



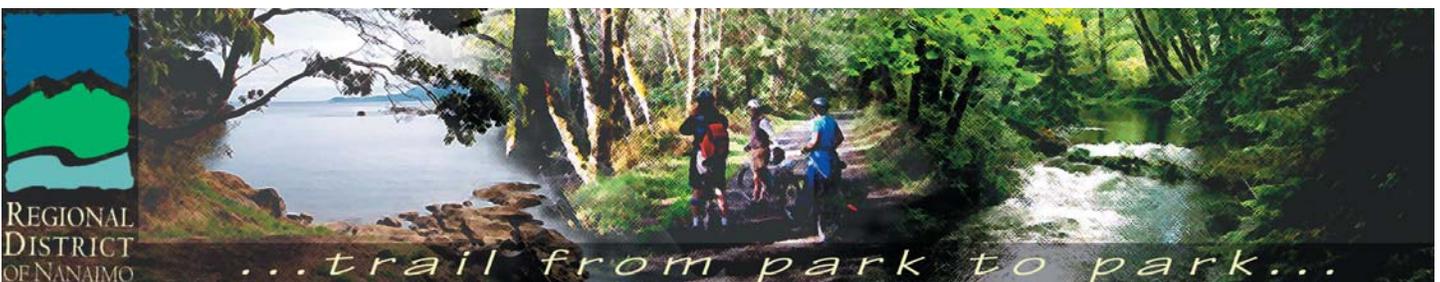
Regional District of Nanaimo



# REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS PLAN 2005 - 2015



March 2005



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

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- C. Stakeholder Meetings
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1. RDN Regional Parks and Trails System – Concept (3 sections)
2. Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (3 sections)



## Executive Summary

In the Regional District of Nanaimo, the regional parks and trails system plays an important role in protecting the rich diversity of natural and cultural landscapes and providing outdoor recreational experiences, thereby enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents of the Region.

Building from the previous 1995 Regional Parks System Plan, the purpose of this Regional Parks and Trails Plan is to define the future direction, policies, priorities and actions for the Regional District over the next 10 years (2005-2015).

In this Plan, the “regional” parks and trails system refers to those parks and trails that are secured and administered by the Regional District of Nanaimo (the RDN); it does not include parks, trails and protected areas managed by municipal, provincial and national governments in the Region. Furthermore, this Plan addresses the RDN’s regional park and trail function, which is distinct from the community park functions that the RDN supports in each of the Electoral Areas.

At the same time, regional parks and trails should not be managed in isolation of these other park, trail and protected area systems. This Plan tries to move towards greater harmonization of environmental and recreational goals among all the levels of parks and protected areas.

### The Plan Review Process

The review and revision of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan was conducted in four phases: 1. Analysis of the Current System; 2. Outreach – Gauging the Demand; 3. Plan Development & Review; and 4. Finalizing the Plan.

The review process included four key consultative components: the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee; five public meetings and presentations; consultation through letters, emails, and meetings with a variety of stakeholders; and a public questionnaire. The public questionnaire gathered information about use of the regional parks and trails and asked for opinions on future acquisition and management priorities. Highlights of the 145 responses received are presented in Attachment 1, and the complete survey summary is provided in Appendix A.

### The Current Regional Parks and Trails System

The Regional Parks and Trails system has grown from two small parks in 1995 to eight regional parks totaling almost 450 hectares and over 60 km of regional trail (Box 1; also see Map 1 “Regional Parks and Trails System”).

Each electoral area except Area C has a regional park, and regional trail

**Box 1** (electoral area location noted in brackets)

<i>Existing Regional Parks</i>	<i>Existing Regional Trails</i>
Beachcomber Regional Park (E)	Arrowsmith Historic Trail (C,F)
Benson Creek Falls Regional Park (D)	Big Qualicum River Trail (H)
Descanso Bay Regional Park (B)	Lighthouse Country Trail (H)
Englishman River Regional Park (G)	Morden Colliery Trail (A)
Horne Lake Regional Park (H)	Parksville-Qualicum Link (G)
Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area (G)	Top Bridge Trail (G)
Little Qualicum River Reg'l Park (F)	Trans Canada Trail (C)
Nanaimo River Regional Park (A)	

development has occurred in five of the eight electoral areas. Significant bridge projects to link sections of trail have also been undertaken over the last several years.

### Vision and Goals

Building from the previous Regional Parks and Trails Plans and public input, the **vision** for the RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails for the next 10 years is a system that:

- *Secures, protects and stewards lands and water features of environmental significance and wildlife habitat value;*
- *Provides rewarding outdoor recreational opportunities;*
- *Fosters education and appreciation of the Region’s natural environment; and*
- *Enhances livability for the current and future residents of the RDN.*

The **goals** of the RDN are to secure for all time a system of regional parks and trails that:

- Represents key landscapes and ecosystems of the Region;
- Encompasses unique natural, historic, cultural and archaeological features;
- Assists in protecting watersheds and important habitats as part of the RDN’s broader land use planning mandate;
- Promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of regional parks and trails in a manner that assures their qualities are unimpaired for generations to come;
- Provides education and interpretation of the Region’s natural features;
- Links components within the system as well as with other parks and trails in the Region and adjacent Regional Districts;
- Provides opportunities to all RDN residents to access and enjoy regional parks and trails; and
- Assists the economy of the Regional District by attracting tourists and generating revenue, as appropriate, to support the parks and trails system.

### Management and Acquisition Priorities

The Plan (Chapters 7 and 8) addresses management priorities for existing regional parks and trails over the next 10 years. It also identifies nine sites as priorities for future Park acquisition as well as several priorities for future Trail establishment and development (Box 2). It also identifies priorities for new bridges and needs for refits or replacement of existing bridges in the trails system.

**Box 2** (electoral area location noted in brackets)

<b>Priorities for Future Park Acquisition</b>	<b>Priorities for Future Trail Establishment</b>
French Creek corridor (G)	E&N Right of Way (all but B)
Gainsburg Swamp (H)	Descanso to Drumbeg (B)
Hamilton Marsh (F/G)	Heritage trail system (all)
Horne Lake Reg’l Park addition (H)	Horne Lake historic (H)
Little Mountain/ Morison Creek (F)	Lantzville Foothills (D,E)
Mt. Arrowsmith Massif (C)	Qualicum Beach to Bowser (G, H)
Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges (C)	Variety of other trail linkages
Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp (A)	<b>New Bridges:</b>
The Notch (E)	Top Bridge – Top Bridge Trail
	Nanaimo River – Trans Canada Trail
	Benson Creek – Benson Creek Falls RP
	Nile Creek – Lighthouse Country Trail
	Nanaimo River – Morden Colliery Trail

## Roles, Relationships and Partnerships

The Plan (chapter 9) recognizes a variety of participants in developing and managing the regional parks and trails system, and presents policies for fostering these relationships and expanding opportunities for partnerships (Summary Table 1 attached).

## Stewarding Regional Parks and Trails

The Plan (chapter 10) presents a series of stewardship policies to ensure that acceptable standards of environmental protection, risk management, operation and maintenance are applied to enhance the character, quality and safety of regional parks and trails (Summary Table 2 attached).

## Service Levels

Figure 1 shows proposed changes in staffing in the Recreation and Parks Department to address the growth in both regional and community parks/trails functions over the next 10 years:

- Starting in 2005, two summer students will be hired to assist staff in organizing and operating programs in both regional and community parks and trails.

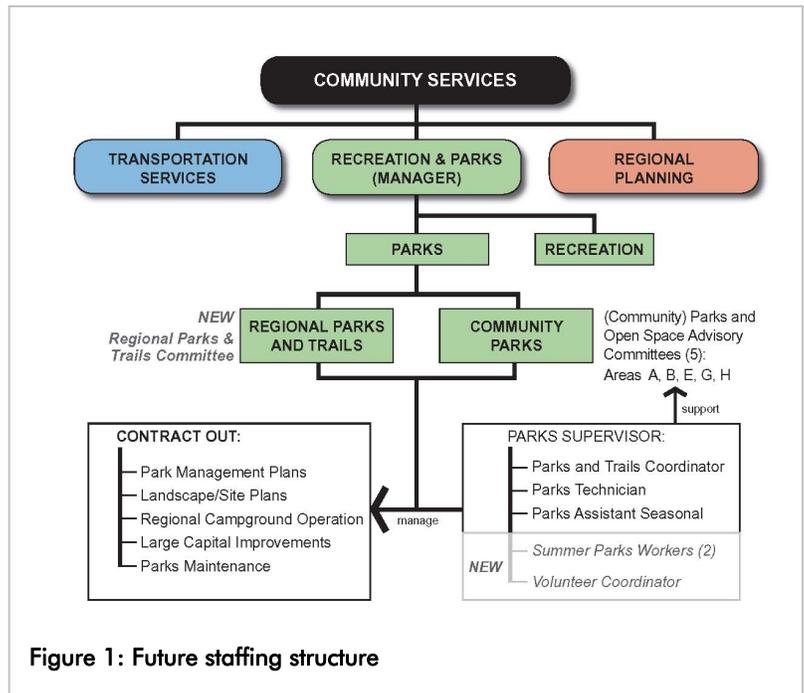


Figure 1: Future staffing structure

- A new staff “field” position will be created for coordinating and supporting volunteer programs in both regional and community functions.
- A Regional Parks and Trails Committee is proposed, to act as an advisory body and advocate for the regional park and trail system. In preparation, staff will generate and present options to the Regional District Board regarding the structure, membership and mandate of this Committee.

## Funding

To date, regional park acquisition and major capital items have been funded entirely by the eight electoral areas. Operational costs are shared by the electoral areas and the four municipalities under the Regional Parks Service Agreement.

Given the public priority on acquisition evidenced through the public questionnaire and meetings, the RDN needs to reconsider its budget allocations and funding sources for acquisition. There are several acquisition funding options that will be pursued over the next 10 years (Box 3).

**Box 3: Acquisition Funding Options**

OPTION	APPROACH
Municipal Involvement	The RDN will examine the range of options for involving the four municipal governments in contributing to land acquisitions for parks. In collaboration with the four municipal governments, the RDN will seek partnership arrangements that serve both municipal and regional interests in acquiring future regional parks.
Development Cost Charges	The RDN will examine the potential for instituting DCCs for future regional park and trail acquisition.
Donations	<p>The RDN will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote the fact that tax receipts can be issued for monetary donations towards regional parks and trails.</li> <li>• continue to work with volunteers and community groups to promote donations to fund specific projects, such as bridge construction, in the regional parks and trails system.</li> <li>• examine the creation of a Regional Parks and Trails Endowment Fund that would accept donations towards development, operation and maintenance of the system.</li> <li>• explore the establishment of a Commemorative Giving Program to support specific infrastructure and facilities in regional parks and trails.</li> </ul>
Acquisition Fund	The RDN will explore the potential for establishing a Regional Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund similar to the Acquisition Fund established by the Capital Regional District.

In terms of operational funding, the RDN will commit additional funds to support additional summer workers starting in 2005 and a future Volunteer/Field Coordinator.

**Implementation**

Chapter 12 summarizes implementation of the management priorities for existing and acquisition priorities for future parks and trails, as well as other key action items, on the basis of short, medium and long-term timeframes.

**Summary Table 1: Policies for Partnerships in the Regional Parks and Trails System**

PARTNER	POLICY
<p><b>Provincial Government</b></p>	<p><b>Crown Lands:</b> The RDN will work with Land and Water BC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize a comprehensive and accurate inventory of Crown lands within the Regional District.</li> <li>• Look at all Crown lands collectively to identify the RDN’s interests in these lands for park and trail purposes, and to determine the best methods for meeting those purposes, be that through long-term tenure, Crown Grant, access agreements, acquisition through future development, or purchase.</li> </ul> <p>The RDN will also consult with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management when identifying Crown land for future regional park acquisition to ensure that there is no conflict with existing provincial land use plans.</p> <p><b>Provincial Parks:</b> Whenever a regional trail is proposed that would provide access to a provincial park, the RDN will work with Parks staff within the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the most appropriate site for accessing the park.</li> <li>• Determine the nature of the interface with the park – e.g., whether cyclists and/or horse riders can continue onward within the park or would have to stop and access the park on foot.</li> <li>• If need be, divert the main regional trail around the park, with access to park trails provided for limited uses.</li> </ul> <p>The RDN will also explore co-management arrangements with provincial Parks staff that make most effective use of limited resources, where future regional and provincial parks may be adjacent.</p> <p><b>Ecological Reserves:</b> The RDN will avoid routing trails to or through Ecological Reserves in future trail planning, to help to protect their sensitive ecological features and habitats.</p> <p><b>Old Growth Management Areas:</b> The RDN will work with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out where OGMA’s are being considered or designated.</li> <li>• Collaborate in planning and developing regional parks and trails to take advantage of OGMA’s where it is beneficial to the goals of this Plan and the OGMA program.</li> </ul> <p><b>Highways/Rights-of-way:</b> The RDN will continue to work in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation in planning and developing regional trails within provincial road rights of way. The RDN will also continue to negotiate with MOT to acquire the Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp property.</p>
<p><b>Federal Government</b></p>	<p><b>Fisheries and Oceans:</b> The RDN will work with DFO to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan, develop and manage the Big Qualicum River Trail in a manner that is compatible with DFO’s activities along the River.</li> <li>• Acquire the property at the entrance to Horne Lake Regional Park.</li> </ul> <p><b>National Defence:</b> The RDN will work with DND to define a satisfactory access agreement for use of a trail to Wallis Point. The RDN will also continue to partner with DND in park and trail projects.</p>
<p><b>First Nations</b></p>	<p>The RDN recognizes that future parks and trails proposed in this Plan may be subject to land claim negotiations between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.</p> <p>The RDN is committed to working with the three First Nations in the Regional District to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and encourage an understanding of First Nations issues and culture through appropriate interpretation (e.g., signage and programs) within the Regional Parks and Trails system;</li> <li>• Find common goals in securing lands for regional parks and trails where the interests of the First Nations and the RDN coincide.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed trails that may affect First Nations Reserve lands are subject to the willing agreement and partnership of the related First Nation.</p>

Summary Table 1: Policies for Partnerships in the Regional Parks and Trails System  
(CONTINUED)

PARTNER	POLICY
<b>Municipalities</b>	<p>RDN Parks staff is committed to working with their municipal counterparts in ensuring continuity between the regional trail system and municipal trail networks.</p> <p>The RDN will seek partnerships with the four municipal governments in contributing to acquisitions for regional park lands.</p> <p>As part of partnerships with municipalities in future park acquisition, the RDN will be open to shared park development and management where the municipality expresses a desire and ability to do so.</p>
<b>Neighbouring Regional Districts</b>	<p>The RDN is committed to working with its neighbouring Regional Districts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide continuity among their respective parks and trails systems; and</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for co-management of contiguous regional parks and trails.</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Companies</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to work cooperatively with forest companies in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the development and renewal of access agreements for regional trails across forest lands.</li> <li>• By providing information to the public about the nature of these agreements, the fact that the areas that the trails access are managed for forestry, and that the surrounding landscape and the route itself may change as a consequence.</li> <li>• By working with the forest companies to find routes that are accessible and minimize impacts on both forest practices and trail use; and</li> <li>• By endeavouring to meet with staff from the forest companies on an annual basis to review logging plans and coordinate the above activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Landowners</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to work cooperatively with private landowners along and adjacent to regional parks and trails.</p>
<b>Woodlot Operators</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to develop working relationships with owners and operators of woodlots adjacent to regional parks and trails.</p>
<b>Conservation Organizations</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to create and foster partnerships with conservation organizations in meeting the goals of the Regional Parks and Trails system and regional conservation.</p>
<b>Community Organizations &amp; User Groups</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to work with its existing community and user group partners in the planning and management of regional parks and trails. We will also endeavor to expand these partnerships to a wider range of organizations to meet the objectives of this Plan.</p> <p>The RDN will work over the next few years with the Alpine Club of Canada and Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, and in collaboration with the Alberni-Clayquot Regional District and the Province, to establish a park on the Mt. Arrowsmith massif.</p>
<b>Volunteers</b>	<p>The RDN will create a new Parks staff position that focuses on “field” projects and the coordination of volunteer programs throughout both regional and community parks and trails systems.</p>
<b>Corporate Supporters</b>	<p>The RDN will continue to work with its existing corporate supporters, and seek new ones to further support capital projects, acquisitions and facility development in the regional parks and trails system.</p>
<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<p>The RDN will endeavor to develop relationships with School District 68 and 69 and Malaspina University-College in working towards common priorities in outdoor recreation and education programs.</p> <p>The RDN will explore the interest of Malaspina University-College in supporting the regional trail system through their woodlot.</p>

Summary Table 2: Regional Park and Trail Stewardship Policies

TOPIC	POLICY
<b>Regional Park and Trail Management Plans</b>	<p>A Regional Park or Trail Management Plan will be approved and adopted by the Regional Board for each regional park/trail. A Management Plan will be completed before any significant development of new or upgraded facilities and services occurs.</p> <p>Development of Management Plans will include public involvement in accordance with the RDN's "Coordinated Public Consultation/Communication Framework".</p> <p>Regional Park and Trail Management Plans will be reviewed and revised as needed to accommodate new information, opportunities and change in direction.</p>
<b>Park Zoning</b>	<p>Regional Park Management Plans will employ park use zones to define areas having different levels of protection and public use, to protect the ecological integrity and special environmental and cultural features of a park, and to reduce conflicts between protection and public use.</p>
<b>Environmental Protection</b>	<p>The RDN will apply the "Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC" (MWLAP, 2004), as it is updated from time to time, in planning facilities and managing operations in regional parks and trails.</p> <p>The RDN will also continue to work with its environmental and conservation partners in complementing the RDN's operational and management functions with the science- and conservation-based expertise of these organizations.</p>
<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>The RDN will design and maintain park facilities and improvements to optimize public safety, reduce exposure to liability, and enhance the public's recognition of natural hazards. This will be carried out with sensitivity to the natural character and quality of experience within the park and trail environment.</p> <p>The RDN will also employ the measures set forth in its Park Inspection Policy to implement risk management in its regional parks and trails.</p> <p><b>Emergency Planning:</b> The RDN will incorporate an Emergency Plan in Regional Park and Regional Trail Management Plans.</p> <p><b>Hazard Trees:</b> The RDN will establish guidelines for management of hazard/wildlife trees in regional parks and trails.</p> <p><b>Park Reserves:</b> Park land that is acquired with few or no improvements will be held in reserve until a management plan is prepared and adopted for the site. In public plans and information, the RDN will be clear about which regional park properties are being held in reserve until such time as the resources are available to develop a management plan and build the facilities needed to ensure public safety and environmental protection.</p>
<b>Interface Fires</b>	<p>The RDN will undertake Interface Fire Risk Assessments as part of the emergency planning component of Regional Park Management Plans where needed, to determine a cost effective program for maintenance and risk assessment in the particular regional park.</p>
<b>Regulation</b>	<p>The RDN will regulate inappropriate behavior and damaging activities through the Park Use Bylaw No. 1399. The Bylaw will be implemented in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RDN and its park operators will promote understanding and respect of the regulations as a priority over strict enforcement.</li> <li>• The RDN will attempt to establish good neighbourly relationships with residents adjacent to parks and trails in order to encourage monitoring assistance.</li> <li>• The RDN will develop volunteer steward programs that assist in promoting awareness and monitoring activities in parks and trails.</li> </ul>
<b>User Fees</b>	<p>The RDN will not charge fees for entry, parking or general use of regional parks and trails. Fees will be considered for specific services on an at-cost operational basis and or to assist in offsetting associated capital costs for park and trail infrastructure.</p>
<b>Facilities and Improvements</b>	<p>The RDN will accommodate only those improvements required to support appropriate activities within regional parks and trails. The choice of such improvements will be determined by the park/trail classification and the specific regional park or trail management plan.</p> <p><b>Standards:</b> The RDN will compile a design standards document that addresses typical improvements in both regional and community parks and trails. All improvements will require the preparation of design details, whether provided by staff, a contractor or volunteers.</p>

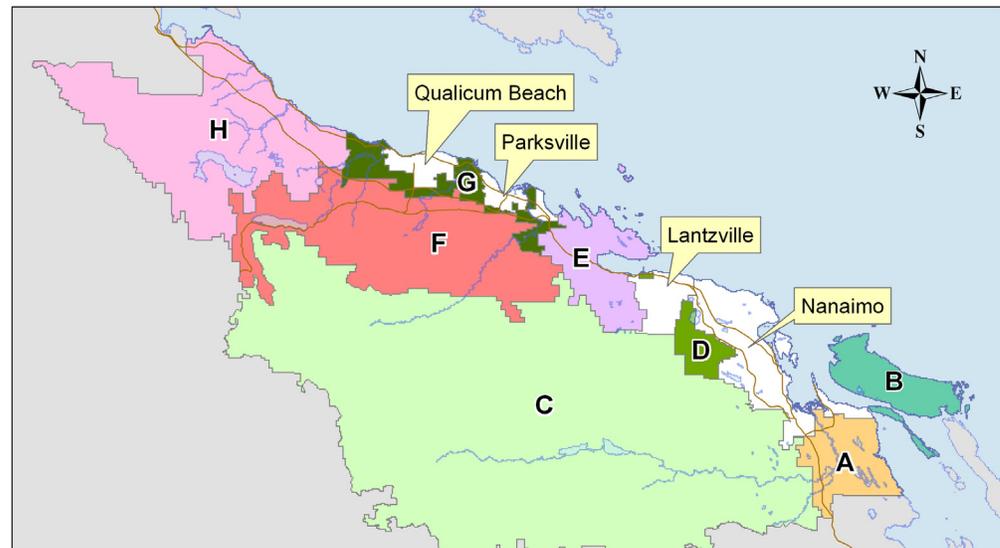
Summary Table 2: Regional Park and Trail Stewardship Policies (CONTINUED)

TOPIC	POLICY
<b>Facilities and Improvements</b> (continued)	<b>'Low-maintenance' Design and Development:</b> The RDN will develop park services and facilities with low maintenance objectives in mind. Park facilities will be designed to reduce the requirement for ongoing maintenance. The RDN will also adopt a "strategic" approach to the development of improvement.
<b>Barrier-free Access</b>	The RDN will attempt to provide barrier-free access within regional parks and trails in high areas and areas close to communities, recognizing the limitations of topography, environmental/cultural/historic sensitivity, and cost.
<b>Signs</b>	The RDN will prioritize sign construction and installation based on type, location, use and need for upgrading.  The RDN will also explore ways of utilizing willing and able volunteers in the design and construction of directional and interpretive signs in regional parks and trails.  The RDN will review its existing Sign Policy to allow it to design and construct signs in regional parks and trails that respond to the above priorities.
<b>Visitor and Group Use</b>	In keeping with the Park Use Regulation Bylaw, the RDN may allow for the use of a park or trail by an organization or non-profit group for a special event provided that the use is compatible with the purpose and management of the particular site, and the group accepts full responsibility for maintaining and restoring the existing conditions of the site during and after the event.
<b>Commercial Services</b>	In accordance with the requirements of the Park Use Regulation Bylaw, the RDN will allow commercial services that are program-oriented, personal services, such as guided programs or outdoor recreation activity training, and that meet conditions set forth in the Plan.
<b>Information and Promotion</b>	The RDN will allocate resources to improve the information about the regional park and trail system. These resources will focus on improved signage and better maps and accompanying descriptive information provided in brochure format and on-line. To help it determine the most cost-effective use of budget and staff resources, the RDN will develop an information and promotion strategic plan.
<b>Education</b>	The RDN will promote the use of regional parks and trails as educational venues by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the use of parks and development of curriculum-based programs with School Districts 68 and 69 and Malaspina University-College.</li> <li>• Encouraging proposals from eco-education/tourism operators for programs in parks.</li> <li>• Working with community groups in developing interpretive trails and tours.</li> <li>• Working with the forest companies in developing forestry interpretation signs along trails through their lands.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer Recognition</b>	The RDN will allocate appropriate resources to recognize volunteer efforts in regional parks and trails through such methods as a Volunteer Awards program and events that celebrate volunteer input and provide opportunities for communications among volunteer organizations.
<b>Pets in Parks</b>	The RDN will assess the need for a "pets in parks" policy in the regional parks and trails system, if and where conflicts over the presence of pets arise. Such a policy would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on current or potential problem areas based on levels of visitor use, reported complaints or input sought from the public.</li> <li>• Would be developed in consultation with park and trail users – both pet owners and otherwise.</li> <li>• Promote education and a 'Code of Conduct'.</li> <li>• Support the delivery of events in communities that focus on responsible dog ownership and activities for owners and their pets.</li> <li>• Include staff training on strategies to deal with difficult circumstances.</li> <li>• Consider designated off-leash parks, trails or areas within them, and the information and facilities that should be provided.</li> <li>• Provide for effective enforcement measures (fines, legal action, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Park Names</b>	The RDN will consider revising its Parks Naming Policy to address existing or future overlap with the names of provincial parks or other protected sites and areas.

# 1. Introduction

The Regional District of Nanaimo is an area rich in environmental diversity and natural and cultural landscapes. The regional parks and trails system plays an important role in protecting these features, thereby enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents of the Region.

**Figure 1-1: Regional District of Nanaimo municipalities (white) and electoral areas (shaded)**



## 1.1 What are “Regional” Parks and Trails

In this Plan, the “regional” parks and trails system refers to the parks and trails that are secured and administered by the Regional District of Nanaimo (the RDN). In B.C., regional districts have been involved in regional parks services since the 1960s. Regional parks have evolved to provide larger areas than can be provided by individual municipalities, particularly outside municipal boundaries.

As such, regional parks tend to be larger parcels of land outside urban cores, with limited facilities and an emphasis on environmental protection and/or outdoor recreation in natural settings. Regional trails extend beyond municipal boundaries, linking communities to parks and to other communities.

Regional parks and trails do not exist in isolation, but are intended to coordinate with and complement parks and protected areas at all levels - community, municipal, provincial and national - throughout the Region. The RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails system is only 15 years old, and linkages to other park and trail systems in the Region may not yet be apparent. However, as the system grows, the hope is that a more ‘holistic’ approach to park and trail planning and development – and greater harmonization of environmental and recreational goals among all the levels of parks and protected areas – will evolve.

## 1.2 The Purpose of this Plan

Building from the previous 1995 Parks System Plan, the purpose of this Regional Parks and Trails System Plan is **to define the future direction, policies, priorities and actions for Regional Parks and Trails in the Regional District over the next 10 years (2005-2015).**

This Plan is developed to support the RDN's regional park and trail mandate and functions. This is separate and distinct from the community park functions in each of the Electoral Areas, several of which are assisted by parks and open space advisory committees. In addition, the four municipalities in the RDN plan and operate their own parks systems, and these areas are not part of this planning process.

Given a range of needs and limited resources, the RDN takes an innovative and pro-active approach, using a variety of methods to manage, improve and expand the regional parks and trails system. As such, this Plan is vital to supporting the following roles of the RDN Recreation and Parks Department:

- **Recognizing sites** and routes that are significant to the regional parks and trails mandate but that are not protected or managed as such. An active inventory of these lands will be maintained.
- **Advocating action** by other agencies and organizations to secure and manage open space and park resources within the Region. With less than 1.5% of the Region protected in parks of all types, all agencies need to participate.
- **Establishing partnerships** in which the RDN works in cooperation with other agencies and organizations to plan, secure, develop and/or maintain park and open spaces.
- **Using various means** to secure parks and trails, from outright purchase to leases and covenants.

Ultimately, this Plan is a guiding document for the next 10 years of regional parks and trails management. It is intended to be responsive to priorities and opportunities as they arise, and it requires the commitment of the RDN, its staff and residents to make it a living document for the next decade.

