

Service Plan for Regional Parks

2016-2019
(2019)



Capital Regional District

Date Updated: July 24, 2018

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1 Overview

1.1 Division & Service Summary

Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks protects and manages approximately 13,000 hectares of natural area in 31 regional parks and three regional trails. In 2017, regional parks recorded approximately 7.3 million visits to parks and trails. The management of regional parks is guided by the Board-approved 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

The purpose of Regional Parks is twofold: Firstly, to establish and protect a system of regional parks that represent and help maintain the diverse range of natural environments in the capital region and, secondly, to provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster appreciation and enjoyment of, and respect for, the region's natural environments.

The mandate of Regional Parks is realized through three services:

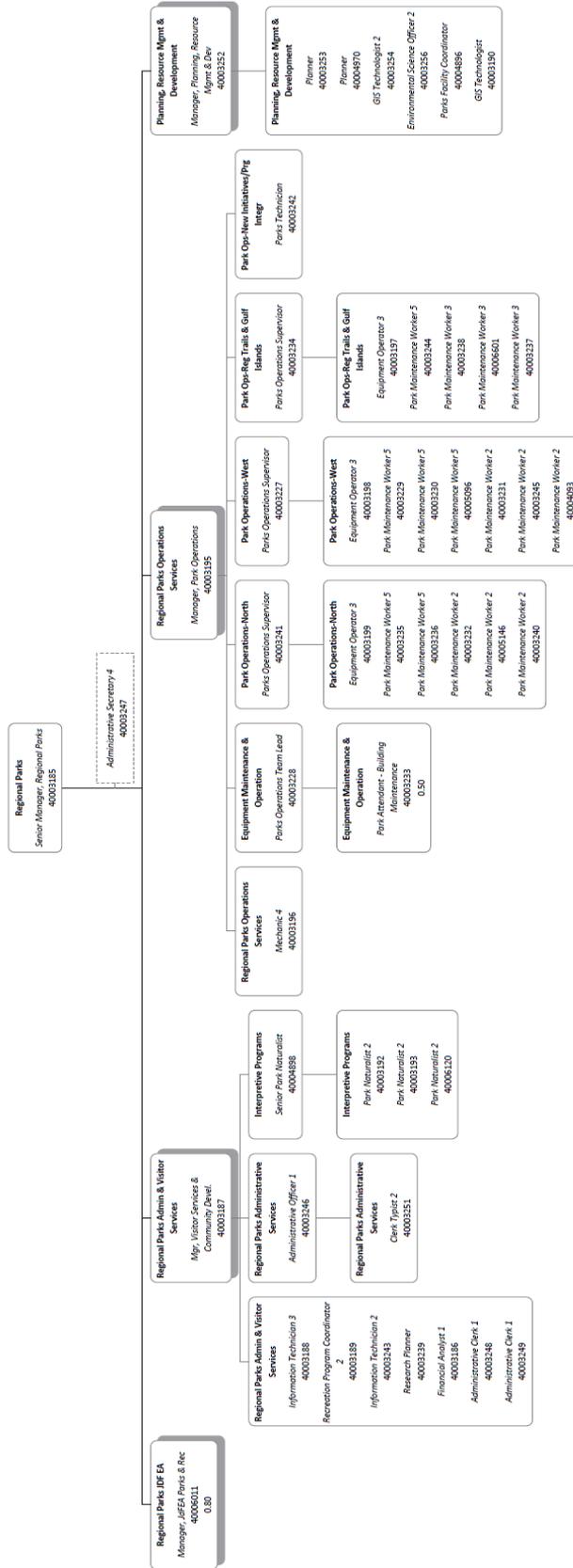
1. Planning, Resource Management & Development (PRMD)
2. Park Operations (OPS)
3. Visitor Services & Community Development (VSCD)

Service Purpose, Role or Overview	Participants	Funding Sources	CRD Board Committee and/or Commission Reporting Structure
<p>Planning, Resource Management & Development</p> <p>Contributes to effective and efficient decision making through plan and policy development, natural and cultural resource management, capital development planning, project management and geographic mapping; development of the division's Strategic Plan and park management plans; provides oversight of the land acquisition program; and guides implementation of scientific and technical work related to environmental management</p>	<p>All municipalities and electoral areas</p>	<p>Requisition, grants, donations</p>	<p>Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board</p>
<p>Park Operations</p> <p>Responsible for the daily operations and maintenance of regional parks and trails, attending to nature centres, campgrounds, washrooms, trails, beaches, picnic areas, parking lots, bridges, kiosks and signs; implementing restoration projects and overseeing park safety and security, including bylaw enforcement and fire management; annual operating plans guide the maintenance of all regional parks</p>	<p>All municipalities and electoral areas</p>	<p>Requisition, grants, donations, non-tax revenue</p>	<p>Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board</p>

