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Regional Parks



Additional land acquisitions and increased access to parks and recreational trails that respect Indigenous culture and conservation values

01 Strategy

STRATEGIES & PLANS

- › [Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan](#)
- › [Regional Growth Strategy](#)
- › [Climate Action Strategy](#)
- › [Special Task Force on First Nations Relations](#)
- › [CRD Corporate Plan](#)
- › [Statement of Reconciliation](#)
- › [Regional Trails Management Plan](#)
- › [Land Acquisition Strategy](#)
- › [Park Management Plans \(Various\)](#)

CORPORATE PLAN GOALS

- 7a Complete the strategic planning & engagement process
- 7b Access & equity
- 7c Enhance the protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity & natural assets in regional parks
- 7d Expand access to green space & outdoor recreation
- 7e Climate action & resilience
- 7f Reconciliation

02 Contacts

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03 Operating Context

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

1. Adopted a new planning process to guide the development of divisional plans and policies.
2. Installed EV chargers at two high-use parks.
3. Replaced the water supply line at Elk/Beaver Lake - Beaver Beach.
4. Completed development of the Mayne Island Regional Trail.
5. Completed a State of Natural Features Report, summarizing ecological data in regional parks and trails, and a State of Recreation Report, summarizing visitor use data in regional parks and trails, which will be used to inform the development of the Stewardship Plan.
6. Delivered the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey (administered approximately every 5 years) to measure residents' satisfaction with CRD regional parks and trails over time.
7. Completed phase one of First Nations engagement to update the Land Acquisition Strategy.
8. Entered into a partnership with the WSANEC Leadership Council to co-develop the Mount Work Regional Park Management Plan.

FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT OUR OPERATIONS IN 2025 AND BEYOND

- **First Nations Reconciliation** – The CRD supports working with First Nations on common interests and recognizes that how this is achieved will be an ongoing discussion with each First Nation and will evolve as priorities, capacities and governance structures shift over time. Reconciliation is a journey towards strengthened relationships with First Nations and overall increased cultural awareness and respect to improve management of regional parks and trails.
- **Changes to Recreational Use Patterns** – With the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation comes challenges for meeting user objectives, including ensuring safety, mitigating environmental damage, and resolving conflict between users. There is also increased pressure for a diversity of recreational uses and greater advocacy from various recreational stakeholder groups.
- **Regional Trails Use and Development** – Increased and diversified transportation use of the regional trails adds demands to existing operations and services, including more calls for service, additional responses to developments adjacent to the regional trails, and the need to support long-range planning processes, including the potential development of a regional transportation service.
- **Sustainable Service Delivery** – Major infrastructure in regional parks is nearing the end of its lifespan and needs improvements to support demands it was not built for. In recent years, the increased cost of materials and the complexity of projects has led to high costs for these major capital projects. Anticipate increased costs associated with the need for improved and safer active transportation infrastructure.
- **Demographic Changes** – The population within the CRD is aging overall. It is also becoming more ethnically diverse. This demographic change will likely continue and will create demands for different forms of recreation and new ways of using open space. It also raises the need to help new Canadians learn about regional parks and trails, fully enjoy the park experiences, and understand and respect the environment of the regional parks and trails system. These demographic changes will give rise to different recreation demands for people with differing needs and abilities.

- **Events** – Regional parks provide locations for recreation activities, events, tourism and filming, all of which are major contributors to the regional economy. However, there is also growing demand for economic activity in the parks, arising from activities such as commercial filming, and numerous group events. The number of permits continues to increase to allow these types of events to occur within the system.
- **Ecological Integrity** – Over a number of years, there has been increased interest in understanding the region’s biodiversity and reaching national climate targets, as well as including Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Increased pressures stem from the need to provide funding, supervision and expertise to support conservation programs that maintain and monitor ecological integrity.
- **Human Disturbance** – Conflict can occur between the need to protect ecological, geological and cultural features and visitor access or recreational activities. While some park features, such as streams, coastal dunes, and similar natural ecosystems, may be considered attractive for some recreation pursuits, they may not be suitable for many activities because of their vulnerability to irreversible change. The CRD has a responsibility to protect species and ecosystems at risk, as well as areas with Indigenous cultural value.
- **Species At Risk** – Effective management of threatened plant and animal species can be complex and requires specialist expertise. Threatened species recovery is a long-term process and success may take time and be financially costly.
- **Climate Change** – Regional Parks continued to mitigate and respond to the impacts of climate change (drought, unseasonably warm temperatures, wildfire, increasing rain, snow and wind events) on park assets and natural resources.
- **Monitoring and Research** – Increased monitoring and research will be required to evaluate the success of conservation programs, the impact of activities on parks and to determine where additional efforts may be required.
- **Land Acquisition** – Expanding the regional parks and trails system to meet increasing recreation demand and conservation needs, while respecting First Nations rights and sovereignty, presents a unique challenge for CRD staff. It requires meaningful engagement and rethinking traditional acquisition processes to foster collaborative relationships that advance the CRD’s broader reconciliation goals.
- **Changes to Regional Development** – The region is experiencing growth in multi-family developments, development sites and intensity of development. This is leading to more pressure for recreational space on nearby regional parks.
- **Dam Management Program** – Regional Parks staff continue to focus on dam management to ensure compliance with dam safety regulations and to manage and mitigate risks associated with dam ownership.