## 1.3 Plan Structure

This Plan has three main parts:

- **Introduction** – This includes this chapter and chapter 2 that describes the methodology used to review and update the Plan.
- **The Current Situation** – Chapters 3 to 5 describe the context for regional parks and trails in the RDN, who is responsible for administering and funding regional parks and trails, and the system of parks and trails as it stands today.
- **The Next 10 Years** – Chapters 6 to 11 present the Vision, Goals, priorities, relationships, stewardship policies, service levels and funding to guide the regional parks and trails system from 2005 to 2015.





## 2. Methodology - the Plan Review Process

This chapter describes the methodology used to review and update the Regional Parks and Trails Plan.

### 2.1 Approach

The review and revision of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan was conducted in four phases:

1. Analysis of the Current System.
2. Outreach – Gauging the Demand.
3. Plan Development & Review.
4. Finalizing the Plan.

The following table summarizes the process followed under these phases.

	2004						2005			
	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Phase 1:</b>										
Start-up meeting	Jun 25									
Roles, Analysis										
SC* Meeting #1		July 5								
<b>Phase 2:</b>										
Public survey										
Public Meetings				Sep 27-30						
Interviews										
SC Meeting #2					Oct 13					
<b>Phase 3:</b>										
Prepare Draft Plan										
SC Meeting #3						Nov 17				
Public Meetings t							Dec 1-2			
SC Meeting #4 to review Draft							Dec 15			
<b>Phase 4:</b>										
Public review of Draft, gather comments										
SC Meeting #5									Feb 9	
Finalize Plan										
Present to RDN Comm of Whole										Mar 8
RDN Board Adoption										Mar 22

\*SC – Select Committee

## 2.2 Consultation

There were four key consultative components of the review process: the RDN Select Committee, public meetings and presentations, stakeholder contact, and a public questionnaire.

### 2.2.1 RDN Regional Parks Select Committee

The RDN Board established a Select Committee comprised of four Regional District Directors and three staff members (see sidebar) to guide the Plan review and development process. The Committee met formally five times to review strategies, results of key tasks and draft material. The Committee's input was invaluable to completing this Plan.

### 2.2.2 Public Meetings

A total of five public meetings were conducted in two rounds. Each meeting consisted of an open house with posters and members of the Select Committee, staff and consulting team available to discuss and answer questions, and a presentation by the consulting team. The meetings were conducted as follows:

- a) **September 27, 29 and 30, 2004:** Three meetings were held, one each at Lighthouse Community Centre (north), Oceanside Place (central) and Cedar Heritage Centre (south). The purpose was to inform the public about the regional parks and trails system, the Plan review purpose and process, of the Plan, the questionnaire, and to get initial input on priorities. About 30 people in total attended the meetings.
- b) **December 1 and 2, 2004:** Two meetings were held, one at Oceanside Place (north and central) and the other at Nanaimo Aquatic Centre (central and south). Their purpose was to present the results of the public questionnaire, and to discuss key elements of the draft Plan as it was being developed. Almost 70 people attended. Response forms were provided to solicit comments on the following key elements of the Plan:
  - Vision and Goals for the system;
  - Park and trail classifications;
  - Representation (and gap analysis) in the system;
  - Park acquisition priorities;
  - Park management and development priorities;
  - Trail management and development priorities;
  - Roles and responsibilities;
  - Funding; and
  - Naming regional parks.

Input at both sets of meetings was instrumental in defining and refining the key components and priorities for the next ten years. Those who attended the public meetings were generally supportive of the regional parks and trails system, but were dismayed at the small budget allocated to further regional park and trail acquisition. Many participants emphasized the urgency in acquiring lands for future parks before opportunities disappear. Given the perception that the Province is divesting Crown land at a rapid rate, several

#### Regional Parks & Trails Select Committee members:

Director L. McNabb, Chair

Director H. Kreiberg

Director J. Stanhope

Director D. Bartram

N. Connelly, General  
Manager Community  
Services

T. Osborne, Manager  
Recreation and Parks

J. Ainge, Parks Supervisor

participants encouraged the RDN to voice their concern, calling for a stop in the further sale of Crown lands.

### 2.2.3 Public Questionnaire

As a point of contact with the residents of the RDN, a questionnaire was circulated from August 15 to October 15 that asked about regional park and trail use and sought opinions about the current state and future priorities for the system.

The questionnaire was advertised via letters to stakeholders, press releases, and on the RDN's website. Copies were distributed at the RDN's offices, at the first set of public meetings in September, and as an online form on the RDN's website where residents could submit their responses directly. Access to the online questionnaire was included in notices and press releases.

In total, 145 responses were received, mostly online. Almost half of the respondents were residents of the Region's four municipalities, with the other half originating from the Electoral Areas and outside the RDN. The results of the Questionnaire are summarized in Attachment 1, and a full compilation of all the responses and comments is provided in Appendix A.

Several letters and email correspondence were also received from individuals in response to the questionnaire or information provided at the public meetings.

### 2.2.4 Stakeholder Consultation

The terms of reference also called for consultation with a variety of agencies and organizations. This occurred in the following ways:

- Representatives of 74 agencies, committees and organizations (Appendix B) were initially contacted by letter to inform them of the review, the questionnaire and upcoming public meetings in September.
- The consulting team met or spoke by telephone with 16 representatives from 10 agencies and organizations (Appendix C) to get their perspective on and any concerns regarding the regional park and trail system. A preliminary concept map of the future parks and trails system was instrumental in these discussions. Input from these meetings was a major source in defining roles, relationships and potential partnerships in this Plan.
- These agencies and organizations were also sent the draft Plan electronically for review and comment.

## 3. The Context for Regional Parks & Trails

This chapter discusses the backdrop for regional parks and trails in the Regional District of Nanaimo.

### 3.1 Regional Land Use Planning and Regulation

Regional parks and trails have a dual mandate – to represent and protect regionally significant areas and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

When it comes to environmental protection, parks – and less so trails – are only one method that the RDN employs. The RDN uses a range of land use planning and regulatory tools to achieve responsible land use and environmental protection on public and private lands:

- The **Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)** provides the broad regional vision, goals and policies for managing growth and development. (See below for more on the RGS.)
- **Official Community Plans (OCPs)** provide long term plans for specific areas, including goals and policies for environmental protection and community parks. Each of the four member municipalities has an OCP, and there are 10 Electoral Area OCPs (see the RDN website <http://www.rdn.bc.ca> for links).
- OCPs can designate **Development Permit Areas (DPAs)** for the purpose of protecting environmentally significant sites or types of areas. For instance, the majority of OCPs in the RDN establish DPAs along watercourses to protect their riparian areas.
- **Zoning Bylaws** can also be used to establish setbacks from environmentally sensitive features such as watercourses and nest trees. There are two zoning bylaws covering the Electoral Areas, and each of the four municipalities have their own zoning bylaw.
- As part of re-zoning, subdivision and development permit approvals, the RDN can place **restrictive covenants** on land parcels to protect environmental features.
- The RDN partners with conservation organizations and stewardship groups in acquiring non-RDN protected areas, negotiating **conservation covenants** (environmental agreements) with landowners, and providing public education on environmental issues and solutions.

Regional parks and trails need to be viewed in this larger land use management context. It is impossible for the RDN to protect every environmentally significant site, wildlife habitat or corridor in the Region within the regional park and trail system. Regional parks and trails can assist, but ultimately, ecologically-based land use planning and management are the primary methods for achieving these goals.



### 3.2 Regional Park Authority- the Local Government Act

In 1989, the RDN was given the authority to establish and operate regional parks as a regional service under Supplementary Letters Patent (Division CCVI) issued under the *Park (Regional) Act*. Then in 1996, the *Local Government Act* (LGA) allowed regional districts to convert its regional park service to one exercised under the authority of a bylaw (section 774.2 of the LGA). The RDN subsequently adopted the *Regional Parks and Trails Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 1231* in March 2001, which sets out the “Regional Parks Function” for the RDN.

With much of the authority for regional parks now included in the LGA, the *Park (Regional) Act* was repealed in 2003. The LGA now includes the following with respect to regional parks and trails:

- It eliminates the requirement for a regional park plan that is approved by the Province, allowing regional districts to acquire land for regional parks or trails without having such a plan.
- General powers regarding regulatory authority replaced conventional prescriptive powers under the former *Park (Regional) Act*.
- Regulatory bylaws respecting regional parks and trails no longer need to be approved by the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.
- Parks now need to be dedicated by bylaw adopted under section 30 of the LGA. Hence, the RDN must amend Bylaw No. 1231 each time it acquires and dedicates a new regional park.
- Local governments are now allowed to establish long-term (greater than five years) contracts and agreements for various services.
- Local governments now have the authority to make agreements regarding the provision and operation of activities, works and services. This provided the basis for the RDN to establish the Regional Parks Services Agreement with the Region’s member municipalities to contribute towards the operation and maintenance of regional parks.

### 3.3 Regional Growth and Development

The population in the Regional District has been growing by 3% on average since 1981. The Regional District’s population in 2001 (the last census) was 127,016 with 71% living in municipalities and 29% in electoral areas (these percentages will have changed with the incorporation of Lantzville in 2003).

According to the most recent estimates from BC Statistics<sup>1</sup>, the Regional District’s population is projected to increase to almost 160,000 by 2015 and 184,365 by 2025 - a 45% increase over the 2001 population.

This population growth will significantly increase the demand on parks and trails, compounded by the trend towards more and more outdoor leisure activities. Hence, it is essential to plan now for a regional parks and trails system that will meet the needs of present and future residents.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.htm>

A critical part of that process will be acquiring a land base of natural areas for regional parks and trails. Otherwise, many opportunities for adding important parcels to the parks and trails system will continue to be compromised or lost to development.

### 3.3.1 The Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional Parks and Trails System Plan is intended to be in accordance with the overarching policies of the RDN’s Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The RGS is a joint initiative of the RDN and the member municipalities to respond to concerns about burgeoning growth in the Region.

Regional parks and trails are one tool, among many, that support the Strategy’s goals regarding environmental protection, improved mobility, a sustainable economy and cooperation among jurisdictions.

Of particular relevance are:

- Policy 4A: to work with member municipalities and individually “to protect open space that reflects the region’s landscape character and ecological integrity, and forms a system of interconnected areas and natural corridors capable of sustaining native plant and animal communities”.
- Policy 5A: to work with member municipalities and individually “to increase the opportunities for more environmentally-friendly modes of transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, transit)”.
- Policy 8D: to consider partnerships and alliances with the supportive groups and organizations.
- Policy 8E: to coordinate the RDN’s planning with First Nations.

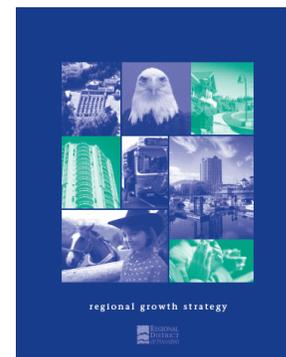
## 3.4 Park Land in the RDN

As noted in Chapter 1, the RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails system is just one part of the total parks and protected areas in the Regional District. Table 3-1 indicates where the Region stands when it comes to park lands; note, however, that statistics for municipal park systems may not be up to date.

Regional parks account for about 14.5% of all park land in the Regional District. Less than 1.5% of the Regional District is dedicated as parks of all types.

### 3.4.1 Role of Regional Parks and Trails

As can be seen, regional parks and trails are part of a larger network of parks, trails and protected areas whose components have some similar and some distinctive roles to play. Attachment 2 provides a summary of the different roles that are played by parks and trails at different levels of jurisdiction.



**Table 3-1: Park land in the RDN**

Jurisdiction	No.	Area (ha)
Provincial Parks	16	1449
RDN Regional Parks	8	430
RDN Community Parks	116	219.5
City of Nanaimo	234	589
City of Parksville	54	87
Town of Qualicum Beach	49	183
District of Lantzville	6	2.3
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>2959.8</b>
Total Area of RDN (approx)		207,000
<b>% of RDN in Park land</b>		<b>1.43</b>
Population (2001)		127,016
<b>Park land per capita</b>		<b>23 ha/1000</b>

Within that overall network of parks, *regional* parks and trails in the RDN:

- Protect regionally significant natural environments and landscapes.
- Are based on a natural area or feature – i.e., not a developed area or facility such as a ball field or swimming pool.
- Manage areas and their uses for ecological integrity as well as outdoor recreation, which means that there will be different levels of use and protection in different parks and trails.
- Provide opportunities for a range of outdoor experiences in a natural or semi-natural setting.
- Include a variety of types of trails, from wide, gentle multi-use trails to narrow, mountainous hiking trails, but are focused on non-motorized use.
- Link the region’s communities, parks (at all levels) and municipal trails to one another, and connect the RDN to neighboring region districts.
- Are aimed to meet the needs of RDN residents.
- Provide attractions for ecotourism.

### 3.4.2 Other Protected Areas

Dedicated park land, however, is not the only form of protected area, and the RDN is certainly not the only player in conserving natural areas. Other protected lands in the Regional District include:

- Provincial ecological reserves – there are three in the Regional District.
- The provincial Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area established in 1993 under the BC *Wildlife Act*, which encompasses 1024 ha of coastal foreshore, estuary and river habitat between Craig Bay and the Little Qualicum River.
- Privately held protected areas - e.g., South Winchelsea Island owned by the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC), and riparian sections of the Englishman River owned by the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC).
- The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve established in 2000 by UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program to recognize the area’s environmental value and unique mix of ecosystems. While Biosphere Reserves carry no legal status or management authority, they do impart international status that strengthens local efforts to achieve protection and sustainable land use.

### 3.5 Other Regional Issues

Population growth and burgeoning development are just some of the challenges faced by the regional parks and trails system. Following are some of the other issues that relate to the growth and development of regional parks and trails.

- **Funding:** Regional Parks are supported primarily through property taxes. Everywhere, local governments are faced with increased financial restraint and greater competition for public money.
- **Acquiring new park lands:** The challenges here are growing scarcity of available lands to acquire, and rapidly increasing property values.
- **Integration with land use planning:** Regional parks and trails need to be managed in the context of the rest of the landscape. They are influenced by, but also must influence, land use planning efforts. There are ten Official Community Plans covering the eight electoral areas, and each one contains policies and plans that relate directly to parks and trails – be they regional or community in function. It is vital that Parks staff work closely with the RDN’s Planning Department as well with land use and park planning by other levels of government is imperative.
- **Maintaining environmental integrity:** Ensuring ecological health is a significant challenge for a variety of reasons. Most parks are fragments of altered landscapes and do not protect complete ecosystems. Property lines rather than ecological considerations determine Park boundaries. Park and trail environments are impacted by their surrounding land uses, over which there is little control. And park and trail ecosystems are impacted by their users, including the introduction of non-native, invasive species.
- **Providing opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities:** The traditional activities of hiking, walking, swimming, cycling and nature study contribute to a healthy lifestyle and quality of life. However, demands are growing for new activities – mountain biking, roller blading, personal motorized and watercraft use, ‘eco-challenges’ and eco-tourism. This means a wider variety of management techniques – such as effective education and interpretation to foster more responsible attitudes towards ecosystem protection.
- **Declining access to Crown lands:** Provincial Crown land was traditionally considered to be either permanently in the public realm or relatively available for application for park use. Land and Water BC manages Crown land use and sales, and its current mandate is to make Crown land more accessible for economic development. This includes tenures but also sale of Crown lands “for the highest and best use”. This creates significant challenges to the Regional District to acquire either land grants or new long term leases to Crown land for park and trail purposes.
- **Declining access to wilderness areas:** The majority of lands in the Regional District are privately owned, with much of the undeveloped ‘wilderness’ area held by timber companies. The public has been fortunate to have informal or managed access to much of this wilderness area. However,

ongoing population growth and land development means that this type of informal access will continue to decline. Furthermore, concerns over fire, vandalism and liability for public access have caused timber companies to close their gates more frequently, denying access for users and for the RDN to develop trails.

## 4. Responsibilities for Regional Parks & Trails

### 4.1 Administration in the RDN

Regional parks and trails are managed by the RDN's Recreation and Parks Department (Figure 4-1). Funding for regional parks and trails are from two sources:

- Park land *acquisition* and major capital items are funded through tax requisition from the eight electoral areas.
- Park and trail *operations and maintenance* are cost shared with the four municipalities in the Regional District – the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and District of Lantzville – through a collective regional parks services agreement.

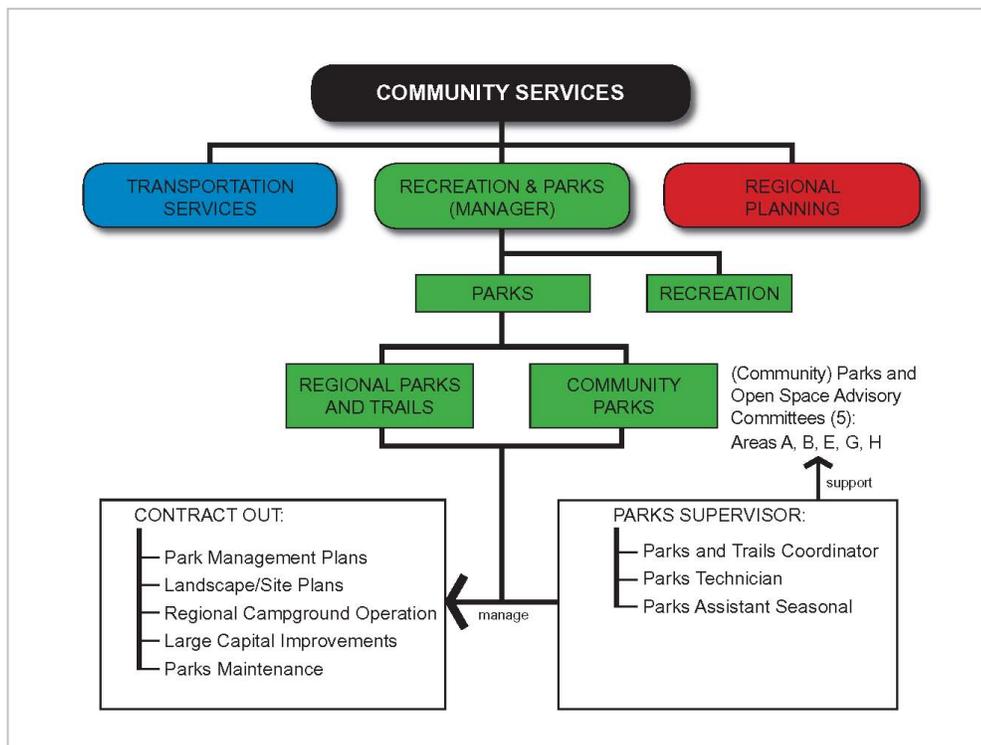


Figure 4-1: Current management structure for parks in the RDN

### 4.2 Relationship of Regional to Community Parks & Trails

Regional parks/trails and community parks/trails are administered under separate programs, due to differences in mandates and funding sources:

- Community parks are aimed at responding to local park and recreation needs, as well as securing locally significant natural features. They are not intended to attract or support use by the broader regional population.

- Unlike regional parks and trails, which are funded region-wide, community parks and trails service are funded through taxes and development revenues (rezonings and subdivisions) collected specifically within each Electoral Area (EA). Consequently, Each EA has its own community parks and trails budgets, and the amount of these funds differ among the eight Areas.
- Whereas most regional parks are acquired through rezoning negotiation or purchase of large tracts of lands, many community parks are acquired under the 5% parkland dedication requirement at time of subdivision.
- In addition, five of the eight electoral areas have Parks and Open Space Advisory Committees to advise the Board and staff on their particular parks and trails. No such committee exists on a region-wide level for regional parks and trails.

#### 4.2.1 Challenges in the Community/Regional Relationship

While regional parks may not compete with community parks for financial resources, they do compete for staff time and resources. As Figure 4-1 indicates, both programs are run by the same staff, which creates significant challenges for staff in balancing their time and resources between the regional and eight community systems.

Given their greater immediacy and the presence of local Advisory Committees, community parks and trails can often occupy a disproportionate amount of staff time and energy. Indeed, it is likely that most electoral area residents do not know the difference between 'regional' and 'community' parks – they simply want the parks and parks staff to respond to their needs and desires.

It is desirable to link community to regional systems, to provide EA residents the opportunity to connect readily to the broader range of opportunities throughout the Region. The degree to which that linkage occurs, however, is up to the individual EA residents. Some may embrace the regional trail system wholeheartedly, and wish to have regional trails close to or through their communities. Others may be more content to be at the periphery of the system.

Without recognizing the increased planning and management needs at both levels, growth in the regional parks and trails system will continue to be limited.

### 4.3 Municipal Involvement

In March 2001, a "Regional Parks Services Agreement" was signed between the RDN and the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach that provides for the municipalities to contribute to the cost of the operation and maintenance of Regional Parks. The District of Lantzville, incorporated in 2003, has since joined the Agreement. Annual payments are determined by a formula based on the proportion of each municipality's population to the total RDN population.

The Agreement also requires the RDN to consult with the municipalities on planning and coordination of future park acquisition and development. All parties have to agree on additions to the inventory of parks covered under the Agreement.

No municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new regional parks. To date, the municipalities have individually focused on and acquired significant park lands within their respective boundaries, many of which are enjoyed by residents from outside their borders. However, as land within municipalities becomes more expensive but pressure continues to mount for more parks and trails, municipal help in acquiring park land outside their boundaries is coming under greater scrutiny.

The current Regional Parks Services Agreement is scheduled to be reviewed and renewed in 2005. The potential for an expanded partnership in regional park/trail acquisition and management will be a topic of discussion.

#### 4.4 Funding - Current Status

The regional parks and trails budget is divided between:

- *Acquisition* (purchasing land for regional parks) and *major capital items* (such as bridges) and
- *Operations* (which includes development and maintenance).

Table 4-1 summarizes how the regional parks and trails budget requisitioned from property tax revenues was distributed between acquisition/capital items and operations over the last seven years.

**Table 4-1: Budget allocations from tax requisition for regional parks & trails**

	Acquisition	Operations	Total
1998	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
1999	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
2000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
2001	\$100,000	\$131,250	\$231,250
2002	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
2003	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$400,000
2004	\$150,000	\$316,000	\$466,000

##### 4.4.1 Acquisition

The 1998 Acquisition Program emphasized that funds allocated to the regional parks function would be used primarily as seed funds to support the RDN in taking a leadership role in achieving the acquisition of priority sites. It assumed that funding and ownership partnerships would be developed and other creative financing strategies explored to combine with these seed funds to support the program.

The RDN has been successful in leveraging its funds by partnering with other agencies and organizations (e.g., the Land Conservancy of BC, the Nature

Trust of BC, Ducks Unlimited, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection) in land acquisition. These collaborative efforts have allowed the RDN's limited acquisition funds go a long way.

#### 4.4.2 Operations

The Acquisition Program was set up on the basis that from 1998 to 2005, there would be a minimal operational and development program in regional parks. Instead, operational funds would be focused on regional trail development. It was assumed that once the nine sites identified as priorities were acquired, the Program's resources would be reallocated to regional park development and operation.

Since 1998, the limited development program for regional parks focused on keeping park sites safe and in good repair, with little spending on major infrastructure projects. Operational funds were focused on trail development, which has been accomplished with a combination of small contracts, volunteers and staff resources.

With the acquisition in 2002 of Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks with their campground operations, more pressure has been placed on the operational side of the regional parks budget. Bridges and some other trail development projects have also had significant cost implications, and there are ongoing items associated with park maintenance and development to address insurance liability issues.

#### 4.4.3 Funding Sources and Cost Sharing

As noted earlier, regional park acquisition/major capital items has been funded entirely by the eight electoral areas. Operational costs are shared by the electoral areas and the four municipalities under the Regional Parks Service Agreement.

Table 4-2 illustrates how the regional parks and trails function is cost-shared based on funding sources in 2004.

**Table 4-2: Funding sources in 2004**

2004 Budget	Acquisitions & Capital Items	Operation & Maintenance
Electoral Areas' contribution	\$150,000	\$82,665*
Municipalities' contribution	----	\$233,335
Operating revenue	----	\$11,250**
Surplus from previous years	\$251,345	\$46,510
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$401,345</b>	<b>\$373,760</b>

\* The Electoral Areas also have individual budgets from property tax requisitions to support the development and operation of community parks within each Area.

\*\* From campgrounds at Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks.

## 5. The Current Regional Parks & Trails System 1995-2004

The chapter begins with a discussion of the evolution of the system since 1995, and then summarizes the components of the system as it stands in 2004.

### 5.1 A Brief History of the RDN's Regional Parks & Trails

The RDN's regional park function originated in 1989 when it was given the authority to establish regional parks by the Province under the then *Park (Regional) Act*. Since that time, several key steps have occurred in the RDN's development of a regional parks and trails system.

**1995 Parks System Plan:** The RDN's first Parks System Plan was approved by the Board and the Province in 1995 as the Official Regional Park Plan under the *Park (Regional) Act*. Through a process of consultation with the public, major landowners and interest groups it identified a number of sites and concepts that were recognized as significant to the region's parks, outdoor recreation and open space mosaic.

**1995-97 District 69 Trails 'Pilot' Initiative:** In late 1995, on the initiative of the Area H Director, a pilot project was initiated and a public committee was struck to investigate establishing an "east coast trail". After considerable public consultation, the "District 69 Trail System Development Plan Report" was submitted. The Board supported the report with further funding, and an "Implementation Plan for the District 69 Trail System 1998-2000" was submitted in 1997.

**1998 Trails Implementation:** Through 1998, a trails project manager and project coordinators were hired and volunteer teams initiated for three of the trail projects presented in the 1997 Plan: Rathtrevor to Top Bridge; the Lighthouse Country Trail, Bowser to Qualicum Bay section; and the Parksville-Qualicum Links.

**1998 Regional Parks Acquisition Program:** In October 1998, the Board approved in principle a Regional Parks Acquisition Program for the 1999 - 2005 period. It was undertaken following the provision of an expanded budget in March 1998 that placed an emphasis on trail development along with recognizing the need for an acquisition program to move the Regional Parks function forward.

The Acquisition Program focused on specific sites selected based on recommendations from the Regional Parks System Plan, Board Directors, community members and landowners. In addition to the two existing sites of Beachcomber and Benson Creek Falls Regional Parks, seven priority sites were identified: Gainsburg Swamp, Hamilton Marsh, French Creek, Lantzville Foothills, Nanaimo River, Sandwell/Locke Bay and an Historic Railway Trail. Nanoose Islands and Mount Arrowsmith were also listed as additional sites where the RDN could play a partnership role in aiding their acquisition or management.



As part of the review process, as many as twenty other regionally significant sites were considered but not included in the acquisition program. The sites that were chosen also provided for each of the eight electoral areas to have a significant regional park within the system by 2005.

**1999-2000 Trails Development:** Two development plans – one for the Lighthouse Country Trail and the other for the Parksville-Qualicum links – were approved. The Top Bridge Trail was officially opened in June 1999. Work continued with part-time coordinators and enthusiastic volunteer teams on the Lighthouse Country and Parksville-Qualicum links trails. Through the hard work of a volunteer bridge team, a \$35,000 BC2000 grant was acquired, which along with \$40,000 from the regional parks budget and a buy-a-piece-of-the-bridge fundraiser is sufficient to tender the construction of the Barclay Crescent Millennium Bridge over French Creek. The Bridge was officially opened in November 2000.

**2001-2003 Evolution to a Regional Trails concept:** Work continues on building (e.g., Lighthouse Country Trail) and fundraising (e.g., Top Bridge Poker Walk-Run-Ride), as well as planning for additional trails (e.g., trail up the Big Qualicum River). Gradually the District 69 system evolved into a Region-wide concept based on building a “trail from park to park” throughout the Regional District. By 2003, in addition to the District 69 Plan trails, the historic Arrowsmith Trail came under RDN management, the Trans Canada Trail had been adopted and developed – including the Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge, and the Morden Colliery community trail was evolving to regional status. In total, trail development had been initiated in five of the eight electoral areas.

