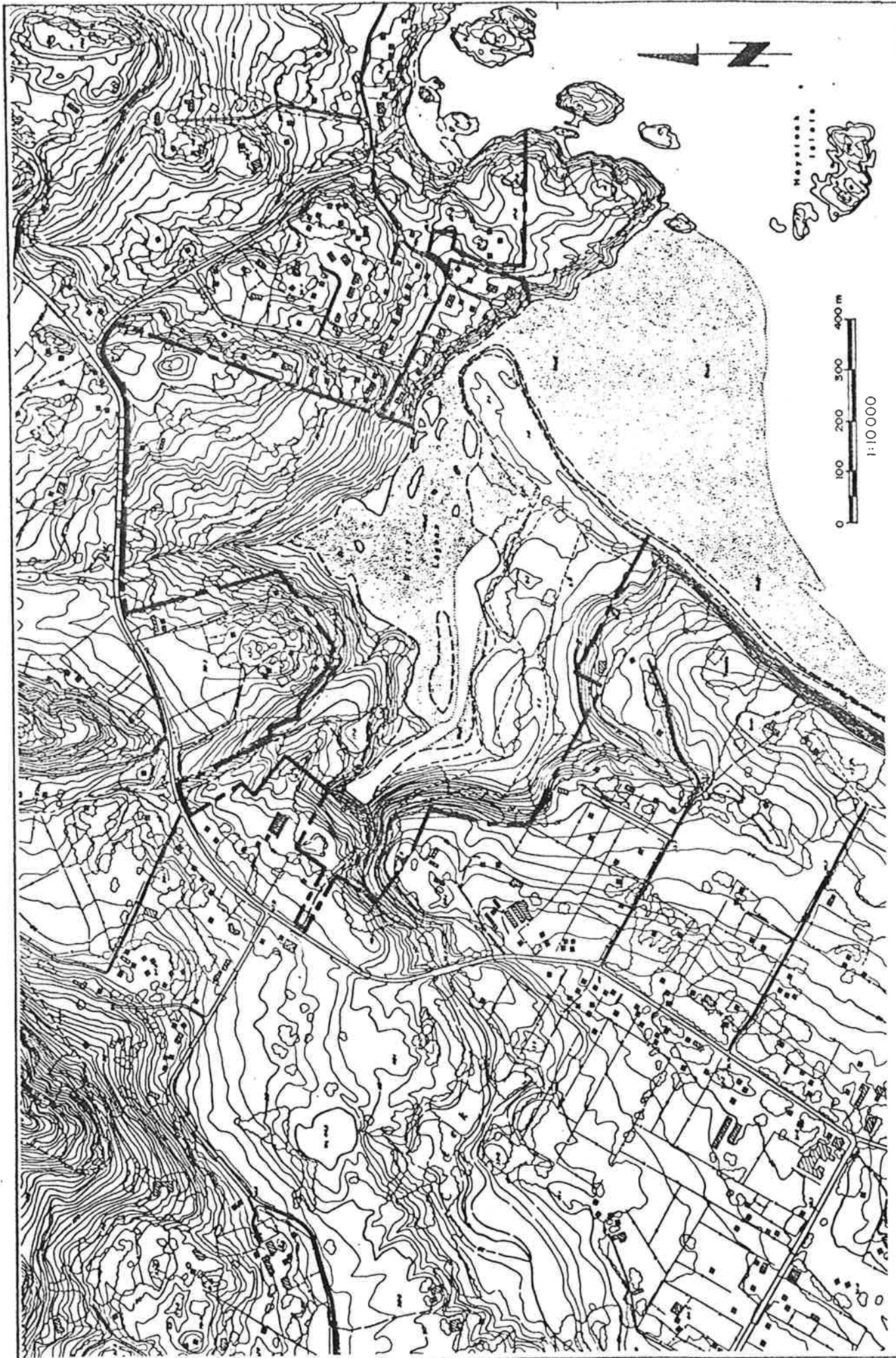
The freshwater systems of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park consist of one major source, Bilston Creek, and four smaller streams (see Map 4). All the watercourse are considered important to the integrity of the park.

The Bilston Creek drainage basin covers approximately 1,500 hectares. At Witty's Lagoon, Bilston Creek plunges over a 20 metre rock bluff creating Sitting Lady Falls. Concern has been expressed by Municipalities, the CRD and Province of British Columbia about water quality and flooding and drainage issues in the Bilston Creek Watershed. A need has been determined for improvement of the Bilston Creek Drainage system in order to provide an adequate level of flood control. In addition, it has been acknowledged that any flood mitigation works in the watershed must not comprise minimum flow characteristics as it relates to the maintenance of water quality, fisheries and wildlife resources and their habitat and recreational opportunities.

The management and protection of freshwater quality and associated resources are the responsibility of the B.C. Ministry of Environment. In the spring of 1994, the B.C. Ministry of Environment initiated the Bilston Creek Watershed Planning Strategy. CRD Parks is included as part of the planning team.

##### (b) Saltwater

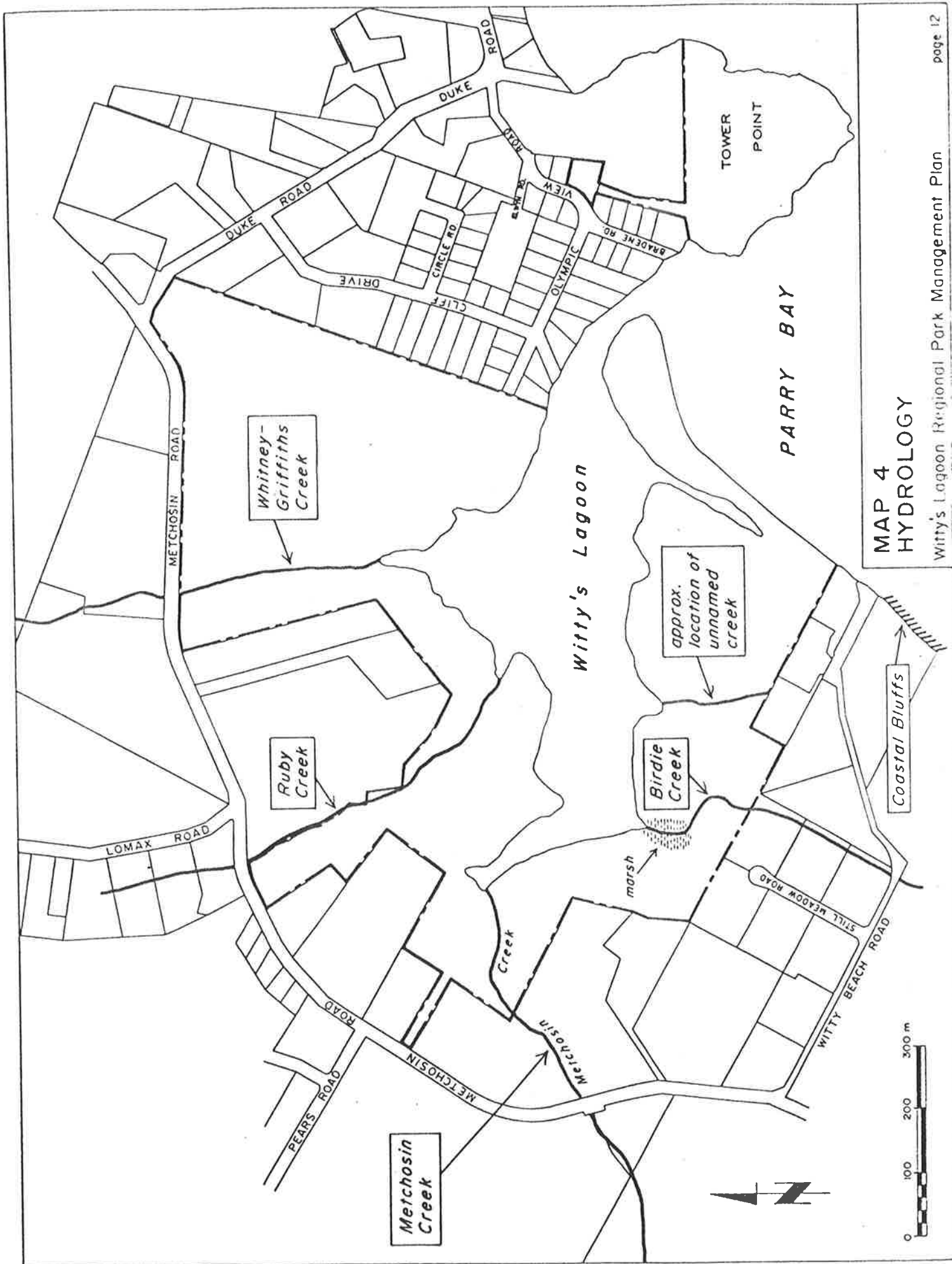
Witty's Lagoon Regional Park's saltwater system consists of the lagoon and coast. Bauer (1976) states that "left to itself, the lagoon will slowly disappear, and the marsh area will continue to enlarge". Emergent plants and several mudbars evident except during high tides and heavy



# MAP 3 TOPOGRAPHY

- DIST. LOT & TP. SEC.
- SUBDIVISION LOT
- BUILDING
- PAVED ROAD
- ROUGH ROAD
- X- FENCE
- - - - - PARK BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Ministry of Environment - Map 92B-038 3 4



