

2022 Interim Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report



Making a difference...together

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CRD conducts its business within the traditional territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOĆÉĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), P'a:chi:da?ahť (Pacheedaht), Pune'laxutth' (Penelekut), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SĪÁUTW (Tsawout), T'Sou-ke, WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), WSIKEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsəm (Esquimalt), all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.



Dancing Dragonflies by Chris Paul

The CRD commissioned WŚÁNEĆ artist Chris Paul to create an image based on the idea of First Nation and Settler communities living side by side and our governments making a difference together.

Dragonfly is a symbol of change, transformation and swiftness. He represents a symbol of change in the view of self-understanding and the kind of change that has its source in maturity and insight into the deeper meaning of life.

It is our hope today that our work to change and transform will be swift, that as we mature we will develop insight that allows us to be poised for reconciliation and that we continue to build strong and meaningful relationships with local First Nations.

Cover photos:

Front: East Sooke Regional Park

Back: Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park

Organizational Overview

The Capital Regional District (CRD) delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and all levels of government to enable sustainable growth, foster community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure, while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region.

Table of Contents

Regional Parks & Trails Overview.....	2
History & Governance.....	2
Funding & Service Delivery.....	3
System Information.....	4
Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2022-2032.....	7
Overview.....	7
Vision & Mission.....	8
Values.....	9
Goals & Priorities.....	10
Tracking Our Progress.....	11
Annual Progress Reporting.....	12
Goal 1: Reconciliation.....	14
Goal 2: Conservation.....	16
Goal 3: Visitor Experience.....	18
Goal 4: Climate Action & Resiliency.....	20
Goal 5: Access & Equity.....	22
Looking Ahead - 2023.....	24
Appendix A: Regional Parks & Trails 2022 Report Card.....	25

Regional Parks & Trails Overview

The CRD has committed to annually reporting on regional park and regional trail-related activities. This report summarizes 2022 activities and annual indicators identified in the CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032, approved on July 13, 2022 on an interim basis for one year while engagement with First Nations in the region continues.

History & Governance

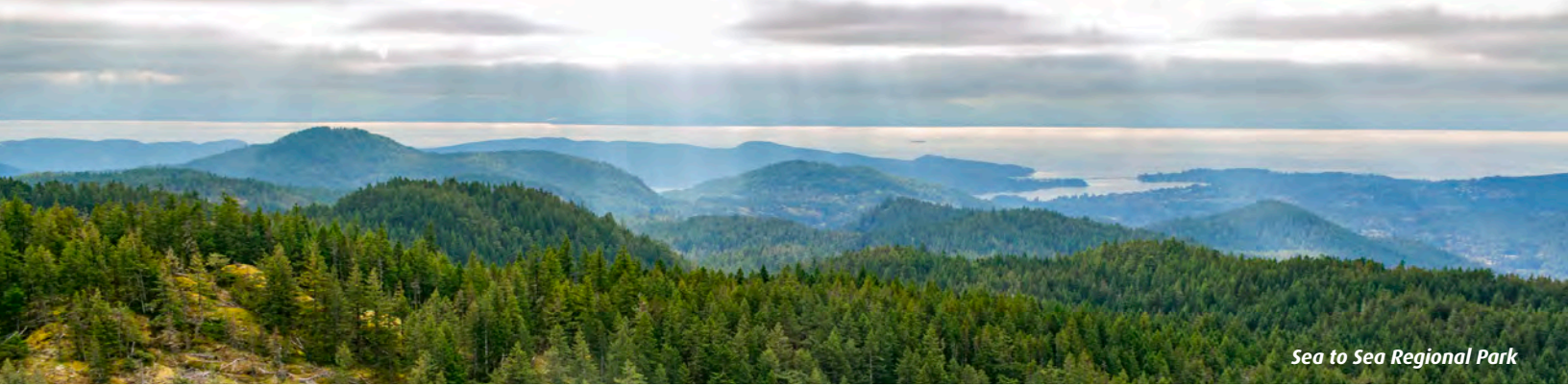
The CRD's regional parks system was established in 1966 (Figure 1). Since then, the CRD has provided a service for the provision and maintenance of regional parks and regional trails to all municipalities and electoral areas in the CRD, as per the "Regional Parks Extended Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 1989," CRD Bylaw No. 1749. The authority to provide a regional parks and regional trails service is granted by the Province of British Columbia (BC) to the regional district primarily through provisions outlined in the *Local Government Act*.

The CRD Board is the decision-making authority for the regional parks and trails service. The CRD Regional Parks Committee provides input to the Board on matters pertaining to regional parks and regional trails.

As of 2022, the CRD Transportation Committee also provides input to the Board on regional trail matters, such as mobility and recreation, trail management and operations.

FIGURE 1. REGIONAL PARKS TIMELINE





Sea to Sea Regional Park

Funding & Service Delivery

The regional parks and trails service is funded primarily through a regional property tax requisition. In 2022, the annual operating budget for regional parks and regional trails was \$16.7 million. The previous CRD Board Strategic Plan 2019–2022 prioritized ensuring appropriate funding for parks and trails infrastructure, improvements, and maintenance.

Non-tax revenue provides a portion of the funding stream for regional parks and trails. Non-tax revenue is generated through the fees and permit provisions such as camping and pay parking in CRD Bylaw No. 3675, “Capital Regional District Regional Parks Services and Facilities Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1, 2010.” Other sources of non-tax revenue may include donations, facility rentals or lease agreements. Additionally, grant funding enhances the overall budget but is dependent on available opportunities and successful applications.

