

Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

10:00 AM

6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

R. Mersereau (Chair), G. Young (Vice Chair), G. Holman, B. Isitt, R. Martin, J. Olsen,
J. Ranns, D. Screech, L. Seaton, M. Tait, N. Taylor, C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio)

The Capital Regional District strives to be a place where inclusion is paramount and all people are treated with dignity. We pledge to make our meetings a place where all feel welcome and respected.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. [21-861](#) Minutes of the October 27, 2021 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

Recommendation: That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of October 27, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

Attachments: [Minutes - October 27, 2021](#)

4. Chair's Remarks

5. Presentations/Delegations

In keeping with directives from the Province of BC, there is limited space for the public to attend CRD Board meetings in-person at this time. However, the public may continue to view meeting materials and Live Webcasts online. If you wish to attend a meeting in-person, please email legserv@crd.bc.ca.

CRD encourages delegations to participate electronically. Please complete the online application for "Addressing the Board" on our website and staff will respond with details.

Alternatively, you may email your comments on an agenda item to the CRD Board at crdboard@crd.bc.ca.

5.1. [21-865](#) Delegation - Rob Thomas; Representing South Island Disc Golf Society: Re: Agenda Item 6.2.: Regional Parks - Strategic Plan Update

5.2. [21-866](#) Delegation - Yvonne Mendel; Representing South Island Mountain Bike Society: Re: Agenda Item 6.1.: Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks and Item 6.2.: Regional Parks - Strategic Plan Update

6. Committee Business

6.1. [21-850](#) Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks report be received for information.

Attachments: [Staff Report: Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks](#)
 [Appendix A: Short-term Actions to Support MBAC Report](#)

6.2. [21-854](#) Regional Parks - Strategic Plan Update

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Board extend the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan's term for eight months and that staff bring back an updated Strategic Plan for Board approval in July 2022.

Attachments: [Staff Report: Regional Parks - Strategic Plan Update](#)
 [Appendix A: 2012-2021 – Status of Strategic Priorities](#)

6.3. [21-855](#) CRD Regional Parks - Interpretive Program

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the CRD Regional Parks Interpretive Program report be received for information.

Attachments: [Staff Report: CRD Regional Parks – Interpretive Program](#)

6.4. [21-859](#) Debrief - Severe Weather Event - Verbal Update**7. Notice(s) of Motion****8. New Business****9. Adjournment**

The next meeting is TBD.

To ensure quorum, please advise Tamara Pillipow (tpillipow@crd.bc.ca) if you or your alternate cannot attend.

Meeting Minutes

Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

10:00 AM

6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

PRESENT

Directors: R. Mersereau (Chair), G. Young (Vice Chair), G. Holman, B. Isitt, R. Martin, J. Ranns (EP), D. Screech, L. Seaton, M. Tait (EP), N. Taylor (EP), C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio)

Staff: L. Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks and Environmental Services; J. Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks; M. Lagoa, Deputy Corporate Officer; T. Pillipow, Committee Clerk (Recorder)

Guest(s): Director R. Windsor

Regrets: Councillor J. Olsen

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Director Martin provided a Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

**MOVED by Director Screech, SECONDED by Director Seaton,
That the agenda for the October 27, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting be approved as amended to permit one (1) late delegation to speak, and that Director Windsor be allowed to participate without vote in the October 27, 2021 Regional Parks Committee Meeting.
CARRIED**

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. [21-786](#) Minutes of the September 22, 2021 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

**MOVED by Director Seaton, SECONDED by Director Screech,
That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of September 22, 2021 be adopted as circulated.
CARRIED**

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Mersereau encouraged members to use their time in the Committee of the Whole to have a wholesome discussion on those topics that were referred from the last meeting of this committee.

5. Presentations/Delegations

- 5.1. Delegation - Rob Buchan; Resident of Central Saanich; Re: Agenda Item 6.4. CRD Regional Parks - Mosquito Population Management and Control Program

Rob Buchan spoke to Item 6.4.

6. Committee Business

- 6.1. [21-677](#) E&N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector

J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.1.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- that future plans take into consideration the Safe Routes to School program
- working with Langford staff with planning and implementation of trails
- building trails beyond our current needs
- available funds for trail maintenance

**MOVED by Director Seaton, SECONDED by Director Screech,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:**

That this report be received for information.

