



Making a difference...together



2006 Annual Report — Regional Parks

# 2006 Regional Parks Committee

## 2006 Regional Parks Committee Members

Regional Parks is a division of the Capital Regional District.

*Committee Chair*

CAUSTON, Christopher

*Committee Vice Chair*

RANNS, John

*Members*

- BRICE, Susan
- CARDINAL, Mark
- DEGRYP, Susan
- DERMAN, Vic
- EVANS, Janet
- LUND, Erik
- MAR, Jack
- YOUNG, Geoff

*Ex-Officio*

LOWE, Alan  
*Board Chair — Capital Regional District*



*Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park*

# Message from the Chair

In 2006, CRD Parks celebrated its 40th anniversary of protecting our region's natural areas. Established in 1966, the first regional parks were Coles Bay, Elk/Beaver Lake, Horth Hill, Island View Beach and Witty's Lagoon. Since then, your regional parks and trails system has grown from 525 hectares to more than 10,500 hectares. We celebrated this significant achievement in August while hosting Sooke Potholes Day at Sooke Potholes Regional Park.



Sooke Potholes Regional Park is an important part of the regional parks and trails system and of the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt, a 12,000 hectare expanse of wilderness that stretches from Saanich Inlet to Sooke Basin. Regional Parks made great strides in 2006 towards preparing a management plan for this area by holding public consultations and building strong working relationships with stakeholders.

Furthering our commitment to protect regionally significant natural areas, the CRD and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia acquired the final parcel of land to complete the boundary of Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve on the south shore of Galiano Island. This brings the total size of this park reserve to 32.8 hectares.

In a region where residents place such a high value on protecting our natural areas as well as providing opportunities for outdoor experiences, I am particularly proud of the diversity found within the regional parks and trails system and encourage you to explore and enjoy the beauty of our parks and trails.

It has been my great pleasure to serve as Chair of the Regional Parks Committee in 2006. Our many achievements would not have been possible if not for the hard work and commitment of my fellow Committee members, and the staff and volunteers of CRD Parks, who helped us achieve so much last year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Causton', written over a horizontal line.

Christopher Causton  
Chair, Regional Parks Committee

# CRD Parks Master Plan Strategic Directions

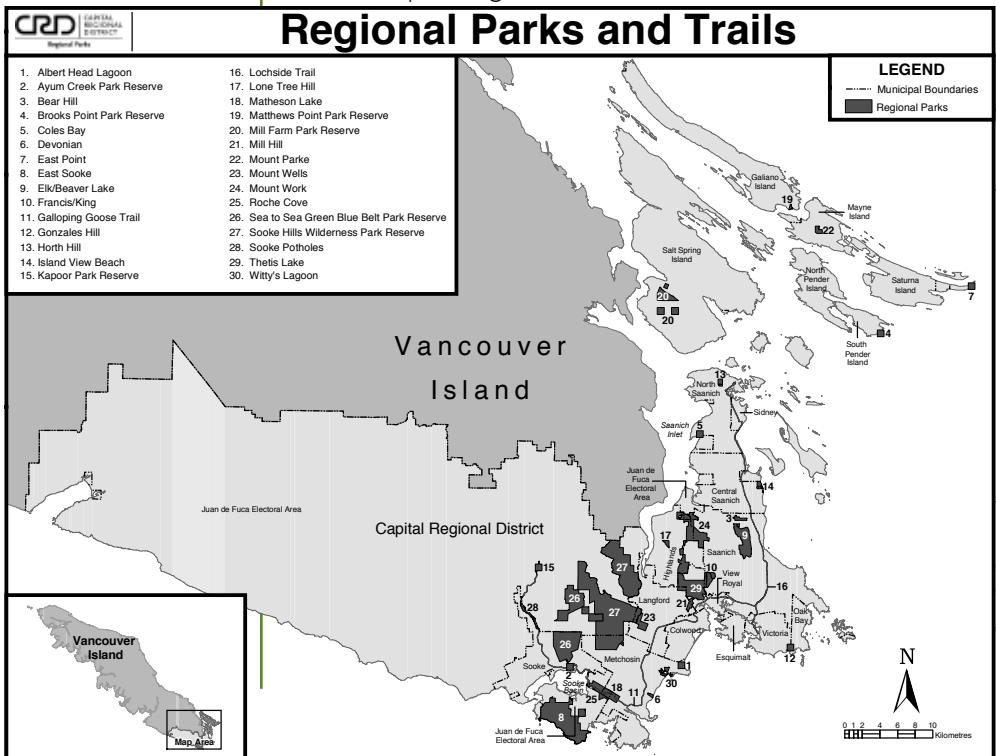
CRD Parks protects and manages more than 10,500 hectares of spectacular and easily accessible natural areas in 30 regional parks and trails on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

