



NEWS RELEASE

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The RDN and the City of Nanaimo Expand Local Parks

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and the City of Nanaimo are pleased to announce that 99.1 ha of land for park expansion has been acquired from Mosaic Forest Management. The new parkland expands and connects the RDN's Mount Benson Regional Park and the City of Nanaimo's Westwood Lake Park, ensuring the public has permanent access to this popular recreational corridor that takes them from lakeshore to mountain top.

The newly acquired land is comprised of three blocks and features second-growth forest. The RDN secured two of the blocks totaling 78.9 ha at a cost of \$2.96 million and the City of Nanaimo purchased the third 20.2 ha block for \$1.25 million. The purchase price of the land is based on both timber and land market values and was established through an independent land appraisal and timber cruising.

Both parks are popular recreation destinations due to the extensive outdoor activities available to residents including hiking, mountain biking and swimming. The collaboration between the RDN, The City of Nanaimo and Mosaic Forest Management is just one example of local governments and the forestry industry working together to increase recreational opportunities in the region.

Mount Benson Regional Park now boasts 292 hectares of forested land along the upper north-east slopes of Mount Benson. It offers panoramic views extending from Nanaimo to the Strait of Georgia and contains the headwaters of Witchcraft Lake and Westwood Lake as well as Millstone River and Chase River. Westwood Lake Park now encompasses 207.9 hectares and is nestled in the foothills of Mount Benson. With multi-use trails, a fresh-water lake and amenities such as a picnic area and playground, it offers a variety of recreational activities for all ages and abilities.

The RDN and the City of Nanaimo will be working together to update the trailhead maps at both park entrances to inform park users of the new additions and connecting trails. New wayfinding signs will also be installed to help park users navigate between Mount Benson Regional Park and Westwood Lake Park.

For more information on Mount Benson Regional Park, Westwood Lake Park and other parks in the region, visit rdn.bc.ca/parks-services and nanaimo.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails.

Quotes

“We are pleased to work with the City of Nanaimo and Mosaic Forest Management to make this wonderful addition to our extensive parks system a reality. Expansion of Mount Benson Regional Park will provide the region’s residents with lasting recreational and social benefits while helping to preserve natural areas for future generations.”

- Tyler Brown, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo

“Nanaimo is known for its spectacular natural assets. Over the pandemic, we saw an increase in use of our parks and trails. This work between the City of Nanaimo, the Regional District of Nanaimo and Mosaic Forest Management will expand our recreational experiences for users, and meet a Council priority, which is to protect and enhance Nanaimo’s natural environment.”

- Leonard Krog, Mayor, City of Nanaimo

“We are delighted to be part of this major expansion of parkland in the Nanaimo area. This is a great example of industry and government working together to achieve positive outcomes for local communities. It is part of Mosaic’s broader initiative to facilitate recreational opportunities in and around our working forest through dozens of access agreements with local organizations and our network of 14 not-for-profit campsites across Vancouver Island.”

- Jeff Zweig, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mosaic Forest Management

Quick Facts

Mount Benson Regional Park

- Established in 2008
- 292 ha in size including the new acquisition
- The new lot featuring over 100 parking spots and a connecting trail was completed in 2019
- Features extensive trails and decommissioned logging roads for hiking and mountain biking

RDN Parks

- Within the RDN, there are 12 regional parks and 212 community parks totaling over 2,800 ha of land and 78 km of trails in 10 regional trail systems

Westwood Lake Park

- Established in 1957
- 207.9 ha in size including the new acquisition
- Features a 6 km multi-use trail around the lake, swimming beaches and a playground

City of Nanaimo Parks

- The City of Nanaimo has over 1000 hectares of City parks and protected open spaces and over 180 km of trails

For more information, please contact:

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