CARRIED

- 6.2. [21-673](#) Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.2.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- implications of adopting the conservation strategy on an interim basis
- clarification of the 2022 work plan

**MOVED by Director Isitt, SECONDED by Director Holman,
That the matter be referred to staff to report back to the Committee by January 2022 on the advisability of adopting the conservation strategy on an interim basis pending the updating of that strategy.**

CARRIED

6.3. [21-801](#) Regional Trails Management Plan - Implementation Update

J. Leahy spoke to item 6.3.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- working toward a more cohesive road crossing system across the region
- intervals at which toilet facilities are installed along the Galloping Goose
- a regional trail expansion policy for the Juan de Fuca area
- inclusion of electoral areas in the Southern Vancouver Island Transportation Strategy
- future plans taking into consideration lessons learned from previous rural builds

Director Ranns left the meeting at 10:56 am.

**MOVED by Director Seaton, SECONDED by Director Isitt,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:**

That this report be received for information.

CARRIED

**MOVED by Director Screech, SECONDED by Director Isitt,
That the Board refer strategic action 2 in the Regional Trails Management Plan to the Capital Regional District Transportation Working Group, as a priority for action in 2022 and to refer all outstanding actions from the plan that require local government coordination to the Working Group to consider in advancing regional transportation priorities.**

CARRIED

**MOVED by Director Isitt, SECONDED by Director Holman,
That the committee direct staff to report back in 2022 on options for evaluating the evolution of the regional trail network.**

CARRIED

6.4. [21-794](#) CRD Regional Parks - Mosquito Population Management and Control Program

J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.4.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- reserve funds that could be contributed to replacing the flapper gate
- the reason for conducting a feasibility study before replacing the flapper gate
- determining the source of this issue and where the costs should be borne
- the long term plans for this area, taking into consideration climate change
- other options being considered by the Tsawout Nation
- the timeline of this recommendation

MOVED by Director Plant, **SECONDED** by Director Screech,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the Board authorize up to \$15,000 of funding toward a feasibility study for the replacement of the Tsawout flapper gate; and
2. That staff undertake a drainage study for the ditches in Island View Beach Regional Park, share the results with the District of Central Saanich and Tsawout First Nation, and report back.

CARRIED

7. Notice(s) of Motion

7.1. [21-755](#) Motion with Notice: Lighting and Trail Improvement/Widening Policy (Director Plant)

MOVED by Director Plant, **SECONDED** by Director Isitt,
That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the Board:
That staff develop a Lighting and Trail Improvement/Widening Policy.

MOVED by Director Plant, **SECONDED** by Director Screech,
That this item be referred to staff to report back on current endeavors and the advisability of such new policies.

CARRIED

7.2. [21-756](#) Motion with Notice: Construction and Detour Policy (Director Plant)

MOVED by Director Plant, **SECONDED** by Director Isitt,
That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the Board:
That staff develop a Construction and Detour Policy.

MOVED by Director Plant, **SECONDED** by Director Screech,
That this item be referred to staff to report back on current endeavors and the advisability of such new policies.

CARRIED

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

MOVED by Director Screech, **SECONDED** by Director Seaton,
That the October 27, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting be adjourned at
12:04 pm.
CARRIED

CHAIR

RECORDER



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2021

SUBJECT **Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks**

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report provides an information update in response to a Notice of Motion on the consideration of mountain biking opportunities in Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks through land acquisition and community input and provides a summary of work done to date since the adoption of the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines.

BACKGROUND

A Notice of Motion was introduced at the October 23, 2019 Parks & Environment Committee (PEC) meeting recommending that the CRD Board approve a budget, provide staffing and request that staff develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) for an advisory committee with the goal of developing a mountain biking policy for CRD Regional Parks within a defined timeframe.

On October 30, 2019, the CRD Board approved \$40,000 in the 2020 Financial Plan to support the creation of an advisory committee to support the development of a mountain biking policy. The Notice of Motion was approved by the CRD Board on November 13, 2019.