**MAP 4**  
**HYDROLOGY**



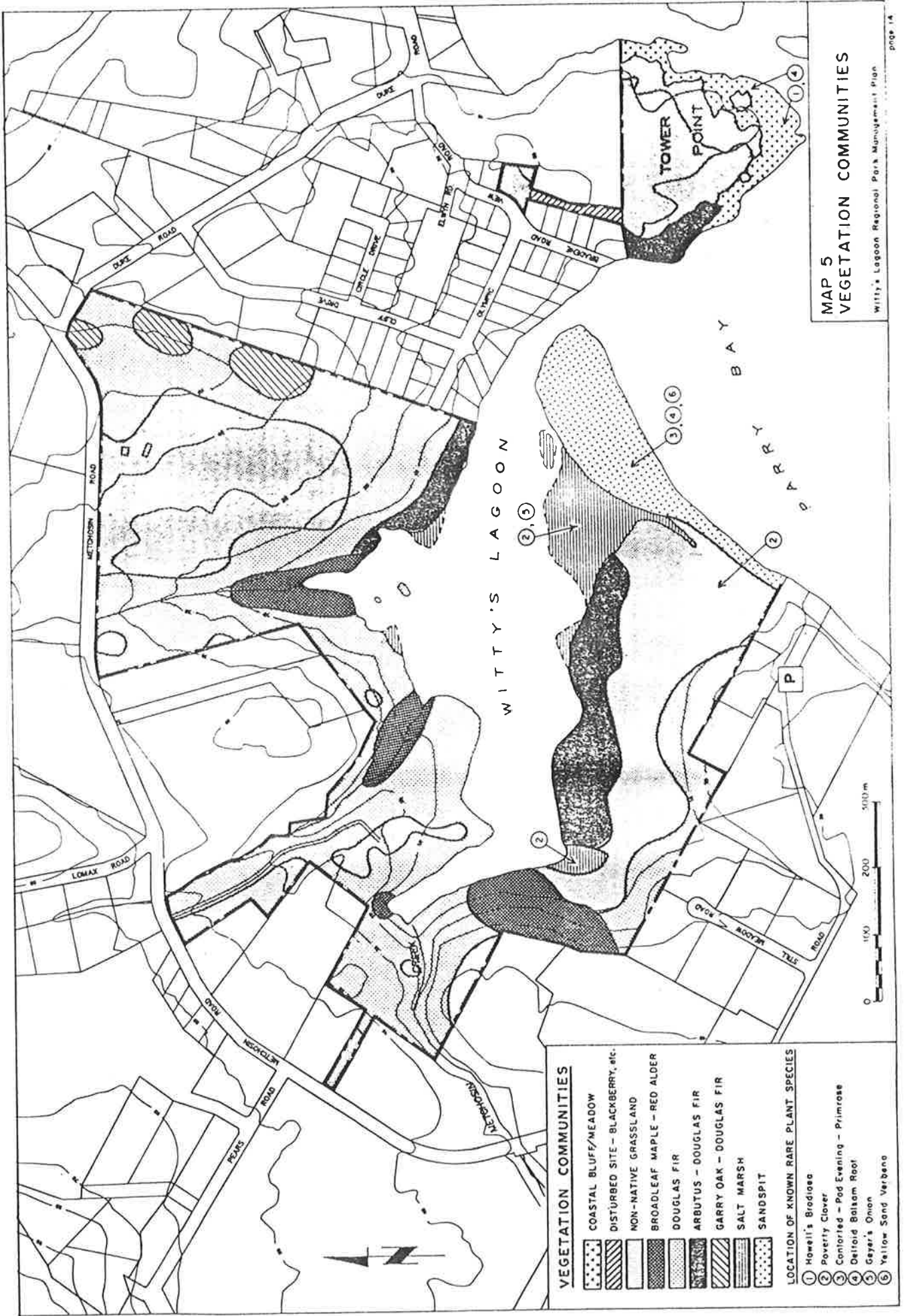
winter rains suggest that this succession from lagoon to marsh is occurring. The lagoon also is suspected to receive increased sediment loads from human activities in the Bilston Creek Watershed and act as a settling pond for any inflowing containments. Insufficient flushing of the lagoon occurs because of low-energy current. Therefore, any sediments or containments would remain in the lagoon. Concern has also been expressed that increased sedimentation in Bilston Creek from unnatural causes may be causing the lagoon to infill at a faster rate than under natural circumstances. This needs to be verified.

The 550 metre beach and spit are maintained by the erosion south of the park along the base of the bluffs. Sand and fine gravels from these bluffs are carried along the shore northward and deposited along Witty's spit and beach. Erosion of the bluffs also contributes to the maintenance of the sandy silt platform which extends seaward. This area is popular for exploring tidal life. Beaches of this type are referred to as accretion beaches and are generally very scarce, comprising less than 5% of all shores in the CRD (CRD, 1978). Action to restrict the bluff erosion would lead to long shore current eroding the beach and spit.

### 2.1.2 Vegetation

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park falls within the southern extremity of the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) biogeoclimatic zone. These rainshadow coastal forests are dominated by Douglas-fir, with an understorey commonly consisting of salal and/or Oregon grape. Western redcedar is typical of wetter sites and Garry oak and arbutus are abundant on drier sites. The latter two trees are characteristic of this zone and occur nowhere else in Canada (Ministry of Forests, 1988). The CDF also contains a rare plant species endemic to British Columbia. Much of the Garry oak ecosystem within the CRD has been lost to residential development, agriculture and industry.

The vegetation communities in the park are shown on Map 5. No systematic inventory of rare plant species has been undertaken in the park. A detailed inventory is essential for park management and resource protection. The known rare plant species, as of April 29, 1994 and as identified by B.C. Conservation Data Centre, B.C. Parks Ecological Reserve Specialist, and Metchosin Sensitive Environment Inventory, are listed below and their general location is shown on Map 5. The scientific name, common name, habitat and provincial rarity ranking by the B.C. Conservation Data Centre is provided. The provincial rarity ranking is based solely on status in B.C. The status of a species is indicated on a scale of one to five (1 = critically imperiled and 5 = common to very common). The ranking is based primarily on the number of extant occurrences of the species, but other factors such as abundance, range, protection and threats are also considered.



**MAP 5  
VEGETATION COMMUNITIES**

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan

### (a) Known Rare Plant Species

- Scientific Name - *Brodiaea howellii*.  
Common Name - Howell's brodiaea.  
Habitat - Grassy coastal bluffs.  
Rarity Ranking - 1 Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer extant occurrences or very few remaining individuals) or because of some factor (s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation or extinction).
  
- Scientific Name - *Trifolium depauperatum*.  
Common Name - poverty clover.  
Habitat - Wet grassy sites in lowland zone.  
Rarity Ranking - 1 Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer extant occurrences or very few remaining individuals) or because of some factor (s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation or extinction).
  
- Scientific Name - *Camissonia contorta*.  
Common Name - contorted-podded Evening-primrose.  
Habitat - Sandy soil along coast and rivers.  
Rarity Ranking - 1 Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer extant occurrences or very few remaining individuals) or because of some factor (s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation or extinction).
  
- Scientific Name - *Balsamorhiza deltoidea*.  
Common Name - Deltoid Balsamroot.  
Habitat - Rocky bluffs, sandy coastal beaches, dry open grassy areas.  
Rarity ranking - 1 Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer extant occurrences or very few remaining individuals) or because of some factor (s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation or extinction).
  
- Scientific Name - *Allium geyeri*  
Common Name - Geyer's onion  
Habitat - Water courses, grassy sites in lowland zone (known only to the Victoria area).  
Rarity Ranking - 2 Imperiled because of rarity (6 - 20 extant occurrences or few remaining individuals) or rare because of some factor(s) making it vulnerable to extirpation or extinction).
  
- Scientific Name - *Abronia latifolla* Eschsch  
Common Name - Yellow sand-verbena  
Habitat - Coastal beaches and sand dunes in the lowland zone  
Rarity Ranking - 3 Rare or uncommon (typically 21-100 occurrences); may be susceptible to large-scale disturbances; e.g. may have lost extensive peripheral populations

### 2.1.3 Wildlife

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park encompasses a diversity of land and water habitats. In particular, the water habitat is important for birds and small mammals. Protecting these areas is important. No inventory of wildlife has been undertaken for the park. This is considered a priority for effective park management.

### 2.1.4 Sensitive Natural Resources

The sensitive natural resources of the park that require protection are:

- Witty's spit, beach and lagoon
- Pillow lavas located on Tower Point;
- Sitting Lady Falls;
- Salt Marsh;
- Plant species located on Tower Point and Witty's spit; and
- Waterfowl and shoreline birds of Witty's Lagoon.

### 2.1.5 Natural Resource Management Issues

The key natural resource management issues in the park are:

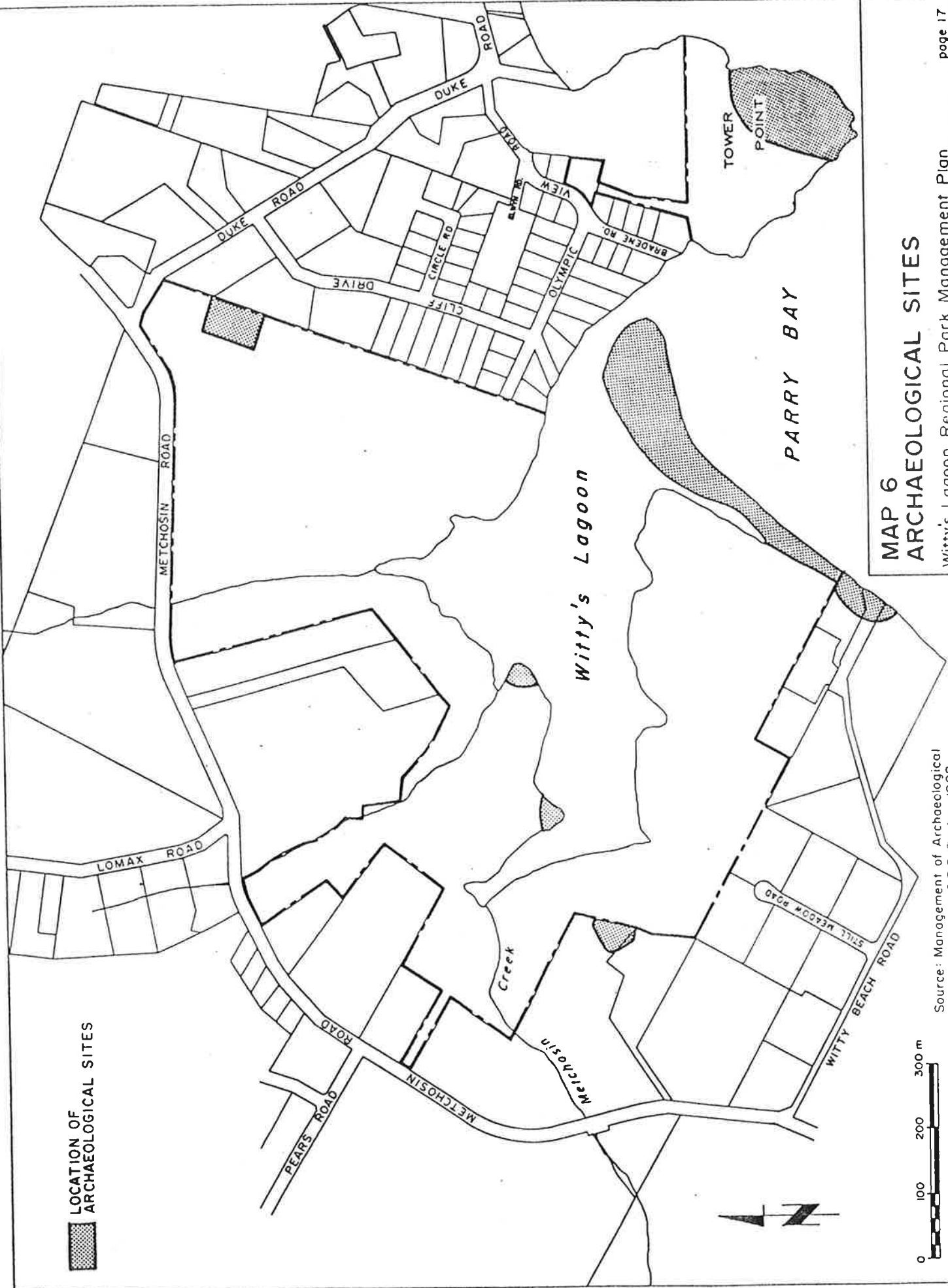
- introduction of non-native plant species, particularly broom and *Daphne laurealis*;
- impact of visitors, in particular use off designated trails;
- impact of surrounding land uses; and
- potential oil pollution of spit, beach and lagoon from oil spill in Strait of Juan de Fuca;

## 2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In 1987, a report titled "*Management of Archaeological Resources in the Capital Regional District Parks*" was completed. A brief overview of the report is provided here. The report provides a general overview of the park's archaeological resources related to native Indian history. No description of Eurocanadian history or inventory of associated resources at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park has been undertaken.