**Your regional parks and trails. Your natural heritage.**

## CRD Parks Master Plan Strategic Directions

1. Protect and maintain the natural environment in existing regional parks.
2. Acquire additional land for regional parks and trails.
3. Complete the regional trail and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation use from Swartz Bay to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, and from the Galloping Goose Trail to the Cowichan Valley.
4. Repair, upgrade or replace major facilities.
5. Increase volunteer participation.
6. Examine opportunities for generating revenue.
7. Establish partnerships with other park agencies.

In 2006, CRD Parks initiated a review of the Master Plan strategic directions. Following a public consultation process, the strategic directions will be updated as part of corporate business planning in 2007.



# 2006 Highlights

## Parkland Acquisition

The Land Acquisition Fund enables CRD Parks to purchase land identified as having regional park potential. The fund raises approximately \$1.6 million per year from an average annual levy of \$10 per household. Since the establishment of the fund in 2000, CRD Parks has purchased 1 882 hectares of regionally significant green space.



*Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve acquisition announcement*

## 2006 Acquisitions

### Final Acquisition for Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve Completed

The CRD and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia acquired the final parcel of land completing the boundary of Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve on the south shore of Galiano Island. This 32.8-hectare park reserve features steep bluffs with spectacular views of Active Pass, stands of mature Douglas-fir trees, pockets of arbutus and Garry oak, a display of spring wildflowers and a sandy beach.

## What Are Park Reserves?

CRD Parks is building a world-class parks and trails system by acquiring parkland for future generations. Our primary goal for these regionally significant areas is the protection of natural and cultural resources.

Although park reserves currently have no facilities, most are open to visitors. CRD Parks will develop visitor facilities in park reserves after completing natural resource inventories and management plans for each area.



## Regional Parks 40th Anniversary

In 2006 CRD Parks celebrated its 40th anniversary with a number of special events and activities throughout the year. CRD Parks was established in 1966 and the first regional parks were Coles Bay, Elk/Beaver Lake, Horth Hill, Island View Beach and Witty's Lagoon. Since 1966, the regional parks and trails system has grown from 525 hectares to more than 10,500 hectares.

### Year at a Glance

- Over 3.5 million people visited regional parks and trails in 2006.
- More than 33,000 visitors attended 890 nature programs and events.
- 370 volunteers contributed 6,700 hours to regional parks and trails.
- 190 park use permits were issued for special events and group picnic shelters involving more than 23,000 participants and spectators.
- 50,648 visitors explored the CRD Parks website.

### Best of the City Awards

This year's Victoria Best of the City awards named Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park as the second best place for a picnic and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail as the third best place to walk your dog.



Beaver Beach 1966 - Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

## Conservation Initiatives

Conservation initiatives help protect, maintain and improve the natural environment in regional parks and trails.

### Mill Hill Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration Project

Year 5 of the restoration of Mill Hill Regional Park included the removal of more than 5 metric tonnes of invasive species (broom, daphne) from the park with the assistance of volunteers. This was accomplished in partnership with the federal government's Habitat Stewardship Program and the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team. Since 2002, over 35 tonnes of Scotch broom have been cleared from 12 hectares.