In response to the Notice of Motion, staff developed a draft TOR for an advisory committee to provide advice and guidance for the use of developing mountain biking guidelines in CRD regional parks. On May 27, 2020, the TOR for a Mountain Biking Advisory Committee (MBAC) was presented and approved by the CRD Board. Between September 20, 2020 and February 16, 2021, the MBAC developed the *Mountain Bike Guidelines: Advice & Guidance to CRD Regional Parks* document.

On May 12, 2021, the CRD Board approved the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines and the short-term actions to support the *Mountain Bike Guidelines: Advice & Guidance Report* with the stipulation that the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines be reviewed in the context of the Regional Parks Strategic Plan update.

A Motion Arising was introduced and carried at the April 28, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting:

1. *That we consider mountain bike opportunities in considering CRD parks acquisitions; and*
2. *That we entertain requests from the mountain biking community for design and construction of mountain bike trails in appropriate locations within CRD parks.*

The CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines were developed with the purpose of providing specific direction and a systematic and consistent decision-making process for planning, developing and managing mountain biking activities throughout CRD regional parks. These guidelines do not provide a plan for where, how and when mountain biking opportunities should occur in regional parks, rather they are forward looking and are intended to guide established

decision-making processes, such as strategic planning, park management planning and land acquisition. A series of updated short-term actions have been provided (Appendix A) to support and enhance mountain biking in regional parks where mountain biking is identified as an acceptable use.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Since 2000, the CRD has acquired land through the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund. The acquisition of land has been guided by Board-approved land acquisition strategies, with the latest approved for 2020-2021. These strategies define the principles, criteria and processes that guide staff and the Board in the identification, assessment, prioritization and acquisition of new lands for regional park purposes. These multi-year strategies provide the Board with a roadmap for acquiring land for regional parks and trails and are guided by the CRD Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

The land acquisition criteria help establish the merit of individual parcels in a systematic and transparent way. The criteria are organized around three categories: environmental; outdoor experiences and activities; and management and planning. During property assessment, some of the key criteria used are:

- the naturalness of an area, including connecting to natural environments and protected areas
- the role of the property in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation
- the significance of an area for outdoor activities and visitor experiences
- the contribution the area makes to the regional growth strategy
- rationalizing existing park boundaries

The objective of the Land Acquisition Strategy is to establish a regional park system that meets the evolving conservation and outdoor recreation needs of residents in the region and anticipates the needs of future generations while providing a range of opportunities for people to connect with nature.

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 indicates that mountain biking trails are one of the outdoor recreation gaps in the system. The plan also states that “management plans provide strategies to protect the environment, and they define appropriate levels of activities.” Through management planning, the goals, objectives and policies for a regional park are set to guide ongoing development and management actions. Management planning processes are designed to engage First Nations, key stakeholders and the general public.

Appropriate locations for mountain biking in regional parks are determined through the park management planning process. The recent Board-approved CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines are an additional decision-making tool that supports the park management planning process in identifying where mountain biking opportunities may occur.

Environmental & Climate Implications

With 8.5 million visits to the regional parks system in 2020, it is important to manage how recreation and park values interact and minimize possible ecological impacts caused by

recreational activities on parks ecosystems. Protecting sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity are key factors to creating resiliency toward climate change. While the CRD recognizes the importance of mountain biking as one of the recreational opportunities offered in regional parks, it also needs to balance the demands of other recreational users, parks values and previous commitments.

Intergovernmental Implications

Regional parks are part of the mountain biking offer and a region-wide approach is required in order to provide a diversity of mountain biking experiences.

Any consideration of new recreational offers or land-altering works require an understanding of cultural values on the landscape. The CRD works with local First Nations to better understand the cultural values within regional parks and ensure that recreational uses and land-altering works are compatible and follow cultural heritage policies and legislation.

Social Implications

The CRD recognizes there is a gap between the demand for mountain biking and the outdoor recreation offered in the region. Although the full demand may never be met within regional parks, the CRD will continue to play a role in providing mountain biking areas and opportunities when identified through the land acquisition program and park management planning processes. Since the Board approval of the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines, significant work has been done to implement recommendations from the MBAC report, build positive relationships with mountain biking communities and find opportunities in the system that align with current park management plans.