A more detailed inventory and mapping of native Indian archaeological resources is required to define specific protection and management actions. A description and inventory of Eurocanadian history and associated archaeological resources is also a priority. The location of known archaeological sites is shown on Map 6. These sites are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. **These sites may not be altered without a permit issued pursuant to the *Heritage Conservation Act*.** Information about these sites is essential for park planning and management and has been used for public education programs. In 1987, an excavation of a site was part of the public education programs.

LOCATION OF  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



# MAP 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan

Source: Management of Archaeological Resources in the CRD Parks, 1988

## 2.3 EXISTING FACILITIES

The existing facilities are shown on Map 7.

## 2.4 VISITOR USE

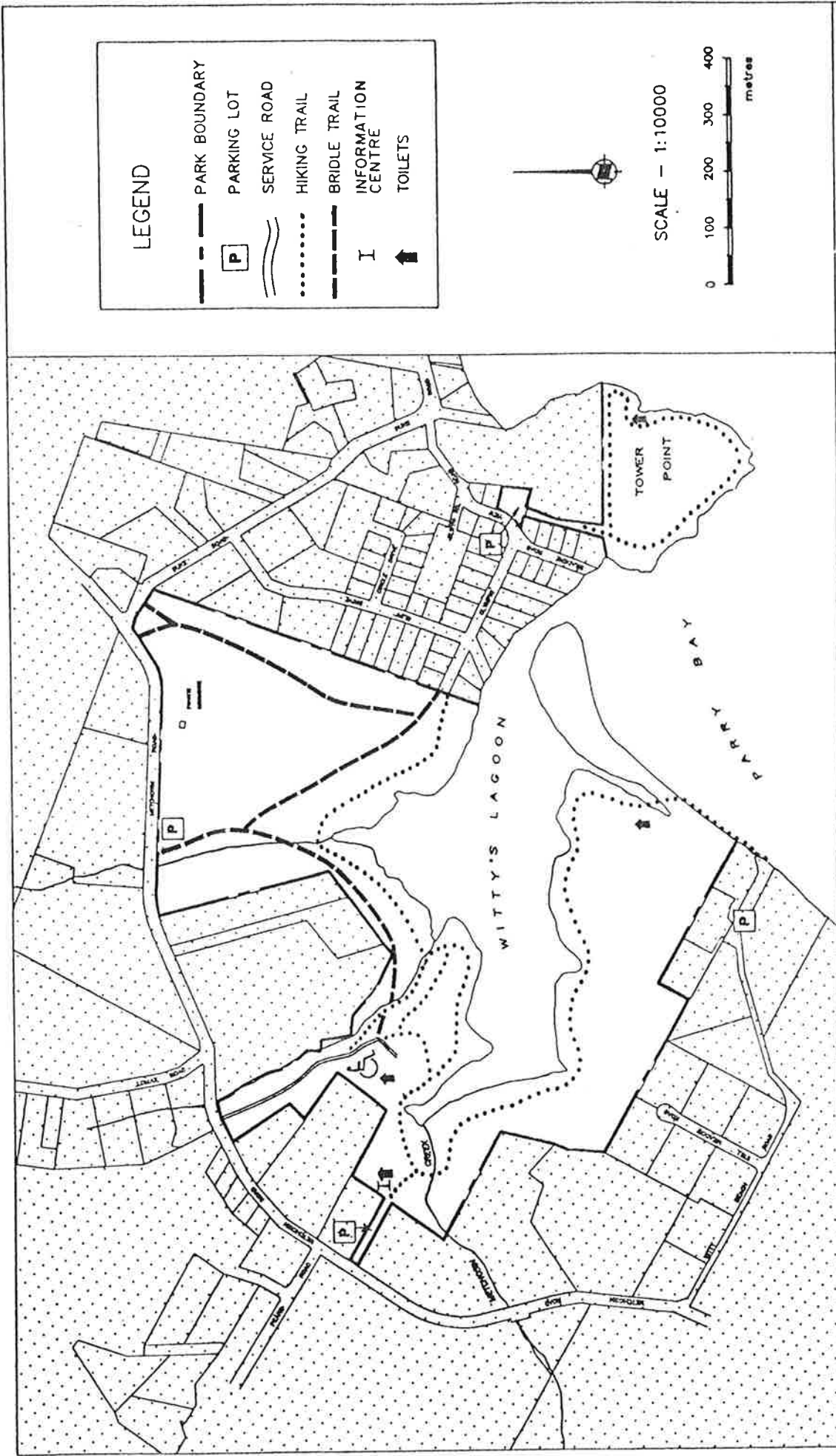
### 2.4.1 Visitor Use Estimates

Visitor use estimates are calculated based on the park vehicle counts. To obtain visitor estimates the number of vehicles entering a parking area is multiplied by the average number of people/vehicle determined through the 1991 Visitor Use Survey. The average number of people/vehicle is 2.7. Vehicle counts for Witty's Lagoon Regional Park are available for 1991, 1992 and 1993 for the main parking area off Metchosin Road and are shown in Table 1. Vehicle counts are not available for the parking areas off Witty Beach Road, Metchosin Road or Tower Point. It is estimated that approximately 45,000 people come to the park through the Witty Beach Road, Metchosin Road and Tower Point access points. Therefore, the overall estimated use is approximately 95,000.

**Table 1**  
**Estimated Number of Visitors to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park - Main Parking Area**

Year	Estimated Number of Visitors
1991	45,500
1992	45,900
1993	44,500

Within the context of all CRD Parks, Witty's Lagoon is the fifth most visited park (CRD Parks Householder Survey, 1993).



**MAP 7  
EXISTING FACILITIES**

## 2.4.2 Visitor Use Characteristics

During the months May to September 1991, CRD Parks conducted a survey of visitors to four CRD Parks. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about the characteristics of visitors to CRD Parks (e.g. age, place of residence), their use (e.g. activities, number of visits), and their opinions about CRD Parks. This information is necessary for planning, management, operation and development of CRD Parks. The results for Witty's Lagoon are summarized below.

- Visitation to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is on a regional basis. 90% of visitors reside outside of Metchosin.
- 87% of visitors are from the CRD and 13% are non-residents.
- 97% of visitors arrive at the park by car.
- The most frequent outdoor recreation pursuits are hiking and walking, beach activities, picnicking and tanning/relaxing.
- Over 90% of respondents to the survey felt that benefits of the park such as preservation of the natural environment, opportunity to learn about nature, protection of open space, place to participate in outdoor recreation, place to relax, and place to spend time with family and friends were important benefits of the park.

(An important aspect of these results is that over 98.6% of respondents stated that they felt the nature oriented benefits of the park were important. This clearly helps to define the role the park plays in the protection of nature and open space in the CRD and the importance of protecting the park's natural and cultural resources)

- 95% of respondents to the survey felt that they were satisfied with the way the natural resources in the park were protected.
- Dogs were the most often mentioned detraction at the park. Litter was the second most often mentioned detraction.
- 50.5% of respondents to the survey rated the trails in the park as above average. 45% stated average and only .5% below average.

Although not addressed in the visitor use survey, the park is a popular area with people from Metchosin. The park is an important part of the community. Much use takes place, particularly in the fall and winter.





## 3.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 3.1 PARK CONCEPT

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is an important part of the CRD Parks system. The park has many regionally significant landscape resources: the spit and beach formations; the lagoon and salt marsh ecosystem; the Tower Point pillow lavas; unique bird populations; and rare plant species. The nature appreciation park classification necessitates a high level of protection for natural and cultural resources of the park so that high quality nature appreciation and educational experiences can be provided. For this reason the following principles will guide the plan:

- Protection of the park's natural and cultural resources will be the primary goal and given priority over recreational use.
- Interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resources and public education programs will be a major focus in the park.
- The level and type of visitor use in the park will be reflective of the goal to protect the park's natural and cultural resources and the focus on nature interpretation and educational programs. Recreational activities will generally be maintained at present levels although in certain instances restrictions will be applied to help ensure the long-term protection of park natural and cultural resources.
- Additional facilities and trail-building will not generally be encouraged, recognizing that use levels are presently acceptable and should not be significantly increased. Enhancing the quality of the visitor experience and reducing environmental impacts will be considered priorities and improvements to some facilities are suggested to achieve those ends.

### 3.2 PARK ZONING

Land use zoning in parks is essential for effective protection, management and orderly development of a park. Zoning classifies park areas according to the desired level of resource protection, use and facility development. The zones define how an area will be managed and what outdoor recreational uses and facilities are considered appropriate. (*Note: park zoning is not the same as zoning found in a zoning bylaw enacted by a local jurisdiction under the Municipal Act*). Three zones are identified. The zones are defined by (a) natural resource protection and management objectives, and (b) permissible uses and facilities. The zones are outlined in Table 2. The zoning scheme is shown on Map 8.