*Broom removal crew - Mill Hill Regional Park*

## Planning Initiatives

### Regional Parks Management Planning Process

In March, the Regional Parks Committee approved a new CRD Parks planning process to guide the development of all regional park and trail management plans. The new planning process provides the context and rationale for park management planning. Other key features of the new process include the creation of a planning process model and plan document template, definition of six park management zones, and incorporation of a goal achievement framework emphasizing planning as a decision-making process based on clearly stated goals and objectives. The planning process is being used in the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt and Brooks Point park management planning.

Central Services staff provide advice and guidance on the management of regional parkland and the provision of outdoor opportunities. Working with partners and through consultation with the public, staff develop long-term plans and recommend actions for acquisition of additional parkland. On a day-to-day basis, they ensure all projects meet provincial and federal environmental guidelines, and prepare park management and restoration plans.

Central Services staff plan and develop park facilities such as bridges, buildings and trails, and carry out infrastructure upgrading. They also oversee park safety and security, including bylaw enforcement and fire management.

*"My motivation for volunteering is to make my part of this earth a better place by learning from and teaching people how to co-exist with nature and how to enjoy it without destroying it. I volunteer at CRD Parks because I enjoy learning and experiencing nature and would like others to experience the same appreciation."*

— D.T.,  
Volunteer Naturalist



D.T., Volunteer Naturalist

## **Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt Management Planning**

In July, the Regional Parks Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt park management planning process which includes Kapoor Regional Park Reserve, Sooke Potholes Regional Park, Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt Regional Park Reserve and Ayum Creek Regional Park Reserve. Three public meetings were held in November to introduce the planning process and gather public input. A nine-member advisory group has been selected to provide advice, suggestions and ideas to Regional Parks during the planning process for the management of the parklands. The goal is to complete the Sea to Sea park management plan in 2008 and open the park to the public in 2009.



Brooks Point Regional Park Reserve

## **Brooks Point Regional Park Reserve Planning**

Brooks Point Regional Park Reserve on Pender Island was created through the work of the CRD and our partners. A considerable portion of the property was transferred to Regional Parks through a generous donation by the Brooks family. Many conservation groups worked together to raise the majority of the funds needed to purchase the remaining property, and Regional Parks agreed to manage the park once the land was acquired. CRD Parks is developing a management plan for the park with the assistance of a public advisory group consisting of representatives from local conservation groups, the Brooks family and the Pender Island community. An open house was held on Pender Island on November 25, 2006. The management plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

## E & N Rail Trail Initiative Gets Underway

Planning work for the E & N (Esquimalt and Nanaimo) rail trail, a proposed multi-purpose pathway to be built within the E & N rail corridor; commenced in 2006. Regional Parks, along with its municipal partners in Victoria, Esquimalt, View Royal, Langford and Colwood will build the trail within the rail corridor, while still allowing the continuation of passenger rail service on the rail line. The trail will be managed by Regional Parks, and will connect with the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails. The goal is to have the trail in place by 2010. Once the engineering work is done, construction could begin as early as 2008.

## Motorized Use Review – Electric Bicycles on Regional Trails

In response to an increase in the use of motorized bicycles in the region, Regional Parks initiated a review of motorized use on the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails. At its meeting of July 12, 2006, the CRD Board adopted Bylaw No. 3348, which defines and regulates the use of motor-assisted cycles on regional trails.

## Proposed Expansion of Elk Lake Rowing Centre

In August the CRD Board approved in principle a proposal by the Victoria Rowing Society to extend two boat bays, relocate a boat repair workshop and construct a dock for coach and safety boats at the Elk Lake Rowing Centre in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. The Regional Parks Committee still needs to approve the detailed design drawings. The proposed expansion is to take place in three phases over five years.