**Park Acquisition Program update 2003:** The Acquisition Program and its priority sites were revisited in 2003. Five more areas were identified as potential priorities in acquiring a future regional park: Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges, the Notch, Little Mountain/Morison Creek, Englishman River, and Little Qualicum River.

The Acquisition Program was set up on the premise that the bulk of operational funds would be concentrated on the regional trail system rather than in parks over the 1999-2005 period. However, the acquisition of two Regional Parks with campgrounds in 2002 put more pressure on the operational side of the regional parks budget, as did the construction of trail bridges and other development projects.

As a result of these initiatives, there are now eight regional parks in the system, with a park in each of the eight Electoral Areas except for Area C.

## **5.2 Evolution of the Parks & Trails System since 1995**

The 1995 Parks System Plan identified a total of 38 sites and 4 concepts of interest for park and trail potential in the Regional District, of which 24 sites and trail concepts were identified to be of “regional” (as opposed to community) significance. Nine of these sites were subsequently identified in the 1998 Acquisition Program and five more in the 2003 Acquisition Plan Update as priorities for acquisition at a regional level.

Since 1998, the RDN has secured five of these 14 priority sites, or their equivalent, as regional parks or trails (Table 5-1). The Qualicum River is represented by two regional park acquisitions. In addition, the RDN acquired Horne Lake Regional Park and developed seven other trails based on opportunities as they arose.

**Table 5-1: Status of the 14 priority sites identified in the 1998 and 2003 Acquisition Programs** (sites that have been acquired are noted in *italics*)

Priority Site	Elec. Area	Status 2004
<i>Sandwell/Lock Bay ('98)</i>	B	Replaced by purchase of nearby <b>Descanso Bay RP</b> (Gabriola Island).
<i>Nanaimo River ('98)</i>	A	<b>Nanaimo River RP</b> acquired with the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC).
<i>Historic Trail ('98)</i>	C,F	<b>Arrowsmith Historic Trail</b> from Cameron Lake to Mt. Cokely came under RDN management.
<i>Nanoose Islands &amp; Wallis Point ('98)</i>	E	South Winchelsea Island purchased by the Land Conservancy of BC in 1998 as conservation area. Wallis Point of park interest.
<i>Mt. Arrowsmith massif ('98)</i>	C	Local mountaineering community is interested in establishing as a provincial park.
<i>Lantzville Foothills ('98)</i>	*	Development proposal may provide opportunity for regional trail extension. (*Formerly Area D, now District of Lantzville.)
<i>Hamilton Marsh ('98)</i>	F/G	Privately owned.
<i>Gainsburg Wetland ('98)</i>	H	Privately owned and Crown land.
<i>French Creek ('98)</i>	G	Community parks acquired along the Creek corridor.
<i>Englishman River ('03)</i>	G	<b>Englishman River RP</b> acquired with BC Nature Trust; Rivers Edge Community Park also acquired as park dedication from development.
<i>Little Qualicum River ('03)</i>	F	<b>Little Qualicum River RP</b> acquired thru rezoning; <b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Conservation Area</b> acquired with Ducks Unlimited and TLC.
<i>Mt. Benson/ Westwood Ridges ('03)</i>	C	RDN supporting Mt. Benson Coalition in negotiations with landowners.
<i>The Notch ('03)</i>	E	Still privately owned.
<i>Little Mountain/ Morison Creek ('03)</i>	F	Province recently offered a 2-year nominal rent tenure but RDN wishes to pursue more permanent acquisition status.
<b>Not on Priority Site List</b>		
	H	2003 – <b>Horne Lake RP</b> acquired through rezoning process.

Other sites of “regional significance” that were identified in the 1995 Plan but not pursued as priorities are listed in Table 5-2.

**Table 5-2: Other Regionally Significant Sites Identified in the 1995 Plan**

These sites have not been actively pursued.

Site	Elec. Area	Comment
Rowbotham Ridge	C	Difficult to access other than on private logging roads.
Rhododendron Lake	C	Difficult to access other than on private logging roads.
Black Jack Ridge	C	Lower priority compared to Mt. Benson.
Stewart Road	E	RDN has applied to Province for a Free Crown Grant as a community conservation area.
Bonnell Creek (trail)	E	May be of interest in the future as part of regional trail network.
Dublin Gulch (trail)	E	Community trail potential.
Mant Farm	-	Within Town of Qualicum Beach.
Linley Valley	-	City of Nanaimo has acquired parkland in the Valley and is pursuing additional surrounding lands.
Harewood Plains	C partial	Of interest to City of Nanaimo.
Dodd Narrows	-	Land acquired by City of Nanaimo as municipal park.

### 5.3 The Regional Parks & Trails System Today

Guided by the 1995 Regional Parks System Plan, the 1997 District 69 Trails Implementation Plan, and the 1998 and 2003 Parks Acquisition Programs, the Regional Parks and Trails system has grown from two small parks in 1995 to eight regional parks totaling more than 430 hectares and over 60 km of regional trail (See Map 1: “Regional Parks and Trails System”).

Each electoral area except Area ‘C’ has a Regional Park, although the Area ‘E’ Beachcomber Regional Park represents more of a community park asset.

Table 5-3 summarizes key facts about the current regional parks.

Regional trail development has occurred in five of the eight electoral areas.

The Morden Colliery Trail has been developed as an Electoral Area ‘A’ community trail project not funded to date from the Regional Parks budget.

Table 5-4 summarizes key facts about the current regional trails.

Significant bridge projects that link sections of trail have also been undertaken over the last several years. They cross Haslam Creek (on the Trans Canada Trail), McBey Creek (on the Arrowsmith Historic Trail), Hunts Creek, and French Creek at Barclay Crescent (on the Parksville-Qualicum link). Two bridges over Thatcher Creek are part of the Morden Colliery Trail.

**Table 5-3: Regional Parks as of 2004**

Park	Description/use	Year est'd	Elec. Area	Land status	Mgmt Plan	Area (ha)
<b>Beachcomber Regional Park</b>	Small waterfront park located near the end of Beachcomber Peninsula in Nanoose Bay. Road Access via Marina Way.	1955	E	Owned by RDN.	---	1.04
<b>Benson Creek Falls Regional Park</b>	Forested park on lower west slopes of Mt. Benson above Brannen Lake. Accessed from Doumont Road or Jameson Road. Steep ravines (up to 50m) of Benson and Flynnfall Creeks dissect the park. Two sets of waterfalls on Benson Creek. Informal trails; public discouraged from use of ravine trails due to high risk and erosion issues. Discussions with MWLAP ongoing bridge locations.	1991	D	Crown; 30-year lease from Province.	1999	22
<b>Descanso Bay Regional Park - Gabriola Island</b>	Oceanfront property, formerly known as the Gabriola Campground, located at 595 Taylor Bay Road, a short distance from the ferry terminal. Acquired from Nanaimo Credit Union for \$1 million (total). 30 camping sites; services for kayakers and other boaters, picnickers, campers and hikers.	2002	B	Owned by RDN	2003	16.2
<b>Englishman River Regional Park</b>	North side of the river from Allsbrook Road to Morison Creek. Acquired with Nature Trust of BC, TimberWest Forest Ltd, Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Province, City of Parksville, and several environmental organizations. Contains a community operated salmon hatchery, a network of informal recreational trails, and extensive wildlife habitat.	2004	G	99-year lease from Nature Trust	----	177
<b>Horne Lake Regional Park</b>	Lakefront park adjacent to Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park. Acquired as park dedication from rezoning and strata subdivision of cabin properties. Contains campground, boat ramp, natural area.	2003	H	Owned by RDN	2003	109.3
<b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area</b>	Waterfront property at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River, adjacent to Marshall-Stevenson Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS). Purchased in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). Has tidal grass meadows, water channels, and a sandy beach; one of three sand spit estuaries along the east coast of Vancouver Island. Essential Management plan to be prepared to support managed public viewing.	2003	G	Co-owned with Ducks Unlimited.	----	4.6
<b>Little Qualicum River Regional Park</b>	Encompasses river corridor downstream of Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park. Acquired as parkland dedication from Little Qualicum River Estates subdivision. Accessed (gated) from Corcan Road or Melrose Road. Development awaiting a management plan.	1998	F	Owned by RDN.	----	44
<b>Nanaimo River Regional Park</b>	Located downstream from the Trans Canada Highway bridge. Acquired with The Land Conservancy, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, and many smaller donors. North side of the river to be managed for public access; the remainder on south side to be conserved for its high fisheries habitat value. An existing riverside trail on the northern side of the river. Access from Fry Road or Thatcher Road.	2001	A	99-year lease from TLC.	2004-2005 in preparation	56
	<b>TOTAL AREA</b>					<b>430.1</b>

**Table 5-4: Regional Trails as of 2004**

TRAIL	EI. Area	APPROX. length 1-way (km)	Description	Land Status
Arrowsmith Trail	C,F	10	Off road - based on historic trail built by CPR in 1912. Connects to trails to Mt. Cokely and Arrowsmith. Access from Cameron Lake day-use area (BC Parks) on Highway 4	Portions owned by Timber West and Weyerhaeuser; RDN has 5-year agreements for public access.
Big Qualicum River Trails	H	12	Off-road: will eventually link the Big Qualicum Salmon Hatchery with Horne Lake. Some of route will be alongside the hatchery service road. Access and parking at the hatchery on Fisheries road (Qualicum Bay).	Partially federal lands; RDN and DFO have entered into agreement to open up public trails along the Big Qualicum River.
Lighthouse Country Trail	G,H	8	Off-road loops to eventually link Qualicum Beach to Bowser. Fundraising underway for bridge over Nile Creek to join the loops together.	Undeveloped gazetted highway corridor (1950), a community park and woodlot land.
Morden Colliery Trail	A	3.4	Off-road; follows former coal railway route that once linked the mines of South Wellington to Boat Harbour. Western portion accessed from Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park at the end of Morden Road; 1-km trail leads through the old mine site over Thatcher Creek to Nanaimo River. Eastern portion accessed at either Cedar Road or at Hemer Provincial Park. 2.4 km (one way) trail through forest and residential areas following the railway grade.	20-year licence of occupation from Province; needs to be renewed in 2015.
Parksville-Qualicum Links	G	8	Mostly on-road route using quiet streets as alternative to highway travel for pedestrians and cyclists. Links to designated bicycle routes within the two urban centres; includes off-road section (Fern Road Woods Trail) and Barclay Crescent Millennium Bridge over French Creek.	Road right of way
Top Bridge Trail	G	5	Off-road route that links Rath Trevor Provincial Park to the Top Bridge Municipal and Mountain Biking Park.	Land use agreements with private landowner (PCI), BC Parks, and City of Parksville plus road right of way.
Trans Canada Trail - Extension Ridge Trail	C	6	Off-road: links south Nanaimo to the residential area of Extension. Access signposted from hydro lines on Harewood Mines Road.	Weyerhaeuser Ltd. and TimberWest Ltd. and some smaller landowners, access being provided through agreements.
Trans Canada Trail - Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge to Spruston Road	C	32	Off road: access off the north side of a gravel pit off Timberlands Rd., from the end of Timberlands Road, or from McKay Lake at the end of Spruston Road. Much of trail is under development with preliminary trail markers.	See Extension Ridge Trail.



## 6. The Future Regional Parks & Trails System 2005-2015

This chapter discusses the underlying premises of the regional parks and trails system for the next 10 years.

### 6.1 The Vision

Building from the 1995 Plan and public input, the vision for the RDN's Regional Parks and Trails for the next 10 years is a system that:

- *Secures, protects and stewards lands and water features of environmental significance and wildlife habitat value;*
- *Provides rewarding outdoor recreational opportunities;*
- *Fosters education and appreciation of the Region's natural environment; and*
- *Enhances livability for the current and future residents of the RDN.*

### 6.2 The Goals

Again building from the 1995 Plan and public input, the goals of the RDN is to secure for all time a system of regional parks and trails that:

- *Represents key landscapes and ecosystems of the Region;*
- *Encompasses unique natural, historic, cultural and archaeological features*
- *Assists in protecting watersheds and important habitats as part of the RDN's broader land use planning mandate;*
- *Promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of regional parks and trails in a manner that assures their qualities are unimpaired for generations to come;*
- *Provides education and interpretation of the Region's natural features;*
- *Links components within the system as well as with other parks and trails in the Region and adjacent Regional Districts;*
- *Provides opportunity to all RDN residents to access and enjoy regional parks and trails; and*
- *Assists the economy of the Regional District by attracting tourists and generating revenue, as appropriate, to support the parks and trails system.*



### 6.3 Representation in the Park System

Regional parks and trails can be characterized according to aspects of the Regional District that we would like to have represented in the park system. This form of classification helps to identify **gaps** in the system, which is a factor in determining the types of parks and trails, and the park sites themselves that should be added in the future.

Based on the Vision and Goals, three attributes of the Region are considered desirable to be represented in the parks and trails system:

- Electoral areas;
- Landscapes; and
- Sensitive ecosystems.

Each of these representation attributes is discussed below.

#### 6.3.1 Representation by Electoral Area

The distribution of parks and trails among Electoral Areas A to H acts as an indicator of equitable geographic distribution, and thereby accessibility, of regional parks and trails.

As Table 6-1 indicates, the regional park and trail system is less well represented in the southern part of the Regional District. Area C has portions of two trails but no regional parks, and Areas B, D and E have no trails as yet.

**Table 6-1: Representation of Electoral Areas in the regional parks & trails system**

Regional Park	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Beachcomber					•			
Benson Creek Falls				•				
Descanso Bay		•						
Englishman River							•	
Horne Lake								•
Little Qualicum River Estuary CA							•	
Little Qualicum River						•		
Nanaimo River	•							
Regional Trail								
Arrowsmith Historic			•			•		
Big Qualicum River								•
Lighthouse Country							•	•
Morden Colliery	•							
Parksville-Qualicum link							•	
Top Bridge							•	
Trans Canada			•					

#### 6.3.2 Representation by Landscape Type

Five general landscape types occur in the Regional District (Table 6-2). River systems and forests are well represented in the RDN's regional parks, lakes and coastal areas less so, and mountain/alpine landscapes not at all.

**Table 6-2: Representation of landscapes in regional parks**

Regional Park	Ocean/ coastline	Lakes	Rivers/ streams	Mountain / alpine	Forest
Beachcomber	●				
Benson Creek Falls			●		●
Descanso Bay	●				●
Englishman River			●		●
Horne Lake		●	●		●
Little Qualicum Estuary CA	●		●		
Little Qualicum River			●		●
Nanaimo River			●		●

### 6.3.3 Representation by Sensitive Ecosystems

The *Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory for Southeast Vancouver Island* defines seven types of unique natural habitats that are becoming increasingly endangered by growing development, as well as 2 important ecosystems that are less threatened but significant in their wildlife habitat value. Map 2 shows the SEI sites (“polygons”) that have been identified in the RDN. These sites are taken into consideration whenever regional parks and trails are being considered for acquisition or development.

While a detailed inventory of sensitive ecosystems has not been done in the regional parks, a rough estimate based on preliminary knowledge of the parks indicates that all but the sensitive “terrestrial herbaceous” (vegetated outcrops) ecosystem and the important “flooded field” ecosystem are represented in the parks (Table 6-3).

**Table 6-3: Representation of sensitive ecosystems in regional parks**

Regional Park	Coastal Bluff	Terr. Herba- ceous	Older Forest	Wood- land	Cliff, dune, spit	Wetland	Riparian	Flooded fields	2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest
Beachcomber	●			●					
Benson Creek Falls							●		●
Descanso Bay	●			●					●
Englishman River			●				●		●
Horne Lake						●	●		●
Little Qualicum River Estuary					●	●	●		
Little Qualicum River									●
Nanaimo River			●				●		●

## 6.4 Park Classification

A classification system is a means of distinguishing the different roles that individual parks play in achieving the goals of the regional parks and trails system. Classification can help determine where different outdoor activities can occur most appropriately, and guide park management accordingly.

In the 1995 Parks System Plan, four classes were proposed: Conservancy, Nature, Trails and Greenbelts/Greenways.

Since that time, the parks and trails system has evolved into a four class system that differs somewhat from the 1995 Plan (Table 6-4):

- **Regional Conservation Area, Regional Natural Area and Trails** are similar in objectives and nature to the “Conservancy”, “Nature” and “Trails” classes from the 1995 Plan.
- **Regional Recreation Area** is a new class to reflect the acquisition of Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks, and other future parks of a more recreationally-oriented nature.

The “Greenbelt/Greenway” class has been dropped due to the overlap with “Conservation Area” objectives and because the regional park function has not taken on the mandate of protecting linear buffers proposed for this class in the 1995 Plan. The RDN may wish to reconsider this or a similar class in future revisions of this Plan.

Table 6-4 describes the primary management focus of each class and the existing parks and trails to which they apply. It is important to note that Natural and Recreation Area parks may also have conservation and/or natural area components within them, which would be managed for those features through, for example, the definition of management ‘zones’ within a park.

**Table 6-4: Regional Parks and Trails Classification**

Management Class	Primary Focus	Applies to...
Regional Conservation Area	Protection of the natural environment. Limited, low impact outdoor activities permitted but may be restricted to specific areas. Environmental interpretive facilities permitted provided they have minimal impact.	Little Qualicum Estuary Conservation Area
Regional Natural Area	Protect the natural environment and provide opportunities for range of appropriate outdoor experiences and activities. These areas protect key natural areas that are significant to the environmental character of the region. They are not as ecologically sensitive as RCA’s but may contain some sensitive ecosystems.	Beachcomber Benson Creek Little Qualicum River Nanaimo River Englishman River
Regional Recreation Area	Provide opportunities for a wide range of outdoor experiences, adventure activities and events; managed to accommodate a relatively high number of visitors.	Descanso Bay Horne Lake
Regional Trail	Connect regional parks to other parks and trails, key points of interest (natural and cultural) and communities. In or near urban areas, to encourage non-vehicular modes of transportation.	All trails; see the next section for a discussion of classes of trails

## 6.5 Trail Classification

Trails are evolving in the RDN into the following three general classes.

### 6.5.1 Shared Roadway

Shared roadways are of two types:

- Lightly used residential or rural roads that provide pleasant cycling and walking opportunities.
- Highways with wide (greater than 1 meter) paved and maintained shoulders.

Shared roadways are promoted as recreational and commuting routes. They are mostly used by cyclists, but also walkers. They can be long distance routes connecting local trails as part of longer loops.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Line painting and roadside directional signage.
- Roadside sweeping and debris removal.
- Road widening if required.

### 6.5.2 Multi-use Trails

Multi use trails are heavily-used pathways suitable for walking, cycling, and horseback riding. Usually with some separation from roads and adjacent land uses, they are at least 2 meters wide and are part of a larger system that provide lengthier routes and access to significant destinations. They are used by local residents as well as visitors and tourists.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Grading to improve access and minimize steep sections.
- Resurfacing with gravel, rock chips, mulch, asphalt or other to minimize erosion and damage during wet weather.
- Bridges constructed with heavy decking and high handrails.
- Other structures such as boardwalks on limited basis.
- May include parking, occasional washroom facilities, interpretive kiosks, etc.
- Maintenance to ensure good drainage and to keep trail clear of vegetation and debris.
- Achieving 'barrier-free' access in high-use areas, as appropriate.
- Overhead clearing to allow easy passage on horseback.

### 6.5.3 Walking/Hiking Trails

These trails are restricted to supporting pedestrian use only due to difficult terrain, environmental sensitivity and/or local community desires. Their objectives may include recreation, alternative travel options, and access to natural areas.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Minimal resurfacing with gravel, rock chips, or mulch to minimize erosion and damage during wet weather.
- Structures such as bridges, steps, boardwalks, and drainage improvements to address terrain and hydrological features and avoid erosion and other environmental impacts.
- May include parking, washroom facilities at trailheads, interpretive signs.



## 7. Regional Parks – Priorities for 2005-2015

In this chapter, priorities for regional parks over the next ten years are presented under two headings: *development and management* of the existing parks in the system, and *acquisition* of future parks.

### 7.1 Development and Management of Existing Parks

Management and development of existing parks, and parks that are acquired over the next ten years, will be guided by the following objectives:

- Ensure public safety.
- Minimize environmental impacts of public use.
- Meet management commitments associated with the park, such as commitments made to park partners like the Land Conservancy of BC and Nature Trust of B.C.
- Respond to public interest and use in determining, constructing and maintaining park facilities and services.
- Provide information on the park system.
- Generate revenue where appropriate.

Based on the above objectives, the priorities for development and management for 2005-2015 in each of the existing regional parks are listed in Table 7-1.

### 7.2 Future Park Acquisition

#### 7.2.1 Criteria

The following criteria will assist in determining future park acquisitions:

- **Priority sites from past Plans:** As section 4 indicates, there are still 10 priority sites identified in the 1998 and 2003 Acquisition Programs that have still not been secured. These sites remain primary considerations in future acquisitions. Other sites identified in the 1995 Parks System Plan but not prioritized will also be considered if other criteria apply.
- **Regional significance:** Potential sites must be of interest to the whole region; more localized sites may be considered within the community park mandate.
- **Level of public interest:** This is an obvious criterion that has been gauged through public input in this review process, as well as past and future interaction with the residents of the Region.
- **Gaps in representation:** Opportunities for acquisition will be reviewed in light of whether they represent:
  - Key landscapes,
  - Sensitive ecosystems, and
  - Distribution across all electoral areas.

- **Availability for acquisition:** The RDN will consider sites only where there is a willing seller or donor of land, access, tenure or covenant.
- **Opportunities that arise:** As occurred with Horne Lake Regional Park, sometimes the opportunity simply arises through development applications, donation or sale to acquire a ‘prime’ parcel that meets the goals of the regional parks and trails system – even when the parcel may not have been previously identified as being of interest. These opportunities should not be foregone.

## 7.2.2 Approach

Given that its resources are limited, the RDN will use its acquisition funds as a leveraging tool, to catalyze and promote partnerships in acquisition projects and to find creative means of financing land acquisition.

Partnerships in regional park acquisitions mean that there may be different roles for the RDN in both the acquisition process and later, in the management of the acquired sites. As in the case with Nanaimo River and Englishman River Regional Parks, the RDN may not be the landowner but rather the long-term leaseholder and manager of parks under agreements with the organizations that own the land.

In future partnerships with other park agencies, such as BC Parks or the City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Dept., the RDN may share its management role, and the park may not be solely a “regional” park.

## 7.2.3 Priority Areas of Interest

Based on the criteria described above, the areas of interest for acquisition in 2005-2015 are shown in Map 1 (marked with a star), and presented in alphabetical order in Table 7-2. Consideration of future acquisitions are subject to First Nations’ land claim negotiations that may affect the parcels involved.

### Priorities for Future Regional Park Acquisition (from Table 7-2):

- French Creek (G)
- Gainsburg Swamp (H)
- Hamilton Marsh (G)
- Horne Lake addition (H)
- Little Mountain/ Morison Creek (F)
- Mt. Arrowsmith Massif (C)
- Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges (C)
- Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp (A)
- The Notch (E)

**Table 7-1: Management and Development Priorities for Existing Regional Parks 2005-2015**

See Map 1 for park locations, and chapter 12 “Implementation Summary” for timing of priority actions.

Park	El. Area	Area (ha)	Management Status	Development Priorities for 2005-2015
Beachcomber Regional Park	E	1.04	Owned by RDN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managed as community park; basic signage.</li> </ul>
Benson Creek Falls Regional Park	D	22	30-year lease from Province. Management Plan completed 1999.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage.</li> <li>Upgrade trail network, provide loops.</li> <li>Install bridge across Benson Creek, if can achieve relaxation of top-of-bank to top-of-bank requirement from MWLAP.</li> </ul>
Descanso Bay Regional Park	B	16.2	Owned by RDN. Management Plan completed 2003.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picnic table replacement.</li> <li>Trail improvements.</li> <li>Investigate how best to restore the summer residence on the site for public use.</li> <li>Replace water system (&gt; 5 years).</li> </ul>
Englishman River Regional Park	G	177	99-year management lease from the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Plan in 2005 to be funded by NTBC, RDN &amp; Arrowsmith Water Services: must address security issues.</li> <li>Hatchery: completion of management agreement with DFO and Community Fisheries; future interpretive use.</li> <li>Signage – directional, interpretive, regulatory.</li> <li>Parking lot and develop Middlegate Rd entry.</li> <li>Trail upgrades.</li> <li>Access to water for Arrowsmith Water System (to be funded by AWS).</li> <li>Naturalization of old gravel pit. Wetland development opportunity + parking area on-site near gravel pit. Possible infrastructure location for AWS.</li> <li>Spawning channel expansion (DFO).</li> </ul>

Park	El. Area	Area (ha)	Management Status	Development Priorities for 2005-2015
<b>Horne Lake Regional Park</b>	H	109.3	Owned by RDN. Management Plan completed 2003, under review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezone the property from 'resource land' to zone that allows for campgrounds and other outdoor activities.</li> <li>• Develop Business Plan that encompasses: long-term lease agreement (15-20 years) with private operator/developer, capital improvements and financing of operations at operator/developer's cost.</li> <li>• Complete signage (ongoing).</li> <li>• Phased development of park facilities and infrastructure; Management Plan updates as phases occur.</li> <li>• Emergency planning - installation of fire suppression equipment, power, new septic and water systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area</b>	G	4.6	Co-owned and managed with the Land Conservancy of BC and Ducks Unlimited Canada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Management Plan: must take into account the covenant regarding the management intent and limited access.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Fence replacement.</li> <li>• Install viewing platform, as per covenant.</li> </ul>
<b>Little Qualicum River Regional Park</b>	F	44	RDN property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Management Plan; will need to sort out what to do with the existing road and bridge, interface with Little Qualicum Falls Prov Park.</li> <li>• Basic infrastructure: signs, toilets, parking, trails, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Nanaimo River Regional Park</b>	A	56	99-year lease from TLC. Management Plan nearing completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic infrastructure: signage, picnic tables, toilets, parking.</li> <li>• Baseline inventory of fish habitat – TLC commitment.</li> </ul>

**Table 7-2: Priority Areas of Interest for Acquisition 2005-2015**

See Map 1 for areas (marked with a ☆), and chapter 12 “Implementation Summary” for timing of priority actions.