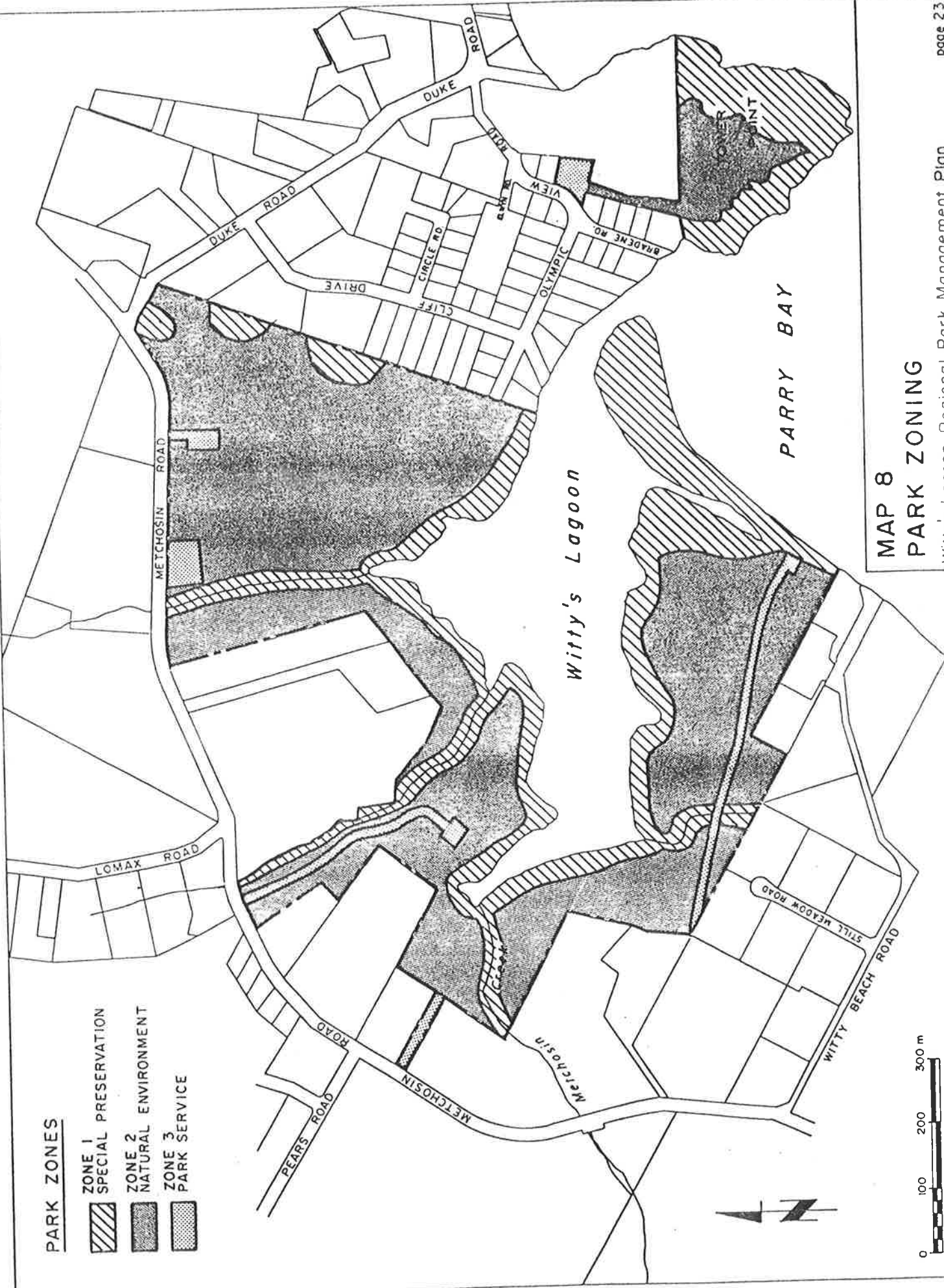
Table 2  
Park Zoning

	Purpose	Natural Resource Protection/Management Objectives	Archaeological Resource Protection/Management Objectives	Recreational Use	Facilities
Zone 1 Special Preservation	To protect areas that contain or support outstanding landscapes and features, important habitat or unique, rare or endangered species.	The primary objective is to preserve park resources. This zone will be managed to ensure that natural resources and processes remain largely unaltered by human activity. With respect to plants and animals, the objective is to maintain the natural processes.	The primary objective is the protection of all archaeological resources in the park. This zone will be managed to ensure that all cultural resources are not disturbed. Resources will be preserved as they currently exist.	Trail activities such as hiking and nature study.  No off-trail use will be permitted.	Development will be limited to trails, necessary signs, and interpretive facilities for education, nature appreciation, research and management.
Zone 2 Natural Environment	To preserve a natural environment while providing opportunities for compatible outdoor recreational activities.	To avoid unnecessary alteration of the natural landscape or interference with natural processes. With respect to plants and animals, the objective is to maintain the natural processes.	The primary objective is the protection of all archaeological resources in the park. This zone will be managed to ensure that all cultural resources are not disturbed. Resources will be preserved as they currently exist.	Opportunities will exist for a variety of dispersed outdoor recreation activities which bring the visitor in closer contact with nature.  Off-trail use may be permitted by park use permit. (1)	Development will be limited to trails, necessary signs and interpretive facilities.
Zone 3 Park Service	To identify where park services will be located.	To minimize the negative impacts of park services on the natural environment.	To minimize the negative impacts of park services on archaeological resources.	Recreational use may be restricted.	Park service facilities such as roads and parking areas.

Off-trail uses will be assessed against the nature appreciation focus of the park. These uses will have a minimal impact on natural and archaeological resources.

**PARK ZONES**

-  ZONE 1  
SPECIAL PRESERVATION
-  ZONE 2  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
-  ZONE 3  
PARK SERVICE



**MAP 8  
PARK ZONING**

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan

### 3.3 MANAGEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides objectives and recommendations for all aspects of park management. The recommendations for each topic are highlighted in a shaded box. The costs for each action are highlighted in section 4.

#### 3.3.1 Boundary Definition

##### (a) Objectives:

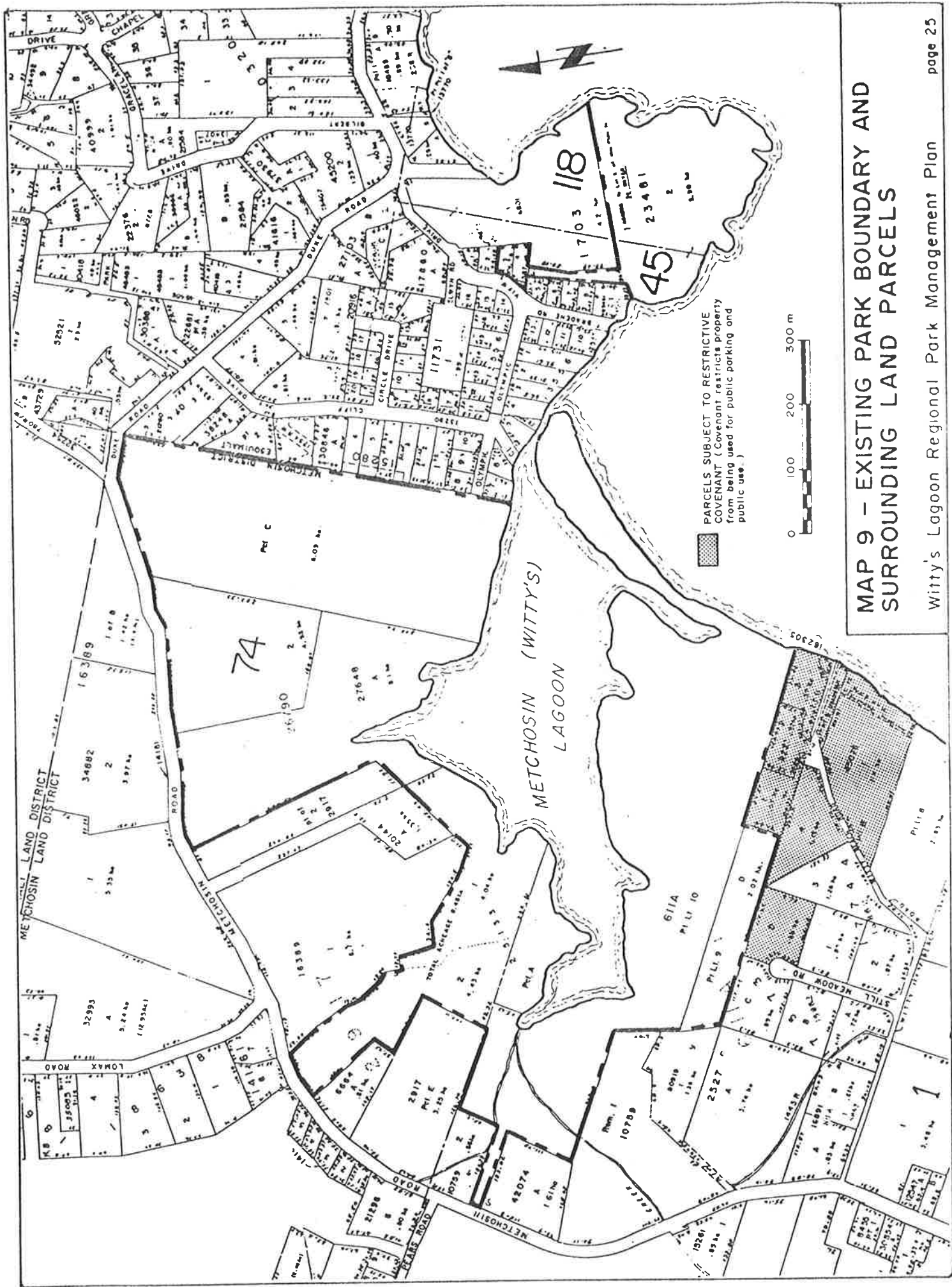
- To acquire the necessary land base to sustain the ecosystem of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park;
- To ensure the long-term protection of the park's natural and cultural resources and visitors outdoor recreation experiences;
- To minimize the impact of surrounding land use on the park's natural and cultural resources and visitors outdoor recreation experience;
- To work cooperatively with the Municipality of Metchosin to minimize the impact of surrounding land use on the park's natural and cultural resources and visitors outdoor recreation experience; and
- To secure service/emergency vehicle access to the beach.

##### (b) Overview

The existing park boundary and surrounding parcels are shown on Map 9 and Photograph 1. The park is immediately surrounded by small residential parcels, Metchosin Road and some larger rural parcels. The existing park boundary is irregularly shaped. This creates a fragmented land base and difficulties for natural resource protection and park operation/maintenance. By obtaining additional land, the boundary of the park could be made less irregular, thereby reducing fragmentation of ecosystems and protecting the parks' natural and cultural resources.

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is part of the overall landscape in Metchosin that includes the Bilston Creek Watershed and Juan de Fuca Strait. The park's ecosystem is an interacting community of organisms (i.e. plants, animals, people) as well as the ecological processes that link them with their physical surroundings. The park's boundaries can't, and don't, stop the exchange of energy, nutrients and wildlife with the surrounding lands. The park functions as part of the surrounding landscape and is not an isolated island. However, management objectives for the park area differ from that on adjacent lands. The well-being and future survival of the park's natural resources depend on the sustainable use of park lands as well as surrounding landscapes.

