

# Mount Work Regional Park

Management Plan – Addendum to the Initial Engagement Report

Capital Regional District | May 14, 2021



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# Executive Summary

In public engagement processes it is important to summarize input in a timely manner and report back to the public on what was heard. This maintains transparency and helps keep the public informed as the planning process unfolds.

The initial engagement for the Mount Work Regional Park management planning was conducted between June and November 2020. An Initial Engagement Report for the Mount Work Regional Park management planning process was provided to the Regional Parks Committee in February 2021 and to the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board in March 2021. At that time, due to the large volume of public responses to the Fall 2020 online comment form, review of the responses to three questions had not been completed. This addendum provides a summary of what was heard on those three questions.

# 1.0 Introduction

The Mount Work Regional Park management planning process was initiated by the CRD Board in May 2020. As one of the first steps in the planning process, initial engagement began in June 2020 and ran through November 2020. The 1,189 submissions received through the initial engagement process led to a vast number of individual comments (i.e., nearly 1,200 people responding to 21 questions in the comment form and 75 further submissions, many of which include 5-7 specific questions posed by staff). The comment form included eight open-ended questions which provided approximately 9,000 comments alone. An Initial Engagement Report (February 2021) summarized key aspects of the process followed and provided highlights of what the CRD heard. At the time the Initial Engagement Report was completed, three outstanding questions from the online comment form had not been fully reviewed. This addendum provides highlights from the three outstanding questions.

## 2.0 Highlights of What We Heard

This section provides highlights of some of the key themes or responses heard relating to Questions 7, 15 and 21 of the initial online comment form (October-November 2020). It is intended to provide an overview only. The comment form and the responses to the other questions asked are included in the Initial Engagement Report (February 2021), which is available on the project webpage at:

[www.crd/bc.ca/mount-work-management-plan](http://www.crd/bc.ca/mount-work-management-plan)

### 2.1 Question 7: Which are your favourite destinations and trails in the park?

A vast number of responses were received. Over 100 different areas, places and trails were mentioned. In general, the top places or trails noted as favourites were:

- Summit Trail
- Designated Mountain Biking Area
- Durrance Lake
- Who's Your Daddy (trail on Hartland Landfill land)
- Snakes and Ladders (trail partly in designated Mountain Biking Area and partly on Hartland Landfill land)
- McKenzie Bight (in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park)
- Huge Ribbon (unsanctioned north-south trail just west of designated mountain biking area)
- Fun Trail (trail in designated mountain biking area)
- Torpedo Run (trail in designated mountain biking area)
- Killarney Lake
- The whole park

Others that were noted by a number of people but not as many as those above include:

- Partridge Hills (in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park)
- Jocelyn Hill (in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park)
- Bubblewrap (unsanctioned trail from Ross-Durrance Parking lot and Summit Trail that goes south and east to the designated mountain biking area)

Several of the informal trails within the park were included in those mentioned as favourites.

## 2.2 Question 15: Please share any issue at Mount Work Regional Park that you believe need to be addressed through the management plan.

The greatest number of comments received related to trails. This included the desire for more trails (more hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails were noted as being desired), updated trail standards and better maintenance, and different or specific types of trails (single use, multiple use, flow trails, climbing trails, etc.). Many comments included concerns about the level of unsanctioned trail building over the years and particularly in recent years while others expressed distress that the CRD was dismantling new sustainable trails created by the biking community and leaving old bike trails that people don't like. There were a few comments indicating that there are very few trails that are welcoming for visitors with mobility issues.

Parking was the second highest issue noted. Comments largely related to the need for more parking, though some people suggested the CRD should advocate for better bus service to the park area and/or development of bike lanes on roads that provide access to the park.

Signage was also a highly noted issue of concern. Comments relating to signs spanned from the need to mark trails better to the need to update existing signs (wayfinding and information signs), the need for better signage at parking areas, to the desire for interpretive signs and conservation related signs to help educate park users about the natural values of the park and appropriate behaviours to help ensure these values are adequately protected.