2023 OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▶ 8.9 million visits | ▶ 376 km of official regional park trails |
| ▶ 33 regional parks | ▶ 95 km of regional trails |
| ▶ 3 regional trails | ▶ 78 FTEs |
| ▶ 13,300 hectares of regional park lands protected | ▶ 30,424 auxiliary staffing hours |

04 Services

The services listed below rely on the support of several corporate and support divisions to operate effectively on a daily basis. More information about these services is available in the Corporate Services and Government Relations Community Need Summaries.

SERVICE BUDGET REFERENCES¹

1.280 Regional Parks

1. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Description

Contribute to effective and efficient decision making through plan and policy development, including the Strategic Plan and park management plans, natural and cultural resource management, capital development planning, asset management, including the Dam Management Program, and project management. Provide oversight of the Land Acquisition Program.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Increase the percentage of management plans that are less than 15 years old and Interim Management Guidelines for newer acquisitions.
- ▶ First Nations Reconciliation. Develop work plans and traditional use agreements with willing First Nations. Seek economic development opportunities for First Nations in regional parks.
- ▶ All new management plans seek to have First Nations section written by First Nations.
- ▶ Evaluate candidate properties for land acquisition. Update the 10-year land acquisition strategy objectives, criteria, process and principles.
- ▶ Provide planning and project management for capital projects. Procure grants to support capital development.
- ▶ Procure engineer assessments of critical built assets (dams, trestles, bridges) up to \$225,000 annually. Prepare a 5-year critical asset assessment schedule.
- ▶ Manage asset inventory data and the Asset Renewal Plan to establish capital project planning for 5, 10 and 20-year capital plans.
- ▶ Provide spatial and GIS data analysis and collection for a range of purposes, including existing and new digital data-sharing agreements.
- ▶ Respond to development referrals that impact regional parks and trails.

Staffing Complement

Regional Parks: **12 FTE + 1 Manager**

¹ Service budget(s) listed may fund other services.

2. REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS

Description

Regional Park Operations is responsible for the operations and maintenance of all regional parks and regional trails. Park Operations staff operate and maintain all regional park facilities and critical infrastructure, including bridges, dams, roads and trails. The operation of regional parks occurs 365 days per year, with high-use facilities being serviced once or twice daily on average.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Manage and maintain 450 km of park trails, 57 washroom facilities and 159 garbage/recycling containers.
- ▶ Support capital project development; undertake infrastructure and facility replacement and repair projects annually.
- ▶ Support large special-use events in regional parks and trails.
- ▶ Annually prepare or update 37 Regional Park and Trail Operating Plans.
- ▶ Manage three regional campgrounds; meet target of 65% weekend occupancy rate at Sooke Potholes and Island View Beach (from May to October).
- ▶ Complete a variety of annual safety-related programs, including dam safety, danger tree program, and facility inspections.
- ▶ Manage and maintain the Regional Parks fleet, including operations vehicles and other heavy equipment.
- ▶ Operate a trail repair program that focuses on revitalizing natural surface trails within regional parks.
- ▶ Operate and maintain a Sign Program that develops, installs and maintains signage in regional parks and trails.

Staffing Complement

Regional Parks: **38 FTE (including Administrative Support) + 1 Manager**

3. VISITOR EXPERIENCE & STEWARDSHIP

Description

Regional parks and regional trails are vital to the region, supporting health and wellbeing, offering social connections, and improving quality of life. Regional parks provide over 450 km of trails and a range of opportunities for outdoor recreation, experiencing nature, learning about natural and cultural heritage, participating in park stewardship, and gathering for events. CRD Regional Parks Visitor Experience and Stewardship staff contribute to quality visitor experience in regional parks through public education, a compliance and enforcement program (park rangers), public engagement, communications, and stakeholder support. Through conservation and stewardship initiatives, including the volunteer program, staff monitor and support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in regional parks. Staff serve the public by answering public inquiries in a timely manner, coordinating park use permits and managing online registration for regional parks camping.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ 600+ volunteers delivering parks and trails condition checks and invasive species removal.
- ▶ Deliver 250+ natural and cultural educational programs, nature outings and outreach events annually.
- ▶ Process 200+ park use permits annually.
- ▶ Undertake four conservation projects per year.
- ▶ Ongoing ecological and species at risk monitoring.
- ▶ Ongoing visitor use and outdoor recreation monitoring.
- ▶ Conduct 4,500+ hours of compliance and enforcement patrol annually utilizing CRD Bylaw Officers and CRD Park Rangers.
- ▶ Deliver at least three public awareness campaigns related to regional parks and trails annually.
- ▶ Conduct an annual accessibility audit of regional parks.
- ▶ Work with recreational activity license agreement holders to improve recreational experiences.