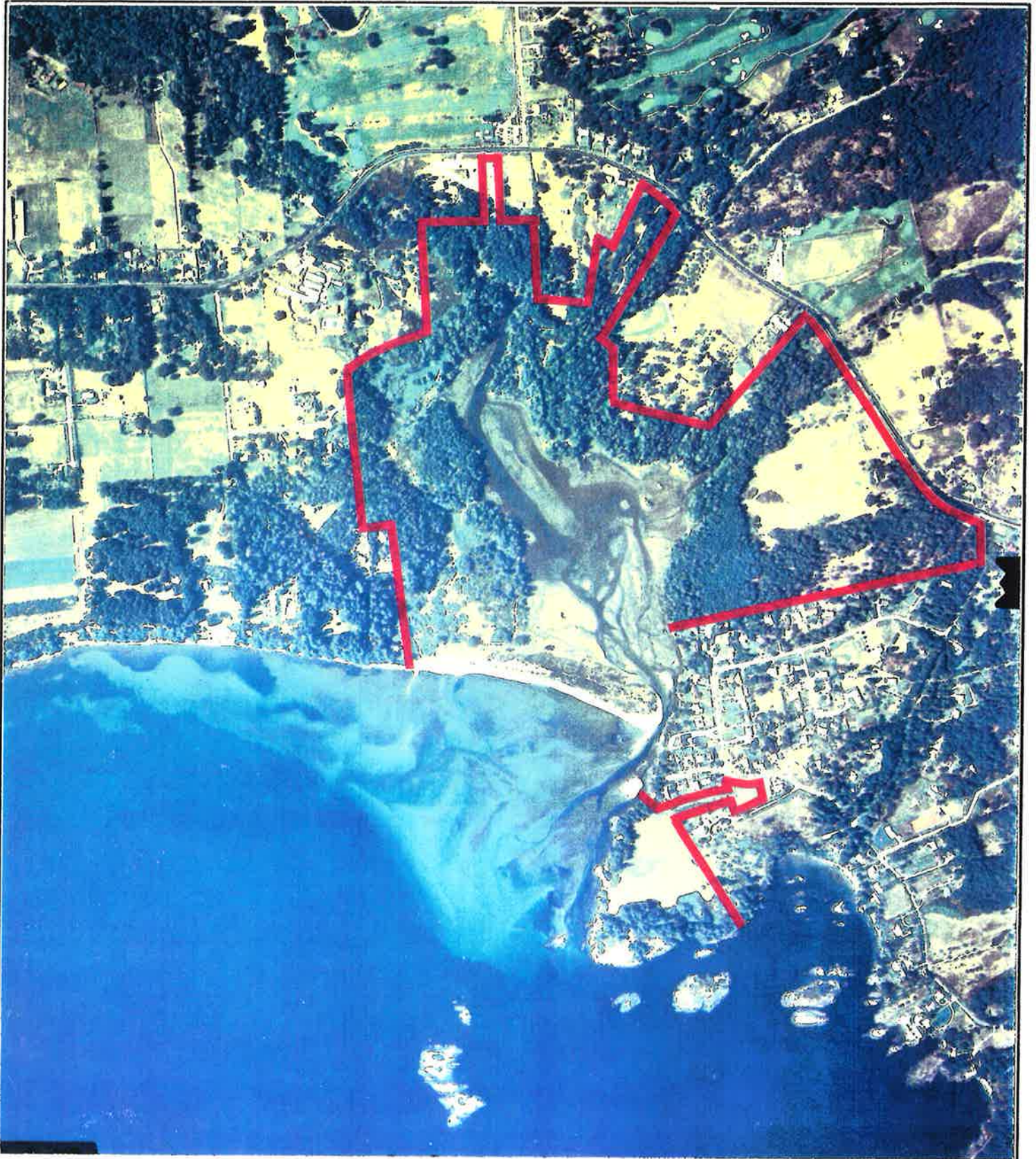
Adjacent land use does affect the park's natural resources as well as outdoor recreation experiences. Of particular concern for protection of the parks' natural resources and outdoor recreation experiences are land uses within the Bilston Creek Watershed and the area encompassed by Duke Road, Metchosin Road and Witty Beach Road. Land use in these areas



**MAP 9 - EXISTING PARK BOUNDARY AND SURROUNDING LAND PARCELS**







**PHOTOGRAPH 1  
AERIAL VIEW OF  
WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK**

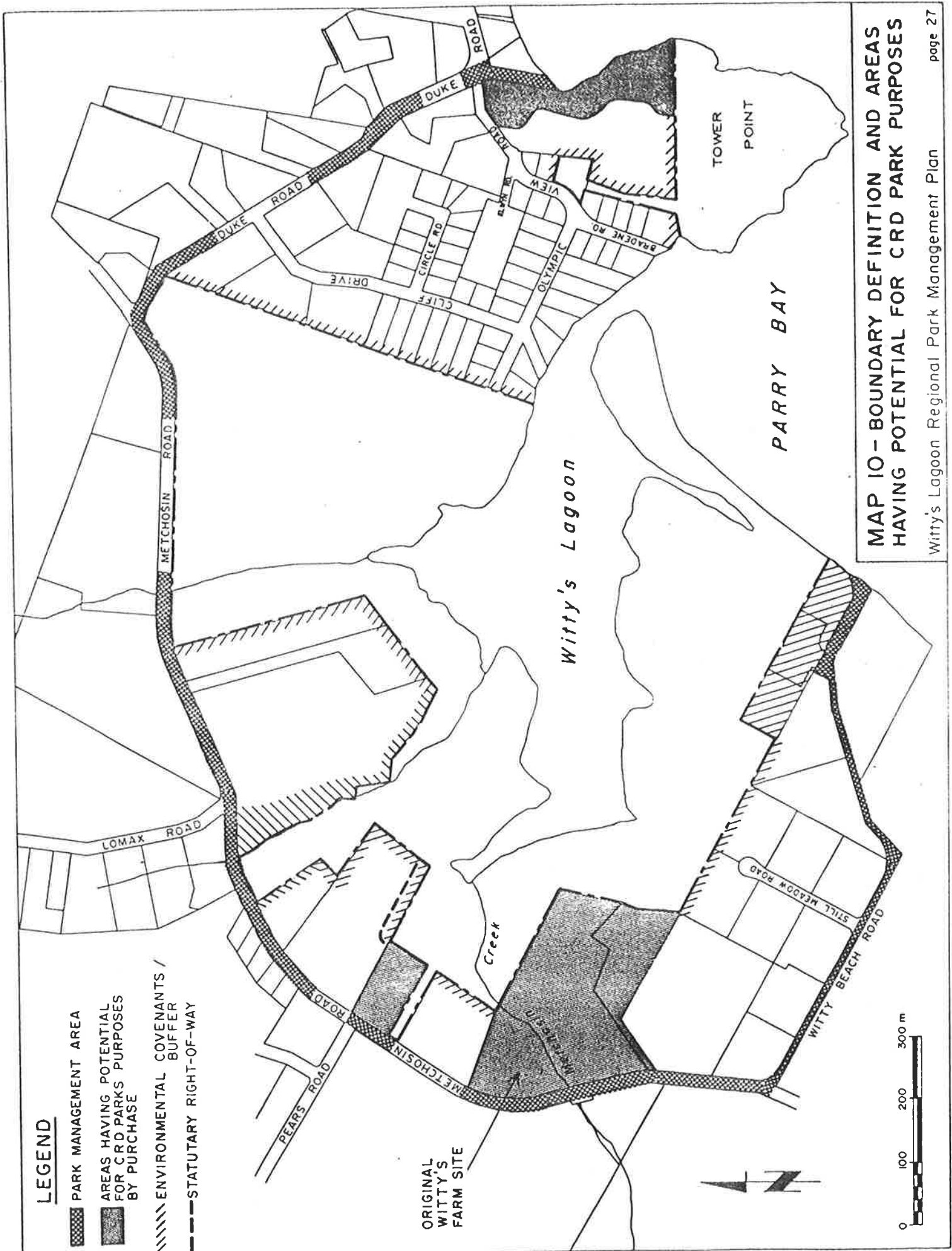
Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Management Plan

Photo Source : Pacific International Mapping Corp. PIM-C-90013 No. 152













**LEGEND**

-  PARK MANAGEMENT AREA
-  AREAS HAVING POTENTIAL FOR CRD PARKS PURPOSES BY PURCHASE
-  ENVIRONMENTAL COVENANTS / BUFFER
-  STATUTORY RIGHT-OF-WAY

**MAP 10 - BOUNDARY DEFINITION AND AREAS HAVING POTENTIAL FOR CRD PARK PURPOSES**

is controlled through the Official Community Plan, zoning by-law, subdivision by-law, development permit, and the Agricultural Land Reserve Act. In this plan, the area that is encompassed by Duke Road, Metchosin Road and Witty Beach Road is designated as a park management area (see Map 10). The intent of this identification is to emphasize the importance that adjacent land use has to the long term protection of the park's ecological integrity and outdoor recreation experiences. It is recognized that the sole responsibility for land use matters on these parcels rests with the District of Metchosin. Therefore, CRD Parks objective is to cooperatively work in partnership with the District of Metchosin and adjacent landowners to address land use planning issues in the park management area in order to protect the park's natural resources and outdoor recreation experiences. In this context, CRD Parks requests the District of Metchosin to provide CRD Parks with an opportunity to comment on any land use changes in the park management area.

Some parcels adjacent to the park also offer significant opportunities to improve park operation/maintenance procedures. Of particular concern is securing service/emergency vehicle access to the beach. This is necessary for fire protection, emergencies and garbage pick-up. The access could also be used to provide people with disabilities access to the beach. A constraint to providing this access from Witty Beach Road is that six parcels adjacent to the end of Witty Beach Road have a restrictive covenant that prohibits the property from being used for public use (see Map 9). Therefore, access to the beach for service/emergency vehicles is required from another location.

#### **(c) Rationale for Adding Land to a CRD Park or Protecting CRD Parks' Interests on Adjacent Land**

The criteria for assessing land for the purpose of adding it to an existing CRD Park or protecting CRD Parks' interests on adjacent land are:

1. The land contains natural resources that are part of the park's ecosystem.
2. The land contains regionally significant natural or cultural resources that are essential to the integrity of the park.
3. The land contains regionally significant outdoor recreation experiences that are integral to the experiences offered in the park.
4. The land contains an area that will provide a buffer to protect the natural and cultural resources and/or outdoor recreation experiences of the park.
5. The land is essential for safety, liability and/or park operation/maintenance needs and concerns.

Each parcel that is recommended for adding to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park or for protecting CRD Park's interests on adjacent land will be assessed based on these criteria. The assessment is provided in section 3.3.1 (e).

#### (d) Methods for Adding Land to a CRD Park or Protecting CRD Parks' Interests on Adjacent Land

Traditionally, private land that has park potential has been purchased. Because of increased property values, demand for public money to provide other public services, public financial restraint, financial demands within the CRD Parks system and that some land owners may not be willing to sell all private land that has park potential cannot be purchased. Alternative ways to secure land that has park potential need to be used. In this respect, the goal is to provide a mix of methods that can be best applied to the situation to accomplish park management goals. The methods fall into three categories; transferring title, dividing responsibilities and separating management (West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation, January 1994). Although not a specific method CRD Parks will also seek partnerships and cooperative arrangements with property owners or conservation groups to protect land that has park potential.

The methods for adding land to an existing CRD Park and protecting CRD Park's interests on adjacent land are:

1. **Transferring Title by Purchase.** This method will be recommended when it is essential that CRD Parks own the parcel for park management (i.e. safety, liability and/or park operation/maintenance reasons), natural and cultural resource protection, and protection of outdoor recreation experiences. Other ways to transfer title include bequests and donations, conditional gifts, options to purchase, rights of first refusal, co-ownership, life estates and trusts, dedication of parkland through subdivision and provision of amenity through section 963.1 of the *Municipal Act*.
2. **Dividing Responsibility.** This method includes restrictive covenants, easements, statutory building schemes, section 214 of *Land Titles Act* statutory rights of way, section 215 of *Land Titles Act* covenants, *Heritage Conservation Act* conservation covenants and easements, and profits à prendre. This method requires the consent of the landowner. The use of this method is recommended when it is not considered essential that CRD Parks own the parcel of land for park management (i.e. safety, liability and/or park operation/maintenance), and protection of the natural and cultural resources or outdoor recreation experiences can be achieved without purchase. CRD Parks may pursue purchase if an agreement cannot be reached to CRD Parks satisfaction.
3. **Separating Management.** This method includes leases and management agreements. This method requires the consent of the landowner. This method is recommended when it is not considered essential that CRD Parks own the parcel of land for park management (i.e. safety, liability and/or park operation/maintenance), and protection of the natural and cultural resources or outdoor recreation experiences can be achieved without purchase. CRD Parks may pursue purchase if an agreement cannot be reached to CRD Parks satisfaction.