Service Purpose, Role or Overview	Participants	Funding Sources	CRD Board Committee and/or Commission Reporting Structure
<p>Visitor Services & Community Development</p> <p>Connects people with the natural environment, conducts social science research and planning, provides park volunteer opportunities for residents, cultivates community partnerships and provides administrative services; park visitors of all ages learn more about their natural and cultural heritage through guided hikes, school programs and special events throughout the year; provides web-based park information and publications to the public, issues park use permits for group picnic shelters and special events and provides administrative and financial support to the division</p>	<p>All municipalities and electoral areas</p>	<p>Requisition, grants, donations, non-tax revenue</p>	<p>Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board</p>

1.2 Organization Chart

Regional Parks



1.3 Key Trends, Issues & Risks – Service Specific

Planning, Resource Management & Development

- Regional Parks contain many important ecosystems and species. Their long-term protection is a core responsibility, as defined in the Board-approved Regional Parks Strategic Plan. With high visitor use, the protection of ecosystems and species is a major park planning challenge.
- The opening of Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park and Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt requires a detailed implementation plan to ensure facilities and visitor experiences correspond to the direction provided in the park management plans for these parks.
- Some major facilities in existing parks need to be replaced or renewed. Demand for capital funding is much greater than available funding. Detailed planning and engineering work also needs to be done for these projects. An asset management plan needs to be completed for all facilities and be used to guide capital development.
- Urban and suburban development will continue at a faster pace in the Western Communities than elsewhere in the region. The consequences of this will be increased use, which could result in diminished park visitor experiences and negative impacts on the natural environment. The regional parks most impacted will be Thetis Lake, Mt. Wells, Devonian, Witty's Lagoon, Sooke Hills Wilderness, Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt and Sooke Potholes.
- Regional residents are looking for transparent and meaningful processes to provide input into various aspects of park operations, including land use, management, conservation and programming.
- A CRD Corporate Priority related to regional infrastructure includes developing and implementing an asset management planning framework and tools to continue proactive and responsible management of assets and infrastructure. Regional Parks is engaging the Manager of Asset Management to support and participate in this corporate initiative.
- In November 2016, the CRD Board approved borrowing up to \$6.1 million to complete Phases 3 and 4 of the E&N Rail Trail. The two sections represent 2.3 km of additional trail and create a 13.8 km continuous route from Jacklin Road to Victoria. In 2018, construction of Phase 3 between Atkins Avenue/E&N Railway Crossing and Savory School in Langford (approximately 1 km in length) will begin. Construction of Phase 4 (1.3 km) from Esquimalt Road to the Blue Bridge in Victoria is targeted to occur in 2019. Completion of both phases is expected in 2019.
- The number and complexity of issues associated with First Nations is increasing, as a result of heightened awareness of the responsibilities local governments have for reconciliation, consultation, engagement, traditional use and access to regional park lands and cooperative management of park lands and resources. All Regional Park lands have associated First Nation interests and are within First Nations' traditional territories.
- The Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund, which since its inception in 2000 has resulted in the acquisition of more than 4,500 hectares of land with a value of over \$52 million, will expire in 2019. Public consultation that was completed in 2018 respecting the renewal of the Fund and the appropriate uses of those funds will inform Board decisions about the future of the land acquisition program.
- In 2019, subject to Board approval, Regional Parks, in cooperation with Environmental Protection, will be working to deploy technologies to address blue-green algae and other water quality issues in Elk/Beaver Lake.

- Regional Parks, in conjunction with Environmental Protection and Integrated Water Services, will contribute to funding for a 0.5 FTE invasive species management coordinator position to be housed in the Environmental Protection Division.