Staffing Complement

Regional Parks: **21 FTE + 1 Manager**

4. REGIONAL TRAILS

Description

Manage regional trails system to protect and operate four regional trails that provide a transportation and recreation function and that provide non-motorized trails for active transportation and recreation to connect municipalities, electoral areas and the region with adjacent jurisdictions.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Operate, manage and maintain 97 km of multi-use regional trails.
- ▶ Conduct vegetation removal annually.
- ▶ Undertake infrastructure renewal projects to extend the life of critical infrastructure.
- ▶ Conduct compliance and enforcement on regional trails through the Park Ranger program, with support from CRD Bylaw and enforcement partners.
- ▶ Promote safe and courteous regional trail use through an annual public awareness campaign.
- ▶ Coordinate and issue access permits for any public or private works within the trail corridors.
- ▶ Manage a number of legal agreements for the operation of the regional trail network.
- ▶ Review development proposals adjacent to regional parks and trails to mitigate potential impacts.

Staffing Complement

Regional Parks: **FTEs built into divisional FTEs**

05 Initiatives

Below are the initiatives listed in the [Capital Regional District 2023-2026 Corporate Plan](#) and the related initiative business cases (IBCs), including financial and staffing impacts, proposed for 2025. The financial impacts reflect full program costs, including cost of staffing.

Initiative	Implementation year(s)
7a-1 Finalize the Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan	2023
7b-1 Conduct research, develop and implement a Universal Access Plan to improve inclusion and accessibility in regional parks and trails	2024-2025
4b-3 Implement the Regional Trails Closure Policy	2024-ongoing
7c-1 Conduct research and prepare and implement a Natural Areas Conservation Plan ²	2023-2026
7c-2 Develop and implement Impact Assessment and Best Management Practice Guidelines	2023
7c-3.1 Elk/Beaver Lake Water Quality Monitoring*	2024-2026
FUTURE IBC 7c-3.2 Elk/Beaver Lake Oxygenator Operation	Planned for 2026
NEW IBC 7c-4.1 Regional Parks Maintenance Workers*	2025-ongoing
7d-1 Develop and implement an Outdoor Recreation Plan ²	2023-2025

² Natural Areas Conservation Plan and Outdoor Recreation Plan to be combined into the Stewardship Plan



Initiative	Implementation year(s)
7d-2 Undertake the Resident Survey	2023-2024
7d-3 Develop an Interpretive Program Plan	Planned for 2027
7e-1 Plan for and implement bike parking and e-bike/electric vehicle charging stations at high-use regional park accesses	Ongoing
7e-2 Update the Land Acquisition Strategy to incorporate criteria that reflects First Nations interests	2023-2025
7e-3.1 Asset Management Engineered Structure Inspections*	2024-ongoing
7f-1 Work with First Nations to develop and implement priority initiatives related to regional parks and regional trails ▶ 7f-1.1 First Nations Strategic Priority Initiatives	Ongoing 2024-ongoing
7f-2 Develop a policy for supporting and clarifying Indigenous cultural use and cultural safety in regional parks	2024-2025

*Not captured in the 2022-2026 Corporate Plan



06 Performance

GOAL 7A: COMPLETE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Targets & Benchmarks

- Board approval of the Strategic Plan indicates general First Nations and public support for the plan.
- Actions identified in Strategic Plan form the basis of annual Board-approved service and work plans.
- Collaboration with First Nations governments, municipalities, park agencies, CRD divisions and stakeholders form the basis for implementing the Strategic Plan.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
2	Number of actions in the Strategic Plan that are underway	Quantity	25	25	30	→
3	Number of Strategic Plan initiatives that have First Nations involvement	Quantity	10	10	15	→

¹ Minor amendments to the Strategic Plan will be brought forward when necessary to update factual information and to update park and trail classifications, as new additions to the system are identified and established.

² High priority actions are identified through annual work planning and form part of the annual financial planning process.

³ First Nation participation in implementation of the Strategic Plan will be through the development of tailored work plans with each Nation.