### **(e) Areas Having Potential for CRD Park Purposes**

The reason for identifying these parcels is to provide guidance for the overall CRD Parks system land acquisition plan. Acquisition of these parcels will have to be assessed in conjunction with other land acquisition needs of the CRD Parks system. Furthermore, the identification of these parcels does not bind the CRD Parks Committee or CRD Board to purchase.

#### **(i) Transferring Title by Purchase**

- Plan 10759 Remainder of Lot 1 (Original Witty's Farm Site).
  - Parcel has regionally significant natural and cultural resources that are essential for the integrity of the park. These are Bilston Creek, original historic Witty's Farm Site, and large Douglas-fir.
  
- Plan 50915 Lot 1.
  - Located adjacent to the above parcel this parcel is key for providing a service/emergency vehicle access to the beach.
  
- Plan 10759 Lot 2.
  - Located adjacent to the main parking area. This parcel offers an opportunity for expanding the parking area.
  
- Plan 6801 Lot 1.
  - The area of concern includes the coastline and Douglas-fir forest. The coastline and Douglas-fir forest are considered to be essential to the integrity of the Tower Point portion of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. These natural resources are considered to be regionally significant in the context of the existing park area.

#### **(ii) Dividing Responsibility/Separating Management**

- Plan 8223 Lots 1, 2 and 3.
  - These parcels are covered by a restrictive covenant that prohibits the properties from being used for public purposes. The covenant is required to protect the views from the beach and the naturalness of the beach area.
  
- Plan 45076 Lot 1, Plan 611A Lot 8 and Plan 611B Lot 10.
  - These parcels encompass the bluffs that form the beach and spit. Erosion of the bluffs is essential to the life of the beach and spit. Therefore, an environmental covenant needs to address the unrestricted erosion of the bluffs.
  
- Plan 8223 Lot 4
  - Provide a 10 metre natural vegetation buffer along the boundary with the park.

- Plan 17573 Lots C and D.
  - Provide a 10 metre natural vegetation buffer along the boundary with the park.
- Plan 42074 Lot A.
  - Provide a 10 metre natural vegetation buffer along the boundary with the park.
- Plan 16389 Lot 1.
  - Two areas need to be addressed. First, the treed area adjacent to Ruby Creek and secondly, a buffer of approximately 10 metres along the boundary with the park.
- Plan 20144 Lot A.
  - Provide a 10 metre natural vegetation buffer along the boundary with the park.
- Plan 2917 Part of Lot 2.
  - Provide a 10 metre natural vegetation buffer along the boundary with the park.
- Plan 2917 Parcel C.
  - Need to obtain a trail for disabled user access to the viewing platforms near the old nature house.
- Encourage landowners to maintain a 5 metre natural vegetation buffer along the east boundary of the park. Where possible CRD Parks would enter into a mutual agreement with adjacent landowners to support the principle of a 5 metre natural vegetation buffer as part of the park management area. The principle of an agreement is that landowners would consult CRD Parks before any action is taken on their property that may affect the park. This principle also applies to all buffer areas.

Those areas shown on Map 10 have potential for meeting the objectives stated for boundary definition/land acquisition. In this respect, CRD Parks should seek a right of first refusal on parcels identified for purchase.

Initiate discussion and work cooperatively with the Municipality of Metchosin regarding land use in the area indicated as park management area on Map 10.

### 3.3.2 Natural Resource Management and Protection

#### (a) Objectives

- To encourage the long-term protection and proper management of the natural resources of the park;
- To encourage the natural evolution and succession of all natural areas within the park;
- To monitor water quality and vegetation changes within the park on a regular basis;
- To continue the accumulation of information about the park's natural environment for interpretive programming and resource management purposes;
- To encourage, where necessary, the reduction of pollution from sources external to the park that could affect the park's natural environment; and
- To limit visitor access to sensitive park areas which if significantly impacted could result in the loss of important natural park values.

#### (b) Overview

Protection of the natural resources of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is fundamental to the nature appreciation focus of the park. The actions recommended in this section reflect the importance of natural resource protection.

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park contains a number of regionally significant and unique resources as well as landscapes and features that are representative of the broader region. Traditionally, natural resource protection efforts for the park have proceeded on a rather ad hoc basis. However, a number of recent concerns pertaining to degradation of park resources highlight the need to formalize a protection strategy, to ensure long term integrity of the area and maintenance of a high quality visitor experience.

#### (c) Field Areas

The field areas provide open green space and are representative of historic land use in the area. However, the fields are not representative of the native vegetation of the park.

The majority of the field areas will be maintained in their present state. Some areas on the edge of the fields will be revegetated with native species.

#### (d) Haying

Haying practices would be more compatible with the educational focus of the park if traditional farming techniques were utilized and promoted. In this respect, CRD Parks should seek a cooperative arrangement with groups such as the Metchosin Agricultural Society to have historic farm equipment used for haying.

Explore opportunities to utilize traditional haying techniques and equipment and incorporate them into interpretive programs.

#### (e) Trail Use

To protect the health and diversity of plant species and maintain the natural integrity and aesthetic values of the park, it is essential to eliminate arbitrary trail creation. Trail rehabilitation efforts are required to help preserve the natural character of trails and protect adjacent vegetation from trampling and degradation.

Eliminate use of and re-vegetate unofficial trails.

#### (f) Water Resources

Maintenance of a high level of water quality is essential to the long-term health and integrity of park's ecosystems. Responsibility for water quality rests with the Province of British Columbia and Federal Government. The nature appreciation role of the park heightens the importance of protecting water supplies and associated natural processes. Maintenance of natural water levels and sediment levels in the lagoon are important to ecosystem integrity and habitat protection. Over time, natural processes will likely contribute to infilling of the lagoon and its gradual replacement with vegetation. However, it is important to isolate any human-induced activity that might accelerate or otherwise alter this process so that appropriate long-term strategies can be identified.

Request the Province of British Columbia to define water quality objectives for Bilston Creek Watershed that will protect the natural water resources in Bilston Creek and Witty's Lagoon.



Request B.C. Ministry of Environment to investigate the impact of any human induced sedimentation in the Bilston Creek Watershed and its impact on infilling of Witty's Lagoon.

#### **(g) Vegetation Resources**

In order to protect significant or fragile vegetation resources it is important that some form of detailed inventory be maintained for use by parks staff in land use decisions, particularly those with respect to trail and facility maintenance. Baseline information for this inventory is contained within the natural resource inventory and assessment carried out in 1990. Additional detail and updating is required. Furthermore, in order to maintain biodiversity in the park it is important to educate and inform park visitors about the park's natural resources and impacts of collecting and trampling vegetation.

Undertake a detailed inventory of significant and sensitive vegetation resources and prepare a protection plan.

#### **(h) Non-native Species**

Non-native species pose a threat to native vegetation in the park and therefore the long-term integrity of the natural resources of the park. Non-native species also diminish the quality of the interpretive focus of the park. The non-native species of greatest concern are broom, *Daphne laurealis*, and blackberry.

The priority is to remove non-native species and re-vegetate with native species on Tower Point, the spit and in Garry Oak plant communities.

#### **(i) Wildlife**

To ensure the continued health and diversity of wildlife species utilizing the park area, additional information needs to be gathered on their specific characteristics and habitat needs. This information is also essential for nature education programs.

Collect and monitor information about park wildlife species and their habitat requirements.

#### (j) Marine Resources

In order to ensure the maintenance of biodiversity in marine and beach ecosystems it is important to educate and inform park visitors about the impacts of collecting marine resources.

Discourage collection of shellfish and other beach life forms and educate park visitors through interpretive programs and signs.

### 3.3.3 Archaeological Resource Protection and Management

#### (a) Objectives:

- To ensure the long-term protection and proper management of the archaeological resources of the park;
- To continue the accumulation of information about the park's archaeological environment for interpretive programming and resource management purposes; and
- To limit visitor access to sensitive park areas which, if significantly impacted, could result in the loss of important archaeological park values.

It is important to ensure that all archaeological resources in the park are identified and protected so that their historic and educational values are preserved for present and future generations. The sensitivity of the archaeological resources necessitates that they be considered as important factors in all development and operation/maintenance decisions. In this respect, a detailed inventory and protection plan needs to be prepared. This information will also be vital for archaeological public education programs.

Prepare a detailed inventory and protection plan for all archaeological resources. This includes Native Indian and Eurocanadian resources.

Monitor archaeological sites on an ongoing basis to ensure their continued protection.

Protect all archaeological resources as they currently exist.

### 3.3.4 Interpretation and Information

Because Witty's Lagoon is classified as a nature appreciation park, interpretive and informational programs and materials which contribute to overall visitor understanding and appreciation of the park are of primary importance. A variety of high quality and popular interpretive programs are carried out at Witty's and attract large numbers of visitors each year. Because of the relatively small distances between parks within the CRD Parks system and resulting overlaps in visitor audiences, interpretive efforts have tended to be distributed across the region, with Witty's being designated for particular programs and activities. The emphasis of nature programs at Witty's is the marine environment. The marine environment theme is not presented at any other Provincial, Regional or Municipal Park in the CRD. Witty's Lagoon regional Park also contains many native Indian cultural resources that are important for public education programs.

In the absence of a formal regional interpretive strategy for the CRD Parks system it is difficult to make management recommendations about the specific nature of interpretation programs and facilities at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. In this respect, development of a regional interpretive strategy is considered essential.

#### (a) Objectives:

- To interpret the park's natural history, features and processes using a thematic approach;
- To interpret the park's cultural history and features using a thematic approach;
- To encourage CRD residents and visitors to the region to better understand, appreciate and enjoy the park;
- To encourage appreciation and respect for park resources and the integrity of ecosystems;
- To provide a variety of interpretive and educational programs and signing that cater to the range of parks user groups and individuals;
- To provide directional signs to assist the public to locate and utilize park facilities and services; and

- To provide visitors with information that will encourage appropriate use and enjoyment of park facilities and services.

### **(b) Interpretation**

For many years CRD Parks public nature education programs have been offered at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. These programs have taken place in the absence of an interpretive plan for the park or a CRD Park system wide interpretive plan.

Develop an interpretive plan for the CRD Parks System which addresses:

- interpretive goals and objectives;
- priorities for interpretive themes and messages;
- target audiences and any areas where additional efforts are warranted; and
- appropriate media to convey themes and messages.

Develop an interpretive plan for Witty's Lagoon within the context of a CRD Parks System interpretive plan and which addresses:

- interpretive goals and objectives;
- priorities for interpretive themes and messages;
- sub themes and messages;
- target audiences and any areas where additional efforts are warranted;
- appropriate media to convey themes and messages (including proven effective media such as check-lists, self-guiding trail brochures, special topic pamphlets, on site interpretive signs, slide shows and video programs; and
- classify interpretive efforts according to season and time and identify opportunities for increased emphasis on off-season programming.

### **(c) Nature House/Interpretive Facility**

For years the nature house in Witty's Lagoon was an attraction for many visitors and the centre for public education programs in the park. In 1992, the nature house was closed because it was found to be structurally unsound. Throughout the management planning process, the Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Advisory Planning Team and public have expressed a desire for a new nature house in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, for it to be located in the same location as the old one and to be similar in character.