Park Operations

- Visitor use continues to increase. In 2017, there were approximately 7.3 million visits to regional parks and trails.
- Aging infrastructure continues to be a concern, as some facilities are reaching the end of their serviceable lives and therefore require increased effort and money to maintain for public safety and aesthetics. Some park facilities need to be replaced or upgraded. Demand for capital funding is much greater than available funding. An asset management plan needs to be completed for all facilities, to guide capital development
- Increased visitor use and service expectations require more equipment to maximize efficiency and meet public expectations. The purchase of a trackless boom flail to manage vegetation on multi-use trails and on fire access roads and the purchase of 7 new pickup trucks are expensive, yet necessary, in order to meet operational service levels.
- The expansion of camping in regional parks from one campground in 2010, to three in 2015, has required a shift in staff resources to meet the level of services necessary to deliver safe and enjoyable camping experiences. The cost of resources to deliver camping services continues to exceed the revenues generated from camping permits
- In 2018, the Board approved changes to the Parks Regulation Bylaw setting an 8-dog limit for commercial dog walkers and requiring that commercial dog walkers obtain a permit. There have been increased efforts to educate park visitors and to collect information about dog management issues in parks.
- More staff time is being dedicated to increasing messages to visitors about hazards related to cliff jumping and swimming at Thetis Lake Regional Park.
- Opening of the Sea to Sea and Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Parks has increased the access to areas adjacent to the Drinking Water Protection Zone of Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park. There will be a need for heightened security and enforcement to keep people out of those areas and ensure that an effective buffer is provided between recreational users and the Greater Victoria Watershed.
- The popularity of the regional trails for recreation and transportation purposes is only expected to increase over time. Increased use and congestion on the trails will likely need to be addressed through facility upgrades and projects focused on increasing the user capacity of the trail system and providing ways to maintain public safety among users.
- The use of regional trails as transportation corridors has created expectations that trails will be maintained to a level of service where high-speed travel can be safely accomplished.
- Changing provincial regulations pertaining to occupational health and safety are requiring increased resources for staff training to ensure compliance.

Visitor Services & Community Development

- Visitor interest and understanding of issues related to the local natural environment is anticipated to continue to increase and develop. This will require Regional Parks to evolve programming to better meet new and emerging interests.
- Volunteers are interested in less traditional opportunities and more self-directed, short-term or one-time only opportunities, such as corporate employee, one-day-only shoreline clean-ups. This presents opportunities for Regional Parks to work with community partners and corporations in innovative ways to deliver on its mandate.
- Use of new technology and social media is increasing rapidly for trip planning and communicating visitor experiences. Technology can provide directions in the parks, and can be used for sharing photos and comments on visitor experiences. Keeping pace through development of apps, on-line registration systems and downloadable maps is crucial.

1.4 Link to Board Strategic Priorities

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Undertake monitoring, education, and remediation programs to support decision-making and management of natural resources

BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

- Respond to issues that threaten ecological health such as wildlife and invasive species and profile best practices
- Integrate a climate lens in our land acquisition strategies

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Develop and implement asset management planning framework and tools to continue proactive and responsible management of assets and infrastructure, both natural and engineered

ACTIVE & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

- Manage trails as transportation corridors

EDUCATION, OUTREACH & INFORMATION

- Expand on successful education partnerships and program delivery to include innovative in-person outreach and educational programs

REGIONAL PARKS

- Increase access to recreational trails within park boundaries and consider opening new park reserve lands
- Prepare and update park management plans

FIRST NATIONS

- Work with First Nations to reach an agreement on the use of the Sea-To-Sea parklands

2 Services

2.1 Service Levels

Service Level Adjustments in Role/Scope		
Service	Base Year	Year 4 (2019)
Planning, Resource Management and Development		
Land Acquisition Manage the land acquisition strategy, identify priority areas, and assess feasibility of acquiring properties to expand Regional Parks System	Provide 2 update to the Board annually	Complete 1 land acquisition
Parks and Trail Management Planning and Public Engagement Provide strategic direction to guide environmental conservation, development of visitor facilities and provision of visitor services, and engage the public, other government agencies and First Nations in park and trail planning processes	Preparation or update of 2 management plans per year 2 public engagement processes per year	Complete 1 park/trail management plan and undertake 2 management plan projects including public engagement
Capital and Facilities Planning and Project Management Undertake improvements and new construction of buildings, facilities, dams and related infrastructure that align with capital plan	7 capital facility plan projects	9 new capital projects identified in service plan
Resource Conservation Undertake stewardship work, including habitat restoration, invasive species control, and working with partners on stewardship projects	20 research permits per year 2 conservation planning/ partnerships per year	Complete 2 conservation plans and initiate 1 conservation project Complete 2 best management practice guidelines for operational activities
Geographic Mapping	200 cartographic products/year GIS analysis for 8 planning initiatives Update and maintenance of 6 Spatial Data Models/year	Update and maintain 9 spatial data models per year Develop and implement mobile GIS technology to support park operations Continue to develop Regional Parks Asset Management Program