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Current Ownership	RDN’s Role
<b>French Creek corridor</b>	Electoral Area G From Inland Island Highway to the estuary (potential future interest in upstream portion)	Conservation for fish habitat and riparian habitat corridor. Build on and link existing community and municipal parks and trails along corridor.	Natural area and/or trail	Mix of RDN, Qualicum Beach and private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire lands for parks in concert with future development applications and through strategic purchases.</li> <li>Through future development regulation, establish covenants on riparian buffers as opportunities arise.</li> </ul>
<b>Gainsburg Swamp</b>	Electoral Area H Approximately 20 acres located between Highways 19 and 19A. Accessed via trail from Gainsburg Road off Highway 19A	Wetland ecology with associated biodiversity, regionally significant waterfowl and insect habitat, 2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest. Informal trails around the swamp; locally popular for walking and wildlife observation. Future trailhead for the Regional Trail system along a gazetted highway right of way. Protection would also benefit the unconfined aquifer that supplies Deep Bay Waterworks District.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area, regional trail	Crown and private; latter is in Agricultural Land Reserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On private portion, explore interest of landowner in selling or covenanting. Alternatively, seek acquisition if change in land use proposed in the future.</li> <li>On Crown portion, negotiate for acquisition as part of larger review of Crown lands within the Regional District.</li> <li>Explore potential acquisition and management partnerships with Ducks Unlimited (DU), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and MWLAP.</li> </ul>
<b>Hamilton Marsh</b>	Electoral Area F/G About 80 hectares (200 acres) located to the northwest of Highway 4; accessed via short trail off Hilliers Road.	Exceptional wetland habitat; recognized by CWS as one of most productive ecosystems in the Region. Prime views over the Marsh to Mt. Arrowsmith. Potential node or feature for Regional (District 69) Trail system. Currently used by School District 69 as an education site.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area	Private - Weyerhaeuser Co. Company staff willing to discuss but concerned about loss of land base for timber production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew discussions with Weyerhaeuser to define Marsh boundaries and extent of upland area needed to provide access and protect wetland ecology.</li> <li>Explore possible acquisition and management partnership with Town of Qualicum Beach, DU, the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC), CWS, and School District 69</li> <li>Explore possibility of land swap for productive timber land with Weyerhaeuser and Ministry of Forests.</li> </ul>

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Current Ownership	RDN's Role
<b>Horne Lake RP addition</b>	Electoral Area H	Property comprises entrance and associated facilities for Horne Lake Regional Park.	Addition to Horne Lake RP	Crown federal – Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize lease as an interim measure; continue to negotiate acquisition in the long term.</li> </ul>
<b>Little Mountain/Morison Creek</b>	Electoral Area F North side of Englishman River, Bellevue Road area	<p>Morison Cr. is tributary to Englishman, significant fish and riparian habitat.</p> <p>Extensive trail network on south and east slopes of Little Mountain.</p> <p>RDN interested only in lower part of Little Mountain. LWBC is in agreement with this, as Province wishes to retain the top of the mountain for the revenues generated from leases for communication towers. RDN would have to subdivide the parcel accordingly.</p>	Natural Area	Crown	<p>RDN's interest originates in 1995 when Province indicated that it would turn area over for regional park. The Province offered a 20-year lease in 2001 but was declined by RDN Board at the time. Current provincial policy is to offer only a 2-year nominal rent tenure but RDN wishes a more permanent status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply to Province for Free Crown Grant or long term lease.</li> </ul>
<b>Mt Arrowsmith massif</b>	Electoral Area C Accessed from Arrowsmith Historic Trail via Mt. Cokely, or from Cameron Main Line (Weyerhaeuser property).	<p>At 1,817 metres, highest peak on southern Vancouver Island and a landmark for the entire Region.</p> <p>Characterized by alpine lakes, tarns, alpine meadows and glacial landscape.</p> <p>Regional/provincial destination for hiking, climbing and backcountry activities.</p> <p>Proposed parcel is contiguous with Arrowsmith Regional Park owned by Alberni-Clayquot Regional District (ACRD).</p>	Natural Area	Crown	<p>Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) and Federation of Mountain Clubs BC (FMCBC) have launched campaign to have the massif designated a park by 2006.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form partnership with ACC, FMCBC and ACRD towards establishing a provincial park, or to acquire the Crown property as a regional park.</li> <li>If successful, explore partnerships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACRD to co-manage both parks.</li> <li>ACC and FMCBC to maintain trails.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges</b>	Electoral Area C prominent (1000m) mountain overlooking City of Nanaimo, with Westwood Ridges on its northeast flank. Accessible from City's Westwood Lake Park	<p>2nd growth forest with some small sites of old growth; terrestrial herbaceous communities on rocky bluffs; sub-alpine at summit</p> <p>Hiking trails, mountain biking trails and viewpoints with spectacular views of Nanaimo, Strait of Georgia and mountains to the south and west.</p>	Natural Area	Crown (north slopes) and private*	<p>A collective of community interests, led by Nanaimo Area Land Trust (NALT), has formed the Coalition to Save Mt. Benson to raise community support and negotiate with owners and the Province.</p> <p>City of Nanaimo may also be interested in acquiring portions of Westwood Ridges and possibly the summit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short term: support negotiations by Mt</li> </ul>

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Current Ownership	RDN's Role
	Lake Park (Westwood Ridges) and Witchcraft Lake off BensonView Drive (Mt. Benson).	* 525 acres around summit and north face owned by Pennclan Co (Ont) Ltd. Northeast slopes owned by Weyerhaeuser and Dept. of National Defence.			Benson Coalition with landowners and the Province. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium term: explore partnership with City of Nanaimo, province and Coalition in acquiring ownership of key parcels and access for regional trail in other areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp</b>	Electoral Area A On southwest boundary of Nanaimo River Regional Park.	Current entry facilities for Nanaimo River RP are inadequate. This property would be useful in providing space for parking, toilets and other staging facilities for the Park.	Extension to Nanaimo River RP	Crown – Min. of Transportation	MOT has indicated that the property may be surplus to their needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue discussions with MOT for acquisition or long term tenure.</li> </ul>
<b>The Notch</b>	Electoral Area E Prominent feature on northwest side of Nanoose Peninsula; accessed from Powder Point Rd.	Sensitive woodland (Garry Oak) and terrestrial herbaceous habitats. Popular area locally for walking, plant and bird observation. Viewscapes over Nanoose Bay, nearby mountains, Strait of Georgia. Identified in the Nanoose Parks Plan as a priority.	Conservation Area	Private – Fairwinds Development Corp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek acquisition through future rezoning as Fairwinds extends its development and/or purchase as opportunity arises.</li> </ul>
<b>Wallis Point</b>	Electoral Area E Southeast corner of Nanoose Peninsula; accessed from Fairwinds Drive.	2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest, some woodland (Garry oak, arbutus) sites, accessible pebble and rocky foreshore. Bird and deer habitat. Excellent views over Nanoose Bay and Strait. Informal trails – locally popular for walking, beach access. Identified in the Nanoose Parks Plan as a priority.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area	Federal Crown – Dept. of National Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term: establish access agreement with DND.</li> <li>• Mid to long term: work with the Province to establish a park.</li> </ul>

## 8. Regional Trails – Priorities for 2005-2015

The priorities for regional trails over the next ten years focus on the development, management and extension of existing trails as well as the development of additions to the regional trail system.

### 8.1 Existing Trails – Development and Extension

The management and development of the regional trail system will be guided by the following objectives:

- Ensure public safety.
- Complete linkages both within trail systems and among trail systems.
- Minimize environmental impacts from public use of the trails.
- Meet management commitments, where they exist – such as commitments made to landowners where trail access is acquired through their agreement.
- Respond to public interest and use in determining appropriate facilities, standards and services to provide on any specific trail.
- Provide information on the trail system.
- Take advantage of opportunities for trail extension and development as they arise.

Based on the above objectives, the priorities for development and management for each of the existing regional trails are presented in Table 8-1.

### 8.2 Future Trails – Establishment and Development

#### 8.2.1 Criteria

The following criteria will assist in establishing future trails:

- **Links to parks and open spaces:** “Trail from park to park” is the underlying mandate of the regional trail system.
- **Links to communities:** Providing interconnections between communities and communities to parks and open space is an important consideration.
- **Gaps within and links to existing trails:** Existing trails act as the backbone from which the regional trail system will continue to grow. Linking to trails systems developed by member municipalities and neighboring regional districts is also a priority.
- **Existing corridors:** Undeveloped road rights-of-way and utility corridors are often the most obvious connectors throughout the Region.
- **Availability:** The RDN will consider new trails only where there is a willing landowner, be that be that federal or provincial governments, municipalities, First Nations, forest companies, or other private landowners.



- **Level of interest and support:** This criterion is gauged through public input in this review process, as well as interaction with the residents of the Region. Community organizations and user groups willing and enthusiastic to participate in building and maintaining a trail is a key factor in considering new trails.

## 8.2.2 Approach

The RDN will maximize the use of its limited resources by working with willing landowners to allow trail accesses. The RDN can offer management responsibilities and adoption of liability in exchange for access. The RDN has developed agreements with and acquired permits from several landholders (such as forest companies and the Ministry of Transportation) to build and management regional trails, and will continue to utilize this mechanism to expand the system.

In addition, the RDN has collaborated, and will continue to partner, with a variety of community organizations and user groups to develop trails that benefit both their and the Region’s interests.

## 8.2.3 Priority Areas of Interest

Based on the above criteria and approach, the priorities for establishing and developing new trails in 2005-2015 are presented in Table 8-2.

All new trails and trail extensions are subject to willing agreement on the part of owners of lands crossed by trails, be that federal or provincial governments, municipalities, First Nations, forest companies, other private landowners and those that have direct interests in these lands (such as woodlot lease and licence holders).

### Priorities for Future Trails (from Table 8-2):

E&N Corridor  
 Descanso to Drumbeg (B)  
 Horne Lake Historic Trail (H)  
 Lantzville Foothills (D,E)  
 Mt. Arrowsmith Massif (C)  
 Heritage Trails  
 Other proposed loops and linkages

**Table 8-1: Development Priorities for Existing Regional Trails 2005-2015**

See Map 1 for location of trails, and chapter 12 “Implementation Summary” for timing of priority actions.

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Bridges completed	Management Status/ Plan	Priorities for 2005-2015
<b>Arrowsmith Historic Trail</b>	C,F	McBey Creek	Land owned by TimberWest and Weyerhaeuser; RDN has 5-year agreements for public access.	Having raised the profile, this trail now requires upgraded management and maintenance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew licences starting in 2005.</li> <li>• Remediate trail erosion.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> </ul>
<b>Big Qualicum River Trail</b>	H	Hunts Creek	Federal lands; RDN has drafted an agreement to formalize public trails along the Big Qualicum River and is awaiting DFO’s response.  Volunteers are building walking trail on south side of River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure agreement with DFO for portion along Hatchery service road.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Develop multi-use roadside trail.</li> <li>• Maintain “south-side” walking only trail</li> </ul>
<b>Lighthouse Country Trail</b>	H		Two loops on a gazetted ROW. See Lighthouse Country Trail D69 Trail System Project 2 Report March 1999.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize railway crossing at south end, adjacent to Lighthouse Community Centre.</li> <li>• Continue to work with woodlot owner.</li> <li>• Signage – on trail, and locational signs from highway.</li> <li>• Bridges over Nile, Ridgewell and Nash Creeks.</li> <li>• Boardwalks.</li> </ul>
<b>Morden Colliery Trail</b> currently part of community park system	A	Thatcher Creek	20 year License of Occupation from Province; expires 2015. Morden Colliery Trail Mgmt Plan 1998; Area A Community Trails Study 2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officially transfer from EA ‘A’ community park to regional trail system.</li> <li>• Secure tenure through Free Crown Grant.</li> <li>• Resolve route through ALR (from Wheatsheaf Inn to Nanaimo River).</li> <li>• Extend trail to Boat Harbour through future development/ rezoning.</li> <li>• Nanaimo River bridge crossing.</li> </ul>
<b>Parkville-Qualicum Links</b>	G	Barclay Crescent bridge over French Creek; wheelchair accessible.	Roadside trail with off-road connector to Fern Rd ROW and pedestrian/cycle bridge.  Trail Corridor Links between Parkville and Qualicum Beach - D69 Trail System Project 3 Report March 1999.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road marking.</li> <li>• Garbage and landscape maintenance.</li> <li>• Engineering bridge inspections.</li> <li>• Consider a bridge replacement fund or for major upgrades/repairs after 2015</li> </ul>

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Bridges completed	Management Status/ Plan	Priorities for 2005-2015
Top Bridge	G	--	Land use agreements with private landowner , the Nature Trust, City of Parksville and Arrowsmith Mt. Bike Association. See Rath Trevor to Top Bridge - D69 Trail System Project 1 Report Nov 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew partnership agreement with all municipality, BC Parks and private landowner.</li> <li>• Signage upgrades.</li> <li>• Discuss and confirm trail corridor with City with respect to future zoning and development of their property and PCI's.</li> <li>• Top Bridge crossing – applied for Federal/Provincial infrastructure grant. Estimated cost in 2001 was \$300,000; approximately \$31,000 available - \$11,000 from PV Bike Advisory Group and \$20,000 through fundraising and donations.</li> </ul>
<b>Trans-Canada Trail:</b> - Extension Ridge - Haslam Creek to Spruston Road	C	Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge	Working with Weyerhaeuser, TimberWest and smaller landowners to secure access over private land.	A high profile trail that requires a high level of management and maintenance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Trail upgrades.</li> <li>• Coordinate link with Cowichan Valley Regional District at south border.</li> <li>• Develop a volunteer trail stewards program (needs coordinator).</li> <li>• Bridge over Nanaimo River to complete linkages.</li> <li>• Adjust trail location over time as required by forest company landowners.</li> <li>• Confirm access from MOT gravel pit.</li> </ul>

**Table 8-2: Priorities for establishing Future Regional Trail 2005-2015**

See Map 1 for location of proposed trails, and chapter 12 “Implementation Summary” for timing of priority actions.

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Status	RDN’s Role
<b>E &amp; N Right of Way</b>	All but B	The E&N ROW is being acquired by the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF).	Promote and develop partnership with ICF for developing a commuter trail along the E&N, continuing the trail now in place in Nanaimo. Most beneficial locations would be through Nanoose Bay; Cassidy to Nanaimo; Bowser-Rosewall Creek PP; Parksville to Cameron Lake; around Cameron Lake to Alberni-Clayquot Regional District.
<b>Gabriola Island - Descanso to Drumbeg and On-road trails</b>	B	Proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will likely be achieved through community parks and local initiatives by the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust Society.</li> </ul>
<b>Heritage Trail system</b>	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a long-term concept plan for extending the Morden Colliery trail concept (historical interpretation) to other historical sites and areas. The concept should aim to eventually link the various heritage trails and sites together. Horne Lake Historic Trail would fit with this too.</li> </ul>
<b>Horne Lake Historic Trail</b>	H	<p>Big Qualicum Trail to Horne Lake: agreement with Horne Lake Strata Corporation for building a link from the Horne Lake Caves Road to Horne Lake Regional Park.</p> <p>Horne Lake to Port Alberni: proposed along the 1911 gazetted road ROW, approximately 20km.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct trail (approximately 8 km) on hillside above Horne Lake Caves Road on Strata Corp. land.</li> <li>Pursue application for Proclamation of Historic Trail with Province; consult with First Nations.</li> <li>Locate/survey 1911 gazetted road ROW beyond HLRP. Alternatively, work with Weyerhaeuser Co. to locate similar route that may be more user friendly and reduces impact on logging operations.</li> <li>Initiate discussions with ACRD to develop linkage with Log Train Trail and lookout.</li> <li>Develop trail on 1911 road section.</li> </ul>

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Status	RDN's Role
Lantzville Foothills	D to E thru Lantzville	<p>Future development of the 1800 acre property may include a substantial park being dedicated to the District of Lantzville.</p> <p>Community woodlot licence to be issued soon for Crown land on north side of Foothills; public access is a required element of a woodlot plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop partnership with District of Lantzville to create a regional trail and side trails through the future parkland associated with the Foothills Development.</li> <li>Explore opportunities/develop partnership with Lantzville and the future woodlot licence holder for continuing the regional trail (or providing alternative route) through the Crown land woodlot.</li> </ul>
Other prospective or proposed trail networks, loops and linkages (Shown on Map 1)	A,C	Nanaimo to Cedar/Ladysmith	Parkway Trail and rail corridor.
	D	Benson Creek Falls RP to City of Nanaimo	Roadside; connect to rail corridor and Parkway Trail.
	D,E,F	Rathrevor to Nanoose Bay and Lantzville	Along E&N corridor.
	F	Top Bridge to Englishman River Provincial Park	Via Englishman River Regional Park and pending Little Mountain and Morrison Creek parks; requires bridges.
	F,G	Englishman River Prov. Park to Little Qualicum Falls Prov. Park	Hydro corridor or Area F community trails and rail corridor.
	F,G	Parksville/Qualicum Beach 'bypass' trail	Negotiate access across woodlots.
	G	Qualicum Beach to Big Qualicum River	1950 gazetted ROW and/or E&N Corridor. Requires bridge over Little Qualicum River and Fletcher Creek, and one railway crossing.
	G	Qualicum Beach to Little Qualicum RP	Negotiate access across Crown land.
	H	Lighthouse South extension Lighthouse North Extension	Connect to Big Qualicum trails; negotiate with Fort Nelson Band Land Development Corp. Thames Creek to Rosewall Creek.
	H	Horne Lake to Bowser	Negotiate access across Crown and private forest lands.
H	Horne-Spider-Cameron Lakes link	Negotiate access across Crown and private forest lands	

### 8.3 Bridges

Bridges represent a major capital expenditure, and therefore deserve some specific attention in this Plan. The following table lists the bridges that are required to complete the park and trail system and their approximate costs. The top five priorities are identified; however, should opportunities arise for bridges and funding at other locations, the list may be revised to facilitate their development.

Note that exact locations are not known for many of these bridges, nor is there a full understanding of the terrain to be addressed; hence, the cost figures in many cases are 'ballpark' estimates only.



**Table 8-3: Locations for New Bridges 2005-2015**

Priority	Trail/Park	Watercourse	Cost Estimate
1	Top Bridge Trail	Englishman River (at Top Bridge)	\$300,000 estimated from 2001 grant application
2	Trans Canada Trail	Nanaimo River	\$250,000 estimated by staff based on current trail location
3	Benson Creek Falls Regional Park	Benson Creek	\$100,000 estimated by staff assuming ability to relax Provincial top-of-bank requirements
4	Lighthouse Country Trail	Nile Creek	\$125,000 estimated by staff
5	Morden Colliery Trail	Nanaimo River	\$500,000 estimated from 1999 study
	Benson Creek Falls Regional Park	Flynnfall Creek	Not scoped out, but bridge would assist providing loop trail within Park
		Benson Creek	Not scoped out, but 2 <sup>nd</sup> bridge could span above falls and close the loop
	Regional Trail System extension	Ridgewell Creek	\$62,500 estimated by staff
		Nash Creek	\$62,500 estimated by staff
		Little Qualicum River	Not scoped out
		Fletcher Creek	
		Morison Creek	
	Thames Creek		
		E & N rail corridor	Numerous - not scoped out

In addition, replacement or major refits to existing bridges may need to be considered, though probably beyond the timeframe of this Plan. They include (Table 8-4):

**Table 8-4: Future bridge refits or replacements**

Trail/Park	Watercourse	Notes
Arrowsmith Trail	McBey Creek	Constructed 2002
Big Qualicum Trail	Hunts Creek	Installed 2003 at DFO Big Qualicum hatchery. Engineered retrofit of a dock ramp
Horne Lake Regional Park	Qualicum River	Forestry road bridge built in 1980s, acquired with transfer of land to RDN.
Little Qualicum River Regional Park	Little Qualicum River	Road bridge of unknown age; will be transferred to RDN during term of this Plan
Morden Colliery Trail	Thatcher Creek	Two bridges installed 1998
Parksville-Qualicum Link	French Creek	Constructed 2000 at Barclay Crescent
Trans Canada Trail	Haslam Creek	Suspension Bridge constructed 2002

## 9. Roles, Relationships and Partnerships

The RDN cannot expand or manage the Regional Parks and Trails system alone. We depend on working with agencies, organizations and residents to fulfill the regional parks and trails mandate.

The following table identifies the various participants in regional parks and trails and the nature of their involvement. These relationships are becoming increasingly important as public demand for parks and trails goes up but budgets and resources remain finite. The RDN intends to foster these relationships and expand opportunities for partnerships to meet the goals of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan.



**Table 9-1: Participants in Regional Parks & Trails and their Roles**

	Acquisition	Tenure or Use Agreement	Development	Maintenance / Operation	Fund raising
<b>RDN Planning Dept.</b>	●				
<b>Provincial Government</b>	●	●	●*		
<b>Federal Government</b>	●	●	●*		
<b>First Nations</b>		●			
<b>Municipalities</b>	●**		●**	●	
<b>Neighbouring regional districts</b>	●**		●	●**	●**
<b>Forest Companies</b>		●			
<b>Other Landowners</b>		●			
<b>Woodlot operators</b>		●	●**		
<b>Conservation Organizations</b>	●	●	●		
<b>Community Organizations, User Groups</b>	●		●	●	●
<b>Volunteers</b>			●	●	●
<b>Corporate Sponsors</b>	●		●		●
<b>Educational institutions</b>		●	●		

\* Through infrastructure funding programs.

\*\* Not a current relationship but potential in the future.

## 9.1 Provincial Government

### 9.1.1 Crown Lands

Many participants in the Plan review expressed concern about the disposition of provincial Crown land under Land and Water BC's (LWBC) current mandate to make Crown lands available "for the highest and best use". Some expressed the opinion that the RDN should be identifying all Crown land within the Regional District as priorities for future acquisition, and that the RDN should participate in the call for a stop to the further sale of Crown land.

Until the last few years, Crown land was considered to be either permanently in the public realm, or relatively available for application for park use. The changes since 2001 to provincial Crown land policies dictate a more strategic approach to identifying the RDN's interests in Crown land for park purposes.

The RDN is working on cataloguing Crown lands in the Regional District in collaboration with LWBC, and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM) as the provincial agency responsible for planning on Crown lands. The current inventory of Crown land is incomplete, but a rough guess places it at 10-20% of the land base in the Regional District. It behooves the RDN to determine the extent of Crown land and its interests in those lands. Regional as well as community park objectives are paramount in those interests, and therefore, Parks staff need to be directly involved in these efforts.

***The RDN will work with Land and Water BC to:***

- ***Finalize a comprehensive and accurate inventory of Crown lands within the Regional District.***
- ***Look at all the Crown lands collectively to identify the RDN's interests in these lands for park and trail purposes, and to determine the best methods for meeting those purposes, be that through long-term tenure, Crown Grant, access agreements, acquisition through future development, or purchase.***

***The RDN will also consult with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management when identifying Crown land for future regional park acquisition to ensure that there is no conflict with existing provincial land use plans.***

### 9.1.2 Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

#### **Provincial Parks:**

As noted in Chapter 8, a primary role of the Regional Trail system is to link parks to parks. However, the RDN also recognizes that trails within provincial parks may not always be of a multi-use nature that can support increased public use that a regional trail system may bring.

***Whenever a regional trail is proposed that would provide access to a provincial park, the RDN will work with Parks staff within the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to:***

- ***Identify the most appropriate site for accessing the park.***
- ***Determine the nature of the interface with the park – e.g., whether cyclists and/or horse riders can continue onward within the park or would have to stop and access the park on foot.***
- ***If need be, divert the regional trail around the park, with access to park trails provided for limited uses.***

***The RDN will also explore co-management arrangements with provincial Parks staff that make most effective use of limited resources where future regional and provincial parks may be adjacent.***

#### **Ecological Reserves:**

Ecological Reserves are designated under the provincial *Ecological Reserves Act* to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key role of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. While most ecological reserves are open to the public for hiking, nature observation and photography, they are not created for outdoor recreation.

There are three Ecological Reserves within the Regional District –at Bowser (Area H), Haley Lake (Area C) and Hudson Rocks (off Nanaimo).

***The RDN will avoid routing trails to or through Ecological Reserves in future trail planning, to help to protect their sensitive ecological features and habitats.***

#### **Old Growth Management Areas:**

Managed by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM), old growth management areas (OGMAs) are areas that contain or are managed to replace “structural old growth attributes”. They are defined through provincial landscape/forest planning on Crown lands with the intent of meeting the Province’s biodiversity targets. While none have been yet been designated in the Regional District, there are several proposed.

Unlike ecological reserves, OGMAs are available to outdoor recreation activities. In fact, designating regional parks and trails adjacent to established OGMAs could provide larger parcels of land that better represent the natural structure and function of undisturbed ecosystems and provide recreational access (B. Zinovich (MSRM), pers.comm.). Similarly, with appropriate design, trails extending through OGMAs may provide opportunities for interpretive programs of the Region’s forest systems.

***The RDN will work with the Regional office of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management to:***

- ***Find out where OGMAs are being considered or designated.***
- ***Collaborate in planning and developing regional parks and trails to take advantage of OGMAs where it is beneficial to the goals of this Plan and the OGMA program.***

#### **9.1.3 Provincial Road Rights of Way**

The RDN makes use of undeveloped road rights of way (ROW) in planning and implementing its trail networks, for which it has received great cooperation from district staff of the Ministry of Transportation (MOT).

The Ministry’s policy is to support local government development of trails, as this represents a managed use of public access ways. For this purpose, local governments can apply for, and MOT may issue, permits for trail construction in road ROWs on the understanding that should the Province need the ROW in the future, the permit will be reclaimed. The permits are also issued on the basis that the local government takes on the responsibility for trail

management and maintenance, liability for trail use, and responsibility for liaising with ROW neighbours.

When there is an application from an adjacent landowner, MOT may consider selling portions of unused ROWs if they are surplus to the Ministry's needs. The process for road closure and sale may initiate a referral to the RDN if MOT staff are aware of RDN interests in the ROW, or issues arise during the public review of the application.

MOT also owns parcels of land, some of which may be considered surplus to the Ministry's needs and which would be available for purchase. An example is the Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp property, located adjacent to the Nanaimo River Regional Park. Acquiring that property would allow the RDN to develop better parking and staging areas for the Regional Park.

***The RDN will continue to work in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation in planning and developing regional trails within provincial road rights of way.***

***The RDN will also continue to negotiate with MOT regarding the acquisition of the Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp property.***

## **9.2 Federal Government**

### **9.2.1 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Lands**

DFO holds most of the land along the Big Qualicum River associated with the Big Qualicum River hatchery that influences the future development of the Big Qualicum Trail. Currently, hikers, cyclists and horseback riders use the service road and informal trails along the north side of the River. A second trail is being planned along the River's south side.

DFO also holds property on Horne Lake, including the parcel at the entrance to Horne Lake Regional Park.

***The RDN will work with DFO to:***

- ***Plan, develop and manage the Big Qualicum River Trail in a manner that is compatible with DFO's activities along the River.***
- ***Acquire the property at the entrance to Horne Lake Regional Park.***

### **9.2.2 Dept. of National Defence (DND) Lands**

DND owns key parcels of land on Wallis Point at the southern end of the Nanoose Peninsula. The RDN wishes to establish an agreement with the Department to provide access for local residents across DND land to Wallis Point.

DND has also helped the RDN in designing and building projects such as bridges in exchange for access to RDN parks.

***The RDN will work with DND to define a satisfactory access agreement for use of a trail to Wallis Point.***

***The RDN will also continue to partner with DND in park and trail projects.***

### 9.3 First Nations

There are three First Nations in the Regional District: the Qualicum, Nanoose and Snuneymuxw First Nations. The RDN recognizes that lands within the Regional District are subject to aboriginal title interests. Some of these lands are the subject of land claims and may be acquired by First Nations through treaty negotiations with the federal and provincial governments. This may affect some of the lands identified in this Plan, such that they may not be available for future park acquisition.

The RDN also recognizes that First Nations governments have influence and decision-making powers that can affect the future of the RDN parks and trails system. The success of this Plan will be affected by how well it works with land use priorities established by adjacent First Nations.

RDN Parks staff is already working with the Qualicum First Nation in establishing a provincially-recognized historic trail along the Horne Lake trail route. Staff hope to expand this relationship to other aspects of the trail as well as other parks and trails in the system.

***The RDN recognizes that future parks and trails proposed in this Plan may be subject to land claim negotiations between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.***

***The RDN is committed to working with First Nations in the Regional District to:***

- ***Promote and encourage an understanding of First Nations issues and culture through appropriate interpretation (e.g., signage and programs) within the Regional Parks and Trails system;***
- ***Find common goals in securing lands for regional parks and trails where the interests of the First Nations and the RDN coincide.***

***Proposed trails that may affect First Nations Reserve lands are subject to the willing agreement and partnership of the related First Nation.***

### 9.4 Member Municipalities

As noted earlier, the four municipalities contribute under the “Regional Parks Services Agreement” to the cost of the operation and maintenance of Regional Parks. However, there are other ways in which the municipalities can contribute to the regional parks and trails system.