A nature house at Witty's plays an important role in CRD Parks public education programs. However, because CRD Parks does not have a Parks system interpretive plan or a plan specific

to a nature house and programming at Witty's Lagoon, a decision about the development of a new nature house cannot be made at this time. Notwithstanding this situation, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park provides an excellent site for a nature house. The exact location for a nature house cannot be determined at this time. The location will be determined through the interpretive plan for Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. Opportunities for public input will be provided.

Maintain existing trailer in the main parking area as a information center until a decision about a nature house is made.

#### (d) Wildlife Watch

Significant seasonal populations of birds and waterfowl at Witty's Lagoon may warrant consideration as part of the provincial Wildlife Watch Program. Before undertaking any promotional efforts, however, adequate consideration should be given to potential impacts to wildlife of increased viewing activity.

Examine the possibility of undertaking cooperative efforts with the provincial Wildlife Watch program to promote shorebird viewing opportunities in the park.

#### (e) Information

Accurate and clear information needs to be provided to visitors to the park. In this context kiosks and trails signs need to be upgraded. These signs should include information about trails, the park's natural and cultural resources, and park regulations.

Upgrade the kiosk at the Metchosin Road, Witty's Beach Road, and Tower Point parking areas.

Upgrade trail signs in the park.

### 3.3.5 Visitor Activities

#### (a) Objectives:

- To encourage and provide educational activities and events that are directly compatible with the nature appreciation focus of the park;
- To encourage and provide for recreational activities compatible with the nature appreciation focus of the park;
- To encourage public appreciation and enjoyment of the park; and
- To encourage responsible use of the park and its facilities.

#### (b) Visitor Use Levels

The types and levels of visitor activities to be encouraged for Witty's Lagoon Park are those compatible with its nature appreciation focus and the corresponding need for a high degree of natural and cultural resource protection.

Over time, increasing visitor pressures may place new demands on park facilities and services and have a negative impact upon the park's natural and cultural resources. Activities and park uses not traditionally considered to pose a substantial threat to the integrity of park resources may have to be re-examined in light of increasing visitor pressures and impacts on visitors experience and natural and cultural resources. In order to maintain a high quality visitor experience in the park and to ensure adequate protection for natural and cultural resources, additional research is required with respect to visitor impacts, resource sensitivity, and carrying capacity of the park.

Methods that can be used to limit park use and protect the park's resources and visitor experience are:

- provision and design of parking areas;
- location, design and construction of trails;
- restriction of access to areas; and
- provision of facilities (e.g. viewing platforms, boardwalks).

Maintain existing levels of visitor activity while research is carried out to determine acceptable levels of future visitor use.

## **(b) Special Events**

In order to ensure the high level of resource protection demanded by the nature appreciation orientation of the park, only those events considered interpretive/educational in nature will be encouraged. In general, group recreational activities will neither be encouraged nor provided for.

Restrict special park events to include only those which are of an interpretive/educational nature within the context of interpretive goals and objectives.

## **(c) Outdoor Recreational Activities**

### **(i) Hiking**

Hiking is the most popular outdoor recreation activity in the park. Hiking trails within the park offer significant opportunities for nature appreciation and awareness of the park's special features, vegetation and wildlife. It is important that their high quality and natural characteristics be maintained.

Maintain existing designated hiking trails and provide accompanying interpretive materials where appropriate.

### **(ii) Equestrian**

Horseback riding has been an activity associated with Witty's Lagoon Regional Park for many years and has not traditionally been considered to be in conflict with the park's nature appreciation goals and objectives.

To avoid conflicts between horse users, and those involved in wildlife viewing and/or recreational use of the beach area, equestrian use of the spit will not be permitted from May 31 to September 16.

Maintain existing designated equestrian trails and access routes. The only exception will be to allow equestrian use in the field area of Tower Point. Equestrian use of the Tower Point field may be restricted at certain times of the year to limit damage to the field. A snake fence will also be constructed along the vegetation zone on Tower Point. Equestrian use at Tower Point will be monitored and the impact on other recreational users assessed.

Maintain the present policy of discouraging horse use of the foreshore area below high water mark between May 31 and Sept. 16.

### (iii) Cycling

Because of the nature appreciation focus of the park and the absence of significant historical precedence for bike use, it is considered appropriate to restrict biking activity.

Maintain existing policy which prohibits bike access to nature appreciation parks.

Provide bike security lock-ups at main park entrances.

### (iv) Dogs

With increasing numbers of park visitors in the park, it is critical that dogs not be permitted to run indiscriminately through the area because of the potential for disturbance of birds and other wildlife. The present policy which states that dogs must be under control is difficult to enforce and a more restrictive policy is considered appropriate given the park's nature appreciation role. Furthermore, dogs were identified as the most often mentioned detraction at the park in a 1991 visitor use survey.

Revise policy with respect to dogs in the park so that they must be on a leash at all times.



### 3.3.6 Visitor Facilities

The level and type of facility development appropriate for Witty's Lagoon must be considered both in light of the park's nature appreciation focus and the desirability of maintaining a high quality visitor experience. In the past, facilities have been provided to meet basic visitor needs. In addition, a nature house has been utilized for interpretive programs. However, in light of increasing visitor numbers and use pressures and the likelihood that these will only increase in future, it is important to clarify and formalize policy with respect to the provision of facilities. Although it is recognized that some additional facilities may be warranted for the achievement of interpretive/informational objectives, it is generally recommended that facility provision be maintained close to present levels and not be expanded merely to accommodate increasing visitor numbers. The location of the facilities is shown on Map 11.

#### (a) Objectives:

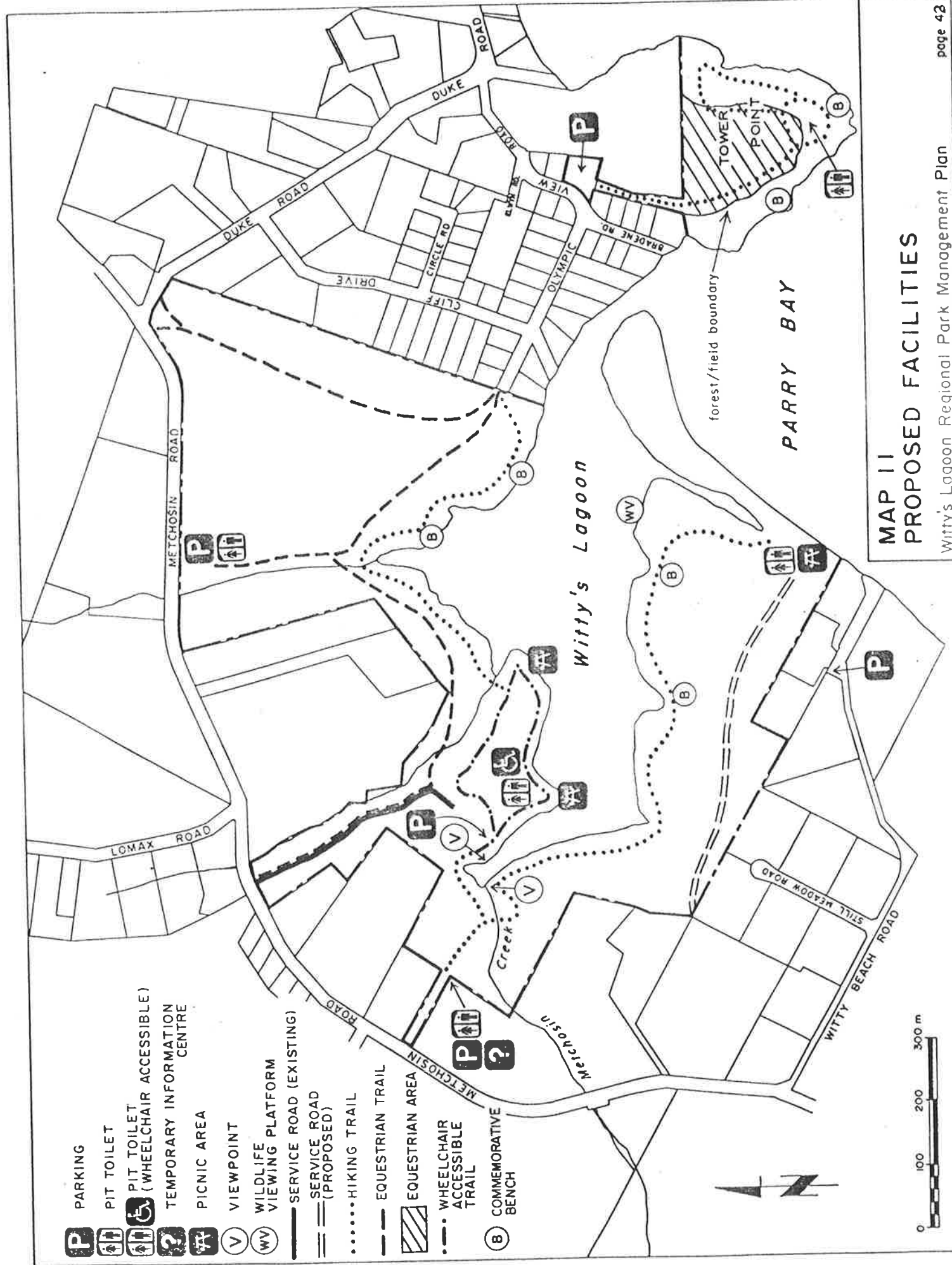
- To provide facilities necessary to meet basic visitor needs and that encourage understanding and appreciation of the park environment;
- To provide facilities that encourage visitors to become familiar with and appreciate all aspects of the natural and cultural environment of the park;
- To construct facilities in such a way that protects sensitive areas of the park and that are compatible with a natural setting; and
- To develop facilities required to accommodate special park visitors such as the elderly and the physically challenged.

#### (b) Wildlife Viewing Platform

The nature appreciation objectives for the park would be enhanced by the establishment of a wildlife viewing platform along the lagoon. The appropriate location and design of such a facility should be determined in consultation with naturalists. The structure should be relatively unobtrusive and compatible with the natural setting of the park.

Develop a wildlife viewing platform close to the lagoon to facilitate unobtrusive wildlife observation.

# MAP 11 PROPOSED FACILITIES



- P** PARKING
- ♿** PIT TOILET
- ♿** PIT TOILET (WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE)
- ?** TEMPORARY INFORMATION CENTRE
- ☼** PICNIC AREA
- V** VIEWPOINT
- WV** WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM
- SERVICE ROAD (EXISTING)
- == SERVICE ROAD (PROPOSED)
- .....HIKING TRAIL
- EQUESTRIAN TRAIL
- ▨ EQUESTRIAN AREA
- ..... WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TRAIL
- B** COMMEMORATIVE BENCH



### (c) Parking

Four parking areas will be provided at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (see Map 11).

#### Tower Point

A small parking area is located off Olympic View Drive. The area is approximately .3 hectares and is bordered on the north and south by small residential lots, the west by Olympic View Drive and east by a large rural lot. The area could accommodate approximately 10 vehicles. The current parking area is in a field, has no hard surfacing and nor defined parking stalls. The parking area provides access to Tower Point and the east entrance to the main part of the park at the end of Olympic View Drive. Drainage at this parking area makes it virtually unusable during wetter winter months. Adjacent residents have expressed concern that upgrading the parking area through surface hardening would lead to considerable increases in undesirable activity and noise.