The CRD actively expands the regional parks system through use of the Land Acquisition Fund (LAF). Through the LAF and with the support of partners, the CRD has acquired approximately 4,900 hectares (ha) of land since 2000 for regional parks.

The management of regional parks and trails is divided into three areas:



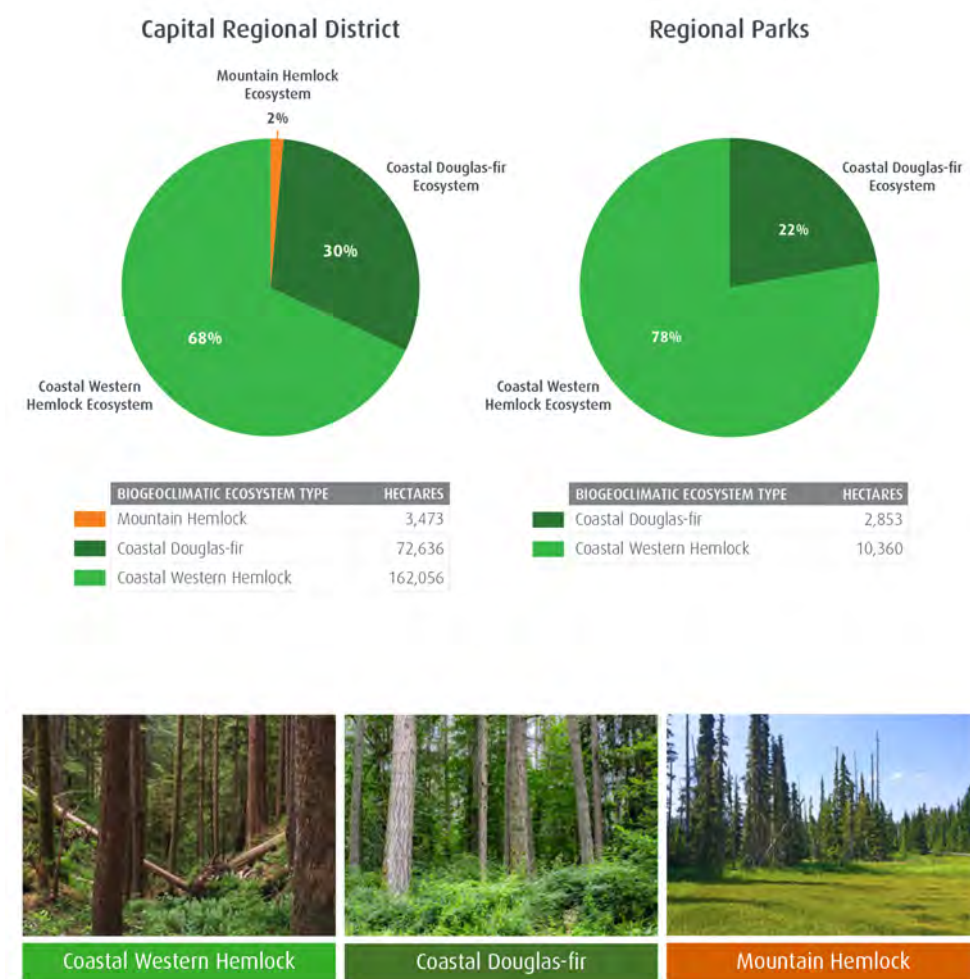
System Information

As of December 31, 2022, there were 33 regional parks and four regional trails in the CRD's system, comprising over 13,300 ha of land. The regional parks system grew in 2022 with the addition of 15.5 ha of land to create one new regional park (Wigglesworth Lake Regional Park), and 25.7 ha of newly acquired land was added to existing parks (East Sooke and Mill Hill regional parks). The regional trails system also grew in 2022 with construction starting on the Mayne Island Regional Trail and the expansion of the E&N Rail Trail Regional Trail.

CRD regional parks protect land and ecosystems in two of the three biogeoclimatic zones that occur within the CRD (Figure 2). The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone is home to the highest number of species and ecosystems at risk in BC, of which many are ranked globally as imperiled or critically imperiled. Only 0.3% of BC consists of CDF zone and it is the least protected zone in BC, with many of the protected areas being small, isolated parcels surrounded by development.

As of July 2022, the CRD protects 4% (2,850 ha) of the CDF occurring within the region, which comprises approximately 22% of the regional parks system as a whole.

FIGURE 2. BIOGEOCLIMATIC ECOSYSTEMS IN THE CRD & IN REGIONAL PARKS IN 2022

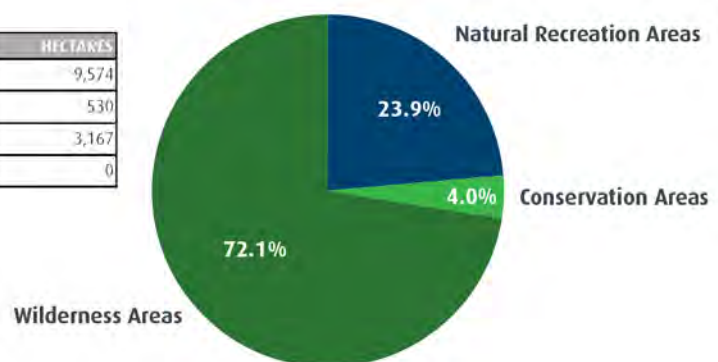




Wigglesworth Lake Regional Park

With the new additions, the regional parks system by park classification as of December 31, 2022 was as follows:

PARK CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF PARKS	HECTARES
Regional Wilderness Areas	3	9,574
Regional Conservation Areas	12	530
Regional Natural Recreation Areas	18	3,167
Regional Conservancy Areas	0	0



As part of the CRD’s commitment to climate action, tracking began in 2022 to determine the levels of energy consumption by regional parks and associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Going forward, the CRD has committed to annually tracking GHG emissions with the end goal of reducing GHGs accross the organization, including regional parks’ operational GHGs.