#### 9.4.1 Linkages with Municipal Parks and Trails

In its trail planning, the RDN endeavours to link regional trails directly to municipal trails and parks at municipal boundaries.

***RDN Parks staff is committed to working with their municipal counterparts in ensuring continuity between the regional trail system and municipal trail networks.***

#### 9.4.2 Potential Partnerships on Park Acquisition

While the Regional Parks Service Agreement requires the RDN to consult with the municipalities on future regional parks and trails acquisition and development, no municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new regional parks. However, there are situations where municipal residents are heavy users, or consider lands outside their boundaries to be integral to the

character of their community. This provides a rationale for direct municipal contribution to park lands outside their municipal boundaries.

Case examples include future acquisition of lands on Mount Benson and Westwood Ridges, in association with the City of Nanaimo, and the acquisition of Hamilton Marsh in association with the Town of Qualicum Beach.

***The RDN will seek partnerships with the four municipal governments in contributing to acquisitions for regional park lands.***

Options for these potential partnerships in park acquisition are discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

### 9.4.3 Potential Partnerships in Park Management

Similarly, a municipality may have a direct interest in managing park land outside its boundaries. Due to proximity and/or the availability of more extensive resource, municipal Parks staff may be in a better position than the RDN to provide services and maintenance to that park.

***As part of partnerships with municipalities in future park acquisition, the RDN will be open to shared park development and management where the municipality expresses a desire and ability to do so.***

## 9.5 Neighbouring Regional Districts

The RDN is bordered by the Cowichan Regional District to the south, Alberni-Clayquot Regional District (ACRD) to the west and Comox-Strathcona Regional District to the north. These neighbouring regional districts plan and manage regional parks and trail systems in their respective jurisdictions.

The ACRD owns Arrowsmith Regional Park, on the slopes of Mt. Cokely, which is actually located within the RDN. With the RDN's interest in the Mt. Arrowsmith massif for a future park, there could be significant opportunities and advantages to coordinate the management of the existing and potentially future regional parks.

***The RDN is committed to working with its neighbouring Regional Districts to:***

- ***Provide continuity among their respective parks and trails systems; and***
- ***Explore opportunities for co-management of contiguous regional parks and trails.***

## 9.6 Forest Companies

Over the last 10 years, the RDN Parks staff has developed good working relations in planning and developing trail networks with the two main forest companies that have extensive land holdings in the Regional District, Weyerhaeuser Company and TimberWest Forest Corporation. The main concerns of these companies are:

- Liability for public uses and activities on their lands.
- Public "ownership" of developed trails that create conflicts when the forest companies intend to log, or when access must be cut off due to fire hazard. Users of trails on these lands must understand that the primary use of the land is for forestry.

- Use of logging roads to access trails and parks, and the liability associated with that use.

The RDN has worked with these companies on several of the regional trails (e.g., the Arrowsmith Historic Trail and the Trans Canada Trail) to develop access agreements that for the most part, address these concerns. Under these agreements, the RDN takes on the responsibility for trail development and maintenance, thereby adopting the liability for their use.

***The RDN will continue to work cooperatively with forest companies in the following ways:***

- ***Through the development and renewal of access agreements associated with regional trails across forest lands.***
- ***By providing information to the public about the nature of these agreements, the fact that the areas that the trails access are managed for forestry, and that the surrounding landscape and the route itself may change as a consequence.***
- ***By working with the forest companies to find routes that are accessible and minimize impacts on both forest practices and trail use; and***
- ***By working with the forest companies to provide information and interpretation of the “working forest” to trail users.***
- ***By endeavouring to meet with staff from the forest companies on a regular basis to review logging plans and coordinate the above activities.***

## **9.7 Other Landowners**

The RDN Parks staff has also developed good working relations with several landowners to provide trail access across private lands through access agreements in which the RDN takes on the responsibility for trail development, management and liability.

***The RDN will continue to work cooperatively with private landowners along and adjacent to regional trails and parks.***

## **9.8 Woodlot Operators**

RDN Parks staff has been working with woodlot owners and operators (those who hold licenses on Crown lands) to coordinate trail linkages and other recreational activities in regional parks that are adjacent to woodlots. Access agreements can address the concerns that such owners/operators may have about allowing public access.

***The RDN will continue to develop working relationships with owners and operators of woodlots adjacent to regional parks and trails.***

## **9.9 Conservation Organizations**

The RDN has collaborated with several provincial and regional conservation organizations in acquiring and subsequently managing regional parks – such as:

- Participating in a partnership led by the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) to acquire a large parcel on the Nanaimo River and subsequently entering into a long-term lease with TLC to manage the property as a Regional Park.

- Participating in a very similar arrangement with the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) on the north side of the Englishman River that led to the Englishman River Regional Park. Other funding partners on this property included the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Environment Canada, the Vancouver Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, MWLAP and several anonymous private donors.
- Partnering with TLC and Ducks Unlimited to establish and co-manage the Little Qualicum River Estuary Conservation Area.
- Most recently, supporting the Nanaimo Area Land Trust in endeavours to negotiate protection and potential acquisition of lands on Mount Benson.

***The RDN will continue to create and foster partnerships with conservation organizations in meeting the goals of the Regional Parks and Trails system and regional conservation.***

## **9.10 Community Organizations and User Groups**

Many trail development projects over the last 10 years would not have happened without the efforts of local resident and stewardship organizations and volunteer committees. To name just a few, such projects included trail planning and building along the Morden Colliery Trail, the Arrowsmith Historic Trail, the Trans Canada Trail, the Lighthouse Country Trail and fundraising for the Barclay Crescent Bridge and Top Bridge.

Community service organizations such as Rotary, Gyro and Kiwanas clubs are traditionally active in their communities in supporting park and trail development.

User groups such as hiking and mountaineering, horseback riding and mountain biking clubs have also been enthusiastic supporters and workers on regional trails. Most recently, the Alpine Club of Canada and the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC have stepped forward to partner in the establishment and future management of a park on the Mt. Arrowsmith massif.

***The RDN will continue to work with its existing community and user group partners in the planning and management of regional parks and trails. We will also endeavor to expand these partnerships to a wider range of organizations to meet the objectives of this Plan.***

***The RDN will work over the next few years with the Alpine Club of Canada and Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, in collaboration with the ACRD and the Province, to establish a park on the Mt. Arrowsmith massif.***

The activities and resources to foster these relationships are discussed in more detail under “Volunteers”.

## **9.11 Volunteers**

The Regional Parks and Trails system would not be where it is today without the efforts of many volunteers, both collectively and individually. Volunteers are not an “option” – they are a vital and necessary component of the parks and trails system if it is to continue to survive and grow.

Moreover, the Public Questionnaire indicated strong support (85% of respondents) for supporting volunteerism in regional parks and trails. At public meetings and in written comments and letters, several organizations and individuals indicated an interest in working with the RDN to supplement existing park and trail services.

### 9.11.1 Volunteer Programs

The effectiveness of volunteerism could be greatly improved and the resulting benefits expanded through a more organized system of volunteer programs. These programs can provide a significant 'value-added' to the park and trail function.

The Capital Regional District, for example, encourages volunteerism through a variety of programs advertised through its website. The following ideas are drawn from the CRD and are applicable to the RDN.

- **Wardens** hike in a designated park at least once a week, educating visitors about park conservation and bylaws, providing maps and advice and reporting on maintenance issues.
- **Naturalists** answer questions, provide information on local flora and fauna and work as members of a team to share their love of parks.
- **Community Service volunteers** give their time to remove invasive plants. They may also clean up garbage and debris left behind in parks or undertake planting projects. These groups may include schools, Guides, Scouts, businesses and hiking clubs.
- **Gatekeepers** help keep parks safe and secure by opening and closing park gates.
- **Special Projects volunteers** use their skills to assist staff with specific projects such as biological inventories, research or construction projects.
- **Work Experience volunteers** contribute skills, time and energy in exchange for valuable work experience. These placements are available for people enrolled in school or employment programs.
- **Facilities volunteers** contribute skills in design, construction or artistry to make signs, build footpaths and boardwalks, or design interpretive materials. Retirees who like to have a 'project', enjoy the outdoors and/or wish to contribute to their community are great resources.
- **Operations volunteers** can run seasonal concessions, conduct tours, and organize and conduct special events. Many of these activities can generate revenues for the parks and trails system.

### 9.11.2 Need for Volunteer Program Coordination

While the benefits of volunteerism can be many, working with volunteers requires a substantial investment in staff time to coordinate and develop. Some examples of the tasks that are required to successfully implement a multi-faceted volunteer program include:

- Responding to telephone queries from residents about RDN volunteer opportunities.

- Providing program information and follow-up.
- Meeting with school groups, conservation organizations, sports associations, and individuals to discuss needs and opportunities.
- Providing information about regional district resources and priorities that support or direct volunteer efforts.
- Developing awards or other volunteer recognition programs.
- Documenting the benefits provided by volunteers and reporting back to the RDN Board about effectiveness and program priorities.
- Liaising with school district to make school facilities available for public recreation and coordinate facility development.

It also requires a commitment of resources on the part of the RDN to support volunteers by providing training, supervision, equipment, and safety and liability coverage.

***The RDN will create a new Parks staff position that focuses on “field” projects and the coordination of volunteer programs throughout both regional and community parks and trails systems.***

## 9.12 Corporate Supporters

The RDN has received assistance from the corporate sector (e.g., the Coastal Community Credit Union) in purchasing or building capital items, participating in acquisitions, and developing facilities. The RDN wishes to expand the opportunities for corporate sponsors to be involved in the regional parks and trails program.

***The RDN will continue to work with its existing corporate supporters, and seek new ones to further support capital projects, acquisitions and facility development in the regional parks and trails system.***

## 9.13 Educational Institutions

School Districts 68 and 69 use areas of ecological and recreational value as part of their educational curriculum. There may be opportunities to collaborate on the development of educational tools and programs within regional parks and trails. Also, school groups can be enthusiastic participants in parks and trails projects.

***The RDN will endeavor to develop relationships with School District 68 and 69 and Malaspina University-College in working towards common priorities in outdoor recreation and education programs.***

Malaspina University-College operates an extensive woodlot on the slopes of Mt. Benson that could support the regional trail network in that area.

***The RDN will explore the interest of Malaspina University-College in supporting the regional trail system through their woodlot.***

## 10. Stewarding Regional Parks and Trails

This section of the Plan presents management principles and policies that apply generally to all parks and trails in the Regional system. The purpose of these policies is to ensure that acceptable standards of environmental protection, risk management, operation and maintenance are applied in all of the Regional parks and trails. These stewardship policies and actions should enhance the character, quality and safety of parks and trails.



### 10.1 Regional Park and Trail Management Plans

Park stewardship is coordinated for each regional park through individual park management plans. A park or trail management plan is a document developed to oversee the activities of an individual park given the natural resources and environmental values, the designated purpose of the park, the aspirations of the community, and the available resources of the RDN.

***A Regional Park or Regional Trail Management Plan will be approved and adopted by the Regional Board for each regional park/trail. A Management Plan will be completed before any significant development of new or upgraded facilities and services occurs in the park.***

***Development of Management Plans will include public involvement in accordance with the RDN's "Coordinated Public Consultation/ Communication Framework".***

Regional Park/Trail Management Plans should, at a minimum, cover such topics as:

- Purpose of the plan.
- Public input.
- Inventory – biophysical, archaeological, historical, cultural and recreational.
- Environmental and cultural protection measures.
- Suitability assessment – types of outdoor recreational uses that are compatible and where they are allowed.
- Service types and levels.
- Site plan – boundaries, location of facilities, etc.
- Implementation strategy – priority management actions with a schedule and budget.

***Regional Park and Trail Management Plans will be reviewed and revised as needed to accommodate new information, opportunities and changes in direction.***

#### 10.1.1 Park Zoning

Park use and management zones within parks, and trails, allows areas to be defined and managed according to their environmental or cultural features and the relative sensitivity of those features to public use. Zones reflect the capacity of areas within a park to accommodate different intensities of park use. Typical zones are "intensive recreation use", "natural environment" and

“conservation”. Their purposes are similar to the Park Classifications defined in Chapter 6.

***Regional Park Management Plans will employ park use zones to define areas of different levels of protection and public use, to protect the ecological integrity and special environmental and cultural features of a park, and reduce conflicts between protection and public use.***

## 10.2 Environmental Protection

Park lands and trail areas contain valuable natural, historic, archaeological or cultural features that are often sensitive to disturbance. All of these features and their protection are addressed in this section under the umbrella of “environmental” protection.

The RDN is at a critical stage where small changes can have significant impacts on the long-term vitality of its natural systems and historic/cultural features. For example, the most dramatic adverse effects on a watershed typically occur during very low-density development.

A more enlightened public attitude and a general desire to allow for outdoor recreation in a way that does not threaten ecological integrity presents both challenges and opportunities to park and trail management.

***To meet this challenge, the RDN will apply the “Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC” (MWLAP, 2004), as it is updated from time to time, in planning facilities and managing operations in regional parks and trails.***

***The RDN will also continue to work with its environmental and conservation partners in complementing the RDN’s operational and management functions with the science- and conservation-based expertise of these organizations.***

## 10.3 Risk Management

The RDN recognizes that for all park and trail lands that it has acquired or manages under lease or use agreements, it is an occupier of land and therefore, subject to the conditions of the *Occupiers Liability Act* which states:

“An occupier of premises (including land) owes a duty to take care that in all circumstances... a person and his property on the premises, and the property on the premises of a person, whether or not that person himself enters the premises, will be reasonably safe in using the premises.”

The RDN recognizes that risk management has become a strong influence in the management of parks and trails. Liability concerns play an important role in management decisions regarding lands made available for public use, but they cannot completely overshadow other public interests. The RDN wants to promote a sense of personal responsibility on the part of all park and trail users.

***The RDN will design and maintain park facilities and improvements to optimize public safety, reduce exposure to liability, and enhance the public’s recognition of natural hazards and sensitivity to the natural character and quality of experience within the park and trail environment.***

Risk management begins with inspection and documentation of conditions in a park or trail for the purpose of increasing public safety and minimizing liability. For this purpose, the RDN has adopted a “**Park Inspection Policy**” (March 12, 2002) that provides a systematic approach to inspecting and documenting potential hazards and actions required and taken to address these hazards.

***The RDN will employ the measures set forth in its Park Inspection Policy to implement risk management in its regional parks and trails.***

### 10.3.1 Emergency Planning

Planning for emergencies includes assessing the need for equipment, facilities and training for natural and human-made emergency situations – e.g., forest fires (see section 10.4), floods, land slip or slides, and rescues.

***The RDN will incorporate an Emergency Plan in Regional Park and Regional Trail Management Plans.***

### 10.3.2 Hazard Trees

Trees within high use areas of parks, along trails or adjacent to structures on neighbouring properties can pose a hazard from overhanging branches or if they are dying or dead. The RDN is liable for any damage or injury that these might cause. At the same time, the desire to remove potentially hazardous trees needs to be tempered by the value of such trees as sources of wildlife habitat and food.

There are many sources of information on wildlife or hazard tree management; e.g., the website of the provincial Wildlife Tree Committee <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/wlt/> provides a wealth of useful information and policy direction. A set of guidelines for hazard tree management is beyond the scope of this Plan, but is something that should be pursued as a regional parks and trails policy.

***The RDN will establish guidelines for management of hazard/wildlife trees in regional parks and trails.***

### 10.3.3 Park Reserves

Park “reserves” refer to park land that is acquired with few or no improvements and with no immediate resources to develop and maintain them as formalized regional parks. Park reserves are an important aspect of risk management and development programming by indicating where public access and use will not be encouraged or promoted.

***Park land that is acquired with few or no improvements will be held in reserve until a management plan is prepared and adopted for the site. In public plans and information, the RDN will be clear about which regional park properties are being held in reserve until such time as the need and resources are available to develop a management plan and actively develop and manage the property.***

## 10.4 Interface Fires

Forest fires are a particular risk that has received considerable attention following the experience of Kelowna and other interior BC communities during the summer of 2003. The rural communities and residences of the RDN may also face a similar threat. Steps that might be taken by the RDN in response to this threat are discussed below.

By way of background, the full report prepared by the province, Firestorm 2003 is available at:

<http://www.2003firestorm.gov.bc.ca/firestormreport/default.htm>.

This report identifies strategies based on the following three concerns:

- Forest Management,
- Fuel Build-up, and,
- Fireproofing.

### 10.4.1 Forest Management Strategies

Although generally beyond the scope of a park and trails plan, the RDN should follow up on the recommendations of the Firestorm 2003 by developing a forest management strategy that addresses equipment, training, and similar measures. The Firestorm 2003 report identifies the need for the Province to take a leadership role in cooperating with local governments to prepare forest management strategies. Assistance may be available from the Province to develop such a strategy.

A forest management strategy should focus on parts of the parks and trails system that are in proximity to communities and rural residences. In more remote parts of the system where fire is a more natural process, many of the steps described below may not be inappropriate.

### 10.4.2 Fuel Build-up

Understanding the impacts of fuel build-up in parks is an issue that cannot be ignored as part of this strategic plan. No risk assessment has been done as yet for RDN parks. As a first step in preparing a management response for interface fires, a risk assessment prepared by a qualified forest management specialist is required. Based on the results of this review the RDN may take steps to:

- Manage fuel build-up in parks by chipping or removing debris,
- Cooperate with provincial government fuel treatment pilot projects,
- Prepare fire prevention plans which would minimize the impact of fires if they were to start in a regional park,
- Work with surrounding landowners to identify risks and develop maintenance strategies, and
- Prepare an interface fire education program to advise of risk and focus on fire prevention strategies.

***The RDN will incorporate Interface Fire Risk Assessments as part of the Emergency Planning component of Regional Park Management Plans, where needed, to***

**determine a cost effective program for maintenance and risk assessment in the particular regional park.**

## **10.5 Regulation**

As the Region's park and trail system grows in size, use and development, regulations are needed to clarify what constitutes inappropriate use of these parklands and to define sanctions that will apply in the event of inappropriate use.

After public review and comment, the Park Use Regulation Bylaw No. 1399, 2004 was adopted in November 23, 2004. Modeled on park use bylaws from other jurisdictions on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland, the bylaw applies to all parks (both regional and community) under the RDN's jurisdiction. It addresses the typical issues associated with public use of parks, such as disruptive activities and the unlawful cutting of park trees.

Schedule 'A' of the Bylaw details all properties subject to park use regulation, broken down by electoral area and level of development. While most parks in the Region are as yet relatively undeveloped, the two campground parks, Horne Lake and Descanso Bay, are quite developed in terms of public use and require the most regulation of all RDN parklands.

Parks staff as well as Park Operators for each of the campground parks will be designated bylaw enforcement officers in order to facilitate effective and timely regulation of these park properties. These staff and operators are in addition to existing bylaw enforcement staff in enforcing the park use bylaw throughout the Region.

A number of community parks and regional parks along with all regional trails and beach accesses are secured by lease, license or permit and not title. These leased lands may be owned by the Crown or private landowners. Legal opinion confirmed that the Bylaw has effect wherever the Region is exercising its park function and is not affected by the nature of the land holding, unless specifically stated in the lease, license or permit.

Improved park use regulation and increased ability to enforce use on parklands managed by the RDN should also help in convincing landowners to contribute land for parks or access for trails.

***The RDN will regulate inappropriate behavior and damaging activities through the Park Use Bylaw No. 1399. The Bylaw will be implemented in a variety of ways:***

- ***The RDN and its park operators will promote understanding and respect of the regulations as a priority over strict enforcement. For this purpose, all parks staff, operators and bylaw enforcement officers will become conversant with the Bylaw and its regulations, and methods for their communication and enforcement.***
- ***The RDN will attempt to establish good neighbourly relationships with residents adjacent to parks and trails in order to encourage monitoring assistance.***
- ***The RDN will develop volunteer steward programs that assist in promoting awareness and monitoring activities in parks and trails (see section 8.10).***

## 10.6 User Fees

The majority of respondents to the public questionnaire opposed general user fees for regional parks and trails. User fees were acceptable if they were applied to specific services – such as camping, tours or rentals – and all revenues were put back into the parks and trails budget.

***The RDN will not charge fees for entry, parking or general use of regional parks and trails. Fees will be considered for specific services on an at-cost operational basis and or to assist in offsetting associated capital costs for park and trail infrastructure.***

## 10.7 Facilities and Improvements

There is potentially a wide range of facilities and improvements that could be made to cater to many different uses.

***The RDN will accommodate only those improvements required to support appropriate activities within regional parks and trails. The choice of such improvements will be determined by the park/trail classification and the specific regional park or trail management plan.***

### 10.7.1 Standards

The RDN intends to provide for essential facilities in a recognized standard of quality. The RDN has used recognized standards (e.g., BC Parks or Parks Canada design standards) in planning and building park and trail facilities.

Over time, RDN parks staff wish to compile and consolidate design standards that are directly applicable to the RDN context, to provide a consistent guideline for all park and trail improvements, whether they are being built by RDN staff, contractors or volunteers. Among other things, such a guideline would address such things as; landscape modification; trails and footpaths; parking; picnic tables; pit toilets; washrooms; camping sites; boat ramps and launching facilities.

***The RDN will compile a design standards document that addresses typical improvements in both regional and community parks and trails.***

***All improvements will require the preparation of design details, whether provided by staff, a contractor or volunteers.***

### 10.7.2 'Low-maintenance' Design and Development

The management of park facilities should be undertaken in a way that minimizes their impact on the natural environment. The construction and maintenance of outdoor facilities can cause a variety of impacts. In recent years, however, a variety of new tools, techniques, and equipment have been developed to modify past practices to reduce the overall impact of these facilities as well as improve the financial bottom-line.

***The RDN will develop park services and facilities with low maintenance objectives in mind.*** Park facilities will be designed to reduce the requirement for ongoing maintenance through a variety of means, including:

- providing trails that respond to user desire lines;
- developing facilities that are robust and vandal-proof;

- Use plant material and develop vegetation management plans that match the surrounding natural areas;
- Coordinate park design with stormwater management plans and develop park designs that support stormwater management objectives.

**The RDN will adopt a “strategic” approach to the development of improvements:**

- **Signs and facilities in high use areas such as park entrances and picnic areas will be designed, built and maintained to have a high quality, professional appearance.**
- **Signs and facilities in areas outside high use zones will be constructed to a more rustic level.**
- **All improvements will be developed to require minimum ongoing maintenance and high resistance to vandalism, to help reduce maintenance and operations costs.**

## 10.8 Barrier-free Access

Barrier-free access refers to facilities being usable safely by people with physical disabilities. Barrier-free access has become a standard in the construction of buildings, public rights of way (sidewalks, street crossings, etc.) and other public spaces. Defining standards for barrier-free access to the outdoors - given the challenges presented by topography, natural surfaces and environmental, cultural and historic sensitivity – is still being worked on internationally (e.g., see US experience at [www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/accessible.html](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/accessible.html)).

Within these constraints, however, the RDN wants to improve accessibility where the level of use is high and natural conditions allow.

**The RDN will endeavour to provide barrier-free access within regional parks and trails in high use areas and areas close to communities, recognizing the limitations of topography, environmental/cultural/historic sensitivity and cost.**

## 10.9 Signs

Signs are an integral component of facilities development, information and promotion, and education within the parks and trails system. The RDN has adopted a Sign Policy to guide the design and application of signs according to their use. However, given the many and varied situations in which signs are used in the parks and trails system, some of these design criteria may need adaptation.

Furthermore, volunteer expertise can be used to enhance the sign program. With guidance on design criteria and specifications and provision of basic materials, budding or retired carpenters and builders are often keen to construct signs and take great care and pride in their products. They can offer suggestions on ways of keeping costs down while maintaining quality and robustness. One participant at a public meeting pointed to the signs built by volunteers in the Powell River area as a good example.

Volunteer expertise can also assist in planning, writing, designing and building interpretive signage. For example, information kiosks and signage at Buttertubs Marsh Conservation Area in Nanaimo have been initiated, designed

and built largely with volunteer efforts, much of it through the Nanaimo Field Naturalists.

**The RDN will prioritize sign construction and installation based on:**

- **Type - the relative needs for direction, entrance, information, regulation and interpretation.**
- **Location – the relative needs of higher profile parks and trails.**
- **Use – the relative need of high visibility (e.g., entranceways, roadside) versus low visibility (e.g., backcountry trail) use.**
- **Upgrading – the relative need to maintain signs in high use versus low use parks/trails or areas thereof.**

**The RDN will also explore ways of using willing and able volunteers in the design and construction of directional and interpretive signs in regional parks and trails.**

**The RDN will review its existing Sign Policy to allow it to design and construct signs in regional parks and trails that respond to the above priorities.**

## 10.10 Visitor and Group Use

The RDN maintains its parks and trails for appropriate activities identified in this plan and in individual regional park management plans. The RDN does not, in general, develop or maintain parks for occasional 'high volume' demands or specific requirements of short-term special events.

However, the RDN recognizes that there is a growing demand for these kinds of uses on public lands. For this purpose, the RDN can issue special use permits under the Park Use Regulation Bylaw for special events in regional parks and trails.

**In keeping with the Park Use Regulation Bylaw, the RDN may allow for the use of a park or trail by an organization or non-profit group for a special event provided that the use is compatible with the purpose and management of the particular site, and the group accepts full responsibility for maintaining and restoring the existing conditions of the site during and after the event.**

## 10.11 Commercial Services

Regional parks and trails provide opportunities for commercial services that can enhance the experience of visitors as well as provide some revenue to support the regional park and trail system. Such services include guided environmental education walks, eco-tourism tours, cycling, hiking, and kayaking training. These services need to be provided in a way that will not spoil the natural environment or another park visitor's experience.

**In accordance with the requirements of the Park Use Regulation Bylaw, the RDN will allow commercial services that are program-oriented, personal services, such as guided programs or outdoor recreation activity training, and that meet the following conditions:**

- the service or activity is an appropriate outdoor recreation activity,
- the service is compatible with the particular regional park management plan,
- the service could not be operated effectively outside the park or trail boundary,

- the business has demonstrated successful operation and has a proven record and credentials,
- all business licences and standards required by the RDN are current,
- the use will have a minimum environmental impact,
- site selection and use are sensitive to the natural environment and the experience of park visitors.

## 10.12 Information and Promotion

Better information about regional parks and trails was identified in the public questionnaire as the most important aspect of the system in need of improvement. Many suggestions were made about the methods and means of improving this information, most focusing on improved directional signage to and within parks and trails, and better maps in paper format and downloadable from the RDN's website.

***The RDN will allocate budget resources to improving the information about the regional park and trail system. These resources will focus on improved signage and better maps and accompanying descriptive information provided in brochure format and on-line.***

Expenditure of these resources will be prioritized for the various parks and trails according to:

- The relative "profile" of the parks and trails – i.e., the level of use and general knowledge of individual parks and trails.
- The capacity of the park or trail to support public use – determined by such factors as level of development, environmental sensitivity, etc.

***To help it determine the most cost-effective use of budget and staff resources, the RDN will develop an information and promotion strategic plan.***

## 10.13 Education

Responses to the public questionnaire were emphatic about the role of the park and trail system in promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the Region's environmental, historical, archaeological and cultural values. Education can also support risk management in informing park and trail users of hazards and safe use. Finally, education programs can help to generate revenue to support the park and trail system.

Measures for facilitating the educational role of regional parks and trails include:

- Interpretive signage.
- Interpretive tours (revenue generation opportunity).
- Student courses – school day, weekend, and week-long programs.
- Information and presentations within the school system.
- Seasonal information kiosks run by volunteers.