Financial Implications

As determined by the Board at its May 12, 2021 meeting, all draft management plans presented to the Regional Parks Committee will identify a cost schedule for plan implementation. This cost schedule will form part of the draft management plan for consideration during the decision-making process. This will help the CRD place the planning for, and implementing of, mountain biking trails and supporting infrastructure within the larger context of sustainable service delivery. The financial cost of building and/or enhancing mountain biking trails and supporting infrastructure can be costly. Budgeting for these activities needs to be planned ahead and included in the appropriate budget cycle.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of land acquisitions currently considers the significance of an area for outdoor activities and visitor experiences, including mountain biking through the Board-approved Land Acquisition Strategy and Land Acquisition Criteria. Appropriate locations for mountain biking are identified utilizing the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Guidelines during the park management planning process. When appropriate locations have been identified, staff will seek further input from the mountain biking community during the management planning process to better understand the desired mountain biking experiences and trail objectives. The CRD will continue to support the mountain biking community while giving consideration to all regional park values.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Mountain Biking Opportunities in Regional Parks report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Update on the Short-term Actions to Support the Mountain Biking Advisory Committee Advice and Guidance Report – November 2021

UPDATE ON THE SHORT-TERM ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE MOUNTAIN BIKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE REPORT

November 2021

Short-term Actions

- **Focus on improved relationships between the CRD, mountain biking community and various stakeholders.**

Status: CRD staff have ongoing coordination and field work with the South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS) representatives on trail maintenance and improvements in the designated mountain biking area at Mount Work Regional Park (as per Licence Agreement). Through the management planning process for Mount Work Regional Park, staff have had meetings and site visits with SIMBS directors, and provided an update at the SIMBS annual general meeting. The mountain biking community was included as a key interest group, along with other user groups, in the initial engagement process for the park management planning. Staff have been in communication with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council and did a walk through the mountain biking area in Mount Work Regional Park in April of 2021 to look at a number of trail re-alignments, rehabilitation projects, trail improvements and updated standards, as part of the collaborative work with SIMBS to create more sustainable trails while giving consideration to park values and other visitors.

- **Build on the success of the Mountain Biking Advisory Committee (MBAC) relationship by continuing to better understand the needs of the mountain biking community.**

Status: The CRD met with SIMBS to conduct a yearly trail planning exercise and to discuss improvements for the mountain biking area in Mount Work Regional Park. Staff continue to work in the field with SIMBS, identifying project work included in the annual work plan and assessing new trail work undertaken. Staff have started more frequent communications with the Sooke Bike Club regarding the mountain biking trails in Sea to Sea Regional Park.

- **Develop a communication campaign for summer 2021 to bring awareness to the new guidelines, trail etiquette and mountain biking opportunities in the regional parks system.**

Status: This campaign took place over the course of June, July and August 2021 and included a social media campaign with weekly posts and print advertising in the following papers: Times Colonist, Goldstream News Gazette, Victoria News, Oak Bay News, Sooke News Mirror, Peninsula News Review, Saanich News.

- **Create a new mountain biking steward volunteer position.**

Status: A mountain biking steward volunteer position was created to ride regularly in a designated park and report on trail conditions, facilities, observed issues, as well as foster positive relationships with recreational groups and regional park and trail visitors through positive role modelling and provide information about mountain biking etiquette and opportunities.

- **Explore an additional licence agreement at Mount Manuel Quimper within Sea to Sea Regional Park.**

Status: An agreement for trail maintenance of mountain bike rated trails has been developed. The licence agreement has been shared with conservation covenant holders, in accordance with the covenant conditions, and staff have received a letter of consent to proceed with the licence agreement of existing mountain bike rated trails. Sooke Bike Club has reviewed the agreement. The agreement is now undergoing the signing process.