Service Level Adjustments in Role/Scope

Service	Base Year	Year 4 (2019)
Park Operations		
Infrastructure replacement and repair	8 infrastructure and facilities projects per year Annual Infrastructure Plan is prepared	6 Infrastructure and facilities projects Annual Infrastructure Plan is prepared
Park & Facility Maintenance	Regular cleaning of park facilities, minor repairs & clearing trails 30 operating plans prepared per year Manage and maintain 400 km of park trails Service and inspect 55 washroom facilities/week Service and inspect 132 garbage containers/week	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
Vegetation Management	Conduct 400 hours of lake weed harvesting at Elk/Beaver Lake	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
Campground Operations	4 campgrounds managed Achieve a 65% weekend occupancy rate at Sooke Potholes and Island View Beach campgrounds between May long weekend and September long weekend	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
Park & Trail Signage	4 park re-signing projects	Repair and replace park signs as necessary
Bylaw Enforcement	1000 patrol hours per year with CRD Bylaw Enforcement 2080 hours of Dog Management Education	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
Fire Management	20 seasonal and regular staff trained to BC Forest Service standards for basic firefighters	
Visitor Services & Community Development		
Volunteers in Parks Programs		

Service Level Adjustments in Role/Scope

Service	Base Year	Year 4 (2019)
<p>Volunteer Naturalists</p> <p>Nature Centre Hosts in the Nature Centres operated by Regional Parks on weekends throughout the year. They engage with park visitors and help to build awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural environments in regional parks</p>	30 volunteers and 900 hours	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Volunteer Park Stewards</p> <p>Visit parks weekly, checking and reporting on condition of parks, trails, and facilities. They also foster positive relationships with visitors through information, education and professional role modelling</p>	50 volunteers and 1,500 hours	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Restoration Volunteers</p> <p>Participate in the removal of invasive species (i.e., Scotch broom removal at Mill Hill Regional Park) and the restoration of natural habitats (i.e., Western Painted Turtle habitat restoration project at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park)</p>	120 volunteers and 900 hours	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Corporation and Community Group Volunteers</p> <p>Participate in one-time events that usually last 1-3 hours. They assist with environmental stewardship projects (i.e., Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up events) and they also assist with restoration projects (i.e., Scotch broom removal at Witty's Lagoon – Tower Point)</p>	400 volunteers and 1,100 hours 2 new corporations or community groups involved in projects	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Environmental Interpretation</p> <p>BC curriculum-based programs are offered to elementary school students in the spring and fall</p>	Educational Programs offered 3 days per week; 150 programs per year	130 formal education programs
<p>Nature Outings and Events</p> <p>Offer nature outings and events, including guided nature walks, adult hikes, roving programs, workshops, and drop-in special events</p>	135 outings and events per year	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required

Service Level Adjustments in Role/Scope

Service	Base Year	Year 4 (2019)
<p>Outreach and Education Activities</p> <p>Outreach and education includes participation in community events and festivals (i.e., Saanich Fair, Strawberry Festival, Oceans Day, Seedy Saturday)</p>	15 outreach events per year	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Community Partnership Development</p> <p>Community partnerships are built with individuals, the private sector, and other levels of government to engage in environmental stewardship projects and improve facilities (i.e., working with community partners to design user-friendly trails in parks)</p>	3 new partnerships	1 new partnership
<p>Regional Parks Legacy Program</p> <p>This Program encourages gifts, donations, and planned giving to support land acquisition, and ongoing programs, services and facilities.</p>	Encourage and support donations with a goal of at least 1 donation per year	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Communications and Creative Services</p> <p>Communication, design and production services in support of park programs.</p>	2,000 signs and display pieces	Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required
<p>Social Science Research & Planning</p> <p>Social Science research and planning, visitor surveys, data analysis</p>	Conduct visitor surveys in regional parks	Conduct visitor surveys in 6 regional parks
<p>Administration</p> <p>Administration staff provide services to the public, including responding to general inquiries, administering the permit system for special events and use of picnic shelters, and administrative support to Regional Parks staff</p>	240 permits processed	260 permits processed
Regional Trails		
<p>Regional Trails Operation & Maintenance</p> <p>Operate and maintain multi-use regional trails as transportation and recreation corridors</p>	<p>Operate and maintain 95 km of multi-use regional trails</p> <p>Conduct 250 km of boom flail vegetation removal in spring and fall cuts</p>	<p>Add 2.3 km E&N Rail Trail (Phase 4) Total 96.3 km</p> <p>Adjust to meet service delivery needs, as required</p>