***The RDN will promote the use of regional parks and trails as educational venues by:***

- ***Exploring the use of parks and the development of curriculum-based programs with School Districts 68 and 69 and Malaspina University-College.***

- **Encouraging proposals from eco-education/tourism operators for programs in Regional Parks.**
- **Working with community groups and individuals in developing interpretive trails and tours.**
- **Working with the forest companies in developing forestry interpretation signs along trails through their lands.**

## **10.14 Volunteer Recognition**

Section 9.11 addresses the many benefits that volunteerism can bring to the regional parks and trails system. It provides the rationale for a 'field' staff person whose role would be to supervise volunteer activities and organize and liaise with volunteers in support of the park and trail system. Programs that recognize volunteers are identified as a priority project.

***The RDN will allocate appropriate resources to recognize volunteer efforts in regional parks and trails through such methods as a Volunteer Awards program that identifies and recognizes significant volunteer contributions, and events that celebrate volunteer input and provide opportunities for communication among volunteer organizations (sport, conservation, etc.).***

## **10.15 Pets in Parks**

The Park Use Regulation Bylaw contains general requirements for the control of domestic animals in all RDN parks, requires excrement to be removed, and provides the authority to post signs that require leashes or prohibit domestic animals in certain areas.

As user visits to the regional park and trail system increase, the need for a 'Pets in Parks' policy may be required – at least in some of the higher use parks and trails. The aim of such a policy would be to provide a safe enjoyable environment that meets recreational needs while protecting sensitive wildlife and habitat and avoiding conflicts with other users.

***The RDN will assess the need for a Pets in Parks policy in its regional parks and trails if and where conflicts over the presence of pets arise. Such a policy would:***

- ***Focus on current or potential problem areas based on levels of visitor use, reported complaints or input sought from the public.***
- ***Be developed in consultation with park and trail users – both pet owners and otherwise.***
- ***Promote education and a 'Code of Conduct'.***
- ***Support the delivery of events in communities that focus on responsible dog ownership and activities for owners and their pets.***
- ***Include staff training on strategies to deal with difficult circumstances.***
- ***Consider designated off-leash parks, trails or areas within them, and the information and facilities that should be provided.***
- ***Provide for effective enforcement measures (fines, legal action, etc.).***

## 10.16 Park Names

The RDN's "Parks Naming Policy" (May 9, 1995) states that regional parks should be named for the significant geographical features for which the park has been established. It further states, "regional parks should be named after people only when that person has donated the land for the park and when that person specifically requests that the park be named after them."

To date, regional parks have been named largely on the basis of the first policy – i.e., significant features. However, so have several provincial parks in the Regional District. This creates some confusion and difficulty in distinguishing regional from provincial parks, which became apparent in the responses to the public questionnaire. Specific overlaps are with Englishman River Falls, Little Qualicum River and Horne Lake Caves Provincial Parks.

The confusion may only increase as these regional parks are developed and promoted over time. Alternative 'themes' by which to name regional parks include:

- First Nations place name – in collaboration with the First Nation in the local area.
- Historical places, events or local characters that may relate to the park site.
- The ecological community that is represented.

***The RDN will consider revising its Parks Naming Policy to address existing or future overlap with the names of provincial parks or other protected sites and areas.***



# 11. Service Levels and Funding 2005-2015

This chapter looks at proposed changes to service levels (staffing) and funding arrangements for regional parks and trails over the next 10 years.

## 11.1 Service Levels

Chapters 7 and 8 outlined a number of priority projects for regional park and trail management and development over the next 10 years. Chapter 9 presented the vital role that volunteers play, or could play with encouragement and support, in sustaining the regional parks and trails system.

However, both of these aspects of the regional parks and trails function require more support than current staffing levels can provide.

To meet these Plan commitments, Figure 11-1 illustrates proposed changes in staffing in the Recreation and Parks Department to address the growth in both regional and community parks and trails functions:

- Starting in 2005, two summer students will be hired to assist staff in organizing and operating programs in both regional and community parks and trails.
- A staff person responsible for coordinating and supporting volunteer programs in regional and community functions will be hired.
- A Regional Parks and Trails Committee will be established to act as an advisory body and advocate for the regional park and trail system. In preparation, staff will generate and present options to the Regional District Board regarding the structure, membership and mandate of this Committee.

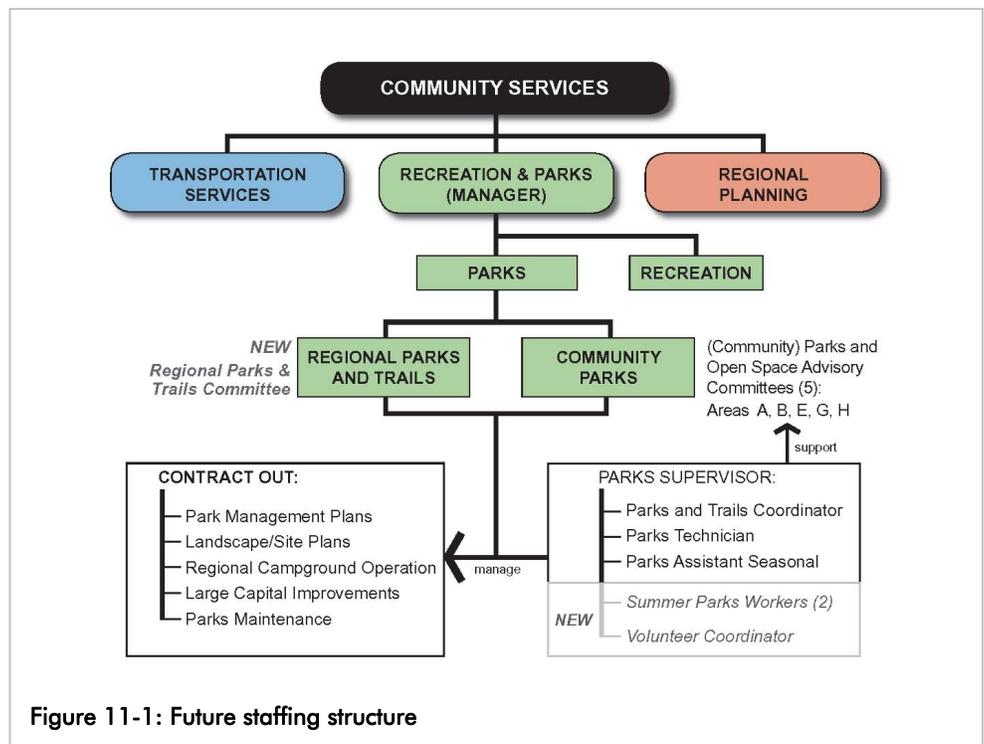


Figure 11-1: Future staffing structure

## 11.2 Future Funding – Acquisition & Capital

The RDN's five-year financial plan for 2005-2010 projects an annual 2% increase in tax requisition for regional park/trail acquisition and capital items. Starting in 2005 with an allocation of \$153,000, the annual allocation for acquisition would grow to just under \$169,000 by 2010. If the same projection was extended to 2015, the annual allocation by that point would be about \$186,500.

However, from 2005 to 2007, this acquisition allocation along with all surplus funds from previous years is fully committed to pay off the purchase of Descanso Bay Regional Park and the RDN's portions of the acquisition of Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area and Englishman River Regional Park, along with necessary construction and upgrades of trail bridges. This means that no funds are available for new acquisitions until 2008, when by current projections and after other capital items, about \$72,000 per year becomes available for new acquisitions.

Obviously, the RDN will be in no position to offer even seed or contributory funds should opportunities arise before 2008; thereafter, its contribution is small relative to the cost of land purchase. Given the public priority on acquisition evidenced through the public questionnaire and meetings, the RDN needs to reconsider its budget allocations and funding sources for acquisition.

There are several options for increasing the RDN's acquisition funding that will be pursued over the next 10 years.

### 11.2.1 Municipal Involvement in Regional Parks Acquisition

No municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new regional parks. However, municipal interests in lands outside their boundaries may increase as they exhaust the supply of available land for sizable parks within their boundaries, or as their residents apply pressure for nearby lands of special concern to be preserved. The municipalities may be willing to participate in the acquisition of future parks or trails that benefit their residents – e.g., the City of Nanaimo's interest in Westwood Ridges and Mt. Benson.

The regional park function now defined under the RDN's Regional Parks and Trails Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 1231 limits the role of acquiring regional parks and trails to the RDN, but that function is now being reviewed. In addition, the current Regional Park Service Agreement between the RDN and the four member municipalities is due for review and renewal in 2005. It is timely to consider means by which the four municipalities could contribute to future acquisitions based on criteria that could be specified in the Agreement.

***In 2005, the RDN will examine the range of options for involving the four municipal governments in contributing to land acquisitions for parks, from individual partnerships in specific acquisitions where a municipality has a direct interest in lands outside its boundaries, to revising the Regional Parks Function to include municipal members as full participants. In collaboration with the four municipal governments, the RDN will seek partnership arrangements that serve both municipal and regional interests in acquiring future regional parks.***

### 11.2.2 Development Cost Charges

Authorized under the *Local Government Act*, development cost charges (DCCs) are monetary charges that a local government can place on new development to assist in providing certain services for the future residents of the new development. The provision of parks is one of the services for which DCCs can be charged. While park DCCs are commonly applied at the municipal level for municipal and community parks, they have as yet not been applied in B.C. for regional parks. However, this does not preclude the RDN from examining the logistics and issues involved in setting up DCCs for regional parks on future developments proposed in the unincorporated areas of the regional district.

***The RDN will examine the potential for instituting DCCs for future regional park and trail acquisition.***

### 11.2.3 Donations

Many respondents of the public questionnaire encouraged the RDN to consider various means of encouraging donations to the parks system. One of the attractions of making donations towards regional parks and trails is that as a local government, the RDN is able to issue income tax receipts for the donation amount.

***The RDN will promote the fact that tax receipts can be issued for monetary donations towards regional parks and trails.***

#### **Project-specific donations:**

RDN parks staff have worked with a variety of community groups to seek funding and donations toward specific park and trail related projects in their communities, such as the Barclay Crescent Bridge (completed) and the Top Bridge project.

***The RDN will continue to work with volunteers and community groups to promote donations to fund specific projects, such as bridge construction, in the regional parks and trails system.***

#### **Endowment Fund:**

An endowment fund to support general development and operation of regional parks and trails was mentioned by several respondents. An endowment fund provides prospective donors with a tangible recipient and some assurance that their donation will be used for the purposes that they support.

***The RDN will examine the creation of a regional parks and trails Endowment Fund that would accept donations towards development, operation and maintenance of the system. An endowment fund could be supported and promoted by a volunteer group, with administrative assistance and oversight by the RDN.***

#### **Commemorative gifts:**

While more of a means of funding operational rather than acquisition functions, commemorative giving can provide a range of opportunities for individual and corporate residents to contribute directly to a park or trail of their choice. Donations may be in the form of cash for equipment or facilities or as land given for recreational use or environmental protection.

Other local governments have established a variety of targeted giving options such as \$100 for a recycling station, \$250 for a bicycle rack, \$800 for a picnic table, or \$1000 for an interpretive sign. At a corporate level, gifts may include \$20,000+ for public facilities such as washrooms and picnic shelters.

Such gifts are typically commemorated by a plaque, label or sign on the item funded.

While this is one method for acquiring equipment and facilities within parks and trails, the downside is the obligation that is created to maintain the item or facility and its commemorative label in the long term.

***The RDN will explore the establishment of a Commemorative Giving Program to support specific infrastructure and facilities in regional parks and trails.***

#### 11.2.4 Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund

In 2000, the Capital Regional District set an interesting precedent by establishing a CRD Parks Land Acquisition Fund based on a special 'tax' or levy charged on residential properties throughout the CRD, in both municipalities and unincorporated areas, for a 10-year period. The establishment of the Fund was supported by the public in an opinion poll held in several municipalities during municipal elections in 1999. The cost to property owners in 2002 was \$4.28 per \$100,000 assessed residential property value or about \$10 per average household. The Fund generates about \$1.6 million per year.<sup>2</sup>

Establishing a similarly structured fund in the Regional District would require the agreement and 'buy-in' of the municipalities, to make any proposed levy on properties equitable across the Region. This could be discussed in conjunction with the review of the Regional Parks Function.

***The RDN will explore the potential for establishing a Regional Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund within the Regional District.***

### 11.3 Future Funding – Operations

While acquisition remains a priority, the RDN realizes that more resources than in the past must be focused on developing and maintaining parks and trails if the system is to continue to be used safely, not to mention expanded.

As discussed in chapter 4, the allocation to operations in 2004 was \$316,000, based on municipal (74%) and electoral area (26%) contributions. Budget projections for 2005-2010 estimate operational budgets of \$330,000-340,000 per year.

These budgets should be adequate to cover current service levels and the priority management and development projects for existing parks and trails referenced in chapters 7 and 8. However, additional operational funding will be required to support the new staff positions.

***The RDN will commit additional operational funds to support additional summer workers starting in 2005 and a Volunteer/Field Coordinator to support regional and community park and trail functions.***

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<sup>2</sup> From CRD Parks, Land Acquisition Fund Bulletin 3 - Summary of 2002 Acquisitions.

## 12. Implementation Summary

The following provides a guide of specific tasks to be completed in the short, medium and long term over the 2005-2015 period of this Plan, based on the priorities and policies identified in this Plan.

### 12.1 Existing Regional Parks

	E.A.	Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10+ years)
Beachcomber RP	E	Signage		
Benson Cr Falls RP	D	Signage Upgrade trail network, provide loops.	Install bridge across Benson Creek, if relaxation top-of-bank requirement can be obtained from MWLAP.	
Descanso Bay RP	B	Picnic table replacement Trail improvements	Investigate restoration of on-site house for public use.	Replace water system
Englishman River RP	G	Generate management plan with NTBC and Arrowsmith Water Services. Complete management agreement with DFO and Community Fisheries for hatchery. Signage – directional, interpretive, regulatory. Develop Middlegate Road entry. Trail upgrades.	Develop parking lot. Naturalize old gravel pit – wetland opportunity, parking and facility space.	Define/formalize access to water for Arrowsmith Water System.
Horne Lake RP	H	Develop Business Plan and long-term lease agreement with private operator. Complete rezoning.	Complete signage. Campground expansion (phased). Update Management Plan as phases occur. Install fire suppression equipment, power, new septic and water systems.	(continue) Install fire suppression equipment, power, new septic and water systems.
Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional CA	G	Generate management plan. Signage. Install viewing platform (with DU).	Replace fence.	
Little Qualicum River RP	F		Develop 5-year management plan.	Develop basic infrastructure: signs, toilets, parking, trails, etc.
Nanaimo River RP	A	Baseline inventory of fish habitat (by TLC). Develop basic infrastructure: signage, picnic tables, toilets, parking.	(continue) Develop basic infrastructure: signage, picnic tables, toilets, parking.	

## 12.2 Existing Regional Trails

	E.A.	Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10+ years)
Arrowsmith Historic TR	C,F	Renew licences. Remediate trail erosion. Signage.		
Big Qualicum River TR	H	Secure agreement with DFO for portion along Hatchery service road. Signage.	Develop multi-use roadside trail.  (continue) Signage	
Lighthouse Country TR	H	Formalize railway crossing at south end, adjacent to Lighthouse Community Centre. Signage – on trail and directional signs from highway. Boardwalks.	  (continue) Boardwalks.	Bridges over Nile, Ridgewell and Nash Creeks.
Morden Colliery TR	A	Officially transfer from EA 'A' community park to regional trail system.	Resolve route through ALR (from Wheatsheaf Inn to Nanaimo River).	Secure tenure through Free Crown Grant. Extend trail to Boat Harbour through future development/ rezoning. Nanaimo River bridge crossing.
Parkville-Qualicum Link	G	Garbage and landscape maintenance. Road marking.	Engineering bridge inspections.	Consider a bridge replacement fund for major upgrades/repairs after 2015.
Top Bridge TR	G	Renew partnership agreement. Confirm trail corridor with City of Parkville regarding future zoning and development of City's and PCI's properties. Signage upgrades.	Top Bridge crossing (if get funding)	
Trans Canada TR	C	Coordinate link with Cowichan Valley Regional District at south border. Signage.	Develop a volunteer trail stewards program. Bridge over Nanaimo River to complete linkages (continue) Signage.	

## 12.3 Future Regional Parks

	E.A.	Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10+ years)
French Creek corridor	G		Acquire lands in concert with future development applications and/or negotiate leases and covenants with landowners as opportunities arise.	
Gainsburg Swamp	H	On Crown portion, negotiate for acquisition as part of larger review of Crown lands within the Regional District.	(continue) Negotiate on Crown portion. On private portion, explore interest of landowner in selling or covenanting. Alternatively, seek acquisition if change in land use proposed in the future. Explore potential acquisition and management partnerships with Ducks Unlimited (DU), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and MWLAP.	
Hamilton Marsh	F/G	Renew discussions with Weyerhaeuser to define Marsh boundaries and extent of upland area needed to provide access and protect wetland ecology. Explore possible acquisition and management partnership with Town of Qualicum Beach, DU, the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC), CWS, and School District 69 Explore possibility of land swap for productive timber land with Weyerhaeuser and Ministry of Forests.		
Horne Lake addition	H	Finalize lease.	Continue to negotiate acquisition with DFO.	
Little Mt/ Morison Cr	F	Apply to Province for Free Crown Grant or long term lease.		
Mt. Arrowsmith massif	C	Form partnership with ACC/FMCBC and ACRD for establishment of a provincial park, or alternatively, to acquire the Crown property through a Free Crown Grant as a regional park.		
Mt Benson/ Westwood Ridges	C	Support negotiations by Mt Benson Coalition with landowners and the Province.	Explore partnership with City, Province and Coalition in acquiring ownership of key parcels and access for regional trail in other areas.	
Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp	A	Continue negotiations with MOT for acquisition or long-term tenure.		
The Notch	E		Seek acquisition through future rezoning as Fairwinds extends its development and/or purchase as opportunity arises.	
Wallis Point	E		Establish access agreement with DND. Work with the Province to establish a park.	

## 12.4 Future Regional Trails

	E.A.	Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10+ years)
E&N Right of Way	All but B		Develop partnership with ICF for developing commuter trail along the E&N in appropriate areas.	
Descanso-Drumbeg	B	(Develop through community parks and local initiatives by the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust Society.)		
Heritage Trail system	All			Develop long-term concept plan for extending Morden Colliery trail concept to eventually link heritage trails and sites together.
Horne Lake Historic TR	H	Consult with First Nations. Pursue application for Proclamation of Historic Trail with Province.	Construct trail (approximately 8 km) uphill from Horne Lake Caves Road behind the strata development. Locate/survey 1911 gazetted road ROW or similar route across Weyerhaeuser lands. Initiate discussions with ACRD to develop linkage with Log Train Trail and lookout.	Develop trail on 1911 road section.
Lantzville Foothills	-	Develop partnership with District of Lantzville to create a trail through future parkland associated with Foothills Development.	(continue) Partnership re. trail through Foothills. Explore opportunities with Lantzville and the future woodlot licence holder for continuing regional trail through Crown land woodlot.	
Other Trail extensions	-	As opportunities arise – see Table 8-2.		

## 12.5 Other Specific Policy Actions

	<b>Short Term (1-3 years)</b>	<b>Medium Term (4-7 years)</b>	<b>Long Term (8-10+ years)</b>
Crown Lands (p.45)	Work with Land and Water BC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize a comprehensive and accurate inventory of Crown lands within the Regional District.</li> <li>Look at all the Crown lands collectively to identify the RDN's interests in these lands for park and trail purposes, and to determine the best methods for meeting those purposes, be that through long-term tenure, Crown Grant, access agreements, acquisition through future development, or purchase</li> </ul>		
Municipal partnerships (p.67)	Examine the range of options for involving the four municipal governments in contributing to land acquisitions for parks. Seek a partnership arrangement that serve both municipal and regional interests in acquiring future regional parks.	As part of partnership with municipalities, investigate a cooperative Regional Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund.	
Staffing (p. 53, 66)	Hire additional summer workers. Create new Parks staff position that focuses on field projects and coordination of volunteer programs in both regional and community parks and trails systems.		
Hazard/wildlife trees (p. 57)		Establish guidelines for management of hazard/wildlife trees in regional parks and trails.	
Information & communications (p. 63)		Develop an information and promotion strategic plan.	Implement strategic plan
Design standards (p. 61)			Compile a design standards document that addresses typical improvements within the parks and trails system.
Funding (p.70)		Examine potential for instituting DCCs for future regional park and trail acquisition.	
Donations (p.68-69)	Promote availability of tax receipts for monetary donations towards regional parks and trails.	Explore establishment of Commemorative Giving Program to support specific infrastructure and facilities in regional parks and trails.	Examine creation of a regional parks and trails Endowment Fund for donations toward development, operation and maintenance of the system
Park names (p. 65)	Review Parks Naming Policy to address existing or future overlap with the names of provincial parks or other protected sites and areas.		



RDN Regional Parks & Trails Plan 2005-2015

**ATTACHMENTS**



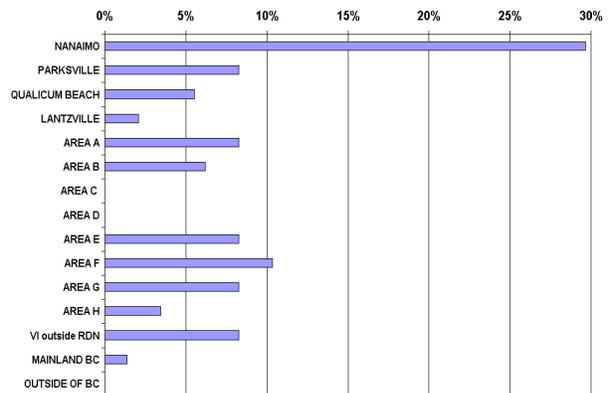
# ATTACHMENT 1

## Summary of Questionnaire Results

The public questionnaire was distributed from August to October 2004. A total of 145 responses were received, of which 73% were submitted online and 27% submitted by fax or mail. The highlights of these responses are summarized below. The complete survey summary, including all written comments, is provided in Appendix A.

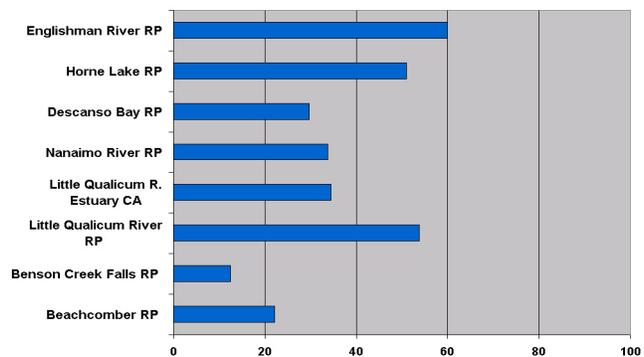
### Location of Respondents

Almost 30% of respondents live in Nanaimo, with about another 20% originating collectively from the other three municipalities of Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Lantzville and Qualicum Beach. All electoral areas were represented except for Areas C and D. Almost 10% of respondents originate from outside the Regional District.



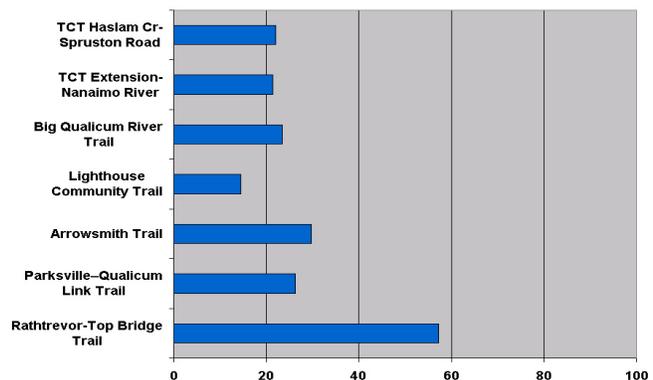
### Regional Park Visitation

Highest visitation was reported to Englishman River RP (60%), Little Qualicum River RP (55%), and Horne Lake RP (51%). However, these results are somewhat suspect as respondents may have confused these Regional Parks with the Provincial Parks by the same or similar name. Visits to other regional parks ranged from 34% (Nanaimo River RP) down to 12% (Benson Creek Falls RP).



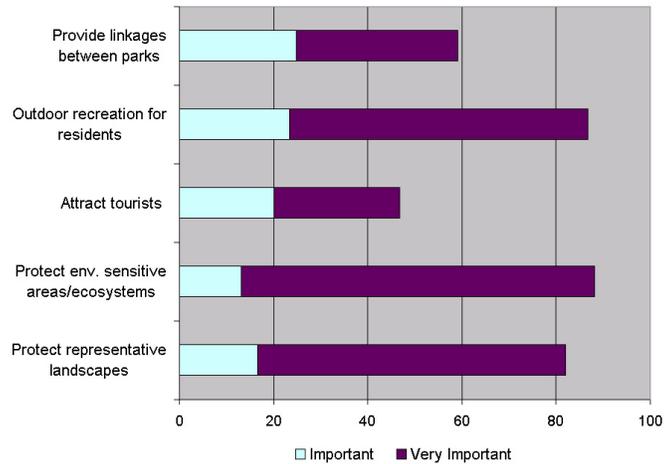
### Regional Trail Visitation

The highest visitation was reported for Rathrevor-Top Bridge Trail (57%) and Arrowsmith Historic Trail (30%). Visitation to other trails ranged from 15% to 26%.



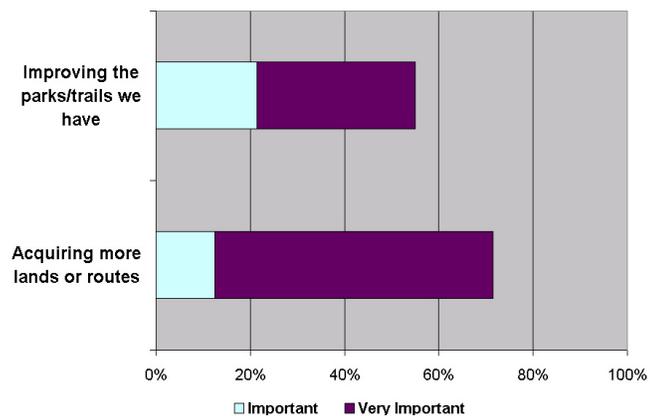
### Roles of Regional Parks and Trails

Protecting environmentally sensitive areas, protecting representative landscapes and providing outdoor recreation opportunities were rated as the most important roles of the regional parks and trails system. Attracting tourists was a less important role. Accompanying comments also emphasized the role of regional parks and trails in educating about the value of the natural environment.



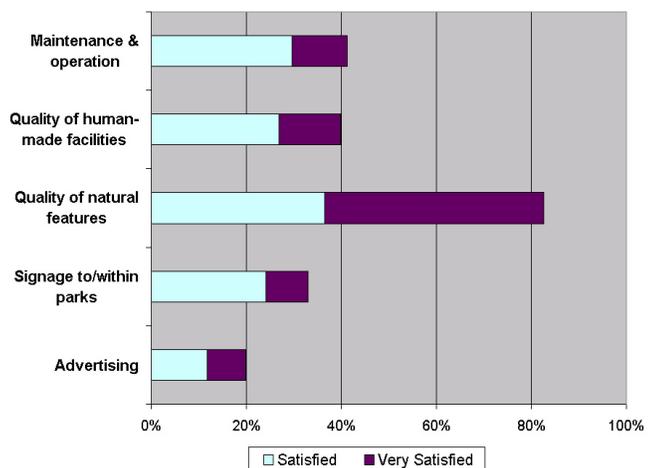
### Priorities for Regional Parks and Trails

Acquisition of more parks and trails was considered generally a higher priority than development of the existing parks and trails. Comments indicated an emphasis on acquiring lands now as they are rapidly being lost to development or becoming too expensive to obtain.



