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**REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2020**

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**SUBJECT**     **Management Plans for East Sooke and Roche Cove/Matheson Lake Regional Parks**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To initiate management planning processes for East Sooke Regional Park and for Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional parks.

**BACKGROUND**

East Sooke Regional Park (East Sooke) is located in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area in East Sooke (Appendix A). The park was established in 1970 and is 1,456.6 hectares in size. East Sooke is classified as a Regional Wilderness Area because of its large size and remote and rugged nature. It features 48.9 kilometres of trails through forest, marsh and old fields, including the challenging 10-kilometre coast trail with its outstanding views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Olympic Mountains. In addition to a developed trail system, the park features other facilities, including parking lots, rest areas, a group shelter and information kiosks.

Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional parks are located in East Sooke within the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, District of Sooke and District of Metchosin, and are adjacent to Sooke Basin and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (Appendix A). Roche Cove Regional Park was originally acquired by Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks in 1985 and additional lands were acquired through a Crown Grant in 1990 and through private purchase in 1994. Adjacent Matheson Lake Regional Park was transferred from BC Parks to the CRD in 1994. Combined, Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional parks comprise approximately 320 hectares. These parks are classified as Regional Natural Areas and feature opportunities for hiking, equestrian, fishing and nature appreciation.

Through management planning, the goals, objectives and policies of the park are set to guide ongoing development and management actions. Even though East Sooke, Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional parks have been open to the public for 30 to 50 years, they do not have management plans in place. Park management plans are needed now to guide decision-making over the next 15 to 20 years to safeguard critical environmental, cultural heritage and recreational values. Management planning processes are also designed to engage First Nations and include public outreach and consultation.

At the May 27, 2020 CRD Board meeting, the Board approved initiating East Sooke, Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional park management planning processes. Roche Cove and Matheson Lake will be under one management planning process due to the close proximity of these parks to each other. The proposed project scope is included in Appendix B and the engagement process outline is included in Appendix C.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Environmental & Climate Implications*

East Sooke is classified as a Regional Wilderness Area in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021. The park includes a variety of ecosystems and species, some of which are federally or provincially listed. The park provides critical habitat for species as diverse as seaside bone lichen, black knotweed, coast microseris, Macoun's meadow-foam, sharp-tailed snake, warty jumping-slug, little brown bat and northern myotis bat. Old fields provide habitat for resident and migratory birds, while forests shelter a diversity of species. The park includes several watersheds which play an important role in water storage, infiltration and nutrient cycling. Major creeks include Pike Creek, Barnes Creek and Vera Brook. A management plan will provide direction for the on-going protection of these important values.

Roche Cove and Matheson Lake are classified as Regional Natural Areas in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021. These parks are predominantly within the Wildwood Creek watershed and have known ecological values, including wetland and riparian habitat. The parks provide critical habitat for western painted turtle, blue-grey tail dropper slugs, sharp-tailed snake, threaded vertigo, and salmonid species, among others. The management planning process will consider how best to protect environmental values and mitigate climate change implications, while providing compatible recreational opportunities.

### *Intergovernmental Implications*

East Sooke, Roche Cove and Matheson Lake are within the traditional territories of Sc'ianew First Nation and the T'Sou-ke Nation. These Nations will be invited to participate in the planning process to address their interests in the parks. Local, regional, provincial and federal agencies will be invited to participate in the planning process where they have legal, jurisdictional or other interests relevant to the management planning process.

### *Social Implications*

There were approximately 205,000 visits to East Sooke in 2018, making it one of the most highly visited parks in the regional parks system. Visitors to East Sooke engage in a range of activities, including walking, hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, beach activities, picnicking and organized group events. At Roche Cove and Matheson Lake, visitors engage in similar recreational activities as well as equestrian, swimming, fishing and boating. Park management plans provide for stakeholder and public involvement during their development, and seek to ensure that the parks are managed in an environmentally responsible manner while providing sustainable recreational experiences.

### *Financial Implications*

Costs associated with this project will be funded by the Regional Parks core budget.

### *Service Delivery Implications*

Development and implementation of park management plans are a key aspect of the regional parks service.

*Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

The 2019-2022 Corporate Plan notes community needs relating to environmental stewardship, protecting natural resources, and reconciling First Nations interests with respect to Park Management Plans. The management planning process includes opportunities to work together with the Sc'ianew and T'Sou-ke First Nations and will outline goals and actions for environmental stewardship and protection of environmental values in the parks.

*Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 includes a strategic priority to strengthen the management of existing parks and trails, and strengthen community involvement and partnerships. The strategic plan includes an action to complete or update park and trail management plans for priority parks and trails. The management planning process as presented is consistent with this direction and will include opportunities for stakeholders, government and public involvement.

**CONCLUSION**

At the May 27, 2020 CRD Board meeting, the Board approved initiating East Sooke, Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional park management planning processes this year. Accordingly, a management planning process will be initiated for East Sooke and another for Roche Cove and Matheson Lake with opportunities for First Nations, local, regional, provincial and federal agency involvement, as per the attached project scopes and engagement processes. The completed plans will provide strategic direction for the effective management of these parks for the next 15 to 20 years by addressing environmental protection, recreational opportunities, cultural heritage management and park development.