- **Continue to improve the mountain biking trails within the mountain bike area of Mount Work Regional Park, such as upgrades to the technical training area, an overall mountain biking area plan, working with South Island Mountain Bike Society (SIMBS) on trail improvements and improved wayfinding signage.**

Status: As part of the annual work plan with SIMBS, a number of trail improvements and realignments were identified. Key trail improvements completed to date include: upgrades to double black and blue flow trails, including Organ Donor and Sofa King; improvements and re-alignments to climbing/two way trails, including Painless, Heads Up and Southridge Flow; deactivation of a number of trails that were redundant after re-alignments, including Lazy Line and Walk Up; and formalizing a number of previously unsanctioned trails in the mountain biking area, including Diaphragm and Ruff'n Roll. SIMBS and CRD staff are currently working on an overall mountain biking area plan within the existing mountain biking area. The trail plan for the designated mountain biking area is being included in the draft park management plan. Technical training area upgrades are planned to begin this fall/winter to improve the banked wood structures, with further improvements to the area being considered in the draft park management plan. A planning and design workshop will be conducted this fall with members of the mountain bike community to inform an improved offer in the technical training area. A sign package is being installed in the mountain biking area of Mount Work Regional Park to improve wayfinding.

- **Develop mountain biking specific sign standards.**

Status: New sign standards have been created for mountain biking technical trail features, ratings and wayfinding. The sign package being installed in the mountain biking area of Mount Work Regional Park includes technical trail features and ratings along with wayfinding.

- **Organize a training session for key CRD staff with a certified International Mountain Biking Association trail builder to improve capacity and to provide quality mountain biking trails within our existing authorized trail network.**

Status: Two training sessions were held for CRD Regional Parks staff on March 9-10 and March 11-12 with Trail Holistics. Future training is planned in collaboration with mountain biking trail maintenance volunteers.

- **Work with local agencies for improved connectivity and consistency of the trail networks.**

Status: Staff have been working closely with adjacent land managers, such as BC Parks, the Hartland Landfill and the Department of National Defence, through the management planning process and on an ongoing basis to coordinate trail development and standards. The CRD's priority is coordination with BC Parks on the proposed establishment of a formal trail linkage at Patridge Hills, which connects to Mount Work Regional Park trails near Durrance Lake.

- **Create a new sign standard for closing off ecologically sensitive areas for trail rehabilitation.**

Status: A new sign standard has been created and is already being utilized in the mountain biking area of Mount Work Regional Park.

- **Develop an impact assessment process to identify planned land altering work to ensure regional park values are protected.**

Status: An impact assessment process has been drafted and is currently being field tested by staff. This impact assessment process will be utilized when creating any new mountain biking trails.

- **Review mountain biking opportunities in Thetis Lake Regional Park that fit within the existing management plan.**

Status: The existing management plan for Thetis Lake Regional Park identifies as an action to determine locations where a limited number of single track or otherwise challenging cycling-friendly trails could be designated. Staff assessed the trails in Thetis Lake Regional Park and have verified the condition, rider experience and ecological impact of the current sanctioned and unsanctioned trail network. Staff have finalized a plan to improve and formalize over 10 km of cross country trails that fit with management plan direction.



Making a difference...together

**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2021**

SUBJECT **Regional Parks – Strategic Plan Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present an update on the renewal of the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

The development of the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 (Strategic Plan) was initiated in 2009 to replace the Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks Master Plan that had been in effect since 2000. The Strategic Plan expires at the end of 2021 and needs to be updated. The development of the Strategic Plan was staff supported but was primarily led by a volunteer Citizens Advisory Panel and included extensive engagement with stakeholders, the public, government, First Nations and other park agencies.

The Strategic Plan continues to be a well-used guidance document, providing ongoing direction and remaining useful as a “roadmap” for the Regional Parks Division. The vision, mission and goals outlined in the Strategic Plan considered many of the trends, challenges and protected area values that are still relevant today. With respect to plan implementation since 2012, six strategic priorities and 26 associated actions were identified. Of the 26 strategic actions outlined in the document, 22 actions are ongoing, three have been completed, and one has yet to be initiated (Appendix A).

At its February 24, 2021 meeting, the Regional Parks Committee addressed the update of the Strategic Plan with the following motion:

That staff report back on a plan to review and update the Regional Parks Strategic Plan.

Staff have completed an internal assessment of the Strategic Plan and consider the framework of the plan to still be relevant, including the mission of regional parks to establish a diverse and connected system of regional parks that protect the region’s biodiversity and landscapes; to expand the regional trails system to connect communities and provide transportation options; and to provide a range of compatible and accessible non-motorized outdoor visitor experiences and activities for people of all ages and abilities that foster enjoyment, appreciation and respect for the region’s natural environment.