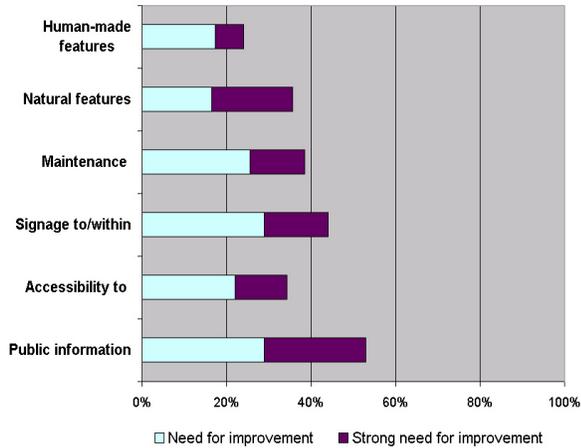
### Level of Satisfaction

Respondents were most satisfied with the quality of natural features in regional parks and trails, and least satisfied with signage and advertising. Comments emphasized the need for more and better information about the system.



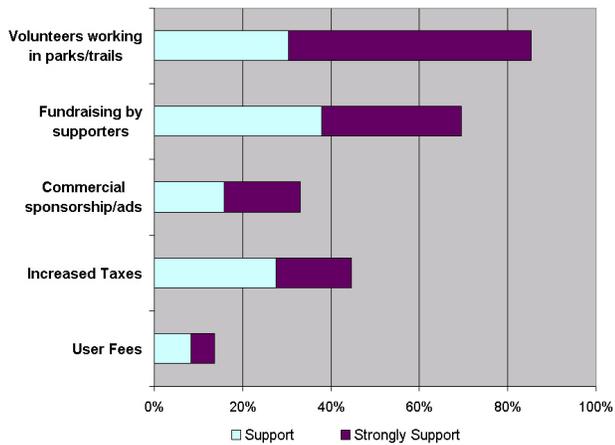
### Need for Improvement

Like the previous question, more information and signage were identified as the aspects in most need of improvement.



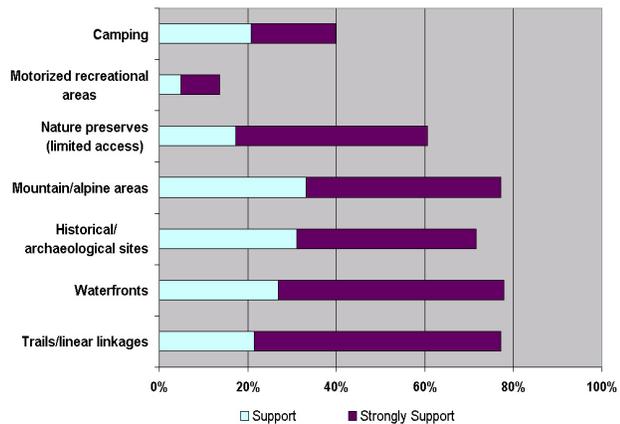
### Funding Options

Support to volunteers and fundraising through donations were the favoured means of funding parks and trails. Surprisingly, almost 45% supported increased taxes. User fees received the least support.



### Additions to the System

Mountain and alpine areas, waterfront lands, more trails, historic/ archaeological sites were supported as additions; motorized recreational areas received the least support.



### Comments Summary

Readers can review the several hundred comments received on all the questions in Appendix A. The following highlights key points that were repeated by many respondents.

#### ***Roles of regional parks and trails:***

- Education is as important as preservation and recreation.

#### ***Priorities:***

- Acquisition is a higher priority than development at this point in time.
- Emphasis on acquiring more trails, waterfront, and alpine areas.

***Development and management:***

- “Keep it natural” was the key message.
- Provide more information about the system.
- Be strategic in the use of funds for facilities.

***Funding:***

- Limited use of user fees to specific services – e.g., tours.
- Allow “discrete” commercial sponsorship and advertising.
- Pursue donations – e.g., set up an endowment fund.
- Support volunteers.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### The Roles of National, Provincial, Regional & Municipal Parks – a comparison

From Capital Regional District Parks Master Plan 2000

**Table 1: Comparison of the Role of National, Provincial, Regional and Municipal Parks**

	National Parks	Provincial Parks	Regional Parks and Trails	Municipal Parks
<b>Geographic Focus</b>	Canada	Province of British Columbia	Capital Regional District	Municipal boundaries
<b>Size of Park Area</b>	Generally very large	Large (i.e., 1 million hectares) to small (i.e., 10 hectares)	4,000 hectares to 5 hectares	Generally small (i.e., 100 hectares to less than 1 hectare)
<b>Purposes</b>	To fulfill national and international responsibilities in mandated areas of heritage recognition and conservation; and to commemorate, protect and present, places that are significant examples of Canada's cultural and natural heritage in ways that encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage, while ensuring long-term ecological and commemorative integrity.	<p><b>Conservation Goals</b>  <b>Goal 1:</b> Protection of Representative Ecosystems. The provincial parks system will include areas that are representative of the natural ecosystems of B.C.  <b>Goal 2:</b> Protection of Outstanding Special Features. The parks system will contain a wide scenic selection of the best provincial outdoor recreation resources, natural features, wilderness areas and historic resources of B.C.</p> <p><b>Recreation Goals</b>  <b>Goal 1:</b> Outdoor Recreation Holiday Destination Opportunities  <b>Goal 2:</b> Tourism Travel Route Opportunities  <b>Goal 3:</b> Regional Recreation Opportunities  <b>Goal 4:</b> Backcountry Recreation Opportunities</p>	<p><b>Regional Parks</b>  To establish and protect a network of regional parks in perpetuity which represent and help maintain the diverse range of natural environments in the Capital Regional District. To provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities and experiences, and environmental education for everybody which foster enjoyment of, and appreciation and respect for the region's natural environments.</p> <p><b>Regional Trails</b>  To establish, where feasible, trails for non-motorized use which provide a range of trail opportunities in a natural setting. These trails will be designed to connect the region's communities and national, provincial, regional and major local parks, and connect the CRD to other parts of Vancouver Island.</p>	The purposes can vary among municipalities. In general they are to provide open space, protect the natural environment and landmarks, and provide recreation facilities and services.
<b>Distinguishing Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus is Canada and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National Parks</li> <li>– National Marine Conservation Areas</li> <li>– Canadian Heritage Rivers</li> <li>– National Historic Sites</li> <li>– Historic Canals</li> <li>– Federal Heritage Buildings</li> <li>– Heritage Railway Stations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• manage for ecological and commemorative integrity</li> <li>• provide educational opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus is the province</li> <li>• goal is to protect 12% of the provincial land base</li> <li>• permit camping and backcountry use</li> <li>• meet the needs of the residents of B.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus is the Capital Regional District</li> <li>• protect regionally significant natural environments</li> <li>• a natural area is the basis for a regional park</li> <li>• provide opportunities for a range of outdoor experiences and activities for the residents of the CRD and visitors</li> <li>• meet the needs of the residents of the CRD</li> <li>• provide attractions for eco-tourism</li> <li>• manage the area for ecological integrity</li> <li>• provide environmental interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus is limited to the municipal boundaries</li> <li>• parks include playgrounds, sports fields, natural areas, trails, and recreation centres</li> <li>• meet the needs of the population of the municipality</li> <li>• parks are usually within walking distance or a short drive away</li> <li>• park area may be natural or an altered landscape</li> </ul>

Note: The protection of the natural environment in the Capital Regional District is also provided by the Provincial Capital Commission, Island Trust Fund, provincial wildlife management areas, land trusts, and conservation organizations. Opportunities for outdoor activities are also provided by the Ministry of Forests and some forest companies.

RDN Regional Parks & Trails Plan 2005-2015

## **APPENDICES**



# Appendix A

## COMPILATION OF PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The questionnaire was distributed August 15 – October 15, 2004 on the RDN website, at RDN offices, and included in mailed notices to government agencies, First Nations, major landholders, sector and community organizations. A total of **145 responses** was received; 73% submitted online and 27% submitted by fax and mail.

*The Recreation and Parks Department of the Regional District of Nanaimo is reviewing and updating the Regional Parks System Plan. We would like to gather your views on the directions and priorities to be taken in the RDN's Regional Parks and Trails over the next 10 years. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions.*

**1. Which of the following RDN regional parks or trails have you or members of your household visited in the past two years? (Please indicate the number of visits to each park or trail)**

Beachcomber Regional Park	46.21%	8.28%	11.03%	1.38%	1.38%	31.72%
Benson Creek Falls Regional Park	55.17%	4.83%	6.21%	1.38%	0%	32.41%
Little Qualicum River Regional Park	28.97%	24.14%	26.9%	0.69%	2.07%	17.24%
Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area	42.07%	12.41%	20%	0%	2.07%	23.45%
Nanaimo River Regional Park	42.07%	11.72%	15.86%	4.14%	2.07%	24.14%
Descanso Bay Regional Park - Gabriola Island	44.83%	18.62%	10.34%	0.69%	0%	25.52%
Horne Lake Regional Park	30.34%	21.38%	27.59%	0.69%	1.38%	18.62%
Englishman River Regional Park	22.76%	19.31%	31.03%	2.76%	6.9%	17.24%
Rath Trevor to Top Bridge Trail	23.45%	16.55%	27.59%	10.34%	2.76%	19.31%
Parksville–Qualicum Links Trail	43.45%	7.59%	15.17%	2.76%	0.69%	30.34%
Arrowsmith Trail	44.83%	11.03%	15.17%	1.38%	2.07%	25.52%
Lighthouse Community Trail	54.48%	5.52%	6.9%	1.38%	0.69%	31.03%
Big Qualicum River Trails	44.83%	8.97%	9.66%	2.76%	2.07%	31.72%
Trans-Canada Trail - Extension Ridge to Nanaimo River	51.03%	8.97%	9.66%	2.76%	0%	27.59%
Trans-Canada Trail - Haslam Creek to Spruston Road	50.34%	10.34%	8.97%	2.76%	0%	27.59%

**2. A regional park system plays many roles. Please rate the following roles of the parks system in the RDN (1 - Not important 3 - Neutral 5 - Very important)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
Protect representative landscapes of the RDN	0.69%	6.21%	8.28%	16.55%	65.52%	2.76%
Protect environmentally sensitive areas/ecosystems	2.07%	1.38%	7.59%	13.1%	75.17%	0.69%
Attract tourists to our region to use the parks, trails	11.03%	15.17%	25.52%	20%	26.9%	1.38%
Outdoor recreation for residents of the RDN	0%	1.38%	10.34%	23.45%	63.45%	1.38%
Provide linkages between parks	6.9%	6.21%	26.21%	24.83%	34.48%	1.38%

**Other roles our park system should play**

**Comments:**

opportunities for disabled, or handicapped people of all ages to get out by building an area that would assist them i.e., wheel chair ramps, railings, boardwalks etc. PS think BIG

Provide outdoor human powered recreation for residents & taxpayers of BC

Build a Biosphere Interpretation Centre on Mt. Arrowsmith/Mt. Cokely Park that will attract visitors from around the World and bring Dollars to our area. Charging a fee will help with the maintain ace of Mt. Arrowsmith park.

We have to spend money to get money!

Wilderness areas should be preserved within the park system.

enhance watersheds, preserve alpine areas

some interpretation if staff were available

Provide equality of access for all by not charging fees for day-use.

Provide corridors for movement of wildlife from area to area.

To provide vegetated "breaks" between rows of repetitive housing.

protect watersheds (i.e. drinking water sources)

Education

Offering weekend activities for youth teaching them the importance of wildlife and preservation through play and recognition. This could be accommodated through volunteers, youth counselor programs, practicum for Malaspina.

Strengthen connectivity for residents to the area in which they live.

Parks should be available in all Districts

- long term conservation and preservation of green space
- recruitment areas of habitat/nest trees, especially for birds
- foreshore access to the public via road ends

To educate young people on the importance of protecting the environment, wildlife and parkland and to teach them to treat them with respect.

Protect historical sites

free of synthetic chemicals/pesticides/herbicides etc

Community greenways, visuals, stream protection, education,

Educational programs; example, plant species in area

provide links btw other protected areas such as Ecological reserves and private lands held by Conservation Covenants.

Preventative health role i.e. more use of parks and natural landscapes equates to better quality health and reduced health care costs.

Enforcement of fire safety and fines for garbage dumped or dog feces.

Linear 'parks' can provide options for alternate and safe transportation routes (cycling, walking).

Perhaps as an educational element for schools or nature groups.

Provide critical wildlife habitat; areas for dogs on and off leash, with their owners in control at all times

Show me a ballfield, slide, or a teeter-totter in Area F.

Areas for our youth to learn and explore the environment - education

educate people on enviro topics

Education of the environment.

- secure a legacy of protection and public access to a diverse range of features, including ocean shore, mature forest, rivers/streams/lakes, prominent viewpoints.
- protect significant greenspace throughout the region to retain the character of the landscape for future generations (both on public and private land).
- opportunity for environmental education and interpretation of the ecology and natural history of our Region.

Allow the designation for special use areas for motorcycle/ATV use where there is an interest in the community and park features may permit.

Through schools education. With cutbacks in BC Parks almost all the interpretive programs have been cut - e.g. Newcastle Island used to have a wonderful program - no longer provided.

Green space.

more promotion of park recreation for health, i.e. disease prevention;

more attention to riparian corridors and access to freshwater systems for wildlife

Protecting representative and sensitive landscapes, flora and fauna is of paramount and urgent importance. Inherent in that is the ideal of educating people to the impact we have on the environment, how we can minimize that impact. As a spin-off benefit, we will be giving some protection to the quality of air, water, and land that we use, too.

Re. question 3, below, "improving" is a loaded word. Making them a safe refuge for wildlife (from zooplankton to mammals) has become more vital than making them human playgrounds.

Provide wholesome out door space for families and friends within the surrounding area is primary. However, for those who visit our region this will be an added incentive to come as well as benefit from this glorious part of creation.

Education much needed by youth, which seems to be lacking in provision from parents and regular education system. Helps to keep environment healthy. Helps to keep society healthy.

Park habitat and the wildlife within Park boundaries must have a high management priority, therefore human activities within the Park need to be considered and mitigated. i.e. - Dogs charging around the Park disturbing wildlife, that humans are there to enjoy.

They should not become dumping grounds within small subdivisions.

Acquire property for the future and future use for next generations. Create partnerships with other landowners to acquire future properties at no cost to the taxpayers.

To maintain and improve wildlife habitat, specifically wetlands.

Land bank for future generations

Bicycle routes linking parks.

Preservation of representative and unique habitats & ecosystems

Provide greenspace

Provide a core of high protection with surrounding buffers that provide limited or non-consumptive recreational opportunities

Provide means for access between urban centres for non-motorized transportation

I think that residents should be considered first and developments should be geared for them rather than for tourists.

Every development cluster should be required to provide a bit of green space where people can breathe and the earth can do its job. Large parks are precious for both people and animals (unless we plan to wipe out the latter) and could be linked with corridors. Should be left natural. Far more expensive to buy back when paved and built on.

- Education.

- Respect for nature and importance of conservation.

A type of transportation (safe). Then people would not drive as much.

Trails to act as alternative mode/route of transportation promoting healthy, environmentally friendly alternative.

To promote more outdoor activities and reduce obesity.

Recognize and commemorate historical activities such as logging and mining, many of which have left signs of their passing in current parks

With minimally protected land within RDN, the Parks Plan has obligation to fulfill a conservation mandate of at least 25% of the land base to realize future recreation and conservation needs and requirements.

Education regarding ecosystems/wildlife/local plants/NB wetlands and inhabitants/variety of landforms/history. Looking at Adran Dorst and Cameron Young's treatment of "Clayquot" for an example. book - ISBN: 895123-04-66 (on the wild side).

A place to go for R+R, Peace and Tranquility away from roads, cars and mobs of people.

Nature appreciation. Not built on

**3. In the future we can focus on increasing quality or quantity, or try to do both. Indicate the importance of the following alternatives. (1 - Not Important 3 - Moderately important 5 - Very important)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
Acquiring more lands or routes	5.52%	4.14%	16.55%	12.41%	59.31%	2.07%
Improving the parks/trails we have	2.07%	9.66%	30.34%	21.38%	33.79%	2.76%

**Are there other priorities for our regional parks system?**

**Comments:**

Completion of the "East Coast Trail" and integration of it with the Trans Canada Trail should be a very high priority. This has the potential to be a real generator of tourist traffic for the region as well as providing recreation opportunities for local residents.

Educating the user to their responsibilities. We need a more comprehensive approach i.e. volunteers talking in schools [show @ tell] videos ;Outdoor stores & groups together with the same message

Protect Mt. Arrowsmith Massif and MT/ Cokely for the future. Make this park the flagship of our park system. Improve the road and trails and allow some controlled commercial development, which will help with the park maintenance cost and provide for supervision for the area.

I would like to see wilderness areas within the parks and minimal recreational use in others i.e. motorized recreation allowed in sensitive, pristine areas.

Personally believe we have enough parks already and money would be better spent on existing parks upgrades.

Is Piper's Lagoon not a regional park? It is nice to have washrooms like this park has.

Protect Mt. Benson and Mt. Arrowsmith.

I think it is important to recognize a variety of outdoor activities that should be supported in our regional parks. There should be some that are for walking, some for biking, some for hiking, running, horseback riding, lawn bowling, tennis, badminton, etc. Limiting use to only one recreational pastime serves as an injustice to many. All activities should be supported and I think a more in-depth study has to be undertaken to get a good picture of what is needed.

Designate certain parks skateboard, rollerblading allowed. This will signal to the youth that we are listening to them.

Developing more recreation opportunities in parks i.e. trails picnic areas etc...

I feel some trails can remain "natural", not all trails need to be multi purpose they just need to be accessible to the public.

acquire parks for other purposes, i.e. off leash areas for dogs, horse trails , bike trails,

acquire the 'missing links'.

-access to shoreline, rivers

-wildlife habitat

To encourage the users of the parks and trails to stay on the trail and to educate people why they should stay on the trail.

I think because of the shrinking pool of available land, and the fact that land isn't getting any cheaper it's important to acquire land now. I think waterfront of all sorts is especially vital, from a wildlife point of view and public access point of view.

volunteers to steward them

distribution across the landscape to provide equal opportunities for all residents, not just people from "nice neighborhoods"

acquisition of crown land adjacent to Linley Valley Park - very important

Assisting our wild animals to have better habitat.

Better signage while on the trail and some way of finding out where these parks are located. For example, I tried to find the TCT Extension Ridge to Nanaimo River trail and couldn't even find the trailhead (somewhere at the end of Spruston!!). I'm an avid hiker and haven't heard of half the trails on this list.

Keep motorcycles off trails!

Develop bike trails along major roads where people bike a lot (i.e. Gabriola Island).

More bike paths and trails. Would love to see a bike path all around Gabriola.

To keep them as 'natural' as possible yet providing access trails, campsites, etc. to visitors.

Historical site preservation and interpretation.

Services to users.

Allow for proper exercise rather than being small pockets of land.

Public Awareness

Continue the focus on acquiring priority parkland that meets the needs of the Regional Parks Plan before the costs become prohibitively high or opportunities are unavailable in the future. Allocate more funds to maintain existing regional parks and to develop a basic level of services to provide for RDN residents and tourists alike. With basic services and park marketing/promotion, community support for future projects and land acquisition will increase. Continue to work on partnerships to stretch capital dollars with

volunteer labour, donated supplies, or community fundraising.

Continuing to improve and mark beach accesses and trailheads.

Make some more off leash trails. Use volunteers (Adopt a Trail) for improving existing trails.

Some of the construction techniques used to date are not good & need improvement (e.g. Top Bridge to Rath Trevor: alder retaining logs)

Protecting Mount Benson, Mount Arrowsmith and Ballenas Islands.

In order for biodiversity values or sensitive ecosystems to be truly protected in the parks system, these areas must be mapped and some effort put into designing a "protected area system" with other landowners and administrative bodies (e.g. provincial parks, nature trust lands, forest lands). Tasmania, for example, has achieved this through a scientific, community driven process; see J. Conservation Biology, volume 16, no. 6, December 2002, Historical Progress of Biodiversity Conservation in the Protected-Area System of Tasmania, Australia, by L. Mendel and J.B. Kirkpatrick.

See comments above.

Re. questions 4 & 5, all answers to these questions depend on which park we are talking about. In general, I feel that "regional" parks should be primarily for residents, rather than tourists, so resources spent on advertising and signage should be minimal. While acknowledging that some trails/access are necessary simply to keep people from trampling everything, I think that "access" and "human-made features" should only be significant in the smallest local parks. However, the security aspect of Operation unfortunately needs to be increased, with serious fines for illegal fires, cutting of trees, etc.

I suppose there is always room for improvement but our experience is that the parks are very well cared for...and this is very much appreciated. Acquiring more lands and/or routes would be important to us only as the area grows and more parks are needed.

Park land should be protected and owned strictly by the government, therefore enabling wild life to flourish and development to be restricted and long term revenue earned from the existence of resources maintained within the park i.e. tourism/recreation.

Volunteer task forces can improve quality. Quantity is more important. We need green spaces / forests for our kids to discover real nature and for wild animals to have homes.

Trails to Connect parks

Concentrate on getting large areas, not a bunch of small areas.

Create loop trails within the individual parks and add features, which will assist the park users - i.e.: good walking trails and signs (directional and interpretive).

To protect all wildlife species from human encroachment, by having some parks as limited or no human access.

Add trails in manner to protect damage from us users to the parks.

Planta Park: The trails in Planta Park should be improved to make them safer to walk on without injury.

Providing interconnected corridors for wildlife movement

Use what we have and don't let it go for other things.

Improvement is too subjective/general to answer. If it means encouraging more traffic (human, horse,

dog) through sensitive areas, I'm not in favour.

Promote use by providing maps of the parks and trails

Regional parks can play a greater role in tourism and enhancing the overall attractiveness of the RDN. If done sensitively, this need not detract from their present good qualities

Nanaimo river trail - acquire old rail bed? We need to get a riverside trail from the highway bridge to upper reaches like Cowichan and Puntledge Rivers have. Nanaimo /Cedar residents have little access to our river. Mt Benson - secure access to viewpoints and the top at the very minimum.

The #1 priority is to secure 12% of the landbase for outdoor recreation and another 12% for conservation. With 87% of population of Vancouver Island living on east coast of Vancouver Island - the demand for recreational spaces will only get higher, and so will the cost of acquisition - especially post 2010. Lifestyle buyers will expect natural areas and wildlife, therefore the selling of Crown Land within RDN must stop and compensation for selling E+N Land be made to the RDN Parks Plan in the transference of all remaining crown land to the RDN.

Improving parks and trails has time: acquiring is endangered.  
 Advertise so the local people will know there are parks for them or for wildlife preservation and they can volunteer help.  
 Kids need vacant lots.

Create a special park for dirt bike motorcycles, ATVs, and other motorized vehicles and ban them in people parks. Horseback riding "theme park".

Regional parks/trails are an advantage mostly for people who live in municipalities.

Acquisition is more important than maintenance now due to population pressures. The acquisition window is about to close in this area. Improvements can be done during the rest of the century, but only if acquisitions are done now.

**4. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of our regional parks and trails. (1 - Very dissatisfied 3 - Neutral 5 - Very satisfied)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
Advertising	9.66%	13.1%	54.48%	11.72%	8.28%	2.76%
Signage to and within parks	8.97%	24.14%	31.72%	24.14%	8.97%	2.07%
Quality of the natural features	0%	4.14%	11.03%	36.55%	46.21%	2.07%
Quality of the human-made features, facilities	2.07%	12.41%	42.76%	26.9%	13.1%	2.76%
Maintenance and Operation	3.45%	8.28%	43.45%	29.66%	11.72%	3.45%

**5. Please indicate your support for improvements in the following areas. (1 - No improvement needed 3 - Neutral 5 - Strong need for improvement)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
Public information about Regional Parks and Trails	6.21%	9.66%	28.28%	28.97%	24.14%	2.76%
Accessibility to Regional Parks and Trails	11.72%	7.59%	42.07%	22.07%	12.41%	4.14%

Signage to/within Regional Parks/Trails	11.03%	11.72%	29.66%	28.97%	15.17%	3.45%
Maintenance of Regional Parks and Trails	6.9%	13.79%	35.86%	25.52%	13.1%	4.83%
Natural features in Regional Parks/Trails	18.62%	8.28%	33.79%	16.55%	19.31%	3.45%
Human-made features in Regional Parks/ Trails	20%	16.55%	34.48%	17.24%	6.9%	4.83%

### Other suggestions for improving our regional parks and trails

#### Comments:

Improved quality brochures describing the parks and trails recreation opportunities of the region are required. Photocopied monochrome brochures with sketch maps are low cost but also low quality and need improvement.

Staging areas are needed as some user groups i.e. horses, large school and hiking groups, are forced to group up on the road. These areas should be part of the park.

Strongly support acquisition and protection of more parks and trails

Establish the adopt a mountain program ! This program can be successful.

Establish a volunteer park watch program to report vandalism or safety concerns etc.

Establish a stand alone RDN Parks website with all the park, trail mountain and ocean information ,also show on this website info about hiking ,climbing, ice climbing, walking, biking, camping and other park related outdoor activities, also tips, warnings, drop down box for report vandalism ,risk /safety concern ,comments and feedback, etc.

I could go on with suggestions ,however I don't know if anyone is interested.

I strongly support creation of a regional park at Mt Arrowsmith, a park that includes as much of the mountain as possible, including all the alpine areas and as many lakes as possible.

Clearly designated parking areas.

Can the public be told what lands are currently the property of the RDN and identified for park and public access - both by newspaper/internet notice and signs on road?

Lose the interpretive signs. While I understand they are appreciated by many, especially tourists unfamiliar with local flora and fauna, I think there are too many signs. Just like that commercial 'Enjoy the view' and the view is blocked by a sign. All too many times I have seen signs that are not maintained. There is a significant cost involved to put them up and maintain them over the years, which I would rather that money is spent on the parks themselves, or acquiring them. Please, also stop building so many stairs over natural rock walk ways. They detract from the natural beauty and ruggedness of the area we like to visit.

Have those on social services (those capable of work but unable to find any) commit 4 hours per month at designated parks for clean up. This will give them a sense of worth and contribution to our city and possibly build self-esteem.

Not sure how you can improve natural features in parks...

To draw or encourage tourists, efforts should be made in advertising and signage.

Sustainability must be taken into account when reviewing improvements.

These questions too similar to the last ones

-too many new smaller trails in small parks should be discouraged  
-neighborhood residents should not be allowed to make new trails at their discretion, wildlife habitat is greatly affected

educate public. example parking at Cathedral Grove...too one sided. public not really aware of how decisions are made

Please, no parking fees. This takes away from the freedom of enjoying a laid back atmosphere in the park. I would much rather have my taxes increased to pay for improvements

Make detailed maps and information about all regional trails accessible online and to pick up in local stores.

Gabriola Island is in need of a bike/walk-way!

We can never have too many parks/trails. We especially like the bike trails, and would like to see this network expanded and improved. I think that hiking trails and bikeways are of huge importance to our region. They continually remind users of the wonderful green space that surrounds us.

The regional parks and trails cover a large area, which makes it difficult to closely monitor maintenance. Under the circumstances I think our parks personnel provide excellent coverage to the best of their abilities.

More work needed on signage and sign protection and sign replacement.

Better co-ordination with city and provincial parks.

Put some "kid" stuff in the parks.