In 2022, regional park and trail operations consumed 4,869 gigajoules of energy and the total emissions were about 252 tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent (e) (tCO₂e). Emission sources were predominantly generated from gasoline powered vehicles in the regional parks fleet (66%), followed by diesel powered fleet vehicles (28%), propane heated buildings (4%) and electrically heated buildings (2%).

In the CRD, regional parks serve to protect biodiversity and cultural heritage and offer quality visitor experiences. Figure 4 highlights some of the 2022 visitor use and conservation statistics in regional parks and regional trails.

FIGURE 4. 2022 VISITOR USE AND CONSERVATION DATA



Interim Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032

Overview

The management of regional parks and regional trails has been guided by various plans and strategies over the years. In 2019, the CRD Board made it a priority to update the former Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012–2021. Through engagement with First Nations, the public and stakeholders, the CRD developed the Interim Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 between December 2021 and June 2022.

The 2022–2032 plan updates the former strategy with a lens on First Nations reconciliation to reflect current challenges and opportunities affecting the region, as well as to incorporate recent CRD initiatives and priorities. The success of the Plan relies on relationships with First Nations, a commitment to superior service delivery, and cooperation with partners.

On July 13, 2022, the CRD Board adopted the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan on an interim basis for one year while engagement with First Nations continues.

Much of the focus for the remainder of 2022 was on continuing to engage First Nations on the Interim Strategic Plan. Feedback received will be considered for incorporation into the final Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 for presentation to the Board.

Coles Bay Regional Park



Vision, Mission & Values

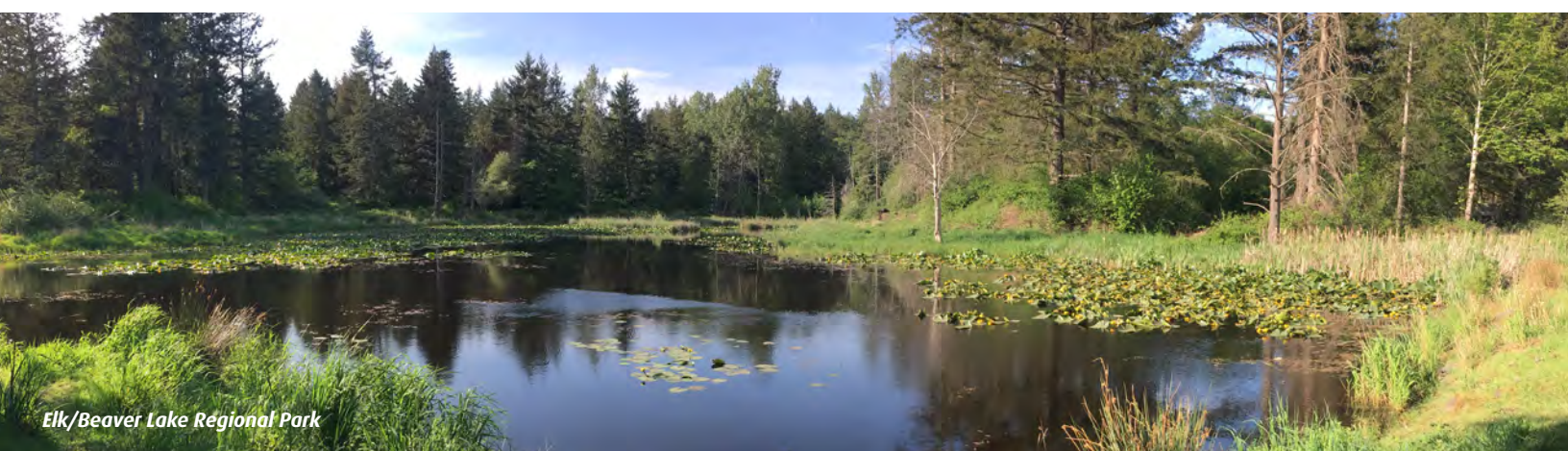
The Interim Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 vision statement identifies the desired future state of regional parks and regional trails in 2032:

We have an expanded and connected system of regional parks and regional trails that are rich in biodiversity, respect Indigenous cultural heritage and use, inspire stewardship, are resilient to change, and provide enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.

Reaching the desired vision will be successful if the CRD works closely with First Nations communities, other levels of government, organizations, institutions, and residents in the region. A focus on equity and accessibility in the Plan is aimed at encouraging broader and safer participation in regional parks and trails.

The mission defines the fundamental purpose of the regional parks and regional trails system, describing why it exists, what it does, and the level of performance to be met or surpassed. The mission for regional parks and regional trails is to:

- Operate and manage a connected system of regional parks for public enjoyment.
- Foster stewardship by learning from and working with long-term land stewards and by connecting people to nature.
- Operate and manage a regional trail network for active transportation and recreation.
- Be fiscally responsible and accountable in decision-making.