At the same time, many things have changed in the region since the plan was approved in 2012. For example, the CRD is now part of a national movement toward Reconciliation with Canada’s Indigenous peoples, and envisions strong relationships with First Nations across the region based on trust and mutual respect, partnerships and working together on shared goals. The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted by the Board in 2018, setting parameters for managing and balancing growth in the region. The CRD declared a climate emergency in 2019 and applies this lens to service-delivery decisions to take meaningful action on climate change. Park acquisitions have added over 300 hectares to the system since 2012, and many more acquisitions are anticipated over the next decade through the Land Acquisition Fund.

Current park management challenges include pressures of increased visitation, environmental protection and striving for sustainable service delivery. Large capital-intensive critical assets, such as bridges, trestles and dams require ongoing inspections and maintenance and, in some cases, extensive rebuilds. The regional trail system continues to expand, with the fourth of the five phases of the E&N Rail Trail to be completed in 2022 and work on the Mayne Island Regional Trail also starting in 2022.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Board extend the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan's term for eight months and that staff bring back an updated Strategic Plan for Board approval in July 2022.

Alternative 2

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Board extend the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan's term for 20 months and that staff bring back an updated Strategic Plan for Board approval in July 2023.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Board Priorities, approved plans, Corporate Priorities and established service mandates drive our work. Initiative 6a-1 in the 2019-2022 Corporate Plan directs staff to "Ensure appropriate funding for parks & trails infrastructure, improvements & maintenance by updating the Regional Parks Strategy with consideration to ecological, recreation & reconciliation principles, land acquisition capacity, & expanded partnerships with First Nations & parks user groups." While the financial planning and operating resources necessary to advance this Board priority have been addressed in the approved provisional financial plan, and the hiring of staff to advance this work is underway, confirmation of mission, values, goals and the proposed strategies and actions to manage and develop regional parks and trails will be identified and approved as part of the planning process.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

An updated Strategic Plan will reflect outcomes from current CRD plans, reports and strategies, such as the Regional Growth Strategy, Climate Action Strategy, the Regional Transportation Plan, the First Nations Task Force Report, the Land Acquisition Strategy, Regional Trails Management Plan and other completed regional parks management plans. Work is underway to assemble this information in a way that can inform the planning process and be incorporated into the new public engagement platform.

Environmental & Climate Implications

The Strategic Plan is the guiding document for Regional Parks, which forms more than half of the capital region's formally protected areas and regional trails. This parks system is key in helping to achieve the region's climate action, natural resource protection and active transportation goals. These goals will be considered during the plan update. An updated plan will also provide better direction on navigating the balance and potential competing interests between conservation and

recreation, in light of increasing visitation and the public and user group input to be received as part of the planning process.

Service Delivery Implications

Because the Strategic Plan framework continues to provide strong guidance and can be updated to reflect current strategic priorities and challenges, staff propose Alternative 1 to undertake a focused review and refresh of the Strategic Plan over the next eight months. Engagement would be conducted in spring 2022 to determine the level of support for and relevance of the overarching mission, goals and priority actions in the Strategic Plan. Engagement would consist of a focused on-line opportunity for public input using a social media platform. Following public engagement, an updated plan would be developed and presented to the Regional Parks Committee in June 2022 with a recommendation to the CRD Board for approval. This approach would require an extension of the current Strategic Plan through July 2022.

With the addition of a new park planner in January 2022, staff time has been allocated to update the Strategic Plan. Staff will undertake background research and engagement with key information providers and the public to refresh the plan. In this way, the Strategic Plan can be updated at minimal cost and with the least amount of delay between expiration of the existing plan and adoption of an updated plan. This approach is an efficient use of existing resources given that the current Strategic Plan is still largely relevant.

The second alternative would be for staff to update the Strategic Plan using a more in-depth public engagement process. Under this scenario, staff would provide an initial public engagement opportunity to help inform the Strategic Plan update. Following the initial public engagement, staff would prepare a draft strategic plan and seek CRD Board approval to release it for public comment. The draft strategic plan would go through a second round of public engagement to confirm its direction before being finalized and presented for Board approval in July 2023. This alternative would require an extension of the current Strategic Plan through July 2023.

