

## Backgrounder: Thetis Lake Regional Park Restoration Project

### Thetis Lake Regional Park

Originally conceived as a nature sanctuary, the 831 hectare Thetis Lake Regional Park has grown into one of the area's best-loved natural areas for a variety of recreational pursuits, including hiking, dog-walking and horseback riding. The park receives over 580,000 visitors annually.

### Why is the project being undertaken?

The Thetis Lake Restoration Project was a major recommendation of the Thetis lake Management Plan and is a three-phase undertaking that began in 2007. The plan includes rehabilitation of the main upper and lower lake trails. At the heart of this restoration project is the desire to ensure conservation of the park's natural areas while encouraging recreational use.

The project addresses the deterioration of the original trail corridor as well as damage to lakeshore vegetation, which is causing further erosion in areas along the path. The \$390,000 restoration project is a priority in the Thetis Lake Management Plan.

### What caused the degradation of the park ecosystem?

Recreational use of the park has increased significantly in recent years with the growing population in the Capital Regional District. The intensity of use means the natural habitat has little 'down time' during which to recover.

### What work will be undertaken?

Our goal is to create a sustainable trail system that encourages visitors to tread lightly on the park, and allows the surrounding ecosystems to regenerate naturally, with minimal intervention by:

- Clearly defining and widening the existing trail
- Installing split rail fences to keep visitors on trails
- Removing invasive plant species
- Closing off "desire line" trails made by visitors and pets walking off-trail

After the restoration project is complete in 2010-11, these trails will be safe to use by families of all ages, walkers, runners, swimmers and fishers. The trails will be restored to a width and condition that will meet the needs of an increasing number of visitors. The land around the trails will be rehabilitated to near natural state and resemble the condition that has drawn visitors to this area for many years.

### How can park visitors help restore and protect the park?

Trail users can help restore and protect Thetis Lake's natural values by staying on the main trails. It is also important to keep pets on the trail and pick up their droppings. This will greatly help to minimize trail braiding, compaction of the soil around tree roots and destruction of sensitive habitat.