*"I am quite passionate about the outdoors and nature in general and I really like the amount of focus and importance the parks get here in Victoria. Playing a role in caring for our regional parks is important to me."*

— B.M.,  
Volunteer Naturalist



Regional Parks Committee Chair on Galloping Goose



E & N Rail Line - Esquimalt

"Thank you for all of your work. You all do an amazing job keeping volunteers like me feeling appreciated and connected to what is going on with the CRD parks. I have truly enjoyed my last year of volunteering and that is largely due to the support I have received. I hope to continue volunteering for a long time to come!"

— N.K.,  
Volunteer Naturalist



N.K., Volunteer Naturalist



Phelps connector trail opening - Thetis Lake Regional Park

### **New Trail Opened at Thetis Lake**

In June Regional Parks and the City of Langford officially opened a new trail connecting Thetis Lake Regional Park and Phelps Avenue in Langford. The 1.3-kilometre pedestrian/cycling trail allows Langford residents to access the park without travelling on busy roads or cycling on hiking trails, and connects with other cycling routes such as the Galloping Goose Regional Trail.

### **Fire Suppression**

Although a high-to-extreme fire hazard rating began in mid-July and continued into September, there were relatively few fires in 2006 compared to previous years. There were no major fires in regional parks and trails; Parks staff attended three small fires in Thetis Lake Regional park.

### **Bylaw Enforcement**

Working in partnership with CRD Bylaw Enforcement and local police agencies, Regional Parks came into contact with more than 8,300 park visitors regarding unauthorized or inappropriate use in regional parks and trails. Regional Parks focussed bylaw enforcement at Thetis Lake Regional Park to curtail issues around alcohol use and inappropriate behaviour.

# Park Services — North and West

## Volunteers in Parks

Volunteer Wardens contributed more than 4600 hours to patrol trails, report concerns and educate visitors.

Volunteer Naturalists at Francis/King and Witty's Lagoon regional parks contributed 1207 hours to welcome visitors and provide education and information.

Volunteer Gatekeepers contributed 60 hours to keep parks secure after hours.

Community Group volunteers contributed 788 hours to invasive species removal and tree planting projects in regional parks.

Volunteer Beekeepers contributed 20 hours to tend the orchard bee hive at Francis/King Regional Park.



*Volunteer Recognition - One Year Service Award Recipients*

## Park Services – North and West

Park Services staff provide day-to-day service to visitors in all regional parks and trails. Staff deliver interpretive programs, coordinate volunteer participation and develop and maintain park facilities such as trails, nature centres, washrooms, beach and picnic areas, parking areas, vehicle and foot bridges, information kiosks, and trail and road signs.

Staff educate park visitors about their natural and cultural heritage, enforce CRD Parks bylaws and assist with fire prevention. They ensure visitors to regional parks and trails have safe and enjoyable visitor experiences.

## Environmental Interpretation

Environmental Interpretation enjoyed its most successful year since its inception. A record number of people (33,275) took part in nature programs - a 27% increase over 2005.

— 8,040 visitors explored the nature centre exhibits at Francis/King, Witty's Lagoon, and our new nature center at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. Thanks to the dedicated volunteer naturalists the nature centres were open 261 days.

— 8,181 students, parents and teachers attended 210 school programs during the spring and fall, a 55% increase over 2006.

— 6,105 visitors stopped by CRD Parks on-site, hands-on exhibits, and 1,291 joined a guided nature walk.

— 4,722 participants dropped in at our special events, which included Marine Day, Snake Day, Hawk Watch, Wreathmaking, I'm a Mammal and So Are You – a total of 18 celebrations of the natural world.

— 278 paddlers explored Elk/Beaver Lake and Matheson Lake at 24 canoe programs – a 29% increase over last year.

CRD Parks was delighted to support the activities of local communities. 2,454 people visited CRD Parks interpretive presentations' at 5 community events this year – including Luminara, Metchosin Days, and the Saanich Strawberry Festival.



*Snake Day Special Event –  
Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park*



*School program at Witty's Lagoon  
Regional Park*



*Strawberry Festival Community Event  
– Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park*



*Interpretive Program at Elk/Beaver  
Lake Regional Park*

## Regional Park and Trail Initiatives

In addition to addressing significant winter storm damage, the following park and trail initiatives were completed in 2006.