#### Metchosin Road

Another small parking area is located off Metchosin Road between Duke Road and Lomax Road. This parking area can accommodate approximately 10 vehicles. Expansion of this parking is possible. However, because of the distance from the lagoon and beach it is unlikely that many people would use it as an access point to the park.

#### Main Parking Lot

The main parking area is located off Metchosin Road across from the golf course and adjacent to the St. Mary's Anglican Church. This parking area can accommodate approximately 60 vehicles. During the summer and holiday weekends this parking area is usually full. Expansion of this parking area is limited by the size of the area. Options to expand the parking area include:

- acquiring property to the north and adjacent to the existing parking area; and
- developing a cooperative arrangement with St. Mary's Anglican Church for using part of the church parking area.

#### Witty Beach Road

The Witty Beach Road parking area is located at the end of Witty Beach Road on the right-of-way and along the north side of the road for approximately 200 metres from the end of Witty's Beach Road. No parking is permitted on the south side of Witty Beach Road and this area is a tow-away zone. The parking area can accommodate approximately 30 vehicles.

The Witty Beach Road parking area provides the closest access to the beach and consequently is a desirable parking location for people who are going specifically to the beach. Concerns have been expressed by the public about the lack of adequate parking at the end of Witty Beach Road during summer months. The high demand for parking in this area during the summer contributes to illegal roadside parking and congestion on the road. This situation is aggravated in May and June when school buses drop children, who are on a school field trip to the park, at the end of the road. In most cases the school buses have to back out along Witty Beach Road. This traffic congestion could create problems for emergency vehicle access. Safety at this site could be improved by working with the Sooke School District to coordinate bus traffic and ensuring that there is a clear lane at all times for emergency vehicles. Adjacent residents have complained about congestion, safety issues and noise.

Expansion of parking at this area is limited by the width of the road right-of-way, traffic congestion, emergency vehicle access, and that the fact that six parcels adjacent to the end of Witty Beach Road have a restrictive covenant that prohibits the property from being used for a parking area or other public use (see Map 9, page 25). Therefore, expansion of parking in this area is unlikely.

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park is a popular destination for many residents of the CRD. No doubt park use demand will increase in the future. Currently, at peak times, the parking areas are full. Given that the intent for future management of the park is to maintain use at approximately current levels and that parking expansion is limited, no major expansion of parking area is necessary. However, the current situation should be improved. The main parking area should be expanded and parking at Tower Point upgraded.

Pursue acquisition of property to the north of the main parking area. If this is unsuccessful pursue discussion with the St Mary's Anglican Church about using a portion of the church parking area.

Close and gate access to all parking areas at night.

Upgrade the Tower Point parking area to accommodate 10 vehicles.

Initiate discussion with the Sooke School District to minimize the impact of school bus traffic along Witty Beach Road.

Work cooperatively with the District of Metchosin to address parking on Witty Beach Road.

#### (d) Facilities and Access for People With Disabilities

In order to ensure high quality access to Witty's Lagoon for people with disabilities, some upgrading of existing trails and facilities may be required.

Improvements should be carried out in consultation with appropriate user groups. Because present access to the beach area for people with disabilities is prohibitively difficult, it is important that access to key areas in upland regions be maintained and expanded where practicable. The service road to the nature house off Metchosin Road is also presently used for handicapped access.

Retain access for people with disabilities to the falls viewpoint by way of the existing service road and upgrade trails from the viewpoint to the lagoon.

Expand access for people with disabilities through development of a trail to provide views of Tower Point from Witty's Lagoon.

#### (e) Trails

Clearly designated and well constructed all-weather trails are important to protect the park's resources and for a quality visitor experience.

Park trails will be developed as shown on Map 11 and to an all-weather standard.

## (f) Benches

CRD Parks receives many requests from the public to donate commemorative benches in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. In 1993, a bench was placed at Tower Point. Commemorative benches are considered an appropriate facility in the park provided that the placement or use has a minimal impact on the park's natural resources.

Permit a maximum of six commemorative benches in the park. Two shall be permitted on Tower Point and the other four along the lagoon trail. The approximate location is shown on Map 11. Each site will be assessed prior to installation to ensure minimal impact on the park's natural resources.

### 3.3.7 Park Operation and Maintenance

The handling of park operation and maintenance issues has important implications for all aspects of park protection, management and development. Operational and maintenance endeavours must be both sensitive to, and compatible with, the nature appreciation focus for the park, while addressing the facility and safety needs of park visitors.

There are frequently operational decisions which are made for visitor convenience or safety that result in some degree of resource degradation. It is of primary importance, therefore, that operation and maintenance activities are carried out with cognizance of the special features and sensitive areas within the park and in cooperation with staff knowledgeable in this regard. In general, expansion of facilities and site hardening will not be encouraged unless considered necessary for the protection of park visitors or park resources.

#### (a) Objectives

- To ensure the safety and security of park visitors and staff;
- To ensure that operation and maintenance activities are compatible with the park's natural environment focus;
- To maintain a high quality of visitor facilities;
- To minimize impacts of maintenance and operations on natural and cultural resources; and
- To efficiently allocate available capital resources for operation and maintenance of the park.

### **(b) Resource Protection**

In a nature appreciation park such as Witty's Lagoon, protection of natural and cultural features must be given higher priority than efficiency of facility maintenance. Over time, management actions can have a significant and deleterious effect on environmental quality. If a high quality visitor experience is to be maintained, adequate consideration must be given to resource sensitivity. This may sometimes mean that higher operational costs will be born.

Conduct all park operations and maintenance procedures with primary consideration given to the integrity of resource values.

### **(c) Fire Suppression**

A strategy for fire control in the park must be clarified so that in the event of an emergency, appropriate actions can be taken to ensure protection of park resources, visitors and adjacent landowners. A fire road is also required to the beach.

Prepare a fire suppression strategy for the park in cooperation with other appropriate agencies. A review of the strategy should then be undertaken with adjacent landowners.

### **(d) Visitor Safety**

In order to ensure the safety of park visitors, particularly young children, it is important that the fencing above the falls provides adequate protection.

Install additional slats or meshing in the fence above Sitting Lady Falls.

### **(e) Servicing**

In order to avoid degradation of park resources during busy periods and thereby ensure that a natural visitor experience is maintained, it is important to schedule larger scale maintenance activities during the park's low season. Furthermore, access requirements for effective and efficient maintenance must be weighed carefully against resource protection considerations. It is considered that present access is sufficient to meet operational requirements while at the same time ensuring maximum protection for park resources. The driveway of a residential property

near the park's southwestern boundary currently provides the only vehicle access to the beach area for fire protection, emergencies and maintenance. To ensure access over the long-term, consideration must be given to acquiring legal easement or additional property in this area.

Conduct large-scale maintenance and development of facilities (trails, structures, etc.) in off peak periods of the year.

Seek a legal arrangement with adjacent property owners to ensure long-term service vehicle access to the beach area. Failing this, pursue property acquisition.

#### (e) Trail Maintenance

Concerns have been raised about portions of trails that become very slippery and unsafe under wet conditions. Widening of trails through wandering visitor use when conditions are difficult has also created problem areas. The choice of surfacing must reflect a consideration of all factors such as effectiveness, aesthetics, cost and frequency of installation, and the costs of maintenance.

Continue use of fine gravel, all-weather surfacing for problem areas along park trails.



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## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the plan is dependent upon the availability of the CRD Parks Department resources (financial and staffing), and will be affected by the needs of the rest of the CRD Parks System.

Approval of this management plan does not constitute approval of funding for implementation of the management plan. Standard CRD funding procedure approvals will be adhered to at all stages of plan implementation.

### 4.1 Estimated Plan Implementation Costs

The estimated plan implementation costs cover those recommendations highlighted in the shaded boxes in section 3.0.

Table 3  
Estimated Plan Implementation Costs

Item	Estimated Cost
Natural Resource Management/Protection	25,000
Archaeological Resource Management/Protection	20,000
Interpretation/Information	15,000
Visitor Facilities	35,000
Park Operation/Maintenance	40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>

Note:

1. Estimated costs are broad. They are not detailed cost estimates.
2. The total costs include labour, materials and equipment costs.
3. The costs for interpretation/information do not include costs for a nature house.
4. The estimated costs do not include land acquisition costs.

## 4.2 Phasing Plan

The phasing plan outlines the preferred sequence of projects for implementation of the management plan in an orderly manner. The sequence of projects is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4  
Phasing Plan**

Item	Years				
	1	2	3	4	5
Initiate Discussion with District of Metchosin Regarding Park Management Area	■				
Prepare Inventory and Management /Protection Plan for Vegetation Resources	■				
Prepare Inventory and Management /Protection Plan for Archaeological Resources	■				
Collect Information About Park Wildlife Species and Habitat	■				
Request Ministry of Environment to Define Water Quality Objectives for Bilston Creek	■				
Request Ministry of Environment to Investigate Impact of any Human Induced Sedimentation in the Bilston Creek on Infilling of Witty's Lagoon	■				
Prepare Interpretive Plan for CRD Parks System	■				
Upgrade Parking Areas		■			
Initiate Discussion With St Mary's Anglican Church About Parking		■			
Initiate Discussion With Sooke School District About Bus Traffic on Witty Beach Road		■			
Provide Bike Lock -up Facilities at Park Entrances		■			
Prepare Fire Suppression Strategy		■			
Prepare Park Interpretive Plan		■			
Remove Non-Native Species		■	■	■	■
Upgrade Trails for People With Disabilities		■			
Develop Wildlife Viewing Platform			■		

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Biological Diversity.** A broad term referring to the variety of life in an area - from small areas such as a pond to the whole biosphere. Biodiversity encompasses four main considerations: landscape diversity, ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. It also involves the countless, complex ways in which living things function and interact. (source: Environment Canada and Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks - State of the Environment report for British Columbia)

**Biogeoclimatic Classification System.** A system of ecological classification primarily based on climate, soils and vegetation that divides the province into large climatic units (zones, subzones and variants) and describes the ecosystems within them. (source: Ministry of Forests)

**Capital Regional District Park (Regional Park).** A park established under the Park (Regional) Act and administered, managed and operated by the Capital Regional District.

**Ecosystem.** An ecosystem is a landscape segment uniform in five basic components: climate, soil, vegetation, animals, and microorganisms. The ecosystem concept emphasizes interrelationships among these components. Climate and soil (including topography) represent the physical environment of the ecosystem - the site. Vegetation, animals and microorganisms represent the living component of the ecosystem - the biotic community. (source: Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks - Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification)

**Habitat (natural).** Locality or geographic area in which a plant or animal species naturally lives or grows.

**Natural Area.** A landscape unit composed of plant and animal communities, water bodies, soil and rock; largely devoid of human-made structures; maintained and managed in such a way as to promote or enhance populations of wildlife.

**Regionally Significant.** Natural areas that are of importance to the entire region. These areas define the ecological character of the region and provide outdoor recreation opportunities and attractions for residents of the region.

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