Better Maps, Marked Trail Heads. Info Centres staffed with more knowledge to trails.

Develop and maintain a professional appearance with high quality materials and infrastructure in high use areas such as park entrances, picnic areas and washrooms. Leave trails and park infrastructure outside of these high-use zones at a more rustic and lower level of development. Allocate sufficient capital funds to develop these high use zones with quality infrastructure that will require minimum ongoing maintenance and highest resistance to vandalism. This will help keep maintenance/operations costs lower. Capital funds seem to be easier to generate than annual operations funds, so these capital projects must focus on high quality, low maintenance design - even if it means reducing the number of capital projects than can be accomplished.

- continue to encourage the development and support the promotion/marketing of park programming by recreation staff or community partners such as Streamkeepers, Arrowsmith Naturalists, etc.

Promote and protect natural features.

Is there signage to Top Bridge?

Some trails need some limestone crush/mulch.

Need a few washrooms - especially the Nature Conservancy land on the Englishman River (bird sanctuary) - at the bottom of Shelley Rd would be nice.

Washroom facilities - especially at Top Bridge.

Turn some into athletic challenge themes like in Port Alberni

Strongly OBJECT to the conceptual trail concept (corridor) along the Nanaimo River. Also object to any use by the RDN (area of interest) next to Morden Mine.

We moved to Nanaimo two years ago, and I was not aware of how extensive the RDN park system was. Now that I've checked out your web site I'm keen to check out some of the trails with my husband. Are there any printed brochures showing the trails and maps, or is it only available from your web site?

There are several parks mentioned that I have no idea how to get to; a detailed map could be an effective way of raising funds to support management of these lands. Also there is no advertising of the biosphere reserve status, which could be valuable for promoting tourism. Having said this, an eco-tourism strategy should be in place to avoid overuse of parks and damage to sensitive areas (another reason they should be mapped - the sensitive ecosystems should not be (as) accessible to public).

Perhaps at least during the summer there could be some kind of park COPS/volunteer ranger program. These people could make regular patrols, report problems and give out general information or similar duties. (Whoops, just got to #6 and saw volunteer question).

With regard to your question re the use of parks; we don't always know the names of the parks so we can't honestly respond to the question. We need to do more to find out where and the names of parks are! We think dogs have too much freedom in some of the parks and we stay away for that reason; this is an owner responsibility, not the parks, but I don't know how you can impose this. The biggest thing my husband and I are concerned about is the development being planned on the Parksville waterfront. We are not opposed to development but we strongly oppose 7 and 9 story high-rises of any kind spoiling, in fact removing the natural beauty of our downtown area. This belongs to all residents, not the developers. We believe the City of Parksville needs to purchase this area and keep it as natural and open as possible.

Maintain the existence of the park and create new parks while educating the public and government on the importance of land kept in natural resource value, which is sustainable for long-term use.

There should be washrooms at all of them.

Loop trails (public want to be able to accomplish walks without retracing their steps.) Directional and interpretive signs are a necessity.

Leave it natural, the less human-made features the better.  
Educational signage promoting the purpose of each element of the ecosystem is important.

Add more trails in correct locations, add loops.

Let the nature of the trails allure. Do not interfere with too many man made trails or countryside blight. We have paid for our parks. Stop bureaucrats from maintaining a job, which is not required. Let the democratic system of those that enjoy the trails look after them without government intervention.

Develop a more enlightened policy for wildlife trees. Park policy of felling any tree with even a tiny bit of rot - even if the tree would have stood for another 100 years - greatly reduces the wildlife value of the parks.

While there is a need to provide access and facilities for human use this should not be the be all or end all of Parks. Given the current Prov. Gov. single minded focus on development and golf courses in the Region, Regional Parks will have to take on the role of preserving as much of the important habitat and wildlife corridors as possible.

Keep human made feature to minimum.

- In larger parks, "human-made features" such as toilets may be necessary, but other facilities should be kept to minimum.
- Security patrols (volunteer or professional) would be useful, at least for fire spotting in summers like the last few.

Make available a list of RDN parks/trails so that one may choose which ones to visit on a particular day. Currently one must search to find where parks/trails are located, then find out trails on them. From the consumer point of view for parks/trails in the region listed or mapped on a single source would be an advantage.

Incorporate interpretive features to explain historical resource uses, and look for ways to link parks using these features as themes

Acquire land now while you still can. Lifestyle buyers move here unaware of our peculiar land use predicament caused by the huge provincial E+N sellout. The E+N "Buy, Sell and Trade" lands will only go up in value as population pressures centre on this region.

Don't give up or forget about parks in any area - local people when consulted can often spark ideas for improvement or suggest ways and means or just encourage a good job. We are grateful whenever something is considered and done with care. It happens.

Keep moving in the current direction. Maintain current parks and trails and continue to add new parks and trails.

Please include in long-range plan a "linear park" adjacent to and alongside the Englishman River on Plummer Rd. side.

Where are the brochures explaining each park or trail and directions on how to find it? The few brochures available have few directions and poor maps.

On Gabriola Island integration of parks and trails in an island network is desirable. I think the federal crown lands on Gabriola should be placed in the Gulf Islands natural park, or under local park administration. Therefore, I see inter-governmental liaison and cooperation as critically important.

**6. Please indicate your support for the following funding options to help pay for our regional parks system. (1 - Do not support 3 - Neutral 5 - Strongly support)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
User Fees	57.93%	8.97%	13.79%	8.28%	5.52%	5.52%
Increased Taxes	19.31%	11.72%	20%	27.59%	17.24%	4.14%
Commercial sponsorship/advertising in Parks and Trails	32.41%	9.66%	20.69%	15.86%	17.24%	4.14%
Fundraising by Park supporters	4.14%	2.07%	20%	37.93%	31.72%	4.14%
Volunteers working in Parks and Trails	0%	2.76%	8.97%	30.34%	55.17%	2.76%

**Other funding options for the regional park system**

**Comments:**

Taxes and development cost charges should be a major component of the funding for our parks. Commercial/industrial sponsorship is acceptable if it can be kept discrete (no golden arches over the entrance to a "McDonalds Trail")

Memberships, family, Yearly, Corporate, Coupons, Parkpass used with a promotional partner. rental of space to user groups [annual events] Special RDN events i.e. Orienteering, Gyro cashing, Merchandising i.e., caps, water bottles, Maps, compass's

## Lottery

User fee for none RDN residents. Federal ,Provincial, Private, Corporate and International funding for the United Nation designated Mt. Arrowsmith Biosphere area. Establish a legacy/endowment fund and solicit tax-deductible donations for the Biosphere centre.

Commercial advertising in the parks of course must be "tasteful".

Tax industry or big business or residential builders. Get sponsorship for parks from industry or big business.

Skate parks could be partially funded by using a small user fee. This has proven to be a success in the larger cities providing employment as well.

Offer an incentive to local business by possibly replacing a portion of their taxes by donation to a park with their name. This money would be forwarded to Parks and Recreation, which in turn would then maintain the parks. This would also be an incentive for choosing Nanaimo as a place to maintain a business while having a possible charitable write-off for tax purposes.

Funding is a difficult subject for all levels of government, our demands will always outstrip our resources.

Regional district should support volunteers

Stop the 'zero risk' RDN policy.  
Get highways to do some.

I do not support user fees because walking is the healthiest sport and is something families can do together without having to pay. Picnics in parks.....first the walk and then refreshments in aid of the park. People who use parks and trails would be more than willing to make a donation in order to keep and maintain them but parks and trails should be part of quality of life and we should not have to pay for them.

bequests, donations, levy on adjacent residential developments, zoning requirement to set aside green areas, camping fees

not increased taxes but redirect taxes from other current allocations

Should have some paid employees to maintain parks.

Modest sales of certain properties that may have commercial value, but little recreational potential.

It would be nice to have commercial sponsorship but I think to see advertising in parks and along trails would be defeating the purpose of enjoying nature and 'getting away from it all'. Perhaps appropriate acknowledgement could be kept to small plaques or mention in brochures available to the general public.

Youth program during summer holidays to help with improving the trails. A small increase in taxes, volunteers and volunteers from the prison and justice systems for community involvement would be better than commercial interest!

I pay for this in my taxes.

Encourage and educate/inform the public re: the value of donating or leaving a bequest of land or money to the parks system. Many people would be happy to donate to an on-going legacy to preserve and acquire parkland, but don't know how to set it up.

Prefer liaison with volunteer group to handle maintenance and security and obviate necessity for increased taxes.

Corporate Sponsorship to include some advertising on Educational Plaques throughout the parks and trails or on printed media such as maps and guides.

- development cost charges for regional (and/or community) parkland acquisition.
- partnerships with NGO's such as Ducks Unlimited, Nature Conservancy etc.
- arrangements to protect park values (e.g., access for outdoor recreation or community greenbelt values - retain working forest) other than outright purchase and management as a regional park. Continue to work closely with private forest companies and other landowners to provide benefits to the landowners for protecting park values.
- set up a range of options for living legacies, estate planning and donations. With changing demographics there is an opportunity to work closely with community and environmentally minded individuals wishing to make a difference/legacy with their estates. Needs to be clear, professionally marketed/promoted, and offer a range of options consistent with Revenue Canada programs to potential donors. May wish to focus on a park foundation sort of a model with money being donated to a non-profit society for the purpose of acquiring regionally significant parkland.
- car washes and bake sales - 10,000 of them might buy one park.

User pay interpretive programs.  
Logging company land trades?

Please start a search for volunteers with known environmentalists so that they can put their money where their mouths are.

Offering densifications and other incentives to private landowners in exchange for critical parkland.

Currently I am working on developing a master's thesis regarding revenue generation for the management of conservation and protected areas in the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve. Because it is important to stay objective at this point, I have responded to #6 with neutral support for funding options that involve ethical and policy driven issues.

Commercial sponsorship is useful as general donation (money or land), but it shouldn't be at the expense of signs all over and shouldn't be for ongoing expenses/administration.

We believe parks belong to the people and are already paid for through our taxes. Therefore we STRONGLY OPPOSE user fees. If increased taxes are needed that may be a fair way to go. Commercial advertising isn't something we would like to see thro'out the parks but perhaps at the entrance may be appropriate. Volunteers is a good way to support parks and trails

Funding should come from functions manifest to the public such as tours, guides, recreational services and facilities which provide the public and tourists with a service that they can appreciate for the fee they have put in. Example: Paying for parking will appear to most as a money grab, but paying for a service that provides the public with education and a form of recreation, will create employment and revenue from tourism or from locals who are interested in paying into a service which directly benefits them.

Donations from public and corporations. Land from landowners i.e.: forest companies. Not all property has to be developed right now - it will come in the future.

Donations from Governments, private corporations, and the general public.

I don't feel that user fees or tax increases are appropriate; I would like to see a large portion of our taxes directed towards parks but not an increase.

There is already a network in place looking after the parks in their collective way. We do not need government to keep tabs on the thousands of people who seek out the pristine environment and look after it and respect it for today and the future.

New developments whether commercial or residential should be taxed on the value of the development with the funds going directly to the acquisition of new lands for parks and the maintenance and operation of existing Parks.

User fees depend upon type of park. If there are extra facilities provided and being used, then perhaps, yes. If not then keep-up (maintain) by taxes upon all. Increased taxes might be more palatable if there was some differentiation among areas depending upon use and costs in each area.

Commercial sponsorship fine, advertising isn't.

Have 10km runs to raise money.

Produce and sell at RDN office locations, maps of parks/trails in the region, perhaps similar to the Davenport map available at Tourist info Centres.

Lottery funds or Casino monies set aside.

Partnerships with Conservation Organizations and Land Trusts.  
Request compensation form Provincial Government for Public Land via transference to RDN Parks Plan of all remaining Crown Land within RDN.

Perhaps not user fees, but donations.

Acknowledgement of sponsorships is good enough; advertising, "DRINK COKE": No. "COKE SPONSORED THIS BRIDGE": Yes.

Let us know the fate of our donations or taxes - where did the money you budgeted actually end up??

I strongly oppose entry and/or parking fees. Regional parks should be for everyone - rich and poor!

Taxes are already crushingly high. Some government programs, particularly federal, need to be closed and the money re-directed to debt reduction and legacies such as parks. Also consider sustainable logging of demonstration forests, and perhaps carbon credit sales under Kyoto accord.

**7. If additions to the regional park system are possible, please indicate your support for the following types of parks or trails. (1 - Do not support 3 - Neutral 5 - Strongly support)**

	1	2	3	4	5	No response
Trails and linear linkages	2.76%	2.07%	13.79%	21.38%	55.86%	4.14%
Waterfronts	2.07%	2.07%	15.17%	26.9%	51.03%	2.76%
Sites of historical or archaeological significance	1.38%	4.83%	17.93%	31.03%	40.69%	4.14%
Mountain/alpine areas	2.07%	3.45%	13.79%	33.1%	44.14%	3.45%
Nature preserves (limited public access)	6.9%	6.21%	22.07%	17.24%	43.45%	4.14%
Motorized recreational areas	51.03%	13.79%	19.31%	4.83%	8.97%	2.07%
Camping	13.79%	13.1%	30.34%	20.69%	19.31%	2.76%

**Other types of parks or trails to consider**

**Comments:**

The limited public ownership of land in the RDN is a problem that needs to be addressed to ensure the protection of our unique natural surroundings ...Stanley Park in Vancouver required a visionary approach, we need to have a similar level of commitment to the future of this area.

Bicycle trails on roadways and road cleaning crews to clean right to edge of road instead of just to the white line. This would open up a lot of road that bicycles could use, as well being safer for all.

Designated motorized recreational area is a must for Mt. Arrowsmith and Mt. Cokley to establish rules /safety and control and achieve much less damage to sensitive mountain areas or park.

Around creeks or rivers?

How about camping for the hiking and biking crowd? Leave the private operators to handle motor homes and trailers etc.

Alpine, or dirt BMX tracks, Mountain biking trails, horse riding trails, lawn bowling, tennis, badminton, volley ball, water parks for kids, ocean beaches with lifeguards, river swimming holes with rope swings. Utilizing natural/local flora, objects to enhance a park. In Mexico, (Xcaret) all of the benches and stairs are built out of the natural rock, or quarried stone. The garbage cans are hidden or Camouflaged into the walls with natural rock outcroppings. Amphitheatres are built of the local stone. We should be making park benches out of the fallen trees, not buying them. We should offer guiding experiences in our regional parks, whether it is an interpretive nature walk or hike, or a river raft ride, or fly fishing adventure, or maybe even mountain climbing or rappelling, or snorkeling. We have so much to learn about eco tourism that could benefit our parks systems and help pay for them. Once again I refer to what many communities on the Caribbean side of Mexico are offering, such as Xcaret and Xel-Ha eco park. While we may not have the advantage of a tropical climate, thousands of people visit Vancouver Island every year and marvel at the natural beauty we take for granted. Regional Districts and Municipalities should take the lead in developing and marketing these traits. Whether it is a partnership or a business undertaking, surely, there is the expertise existing within our local government that we too, can do this successfully. I am not saying make the park a user fee option, but options within the parks should be promoted that work within our goals of preserving these spaces.

Use of existing highway lands.

nature trails with explanations as to the type of tree or plant.

Really need to get the Rails to Trails thing going - such as the unused rail bed to Port Alberni. They bring in a huge amount of money - there is a seminar as part of the Pro Bike/Walk conference in Sept. in Victoria showing the benefits of these trails. I think they said the "rue vert" in Quebec (old rail beds converted to cycling/hiking trails) brings in something like 95 million dollars to the economy. The Kettle Valley trail is a huge economic boost to the Okanagan.

marine parks, moorage

Some trails that are more strenuous for exercise minded people who want to get away to peace and quiet.

Do not support camping on Gabriola in parks. Support bike trails on all major roads.

We could really use walking/biking trails around Gabriola Island, or at least part of the island.

Trails around Little Mountain. Extension of a trail along Little Qualicum River to the Fist Hatchery.

mountain biking trails, backpacking opportunities, trails similar to the galloping goose in Victoria

- add greenbelt corridors to protect greenspace viewsapes and retain natural character of communities in the region.
- consider working with user groups to set aside designated appropriate multi-use areas within regional parks for motorized activities, mountain biking, horseback riding and other specific uses. Providing a location for these kinds of activities helps in managing conflicts created by these activities elsewhere.

Trailer Park in Englishman River Estuary!

If camping can make money to preserve an area - go for it - otherwise more headache than it is worth. RDN in partnership with the Nature/Land Conservancy. Partnership with other communities to use rail bed or trail beside railway between Campbell River to Victoria.

Please redefine the 'Park' zoning designation within the RDN Planning Dept. Presently, it is possible to build a house on property zoned as Park. Why?

Need to provide areas for noisy activity.

Bridging Nanaimo River on TransCanada Trail should be top priority.

Not quite sure what is meant by "motorized recreational areas" - does that mean you can drive and park there, or you can bring your camper there or you can take a snowmobile or ATV there??

Sites of archaeological significance are numerous along the waterfront and elsewhere. These areas, although they are fascinating to many (including me), are susceptible to pillaging and damage by treasure hunters. It is important to protect them, but not draw attention to them. Mountain areas may be important to assure the watersheds are well managed. The concept of limited public access to sensitive areas is something that definitely needs more attention; again (do I sound like a broken record?) we need to know precisely where they are before this can happen. At the same time it is important to ensure there is adequate access for recreation and tourism, so that the public has every opportunity to develop an appreciation for nature.

All unique areas near creeks, ocean, rock, mountains.

All trails and parks should be informative, how we as visitors can help protect not only our parks but our whole environment.

Lakes.

Bicycle trails, meditative sanctuaries for all age groups, kayaking sites

Wildlife corridors - high preservation values

It seems to be too late to save more central - east coast of V.I. Estuaries. This makes other waterfront preservation (ocean and lake) even more important.

I feel it is very important to have trails that link different areas so you can walk, run etc. safely.

Trails useable by a variety of means of transportation, excluding motorized would be best. I favour bicycle useable trails.

Acquisition of any remaining public land in a timely manner is paramount in establishing core conservation or recreation areas. Conservation covenants and out-right purchasing of private property will then be the sole means of expanding core areas and creating connectivity. Sadly, the RDN is not in a position to ponder what public land it will utilize, as such has been removed from the land base thus the E+N Deal and only small remnants remain public.

More small inner-street parks for moms and tots, teen ball, dogs, birds; just grass with some trees. A place to play not far from home, in regional districts, especially rural lots. Can be self-maintained and kept tidy.

Horseback riding only parks. Could expand with camping facilities for horses and their owners i.e. truck and trailer parking with corral at campsite. This park could be by FEES.

Some camping can be used to fund park operations.

**8. Which of the following best describes where you live?**

CITY OF NANAIMO	29.66%
CITY OF PARKSVILLE	8.28%
TOWN OF QUALICUM BEACH	5.52%
DISTRICT OF LANTZVILLE	2.07%
ELECTORAL AREA A: Cassidy, Cedar, Yellowpoint, South Wellington	8.28%
ELECTORAL AREA B: Gabriola, DeCourcy, Mudge Islands	6.21%
ELECTORAL AREA C: Extension, Arrowsmith-Benson	0%
ELECTORAL AREA D: East Wellington, Pleasant Valley	0%
ELECTORAL AREA E: Nanoose Bay	8.28%
ELECTORAL AREA F: Coombs, Hilliers, Errington	10.34%
ELECTORAL AREA G: French Creek, Dashwood, Englishman River, San Pareil	8.28%
ELECTORAL AREA H: Shaw Hill, Qualicum Bay, Deep Bay, Bowser	3.45%
VANCOUVER ISLAND OUTSIDE RDN	8.28%
MAINLAND BC	1.38%
OUTSIDE OF BC	0%
No response	0%

## Appendix B

### Stakeholder Agencies and Organizations Contacted

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*The following agencies and organizations were contacted regarding the review and update of the Regional Parks and Trails System Plan. Initial contact was by mail in September 2004 to introduce the review and distribute the public questionnaire. A second contact was made by email in December 2004 to seek comments on the Draft Plan.*

**Municipalities:**

District of Lantzville  
City of Nanaimo  
City of Parksville  
Town of Qualicum Beach

**Provincial Government:**

Agricultural Land Commission  
Land and Water BC  
Ministry of Forests, South Island Forest District  
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management  
Ministry of Transportation, Vancouver Island District  
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Vancouver Island Region: Planning Section, Ecosystem Section, Protected Area Section

**Federal Government:**

Dept. Fisheries and Oceans, Habitat Management  
Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada

**First Nations:**

Nanoose First Nation  
Qualicum First Nation  
Snuneymuxw First Nation

**School Districts:**

School District No. 68  
School District No. 69

**Neighbouring Regional Districts:**

Cowichan Valley Regional District  
Comox-Strathcona Regional District  
Alberni-Clayquot Regional District  
Islands Trust, North Office and Victoria Office

**Business and Tourism:**

Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce  
Oceanside Tourism  
Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce  
Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Tourism Association of Vancouver Island  
Tourism Nanaimo

**Forestry:**

South Island Woodlot Association  
TimberWest Forest Corporation  
Weyerhaeuser Company Limited

**Environmental Organizations:**

Arrowsmith Ecological Association  
Arrowsmith Naturalists  
Arrowsmith Watershed Stewardship Team  
Ducks Unlimited Canada  
Gabriola Land and Trails Trust  
Lantzville Streamkeepers  
Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society  
Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve Foundation  
Nanaimo Area Land Trust  
Nanaimo Field Naturalists  
Nanaimo Fish & Game Protective Society  
Nanose Naturalists  
Nanose Streamkeepers  
Nature Trust of BC  
Nile Creek Streamkeepers  
North Island Wildlife Recovery Association  
Parksville-Qualicum Beach Fish & Game Society  
Qualicum Beach Environment Committee  
The Land Conservancy of BC  
Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Mid-Island Branch

**Community Organizations:**

Cedar Community Enhancement Society  
Cedar Residents' Association  
Chartwell Residents' Association  
Eaglecrest Residents' Association  
Ecohill Residents' Association  
Echo Mountain Residents' Association  
Errington Residents' Association  
Nanose Property Owners & Residents Association  
Fairwinds Community Association  
French Creek Residents' Association  
Gabriola Ratepayer Association  
Horne Lake License Holders' Association  
Mapleguard Ratepayers' Association  
Northwest Nanose Residents' Association  
Spider Lake Community Association  
Spruston Road Preservation Society

**RDN Advisory Committees:**

Area A Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee  
Area B Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee  
Area E Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee  
Area G Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee  
District 69 Recreation Commission

# Appendix C

## Stakeholder Meetings

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*Discussions in person or by phone were conducted with the following representatives:*

Area A Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (presentation made at meeting)

Area B Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (presentation made at meeting)

Land and Water BC: Richard Brunning, Development Marketing Project Manager, and Keith Anderson, Sales Manager, Nanaimo office

Lantzville, District of: Ian Howat, Chief Administrative Officer

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management: Bill Zinovich, Sustainable Resource Management Officer

Ministry of Transportation: Bob Wylie, Sr. District Development Technician, Vancouver Island District Office

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection – Parks/Protected Areas: Dave Forman, Area Supervisor for Arrowsmith; and Drew Chapman, Area Supervisor for Qualicum

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection: Sharon Erickson, Planning Section Head, Vancouver Island Region

Nanaimo, City of: Richard Harding, Manager, Parks Planning and Development

South Island Woodlot Association (made presentation at Annual General Meeting)

TimberWest Forest Corp.: Steve Lorimer, Manager, First Nations and Community Relations

Town of Qualicum Beach: Paul Butler, Director of Planning

Western Canada Wilderness Committee: Annette Tanner, Rhonda and Gary Murdoch

Weyerhaeuser Ltd.: Brad Rodway, South Island Woodlands Division, and John Eden, Northwest Bay Operations



# Appendix D

## RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

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### **RDN Park System Plan** Schedule A of Bylaw No. 921, 1995

- Staff reports detailing amendments and updates to the 1995 Plan:
  - February 25, 1998
  - September 29, 1998
  - May 21, 1999
  - February 17, 2003
  - June 13, 2003

### **RDN Regional Growth Strategy**, Bylaw No. 1309, 2003

#### **RDN Official Community Plans for Electoral Areas:**

Electoral Area A (Cassidy, Cedar, Yellow Point, South Wellington), Bylaw No. 1240, 2001

Electoral Area C, Arrowsmith-Benson-Cranberry Bright, Bylaw No. 1148, 1999

Electoral Area D, East Wellington-Pleasant Valley, Bylaw No. 1055, 1977

Electoral Area D, Lantzville, Bylaw No. 974, 1995

Electoral Area E, Nanoose Bay, Bylaw No. 1118, 1998

Electoral Area F (Errington/Coombs/Hilliers), Bylaw No. 1152, 1999

Electoral Area G, Englishman River, Bylaw No. 814, 1990

Electoral Area G, French Creek, Bylaw No. 1115, 1998

Electoral Area G and H, Shaw Hill, Deep Bay, Bylaw No. 1007, 1996

Electoral Area H, Bylaw 1335, 2003

#### **RDN Regional Park Management Plans:**

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan, 1999

Descanso Bay Regional Park Management Plan, 2003

Horne Lake Regional Park Management Plan, 2003

- Related Staff reports:
  - Horne Lake Regional Park Operations, February 16, 2004
  - Horne Lake Regional Park Operations Update, September 24, 2004

Nanaimo River Regional Park, Management Plan, 2004

#### **RDN Regional Trails Project Studies and Implementation Plans:**

District 69 Trail System, An Implementation Plan 1998-2000. 1997.

Morden Colliery Trail Management Plan, 1998.

District 69 Trail System, Making Connections-Rathtrevor to Top Bridge. 1998.

District 69 Trail System, Project Two - Lighthouse Country Trail. 1999.

District 69 Trail System, Project Three – Trail Corridor Links between Parksville and Qualicum Beach via French Creek, A Concept Plan. 1999.

Electoral Area ‘A’ Community Trails Study, 2002.

**RDN Community Parks and Open Space Plans:**

Nanose Bay Parks and Open Space Plan (2000)

Lantzville Parks and Open Space Plan - Foothills to Foreshore. 2000.

**Other RDN bylaws, policies and documents:**

Policy no. C1.3, Parks Naming Policy, 1995

Regional Parks Services Agreement, March 13, 2001.

Sign Manual for Community and Regional Parks and Trails. 2001.

Policy no. C1.4, Park Inspection Policy, 2002

5 Year Financial Plan 2005 to 2010. 2004.

Active Living Guide Spring/Summer 2004.

RDN Park Use Regulations Bylaw, No. 1399, 2004

- Related Staff Reports 27 August 2004 and 26 October 2004

**Information available from the RDN website <http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=128> :**

Regional Parks and Trails map

Regional Trails System

Trans-Canada Trail Map (Nanaimo Region)

Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge Location Map

Arrowsmith Trail Map

Regional Camping information

**Documents from other sources:**

Capital Regional District Parks Master Plan, Schedule "A" to Bylaw No. 2743, 2002

Central Okanagan Regional District Official Regional Park Plan, Bylaw No. 884, 2000

Columbia Shuswap Regional District Electoral Area 'C' Parks Plan Final Report, 2003

Comox Strathcona Regional District – Regional District Parks Information <http://www.rdc.bc.ca/Parks/>  
(City of) Nanaimo Trail Implementation Plan, 2001.

Stewart, C. Regional Parks and Regional Trails: a Handbook for Regional Districts. Staples McDannold Stewart. 2004. 30 pages + appendices.

Sunshine Coast Regional District Strategic Park Master Plan – Community Parks, Draft. 2004.

Terrestrial Logic Consulting Ltd. Preliminary Environmental Assessment Qualicum Bay to Dep Bay Crown Lands Phase 1 Studies. Prepared for Land and Water BC Inc. 2004.