- Bear Hill – trail surface improvements.
- Coles Bay – trail upgraded from entrance to beach lookout and picnic site.
- Devonian – trail improvements completed.
- Elk/Beaver Lake – beach improvements and building upgrades to nature centre at Beaver Beach.
- East Sooke – trail maintenance and upgrading; toilet building replaced at Aylard Farm.
- Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails – updated kiosk panels and new regional trails information kiosks; trail and road crossing improvements completed.
- Gonzales Hill – Gonzales Observatory building repainted.
- Island View Beach – trail improvements to north toilet building.
- Mount Work – repairs to dam at Durrance Lake.
- Matheson Lake – beach improvements completed.
- Roche Cove – toilet building improvements completed.
- Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt – road upgrading underway.
- Sooke Potholes – parking, trail and visitor information improvements completed.

## Park Watch Program

Regional Parks contributed funding and in-kind services to the Park Watch Program which patrolled parking areas at East Sooke, Roche Cove, Matheson Lake and Witty's Lagoon regional parks and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (Sooke River Road lot). The program has been successful in deterring auto crime with few reports of theft from vehicles during the program in 2006.



*Sooke Potholes Regional Park*



*Aylard Farm toilet building -  
East Sooke Regional Park*



*Phelps connector trail construction  
- Thetis Lake Regional Park*

# Administrative and Visitor Services

*Being a volunteer gives me an opportunity to spend time in parks while learning more about them. To be able to work as a volunteer with my two children is a great option for me. We can participate as a family.*  
— A.U.,  
Volunteer Naturalist



A.U., Volunteer Naturalist

## Administrative and Visitor Services

Administrative and Visitor Services staff connect visitors with parks, park values and stewardship opportunities in regional parks and trails. They provide information, register participants for interpretive programs, issue park use permits for group picnic shelters and special events, and provide administrative, communications and financial support to department staff.

The General Manager works closely with incorporated and unincorporated areas and elected officials on regional parkland issues, and has overall responsibility for Regional Parks.

## Park Use Permits

193 permits for events were granted involving more than 23,000 participants and spectators.



Main beach - Thetis Lake Regional Park

## Parks Communications 2006

- Special events and activities, including Sooke Potholes Day at Sooke Regional Park, held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Regional Parks.
- Public consultation process undertaken for Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt, including the development of an informational newsletter and web content.
- Public consultation process for Brooks Point Regional Park Reserve, including the development of an informational newsletter and web content.
- Four Nature Notes columns published in Island Parent Magazine.
- Four seasonal nature program brochures produced.
- 50,648 visitors explored the CRD Parks website.

## Our School Programs are getting rave reviews!

*"It was a fantastic trip. The children learned lots about crabs. I love your programs."*  
— D. F.,  
Braefoot Elementary

*"The program was excellent. I will recommend it to other teachers that I talk to."*  
— S.M.,  
Gordon Head Elementary

*"The naturalists were very skilled at program delivery, also very knowledgeable. They were very encouraging, accepting, understanding of Kingergarten students."*  
— A.G.,  
Tillicum Elementary



Parks for All Seasons display



Galloping Goose Regional Trail kiosk

# Donors to CRD Parks

Many thanks to the following organizations, whose generous donations helped Regional Parks acquire additional parkland and carry out important projects in 2006:

**The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC)** has been a donor and partner with CRD Parks on several land acquisition initiatives. In 2006, TLC contributed \$5,000 toward the acquisition of the final parcel of land completing the boundary of Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve on the south shore of Galiano Island.

**The Government of Canada through the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk** contributed \$49,500 to the Garry Oak Ecosystems Restoration Project at Mill Hill Regional Park.