Discussion

- The new regional park classification, Conservancy Area, may increase participation of First Nations in land acquisition discussions and development of cooperative management agreements.
- Acquisition of new park land through the Land Acquisition Program may necessitate minor amendments to the Strategic Plan to update park classifications and other information.
- Implementation of some high-priority actions will help to set the policy framework for the management of regional parks and trails.

GOAL 7B: ACCESS & EQUITY

Targets & Benchmarks

- Measuring the level of asset renewal investment and condition of parks and recreation trail infrastructure is a good indicator of how well-maintained, and therefore accessible and inclusive, the infrastructure is. This is supplemented by information about visitor satisfaction to ensure that expectations are met and that CRD actions and initiatives are facilitating a good experience for visitors.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
1	Maintain a visitor experience satisfaction rate of 85% or better for regional parks and trails	Quality	85%	85%	85%	→
2	100% of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system in good or better condition	Quality	100%	100%	100%	→

¹ Percentage of visitors that described their overall experience with Regional Parks and Trails as 'quite satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'; data from CRD Regional Parks Resident Survey 2017 (collected every ~5 years).

² Percentage of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system that is in good or very good condition; data from asset management sustainable report cards.

Discussion

- Resident Survey to be completed in 2024 and results will be released in the fall.

GOAL 7C: ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY, ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY & NATURAL ASSETS IN REGIONAL PARKS

Targets & Benchmarks

- The CRD receives the gracious help of many volunteers who support the preservation and enjoyment of regional parks and trails through positions like naturalists, restoration volunteers, park stewards and trail ambassadors, as well as recreational activity groups.
- Our target is to maintain or better the existing volunteer base.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
1	Maintain a volunteer base of greater than 500 people	Quantity	665	665	665	→

¹ Number of active volunteers in Regional Parks and Trails; data from volunteer registry.

Discussion

- Experienced lower volunteer numbers during the pandemic but numbers have climbed back up to pre-pandemic levels.

GOAL 7D: EXPAND ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE & OUTDOOR RECREATION

Targets & Benchmarks

- The Land Acquisition Fund provides funding for the purchase of land for regional parks and trails. Tracking community contributions helps demonstrate the sufficient availability of funding and community support for the strategy that has been put in place.
- The target for community contributions is 25% of the fund contributions received annually.
- A process to update the Land Acquisition Strategy with fulsome First Nations engagement early in the process will help to ensure that the criteria, principles and process identified in the Strategy reflect First Nations values.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
1	A 25% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners	Quantity	0%	25%	25%	→

¹ Percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund contributions annually that comes from community partners: data from Land Acquisition Updates.

Discussion

- The CRD continues to seek partnerships for land acquisition, including increasing First Nations’ partnerships in regional park acquisitions and management.
- Engagement with First Nations on the updated Land Acquisition Strategy will proceed in three phases over 2024 and 2025 leading up to Board approval of the Strategy at the end of 2025.

GOAL 7E: CLIMATE ACTION & RESILIENCE

Targets & Benchmarks

- Regional Parks is contributing to the development of complete and connected communities by improving multi-modal access to regional parks by installing vehicle charging stations at high-use regional parks.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
1	Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are installed in high use parks	Quantity	0	2	2	→

¹ High-priority regional parks will get two ev-charging stations at main access points in 2024. Future charging stations within regional parks will involve working in partnership with agencies to install chargers within regional parks.

Discussion

- The EV-charging stations are included in the Regional Parks capital plan.

GOAL 7F: RECONCILIATION

Targets & Benchmarks

- The CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan supports ongoing engagement with First Nations in the management and operation of regional parks and regional trails in years to come and ensures that parks and trails remain culturally safe and inclusive.
- Reconciliation workplans are developed with each First Nation. The target is two new workplans annually.
- Traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region. The target is two new agreements annually.
- A cultural safety policy is developed and implemented.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2023 Actual	2024 Forecast	2025 Target	Desired trend
1	Reconciliation workplans are developed with each First Nation	Quantity	0	2	2	→
2	Traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region	Quantity	1	2	2	→
3	A cultural safety policy is developed and implemented	Quantity	0	0	1	↗
4	Participation of 19 First Nations in the update of the Land Acquisition Strategy	Quantity	15	16	19	↗

Discussion

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 focuses on strengthening government-to-government relationships and understanding between the CRD and First Nations in the region. After an extended engagement period with First Nations on the Interim Strategic Plan in the region, the CRD Board adopted the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 in July 2023. The CRD is committed to maintaining an open dialogue with First Nations to confirm that Indigenous cultural values and cultural uses are respected and that the priorities and actions remain relevant and meaningful.

07 Business Model

PARTICIPANTS	All municipalities and electoral areas
FUNDING SOURCES	Requisitions, grants, donations and non-tax revenue
GOVERNANCE	<u>Regional Parks Committee</u> <u>Regional Transportation Committee</u>