Regardless of the preferred approach, the updated Strategic Plan will address a number of issues, including conservation, recreation, revenue generation, First Nations reconciliation, climate change, accessibility, sustainability, land acquisition and active transportation.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with this Strategic Plan refresh will be covered by the Regional Parks 2022 core budget for Alternative 1, and by the Regional Parks 2022-2023 core budget for Alternative 2.

CONCLUSION

The 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction for the regional parks service; however, its term ends in 2021. Because much of the current Strategic Plan still remains relevant, staff recommend commencing a Strategic Plan review and update project in December 2021 and submitting an updated plan to the CRD Board for consideration in July 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Board extend the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan's term for eight months and that staff bring back an updated Strategic Plan for Board approval in July 2022.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan – Status of Strategic Priorities

**2012-2021 REGIONAL PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN
STATUS OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

November 2021

Strategic Priority	Strategic Action	2021 Status
Strengthen management of existing parks and trails	Upgrade, maintain, repair or replace major facilities.	ongoing
	Cultivate partnerships, explore new approaches and adopt best management practices and technologies.	ongoing
	Explore opportunities for generating non-tax revenue.	ongoing
	Complete or update park and trail management plans for priority parks and trails.	ongoing
	Complete ecological inventories and conservation plans for priority parks and address priority conservation issues.	ongoing
	Collaborate on the development of a natural area connectivity plan.	underway
	Complete asset, maintenance and operation plans.	ongoing
	Develop an environmental education plan and provide leadership in a review of interpretive facilities in the region.	ongoing
	Develop an outdoor recreation strategy.	not started
Strategically plan for and open existing land banked parks and trails as resources are approved	Develop a park and trail opening strategy.	ongoing
	Continue construction of the E&N Rail Trail.	ongoing
	In partnership with other public agencies, local government and private landowners, initiate planning for the regional trails system on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands.	ongoing
Strengthen community involvement, education and partnerships	Engage the community by providing volunteer and educational experiences for people, including youth and families, to discover, learn about, protect and restore parks and trails.	ongoing
	Foster and initiate partnerships and expand volunteer opportunities.	ongoing
	Integrate First Nations interests into planning for, and management and stewardship of, regional parks and trails.	ongoing
	Undertake a visitor use survey.	underway
	Undertake a survey of residents.	complete

Strategic Priority	Strategic Action	2021 Status
Prepare for future land acquisitions	In partnership with other CRD departments, First Nations and the federal and provincial governments, prepare a sensitive ecosystem inventory for land west of the Sooke River.	ongoing
	Prepare a land acquisition strategy and examine acquisition options to achieve the future regional parks and trails system.	complete
	Prepare a boundary rationalization plan for recent acquisitions prior to park dedication and declare land that does not have regional park or trail value as surplus and sell these lands. Proceeds from the sale of the surplus lands would be used for further park or trail acquisitions.	ongoing
Promote the health benefits of regional parks and trails	Partner with other levels of government and health agencies to promote the health benefits of regional parks and trails to the community.	ongoing
	Undertake a study on the natural capital value of regional park land.	ongoing
	Focus programs on engaging youth and families in park activities.	ongoing
	Provide more accessible opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature.	ongoing
Engage in planning for regional sustainability	Bring forward, as part of the process to prepare the Regional Sustainability Strategy, the discussion of the concept that at least half of the region's land base should be managed for nature conservation.	complete
	Partner with CRD Regional Planning to advance Regional Parks' interests into planning for regional sustainability.	ongoing



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2021

SUBJECT CRD Regional Parks – Interpretive Program

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an informational update on the interpretive program offer at Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks.

BACKGROUND

The interpretation program at CRD Regional Parks was established in 1976, with a focus on nature education for children. Over the past forty-five years, the type of educational programs has widened but the priority to provide opportunities to discover and learn about parks and trails and to connect people to regional parks has remained constant.

The interpretive program within the visitor services section of CRD Regional Parks is comprised of an interpretation coordinator, three full-time interpretive staff, and auxiliary staff, as required, who develop and deliver school programs, guided walks, in-park and community events and training sessions for educators. They develop content for park information kiosks, interpretive signs, articles and social media, as well as oversee three nature centres. Interpretation is a core service that plays a fundamental role in the protection of regional parks and trails. It educates visitors about the natural and cultural history of the region and park management issues through direct experiential learning in regional parks. The interpretive program encourages stewardship and advocates for the regional parks and trails system.