## Partners in Parks

CRD Parks has a long history of working in partnership with individuals, non-government organizations and all levels of government to undertake projects and provide services that, without outside support, would not be possible. CRD Parks would like to thank our 2006 partners:

### Elk/Beaver Lake Equestrian Society (EBLES)

EBLES has operated the equestrian centre at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park for over a decade. The Society ensures the centre is open to equestrian groups and the public, carries out maintenance and, in consultation with CRD Parks staff, issues park use permits for special events.

### Kiwanis Club of Saanich

The Kiwanis originally constructed and financed the two concession buildings at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park approximately 35 years ago. The Kiwanis Club provides concession services at Hamsterly Beach in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park and Thetis Lake Regional Park from May to September each year.



*T.S., - EBLES member and Volunteer Warden*



*Accessible fishing float at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park*



*Mount Work Regional Park - Hartland*

### **South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS)**

SIMBS assists with the development, maintenance and management of the Hartland mountain bike area at Mount Work Regional Park. SIMBS carries out trail development and maintenance, monitors trail conditions, visitor use and safety, coordinates special events, and promotes off-road cycling through education and volunteer activities.

### **Vancouver Island Retriever Club (VIRC)**

VIRC has used the Beaver Lake ponds at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park for retriever training and trialing events for more than 30 years. Club members ensure the area is open to retriever groups, trainers and the public, and carry out maintenance in consultation with Regional Parks.

### **Victoria Rowing Society (VRS)**

VRS has operated the Elk Lake Rowing Centre at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park since its construction in the mid-1980s. VRS works closely with CRD Parks to ensure the smooth operation of the Centre, represent the long-term interests of rowing and resolve conflicts with other Elk Lake user groups.

## **A Special Thanks**

CRD Parks gratefully acknowledges the following community groups and individuals that completed volunteer projects in 2006:

### **Invasive Plant Removal**

Volunteers at Mill Hill Regional Park, the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team and the Nature Conservancy of Canada continued to support the Mill Hill Garry Oak Ecosystems Restoration Project.

### **Beach Cleanups**

Great Canadian Shoreline  
Clean Up  
Esquimalt Air Cadets

# CRD Parks 2006 Budget

(Board approved)

## Expenditure Budget

Total:

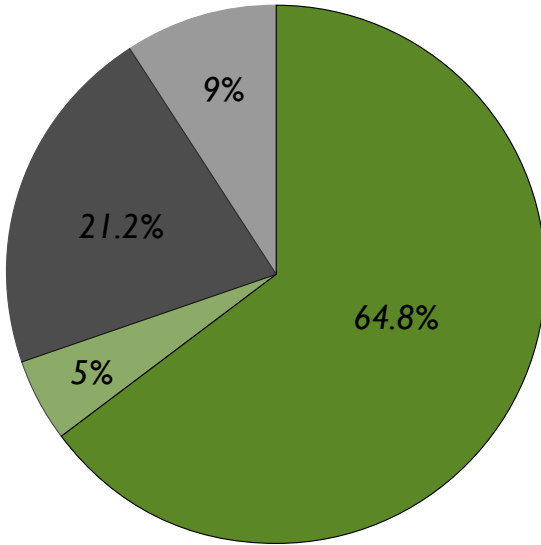
**\$7,512,590**





Cost per Average Household Assessment:

**\$42.96**

Cost per \$100,000 of Converted Assessments:

**\$10.50**



 CRD Parks Operations	\$4,871,280
 Capital — Projects and Equipment	\$372,620
 Capital — Land Acquisition	\$1,596,010
 Debt Services on Acquisitions Prior to 2000	\$672,680

## **Regional Parks**

490 Atkins Avenue  
Victoria BC V9B 2Z8  
T 250.478.3344 | F 250.478.5416  
[www.crd.bc.ca/parks](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks)

## Regional Parks

490 Atkins Avenue  
Victoria BC V9B 2Z8  
T 250.478.3344 | F 250.478.5416  
[www.crd.bc.ca/parks](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks)



*Volunteers at Mill Hill Regional Park*



Making a difference...together