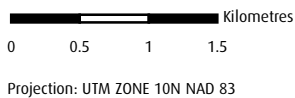
**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Capital Regional District Board receive this report 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: Location Map
- Appendix B: Project Scope
- Appendix C: Engagement Process



- Roche Cove & Matheson Lake Regional Parks
- East Sooke Regional Park
- Galloping Goose Regional Trail
- Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary

- First Nation Reserve
- DND Land
- Other Park
- Lake / Ocean

- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Creek / Brook

**Important** This map is for general information purposes only. The Capital Regional District (CRD) makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of this map or the suitability of the map for any purpose. **This map is not for navigation.** The CRD **will not be liable** for any damage, loss or injury resulting from the use of the map or information on the map and the map may be changed by the CRD at any time.

**Appendix A**  
**Location Map**  
 Capital Regional District Board  
 Staff Report  
 June 24, 2020

## EAST SOOKE AND ROCHE COVE/MATHESON LAKE REGIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

### PROJECT SCOPE

June 2020

#### **PROJECT SCOPE**

Multi-disciplinary internal project teams will assist in the development of the management plans for East Sooke Regional Park and for Roche Cove and Matheson Lake regional parks to ensure issues related to planning, public engagement, conservation, recreation, visitor services, park operations and park development are adequately considered. The planning processes will include opportunities for broad engagement before a management plan is drafted and again once a draft management plan is available. All comments received will be considered as the management plans are developed and public participation reports will be provided to the Regional Parks Committee for information following each round of engagement.

The Sc'ianew First Nation and the T'Sou-ke Nation will be invited to participate in the planning processes. Key federal, provincial, regional and local governments will be invited to participate directly, based on location of the parks and properties owned/managed by the various jurisdictions.

Opportunities will be provided for input from key stakeholders, such as park users, interest groups, neighbours, former landowners, and the public.

In the immediate term (2020), given the COVID-19 situation, the majority of the promotion and engagement will be done through non-personal methods, including in-park signage, phone calls, email, and various digital and online opportunities. If it becomes feasible and is appropriate, in-person engagement strategies may be incorporated into the overall engagement process.

A project webpage will be established on the CRD website to provide information about these management planning processes and to provide an opportunity for the public to offer information and input. Other digital tools will also be used based on project needs.

The project aims for the following general timeline breakdown:

Board initiates project	summer 2020
Initial public engagement process	fall 2020
Initial public engagement report	winter 2021
Draft plan developed	spring 2021
Public engagement on draft plan	summer - fall 2021
Finalize plan for Board approval	winter 2021 - spring 2022

#### **PLANNING PROCESS – GENERAL TASKS**

1. Gather background information and conduct site visits.
2. Develop public awareness information (e.g., webpage, on-site signs, input surveys).
3. Liaise with First Nations.

4. Liaise with key stakeholders and governments and provide opportunities for initial public input via the email, website, and/or other digital means.
5. Assess initial input received.
6. Develop draft plan.
7. Prepare for and hold public engagement on draft plan.
8. Analyze comments received.
9. Finalize management plan.
10. Provide recommended plan for Regional Park Committee endorsement and CRD Board approval.

### **PLAN OUTLINE**

At a minimum, the management plans will include strategic direction (park vision, goals, and management statements relating to environmental conservation, cultural heritage protection, visitor opportunities, and park development), park zoning consistent with the park's classification, key management actions, and a general implementation strategy.

**EAST SOOKE AND ROCHE COVE/MATHESON LAKE REGIONAL PARK  
MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**OUTLINE OF ENGAGEMENT PROCESS  
June 2020**

<b>Announce Project</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce the project publicly through social media and media release following CRD Board approval to initiate</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020
<b>Prepare for Engagement</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create/post project webpage</li> <li>• Create/post public awareness information (e.g., in-park signs)</li> <li>• Develop necessary digital tools (e.g., webinar, online displays)</li> <li>• Create initial input surveys</li> <li>• Reach out to First Nations to determine how they wish to engage in the process</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020
<b>Initial Engagement</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with First Nations</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify/engage with local, regional, provincial and federal agencies and key stakeholders</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post online information and input survey for initial public engagement</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze comments received</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on initial public engagement</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021
<b>Draft the Management Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Management Plans</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarters 2021
<b>Prepare for Engagement on Draft Management Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop necessary digital tools for engagement (e.g., webinars, online displays)</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create input survey for draft plan</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update public information (e.g., webpage, in-park signs)</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRD Board approval to release the Draft Management Plans for public review</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute media release re: draft plan release/comment period</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021
<b>Engagement on Draft Management Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer draft plan to First Nations and seek engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarters 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer draft plan to key government agencies and stakeholders and seek or identify engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarters 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host public engagement (digitally and/or in person)</li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarters 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze input received</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on public engagement</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2022
<b>Finalize Management Plans</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize recommended management plan</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2022
<b>Endorsement &amp; Approval of Management Plans</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update project webpage to include notice of Regional Parks Committee meeting date and potential CRD Board meeting date</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Parks Committee meeting</li> </ul>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRD Board meeting</li> </ul>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2022