With more than 8.6 million visits annually to regional parks and trails, the interpretive program has increased its role in providing education around responsible park use and the protection of park values. By providing fun and engaging information on key regional parks management issues, such as social distancing, dog management, impacts of off-trail travel, carnivore awareness and wilderness park visit preparedness, park interpreters are an integral part of the education and compliance spectrum. Working together with CRD regional parks rangers, they help to ensure park visitors have a positive, safe and respectful visit in regional parks.

The CRD's boundaries span the traditional territories of over 20 First Nations, whose ancestors have been taking care of the land since time immemorial. Many of CRD regional parks are significant historically, culturally and spiritually for these Nations. First Nations histories, language, culture and perspectives have been under-represented in interpretive programs in CRD regional parks. In March 2020, a new cultural programmer position was created as a first step toward educating the public about traditional cultural values, Indigenous perspectives and the relationship between First Nations and the land. Through this public education, the CRD is supporting regional parks as a culturally safe place for Indigenous community members to practice their traditional rights. Some highlights of the new offer to date include:

- meeting with educators from local Nations to discuss program development.
- developing a cultural display for the Francis/King Nature Centre.
- piloting a live online park program, in partnership with the Royal BC Museum.

- offering a new self-guided walk titled “Exploring Indigenous Perspectives.”
- offering a new guided walk about traditional uses and preparation for ceremonial gatherings
- delivering guided walks on the topic of Indigenous Perspectives throughout the fall/winter 2021.
- contributing engaging social media content that aligns with park messaging and includes Indigenous rights to harvest.
- development and delivery of a school program series called EAGLE (Education and appreciation Garnered through Listening and Exploring).
- drafting five Indigenous school programs for input from the WSÁNEĆ and Ləkʷəŋən people
- evaluating current interpretive program offerings for opportunities to include cultural content and to encourage respectful exploration.
- drafting Indigenous content for park and trail information kiosks and a new interpretive sign for Gonzales Hill Regional Park.
- delivering a professional development workshop for teachers to encourage park stewardship inspired by cultural protocols.
- ongoing work to bring cultural awareness to regional parks staff and to educate staff about traditional rights, including a mandatory cultural awareness video from WSÁNEĆ for park rangers.

The interpretation program aims to connect people to nature and culture within regional parks. Over the last four years, the interpretive program has reached 10,897 students through school programs, 21,956 park visitors through public programs, 6,922 residents through community events, and 23,651 park visitors through pandemic social distancing outreach. In addition, the three nature centres see over 8,000 visitors a year, on average.

IMPLICATIONS

Intergovernmental Implications

Through its reconciliation statement, the CRD recognizes the integral relationship First Nations have with the land. The CRD has made a commitment to work with First Nations on taking care of the land while providing space for cultural and ceremonial use, food and medicine harvesting, traditional management practices and reclaiming Indigenous place names. It is understood that a commitment alone is not enough and that action is needed to take measurable steps toward a better relationship with Indigenous peoples. In that spirit, a key component of the cultural program is to work with local First Nations to build relationships, support traditional rights and offer more cultural education programs in regional parks.

Social Implications

With increasing visits to the regional parks system, it is important to manage and minimize possible impacts to ecological and cultural integrity caused by recreational activities. Fostering a deeper connection to regional parks and educating park visitors about their role in parks stewardship is an integral step in protecting sensitive ecosystems, cultural values and biodiversity.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan identifies that a key mission of regional parks is to “provide environmental and cultural interpretation that focuses on the visitor’s relationship to

nature, natural processes, ecology, the value of natural conditions, and the cultural history and stories of the parklands and trails.”

CONCLUSION

Education in regional parks has a unique role to play in connecting people’s hearts and minds to nature and culture in the regional parks system. Over the last four years, more than 63,000 people participated in interpretive events and programs that have provided opportunities to discover and learn about regional parks and trails and the ecosystems and cultures that depend on them. The interpretative program at CRD Regional Parks is built on a strong 45-year foundation of environmental education and continues to evolve and grow to provide quality programs and meet visitor expectations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the CRD Regional Parks Interpretive Program report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer