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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024

SUBJECT **Island View Beach Regional Park Campground – Operating Season Extension Pilot**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To report on the pilot to extend the length of the operating season at Island View Beach Regional Park campground and to seek direction on the future term of the operating season.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District (CRD) operates a campground at Island View Beach Regional Park (IVBRP) that consists of 18 recreational vehicle (RV) sites, 5 small trailer sites and 24 tent sites (Appendix A) under a temporary use permit from the District of Central Saanich (Central Saanich). Since opening in 2010, the CRD has operated the campground from the beginning of the Victoria Day weekend in May until the end of the Labour Day weekend in September.

On February 10, 2023, the CRD submitted a temporary use permit renewal application to Central Saanich to continue operating the IVBRP campground for an additional three years (standard permit term), which was approved on May 24, 2023. During the application review process, Central Saanich Council expressed interest in having the camping season extended on a trial basis. At its May 24, 2023 meeting, the Regional Parks Committee carried the following motion arising:

That staff report at the July Capital Regional District Board meeting on adding a pilot to extend the IVB camping season beyond the current end of season on Labour Day.

The Board carried the following recommendation at its July 12, 2023 meeting:

- 1) *That the 2023 operating season for the Island View Beach Regional Park Campground be extended to the end of the Thanksgiving long weekend, October 9, 2023, as a pilot project; and*
- 2) *That CRD staff review the success of the pilot project and report back to the Regional Parks Committee and Board in early 2024.*

Staff are reporting back on the pilot to extend the operating season at Island View Beach Regional Park campground.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the operating season for the Island View Beach Regional Park campground be extended to the end of the Thanksgiving weekend each year.

Alternative 2

That the operating season for the Island View Beach Regional Park campground remain from the beginning of the Victoria Day weekend until the end of the Labour Day weekend.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The CRD began operating the campground in 2010 when the land was acquired through the Land Acquisition Fund. The CRD did not own the land on which the existing campground is located when the Island View Beach Regional Park Management Plan Bylaw No. 1, 1989 was approved in 1989, nor when it was amended in 1996 and 1997. As such, there is no specific management direction for the campground.

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (Strategic Plan) contains the following Visitor Experience Strategic Priority, which provides high-level support for offering camping services in regional parks:

3-1 Offer compatible outdoor recreation opportunities that are enjoyable, healthy, safe and immersed in nature.

Financial Implications

Camping at IVBRP is a subsidized recreational activity. In 2023, camping fees were set at \$25/night, plus \$10 per additional vehicle, for all 47 sites. The total revenue collected from camping fees was approximately \$126,700 (see Table 1) and operating costs totalled approximately \$138,000, resulting in a net operating deficiency of approximately \$11,300.

Table 1: Island View Beach Regional Park Campground – 2023 Revenue

Month	Operating Days	Fee Revenue	Average \$/Day	Estimated Occupancy Rate
May	13	11,309.52	869.96	77%
June	30	26,190.48	873.02	78%
July	31	31,357.14	1,011.52	90%
August	31	32,976.19	1,063.75	95%
September	30	20,595.24	686.51	61%
October	8	4,285.71	535.71	47%
Totals	143	\$126,714.28	\$886.11	79%

The estimated occupancy rate for the entire 2023 camping season was 79%, with the traditional season (Victoria Day to Labour Day) at 87% and the pilot extension season (Labour Day to Thanksgiving) at 54%. Due to lower occupancy rates during the pilot extension, staff reduced operating costs by decreasing staff hours and services. Operating expenses for the pilot extension totalled \$21,250 and revenue collected totalled \$21,238 for a net operating expense of \$12, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Island View Beach Regional Park Campground – 2023 Pilot Extension Period Cost and Revenue (September 4 to October 9, 2023)

Operating Days	Fee Revenue (+GST)	Revenue/Operating Days	Operating Expenses	Net Operating Expense	Estimated Occupancy Rate
35	\$21,238	\$606.80	\$21,250	\$12	54%

Intergovernmental Implications

CRD staff have provided updates to Tsawout First Nation and Central Saanich staff on the pilot to extend the operating season at the IVBRP campground and the proposed recommendation to permanently extend the operating season. Feedback from the updates supported the pilot and permanent extension of the operating season.

The campground is permitted to operate through a Central Saanich temporary use permit and the CRD will submit the necessary land use applications to formalize the campground as a permitted use under Central Saanich’s bylaws. CRD staff will continue informing the Tsawout First Nation and Central Saanich about the ongoing management of IVBRP and the campground.

Service Delivery Implications

Operating the IVBRP campground is funded through core budget sources. The additional revenue and operating expenses associated with permanently extending the operating season to the Thanksgiving weekend each year can be absorbed into the existing core budget.

Social Implications

Island View Beach Regional Park offers a uniquely picturesque setting on the east coast of the Saanich Peninsula, which attracts many visitors from across the region and beyond. Extending the camping season at IVBRP will offer additional camping options to the public through the early fall. Bookings are anticipated to be primarily on weekends, with the RV and tent trailer sites receiving the highest occupancy rates, as weather can be variable.

CONCLUSION

At the July 12, 2023 CRD Board meeting, staff were directed to pilot an extension of the operating season at the Island View Beach Regional Park campground to the end of the Thanksgiving weekend, October 9, 2023, and report back to the Regional Parks Committee. Staff have completed the pilot, assessed the implications and are recommending extending the operating season from the beginning of the Victoria Day weekend in May until the end of the Thanksgiving weekend in October each year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the operating season for the Island View Beach Regional Park campground be extended to the end of the Thanksgiving weekend each year.

Submitted by:	Mike MacIntyre, Acting Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Island View Beach Regional Park Campground Map