The following values and guiding principles were also identified during the development of the 2022–2032 Strategic Plan. Values and principles define what is important to the CRD and will be applied to guide the implementation of the Plan:

Access: Regional parks and regional trails can be accessed by transit, micromobility, cycling and walking.

Accountability: Decision-making processes and financial management are transparent and based on the best available information.

Connectivity: Biodiversity depends on connected natural area corridors and complete communities depend on connected trail corridors and active transportation networks.

Conservation: Regional parks protect, restore and enhance the region’s cultural heritage, biodiversity, and rare and unique ecosystems.

Education: Promoting literacy of the region’s natural and cultural heritage increases awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and the nature and impacts of climate change.

Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive, culturally safe, and accessible to visitors of all ages, abilities and income levels.

Outdoor Recreation: Outdoor recreation benefits our health and wellbeing, connects us to each other and immerses us in nature.

Partnership: A commitment to developing meaningful partnerships with First Nations that respects Indigenous knowledge, First Nations governance and cultural use, as well as to developing partnerships with other levels of government and organizations in the region.

Reconciliation: A commitment to take action towards Indigenous reconciliation by respecting Indigenous laws and strengthening relationships with First Nations communities.

Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails adapt to change by incorporating solutions that take action on climate change, recognize the value of Indigenous cultural knowledge, ensure sustainable service delivery and aim to benefit future generations.

Stewardship: A commitment to learning from and implementing approaches from First Nations, who are the long term land stewards, and inspiring residents and visitors to be stewards of the region’s natural and cultural heritage by leading by example and showcasing best practices.

Goals & Priorities

The CRD's Interim Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan was developed to guide the CRD towards its desired vision for regional parks and regional trails. The Strategic Plan establishes five goal areas where the CRD will focus its efforts.

Each of these goals includes strategic priorities with supporting actions and timelines for implementation. Overall, there are 13 strategic priorities and 57 supporting sub-actions.

GOAL	PRIORITIES
Reconciliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate First Nation worldviews and knowledge in the ongoing management and operation of regional parks and regional trails. • Work with First Nations Governments in service delivery initiatives.
Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to increase protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity and natural assets in the region through improved knowledge, proactive stewardship and land acquisition. • Respect and protect cultural heritage sites and traditional cultural use practices. • Work with partners in taking care of the region's species, habitats and natural areas.
Visitor Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer compatible outdoor recreation experiences that are enjoyable, healthy, safe and immersed in nature. • Foster stewardship through program delivery, knowledge sharing and collaboration.
Climate Action & Resiliency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance regional active transportation opportunities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction. • Support the development of complete and connected communities by improving access to regional parks by transit, electric vehicles, micromobility, walking or cycling. • Align service delivery and infrastructure improvements in regional parks and regional trails with climate action. • Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas. • Strategically acquire and manage natural areas to address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population.
Access & Equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance health and well-being by providing equitable access to regional parks and regional trails.



Tracking Our Progress

Over the ten-year term of the CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, the actions contained within will form the basis of service plans and work plans that are approved by the Board annually as part of the financial planning process. Collaboration with First Nations Governments, municipalities, other park agencies, CRD divisions and stakeholders will be integral to this process.

As progress is made in the implementation of this Plan, knowledge and understanding of impacts to regional parks and regional trails will continue to develop. To remain flexible and adaptable, and to support consistent implementation over time, CRD staff will:

- Continue on a journey of reconciliation with First Nations
- Prepare a funding strategy to accompany implementation
- Continue to identify opportunities for external grant funding and partnerships
- Share knowledge and best practices with others
- Participate in professional development to improve service delivery
- Continue to monitor data to track progress over time
- Evaluate progress and adjust actions, as needed
- Continue to improve on current practices

Annual Reporting

Progress on the implementation of the 10-year Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan will be reported annually. Reporting indicators have been identified for each strategic priority area proposed for annual reporting. For each goal area, an action status will reflect general progress made towards all actions supporting that goal. This helps to summarize at-a-glance progress made on actions that may not be easily measurable or reflected in another indicator, such as actions that are ongoing or taking place over a long period. For other measures, an icon is provided to indicate the desired direction of the indicator over time (increasing or decreasing), if applicable.

The following section is intended to provide a high-level, easy-to-understand overview of the CRD's performance and progress related to regional parks and regional trails, and summarize progress made in the 2022 year for each goal area.

Detailed information on each goal, its related action items and progress on those action items is contained in Appendix A: Report Card.



Mount Work Regional Park



2022 Overall Strategic Plan Progress

On Track

Goal Area



Reconciliation: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.



Visitor Experience: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Conservation: Protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Climate Action & Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.



Access & Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.

Legend: Action Status



On Track: 75% or greater of yearly target progress



Opportunity for Improvement: 50% - 75% of yearly target progress



Attention Required: less than 50% of yearly target progress



Future Action

Legend: Indicators



Direction of arrow indicates **current trend direction**



Indicator is trending in the **desired direction**



Indicator is trending in the **wrong direction**



Indicator is intended to provide **contextual information**



Reconciliation



Goal 1: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.

Overall Action Status

Opportunity for Improvement

CRD Roles

First Nations Engagement

Park Management & Planning

Cultural Heritage Protection

Interpretive Education

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 focuses on strengthening government-to-government relationships and understanding between the CRD and First Nations in the region. Through the latter half of 2022, engagement on the Interim Strategic Plan took place with First Nations in the region.

The CRD is committed to maintaining an open dialogue with First Nations to confirm that Indigenous cultural values and cultural uses are respected and that the priorities and actions remain relevant and meaningful.

The Plan supports ongoing engagement with First Nations in the management and operation of regional parks and regional trails in years to come and ensures that parks and trails remain culturally safe and inclusive.

This goal contains

6

sub-actions

Goal Progress Summary

- CRD staff invited Nations to identify priority initiatives related to regional parks and regional trails and to develop workplans with associated timelines and budgets for implementation.
- An operating agreement for Spring Salmon Place (KWL-UCHUN) Campground at Sooke Potholes Regional Park was renewed with T'Sou-ke Nation.
- The CRD's *Exploring Indigenous Perspectives* programming was offered to a growing number of park visitors throughout the year.



Culturally Modified Tree

Indicators



Reconciliation workplans are developed with each First Nation

- First Nations invited to develop workplans.



Traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region

- Traditional Use Agreement in place with one First Nation.



Increased participation in Indigenous perspectives programs and presentation

- The CRD's *Exploring Indigenous Perspectives* programming was offered to over 1,000 park visitors. This grouping of programs encourages park visitors to learn about the cultural history of the region and the time-honoured traditions of Indigenous people and the importance of their relationship with the land.



Increased number of conservation and restoration projects in partnership with First Nations

- Small scale, culturally important plant propagation initiated from Coles Bay Regional Park plant stock.



Increased number of economic opportunities made available to First Nations

- Timber from Mayne Island Regional Trail construction (and related tree removal) went to the WJOLELP Tsartlip First Nation & an operating agreement was renewed with the T'Sou-ke Nation for KWL-UCHUN Spring Salmon Place Campground.



Indigenous Perspectives Programming at Francis/King Regional Park



Conservation

Goal 2: Regional parks protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Overall Action Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Conservation Partnerships

Volunteer Program
Management

Interpretive Education

Land Acquisition,
Management & Planning

Regional parks contribute to a large system of connected natural areas that protect natural assets, maintain ecological health, function and integrity, and provide important refuge for a diversity of species, from the threatened blue-grey taildropper slug to large carnivores, including wolves, bears and cougars.

This complex and diverse system of protected areas is vital to ensuring long-term viability of natural areas, conserving biodiversity and building resilience to changing climates and increasing pressures on the landscape. Regional parks also contribute to the protection of the region's cultural heritage and archaeological sites protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

Goal Progress Summary

- In 2022, 41 hectares of new regional parkland was acquired.
- A Species At Risk inventory was conducted in regional parks in 2022.
- Restoration of over 15 separate sites is ongoing as part of CRD Regional Parks' Ecological Restoration Volunteer Program.
- A Cultural Heritage Protection Plan pilot project got underway in 2022 with two First Nations in East Sooke, Matheson Lake and Roche Cove regional parks.
- There were 26 research permits issued in regional parks in 2022. Of those, 20 related directly to conservation and ecological values.

This goal contains

13

sub-actions



Western Painted Turtle

Indicators



Increased area of regional park land protected

- In 2022, the CRD acquired a new park - a 15.5 hectare park now known as Wigglesworth Lake Regional Park. An additional 9.8 hectares of land was also added to Mill Hill Regional Park and 15.90 hectares to East Sooke Regional Park.



Increased area of regional park land restored

- CRD volunteers spent a total of 2,506 hours restoring and enhancing about 12.4 hectares of regional park land.



Increased protection of at risk species and ecosystems in regional parks

- Inventory conducted for federally and provincially listed species at risk including sharp-tailed snake, western painted turtle and contorted-pod evening-primrose.
- Conservation fencing and signage installed in three regional parks to enhance protection of rare species and ecosystems.



Increased percentage of First Nations collaborating with CRD on cultural heritage protection projects

- Two First Nations began collaborating with the CRD on cultural heritage protection projects in East Sooke Regional Park and Roche Cove Regional Park.
- Cultural monitors from three First Nations were involved in four regional park and trail projects.



All staff receive cultural awareness training

- All Regional Parks staff received cultural awareness training in 2022.



Increased conservation and research partnerships

- Two official conservation and research partnerships in place between the CRD Regional Parks team and local groups.



Ecological Restoration Volunteer Program



Visitor Experience

Goal 3: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Overall Action Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Recreation Partnerships

Interpretive Education

Compliance & Enforcement

Volunteer Program
Management

Visitor Information

This goal contains

9

sub-actions

Outdoor recreation opportunities play an important role in the quality of life that attracts people to this region, benefiting mental and physical health, promoting social and community connectivity, and being relatively low-barrier to access.

Goal Progress Summary

- In 2022, the CRD added new mountain bike-rated trails in the regional park system and a new park in the Natural Recreation Area classification.
- Increased engagement with parks visitors on management issues.
- 2023 Interpretive School Program content and materials were revamped to include increased focus on climate change.
- The volunteer program supported diverse opportunities for participation and contribution to regional parks, as well as ongoing partnership development with community organizations.
- Trail standards and rock-climbing guidelines were initiated, as well as work with geocaching groups to ensure caches were not located in sensitive areas or within the protected watershed area.



Sea to Sea Regional Park

Indicators



Maintain high rates of visitor satisfaction

- Visitor satisfaction to be included in the Resident Survey in 2023.



Increased area available for compatible outdoor recreation

- Twelve kilometers of new, official mountain bike-rated trails were opened in Thetis Lake Regional Park in areas which had already had established use and disturbed areas.
- Wigglesworth Lake Regional Park was added as a new Natural Recreation Area.
- The accessible Hamsterly Beach nature playground in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park was completed.



Review and update interpretive program content every four years

- Three new cultural programs (public and school) were created in 2022. Repeated programs are refreshed each year and new programs created.



Increased number of volunteer hours

- A total of 621 volunteer naturalists, restoration volunteers, park stewards and trail ambassadors contributed 5,664 hours to regional parks.



Thetis Lake Regional Park



Climate Action & Resiliency



Overall Action Status
On Track

Goal 4: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.

CRD Roles

Regional Trail
Management & Planning

Regional Park
Management & Planning

Land Acquisitions

Interpretive Education

Conservation

This goal contains

24

sub-actions

The CRD Board declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has since committed to take action to address climate change within operations at the regional level and to take a leadership role to pursue carbon neutrality.

The CRD can contribute to regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions in regional parks and trails by integrating the corporate climate lens framework, making operational choices that reduce GHG emissions, and through the planning, design, and operation of the regional trails system, which serves as the anchor of the region's active transportation network. Additionally, the CRD can ensure the long-term and consistent management and acquisition of regional park land and protected natural areas to help address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population.

Goal Progress Summary

- The 100 kilometers of regional trails continued to be well used in the CRD through 2022.
- Construction of E&N Rail Trail Phase 4 was initiated in partnership with the City of Victoria.
- The construction of Mayne Island Regional Trail began in late 2022. This expansion to the regional trail network into the Gulf Islands increases multi-modal access across the region.
- Grant applications were submitted related to priority regional trail expansion and enhancement projects.



Galloping Goose Regional Trail

Indicators



Increased use of regional trails

- There were 3.3 million visits to regional trails in 2022 compared to 3.79 in 2021.
- There were 4.8 million visits to regional parks in 2022 compared to 5.1 in 2021.
- However, the ten year visitation trend shows a use increase of 12.9% between 2013 and the end of 2022.



Completed regional trail priority projects

- Four grant funding applications were submitted to support regional trail priority projects.
- Construction of Mayne Island Regional Trail and E&N Rail Trail Regional Trail Phase 4 was initiated.



Minimized regional trail service disruptions

- Guidelines for trail closures under development.



Increase Electric Vehicle charging stations at park accesses

- Funding was secured in 2022 for future charging station implementation at high-use regional park accesses.



Reduced operational greenhouse gas emissions

- Overall, the CRD's total emissions are up 1% over 2021.
- Regional Parks division-specific energy consumption and emissions data was established in 2022 to inform future divisional progress reporting.



Maintain critical infrastructure in good condition

- Ongoing asset renewal and capital project work through 2022, including Veitch Creek Bridge and Charters Trestle, helped to maintain critical infrastructure in good condition.



Increase the percentage of parks with management plans less than 15 years old

- 8 out of 33 regional parks have management plans less than 15 years old.
- Mount Work Regional Park Management Plan Draft was completed.



Increased area of regional park land

- Just over 41 hectares of regional parkland was acquired.



Increased representation of all regional park classifications

- Land acquisitions saw 15.9 hectares added to the Wilderness Area classification, 9.8 hectares added to the Conservation Area classification, and 15.5 hectares added to the Natural Recreation Area classification. No land was added to the Conservancy Area classification.



Access & Equity

Goal 5: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.



Overall Action Status
On Track

CRD Roles

Recreation Partnerships

Data Collection &
Monitoring

Interpretive Education

Visitor Information

Regional parks and regional trails are a public good that belong to everyone in the region. The benefits of experiencing and interacting with nature for physical and mental well-being are felt by many. Medical professionals from the World Health Organization to Doctors of BC are advocating for equitable access to nature to safeguard the physical and psychological wellbeing of residents. Factors such as lack of access to transportation and distance to parks can be barriers preventing members of society from enjoying the benefits of parks and trails.

Increased benefits of accessing nature and public spaces can be realized when they adapt to the needs of diverse populations, such as people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, mobility levels and income brackets.

This goal contains

5

sub-actions

Goal Progress Summary

- In 2022, an accessibility audit was launched at select regional parks to learn more about barriers and deterrents to access and potential improvements that can be made.
- A Gender Equity Study on CRD regional trails was launched that will improve understanding of barriers and deterrents to use.
- Park information kiosk standards were updated in 2022 to include cultural awareness information.
- Engagement with First Nations is underway to better understand cultural safety concerns.
- The CRD's *Exploring Indigenous Perspectives* programming was delivered to over 1,000 park visitors.
- Accessible and user-friendly facilities were added in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.



Indicators



Improved accessibility to regional parks and regional trails

- Accessibility audit at select regional parks was initiated in 2022 to identify potential improvements.
- An accessible fishing dock was installed at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
- New user-friendly nature playground was added and construction began on an accessible washroom facility at Hamsterly Beach in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
- New mobi-mats were installed at Thetis Lake Regional Park.
- A bus stop realignment project at Thetis Lake Regional Park was completed, meaning better transit access is now available.



Cultural awareness information is incorporated into new park kiosks

- A cultural acknowledgement was developed with First Nations Relations and Corporate Communications and is being added as park kiosk panels are installed or renewed.
- The new kiosk format with cultural statement and additional cultural information launched at Roche Cove Regional Park in 2022.



Looking Ahead – 2023

In 2023, the CRD will continue to work with First Nations to better understand and respect Indigenous cultural heritage and use, focus on the protection of biodiversity, further inspire stewardship in parks, offer desirable outdoor recreation experiences, develop an expanded and connected system of regional parks and trails and prepare for and adapt to climate change.

Some initiatives planned for 2023 include:

Engage First Nations: As per the CRD Board’s direction, engagement will continue with First Nations on the Strategic Plan in 2023. Building on these relationships, the CRD will invite First Nations to identify, develop and implement priority initiatives in regional parks and regional trails. The CRD will find ways to incorporate First Nations knowledge into the management of regional parks and trails.

Increase Protection of Biodiversity: Research will be conducted to inform a report outlining the State of Natural Values in Regional Parks; this work will be done to support the development of a Natural Areas Conservation Plan. An Impact Assessment tool will be launched to mitigate effects on important habitat and sensitive ecosystems in regional parks and regional trails. The CRD will also continue to support conservation initiatives and partnerships and research.

Offer Compatible Outdoor Recreation: The CRD will advance Trail Standards and Rock Climbing Guidelines and begin preparing for development of an Outdoor Recreation Plan. Staff will continue to work with local geocaching groups to ensure caches are not located in sensitive areas or within the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area.

Install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Plan for and implement electric vehicle and electric bike charging stations at CRD worksites and at high-use regional park accesses.

Regional Trail Enhancement Projects & Active Transportation Initiatives: Complete construction of the Mayne Island Regional Trail and secure funding to implement priority regional trail enhancement and expansion projects. Initiate asset inventory for regional trails and update regional trail agreements. Review service levels and emerging needs for CRD’s regional trails and work with municipalities on a regional active transportation network and a consistent approach to service disruptions on regional trails.

Management Planning: Finalize Mount Work Management Plan and initiate interim management guidelines for new regional parks.

Land Acquisition: Engage First Nations on updating land acquisition criteria and processes.

Access and Equity: Perform an Accessibility Assessment to better understand how we can improve accessibility in regional parks and on regional trails.



Brooks Point Regional Park

Appendix A: Regional Parks & Trails 2022 Report Card

The Regional Parks and Trails Report Card is intended to provide a high-level, easy to understand overview of the CRD's progress and performance towards achieving the five goals in the Strategic Plan.

Methodology

The Interim Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 identifies specific actions to guide CRD efforts over the lifespan of the Plan. These include 13 strategic priorities with 57 sub-actions and associated timelines. Section five of the Plan establishes a monitoring and reporting system and a set of performance indicators.

For each goal area, an action status will reflect general progress made towards all actions supporting that goal. This helps to summarize at-a-glance progress made on actions that may not be easily measurable or reflected in another indicator, such as actions that are ongoing or taking place over a long time period. Icons are used to indicate the desired direction of the indicator over time (increasing or decreasing) where applicable.

The Regional Parks and Trails Report Card compiles the reporting indicator performance relative to the baseline year. It is important to note that change in year-to-year performance do not always equate to a long-term trend and that while performance in any given year may be positive or negative, it may take years to complete the actions and achieve the desired results.

For 2022, indicators are reported for July-December as the CRD Board adopted the Plan on an interim one-year basis in July 2022. Going forward, indicators will be reported for the full calendar year.



2022 Overall Strategic Plan Progress

On Track

Goal Area



Reconciliation: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.



Visitor Experience: Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.



Conservation: Protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.



Climate Action & Resiliency: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change.



Access & Equity: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible.

Legend: Action Status



On Track: 75% or greater of yearly target progress



Opportunity for Improvement: 50% - 75% of yearly target progress



Attention Required: less than 50% of yearly target progress



Future Action

Legend: Indicators



Direction of arrow indicates **current trend direction**







Indicator is trending in the **desired direction**

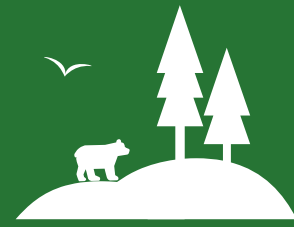


Indicator is trending in the **wrong direction**



Indicator is intended to provide **contextual information**

<div>  <p>Reconciliation</p> <p>Goal 1: Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.</p> <div>  <p>Overall Action Status Opportunity for Improvement</p> </div> </div>	Status	Action	Update
	Progress on Actions		
		1-1 Incorporate First Nation worldviews and knowledge in the ongoing management and operation of regional parks and regional trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of continuing engagement with First Nations in the region on the Interim Strategic Plan, CRD staff are inviting Nations to identify priority initiatives related to regional parks and regional trails and to develop workplans with associated timelines and budgets for implementation. Developing a policy for supporting and clarifying Indigenous cultural use and cultural safety in regional parks has been identified as a short term action to be initiated after First Nations engagement on the Strategic Plan is completed.
		1-2 Work with First Nations Governments in service delivery initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional parks hired a full time equivalent (FTE) Cultural Programmer in 2020 and opened applications for a FTE Assistant Cultural Programmer in 2022. The Sooke Potholes Regional Park Spring Salmon Place KWL-UCHUN campground operating agreement was renewed with T'Sou-ke First Nation. Timber from construction of the Mayne Island Regional Trail was provided to WJOLELP Tsartlip First Nation, and six First Nations received Requests for Expressions of Interest for the construction tender of Mayne Island Regional Trail.



Conservation

Goal 2: Regional parks protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations



Overall Action Status
On Track

Status	Action	Update
Progress on Actions		
	2-1 Take action to increase protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity and natural assets in the region through improved knowledge, proactive stewardship and land acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Species At Risk inventory was initiated in regional parks which will inform a future Conservation Plan. A State of Natural Values Report was also initiated in 2022.• An Impact Assessment was initiated in 2022 for regional parks, as well as project-type specific Best Management Practice Guidelines for activities within regional parks in development.• Conservation fencing and signage installed in three regional parks to better protect rare species and ecosystems.• CRD acquired 41 hectares of regional parkland in 2022.• CRD volunteers spent a total of 2,506 hours restoring and enhancing about 12.4 hectares of ecosystem within regional parks.
	2-2 Respect and protect cultural heritage sites and traditional cultural use practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural monitors from three First Nations were involved in construction projects within regional parks.• All Regional Parks staff received CRD Cultural Competency training in 2022.• A Cultural Heritage Protection Plan pilot project was initiated with two First Nations in East Sooke, Matheson Lake and Roche Cove regional parks.
	2-3 Work with partners in taking care of the region's species, habitats and natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eight CRD Regional Parks staff participated and/or presented at the 2022 BC Protected Areas Research Forum.• Park Stewardship staff sit on the steering committee of the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership.• Several planning and stewardship staff participate in Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership events including <i>Mapping Solutions Workshop: A Framework for Nature-based Solutions in South-west BC</i>.• CRD staff hosted one and participated in an additional bimonthly invasives species management meetings as part of the Capital Regional Invasive Species Partnership, and permitted and facilitated 20+ academic, government or eNGO biodiversity and ecology research projects in regional parks in 2022.



Sustainable Land Use,
Planning and Preparedness

Goal 3: Visitors to regional parks
are involved in stewardship
and have enjoyable outdoor
recreation experiences



Overall Action Status
On Track

Status	Action	Update
Progress on Actions		
	3-1 Offer compatible outdoor recreation experiences that are enjoyable, healthy, safe and immersed in nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trail Standards and Rock-Climbing Guidelines started development.In 2022, CRD staff worked with geocaching groups to ensure geochaches aren't located in sensitive areas.Updates to Regional Parks & Trails Emergency Planning began in 2022; parks staff collaborating with Protective Services to align direction.12 kilometers of new, rated and official mountain bike trails were opened in Thetis Lake Regional Park in areas which had already had established use and disturbed areas and which fit with park management plan direction.
	3-2 Foster stewardship through program delivery, knowledge sharing and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2023 Interpretive School Program content and materials were revamped to include increased focus on climate change.Park Naturalists worked closely with CRD Parks Cultural Programmer to include a cultural lens in interpretive programs and events.Increased visitor engagement in regional parks and on regional trails.Ongoing Volunteer Program development supports diverse opportunities for participation and contribution to regional parks, as well as ongoing partnership development with community organizations.



Climate Action & Resiliency

Goal 4: Regional parks and regional trails are resilient and take action on climate change



Overall Action Status

On Track

Status	Action	Update
Progress on Actions		
	4-1 Advance regional active transportation opportunities that contribute to greenhouse gas reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Four grant applications were submitted for regional trail priority projects.Staff participated in the Transportation Working Group and the renewal of regional trail tenure agreements was initiated.
	4-2 Support the development of complete and connected communities by improving access to regional parks by transit, electric vehicles, micromobility, walking or cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Projects to improve connectivity of and access to the regional trail network got underway, including Mayne Island Regional Trail and phase four of the E&N Rail Trail.Funding was secured to install electric vehicle charging stations at high-use regional park accesses.
	4-3 Align service delivery and infrastructure improvements in regional parks and regional trails with climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A Climate Lens Assessment was included in three grant applications for regional trail priority projects.
	4-4 Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mount Work Regional Park Management Plan draft was completed.Increased collaboration between Regional Parks and Watershed Protection to reduce unauthorized access to the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area.
	4-5 Strategically acquire and manage natural areas to address climate mitigation, urban containment and access to green space for a growing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Municipal land transfer to Mill Hill Regional Park.Additional land added to East Sooke Regional Park through the Land Aquisition Fund.



Access & Equity

Goal 6: Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible



Overall Action Status
On Track

Status	Action	Update
Progress on Actions		



5-1 Enhance health and well-being by providing equitable access to regional parks and regional trails

- Gender equity study on regional trails initiated.
- Accessibility audit launched at select regional parks to identify barriers and deterrents to access.
- Continued engagement with First Nations underway to inform how to improve Indigenous cultural safety in regional parks.
- New user-friendly and accessible assets added to two regional parks, including new mobi-mats at Thetis Lake Regional Park and a new, accessible fishing pier at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
- Construction began on an accesible washroom facility at Hamsterly Beach in Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park.
- A bus stop realignment project at Thetis Lake Regional Park was completed, meaning better transit access is now available.



Capital Regional District

625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6
250.360.3000

www.crd.bc.ca
Twitter: @crd_bc
Facebook: Capital Regional District