2.2 Workforce Considerations

Service	Workforce (FTEs)				
	Base year 2015	Year 1 (2016)	Year 2 (2017)	Year 3 (2018)	Year 4 (2019)
PRMD	4.96	4.96	5.96	5.96	7.66
OPS	20.69	20.69	20.69	20.69	27.68
VSCD	15.62	15.62	14.62	14.62	13.66
Total	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.5	49.0
Increase FTEs	0	0	0	0	0.5
Combined Total	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.5	49.0

3 Divisional Initiatives & Budget Implications

Title & Estimated Completion Date	Description	Priority	Budget Implications
2019			
Complete the opening of the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt	One seasonal auxiliary park officer to provide customer service, maintain facilities, and ensure safe camping experiences at Sheilds Lake camping area, to assist with enforcement patrols on The Great Trail, in the watershed protection zone of Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park, and the lakes area and Mount Manuel Quimper area of the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt May-September (21 weeks)	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Regional Parks	\$32,500 ongoing increase for seasonal auxiliary park officer wages
Open Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park in the vicinity of the Veitch Creek	Development of trails, parking area and installation of signs	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health	\$200,000 allocated in capital budget
Develop Asset Management Plan	Develop an asset management program in conjunction with the Corporate Asset Manager that includes the implementation of Plant Maintenance (SAP)	Regional Infrastructure	\$200,000 is identified in capital budget for 2016 \$190,000 carried forward to 2019
Construct Phase 3 & 4 of the E&N Rail Trail	Construct Phase 3 and 4 of the E&N Trail, adding 2.3 km of new trail	Active and multi-modal transportation	Funding source - borrowing
Galloping Goose User Separation Feasibility Study	The Regional Trails Management Plan identifies the completion of a feasibility study to separate users or widen the trail from Selkirk Trestle to McKenzie Avenue	Active and multi-modal transportation	Core budget

Title & Estimated Completion Date	Description	Priority	Budget Implications
	on the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and from Switch Bridge to McKenzie Avenue on the Lochside Regional Trail.		
Elk Lake Aeration System	Working with Environmental Protection, develop a business case for a larger water quality improvement process for Elk Lake.	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health	Core budget

4 Goals & Performance Indicators

Service Goals	Indicators or Measures
Maintain exemplary park planning, resource management and development practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional lands to the regional parks and trails system • Undertake environmental conservation planning and projects (e.g., habitat restoration, invasive species control) • Prepare or update a minimum of one park management plan annually • Number of public engagement opportunities on park/trail management • Completion of an updated list of Species at Risk annually* • Number of locations where invasive species removal has occurred
Maintain visitor satisfaction with regional parks and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor satisfaction with regional park and trails • Number of trips on regional trails annually (target a minimum increase of 2% annually over previous year)* • Increase in kilometers of active transportation infrastructure*
Maintain responsible management of regional infrastructure and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of capital projects delivered on time and on budget • Weekend occupancy rate at Sooke Potholes and Island View Beach campgrounds between May long weekend and September long weekend • Number of sign packages completed annually
Increase opportunities to engage residents and community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of community outreach events the CRD participates in and/or supports annually* • Number of guided hikes and special events delivered or partnered on annually • Number of formal education programs delivered in parks to students • Number of volunteer hours leveraged in restoration or stewardship activities* • Satisfaction rates from feedback forms collected through environmental interpretation programs
Service Goal: User Fee Revenue as % of Total Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.84% for 2019

* Corporate Indicator – multiple divisions may contribute to this measure

Contact

Name: Mike MacIntyre
Title: A/Senior Manager
Contact information: 250.360.3340