Competing uses and overuse was an issue raised by many. Some comments noted that mountain biking is increasing and is underserved within the region. Some comments noted the mountain biking area in Mount Work is becoming crowded (particularly at certain times of the day or days of the week) and needs expansion or mountain bikers should be able to use the rest of the park also. Others noted that the park is being over-run by mountain bikers and their personal enjoyment of the park (through hiking/nature appreciation) was being impacted negatively by this competing use. Some noted destruction of the natural environment as an issue related to overuse or use in inappropriate areas.

Dog management was raised by some. Again, different perspectives were noted, such as off-leash dogs going onto private lands being an issue or requesting that commercial dog walking not be permitted where horseback riding is permitted because a “pack” of dogs can be quite concerning for horses. Some people wanted to run their dogs off-leash while mountain biking or felt it was critical for dogs to get exercise in nature. Others hoped for some areas of the park where no dogs are permitted.

Nature protection comments ranged from concerns about tree die off, protecting watersheds and water quality, and destruction of the environment (skinned moss from rock faces, cutting of trees). Some talked about the need for better balance of recreation and protection in the park.

Other issues that were noted, though less frequently, related to:

- Trespass on private land (mountain bikers or hikers noted)
- Night use – either wanting it or expressing concerns about it (biking, partying)
- Landfill expansion and its impact on trails
- Desire for all types of users to be consulted before decisions are made
- Need to acknowledge First Nations
- Need for enforcement
- Need for more picnic tables or benches

### 2.3 Question 21: Do you have any other information or comments to provide about Mount Work Regional Park?

The vast majority of responses to this question related to trails. Many noted they wanted more trails, some wanted longer trail opportunities, some wanted more beginner trails, some wanted more trail connections to other parks in the area, and some expressed a desire to manage uses in a specific way (e.g., no horses on mountain biking trails, no mountain bikers on hiking trails, no mountain bikers outside of the designated mountain biking area, no hikers on main downhill mountain biking trails).

A large number of the responses to this question shared appreciation for the park, for the management planning process, for consulting with them or noted the CRD was doing an excellent job of providing parks and that Mount Work is a great resource, great area, or great park. Others expressed their frustration with the CRD or park rules or felt the CRD places more value in protecting nature than providing recreation. Some expressed their desire to recreate wherever they want and discussed perceived red tape or lack of support for mountain biking within the region. Some indicated a desire to be involved in decision-making, trail design, or trail development.

A number of respondents felt that the CRD should purchase more land to increase parks, particularly given the increase in population, use of parks, or growth in an activity (e.g., mountain biking). Some of those specifically noted the need to buy more areas that are suitable for mountain biking.

A number of people indicated that foresight was needed and that CRD needed to preserve the parks for future generations or protect the park's natural resources, noting they are islands of refuge for nature. Some indicated that the ever-increasing populations/development surrounding them was putting too much pressure on parks. Some expressed frustration that too much emphasis was placed on recreation and not enough on protection and that CRD needs more enforcement.

A few noted that CRD should promote the park for mountain biking due to its wider economic benefits in the region while others noted the mountain biking area is becoming too crowded. A few, would like food trucks at the parking lots, and several felt that the CRD should not expand the landfill.

### 3.0 Conclusion

The CRD appreciates the high level of interest in Mount Work Regional Park and its future use and management. In public engagement processes it is important to summarize input and report back in order to maintain transparency and to keep the public informed. The input received, and highlighted in the Initial Engagement Report (February 2021) and the Initial Engagement Report Addendum (May 2021) is being used to inform the development of the park management plan.

As can be seen through the range of initial engagement comments, the interests and perspectives on how the park should be managed are wide-ranging. The CRD's goal is to consider the input received and establish a plan that addresses, at least to some degree, the varied interests of First Nations, government agencies, park neighbours, key stakeholders and interest groups, and the general public.