



Regional Parks Large Carnivore Pilot Project

Regional Parks Committee

January 28, 2026

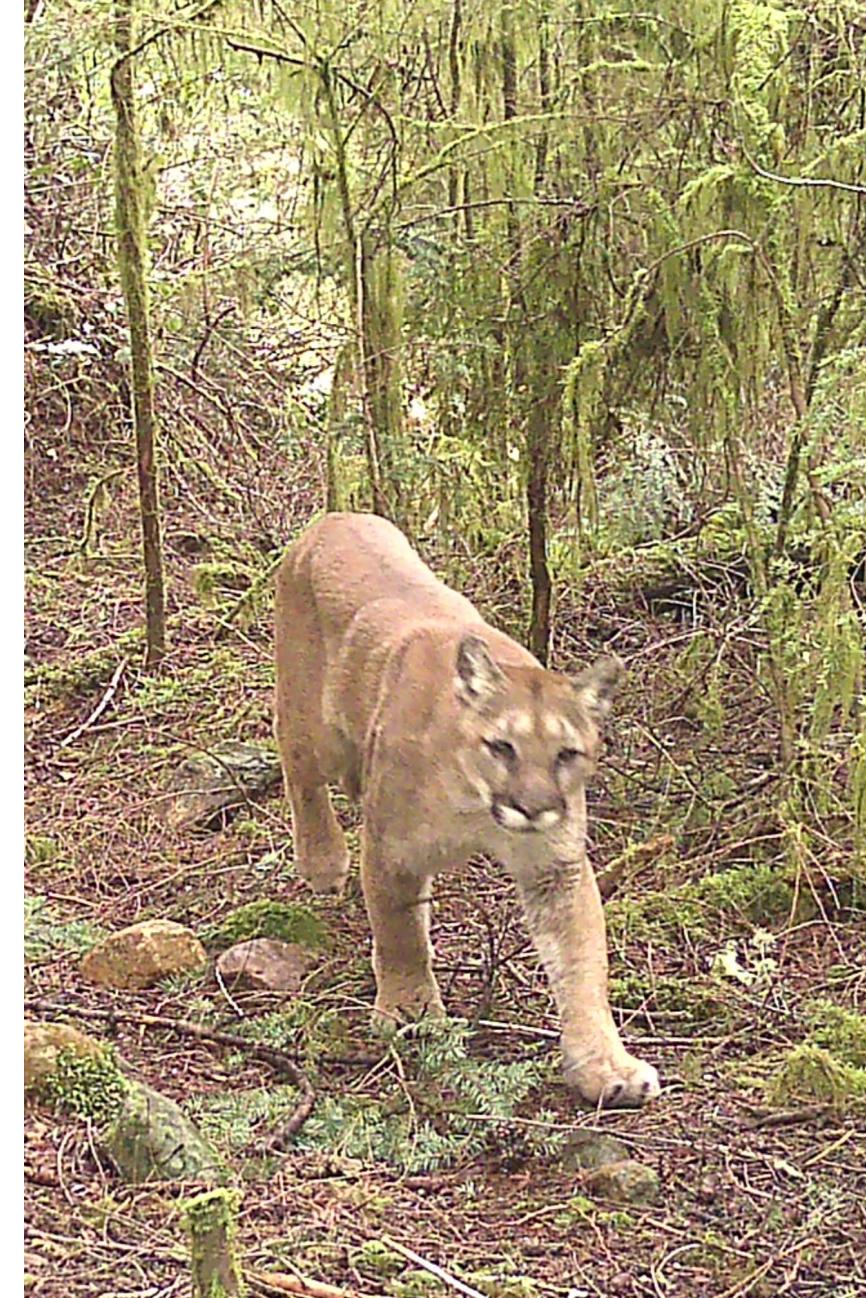
Presentation Content

1. Background
2. Key Findings
3. Implications
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Background

- Large carnivores play a critical role in ecosystem health.
- The State of Natural Features Report identified a need to inventory wildlife habitat features in regional parks.
- The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 identifies Priority Action 2-1c: Protect, restore, enhance and mitigate impacts to important habitat and sensitive ecosystems in regional parks.
- Data on the presence of large carnivores (bears, cougars and wolves) and their habitat use is limited.





Scope of Project

- Establish baseline data for large carnivore presence in three regional parks.
- Identify key wildlife habitat features and seasonal use.
- Inform park planning, management and future conservation priorities.

Methodology

- Regional Parks selected:
 - East Sooke
 - Matheson Lake
 - Roche Cove
- Non-invasive survey methods:
 - Track and sign surveys
 - Community and staff observations
 - Wildlife cameras
- Intuitive, opportunistic sampling locations.



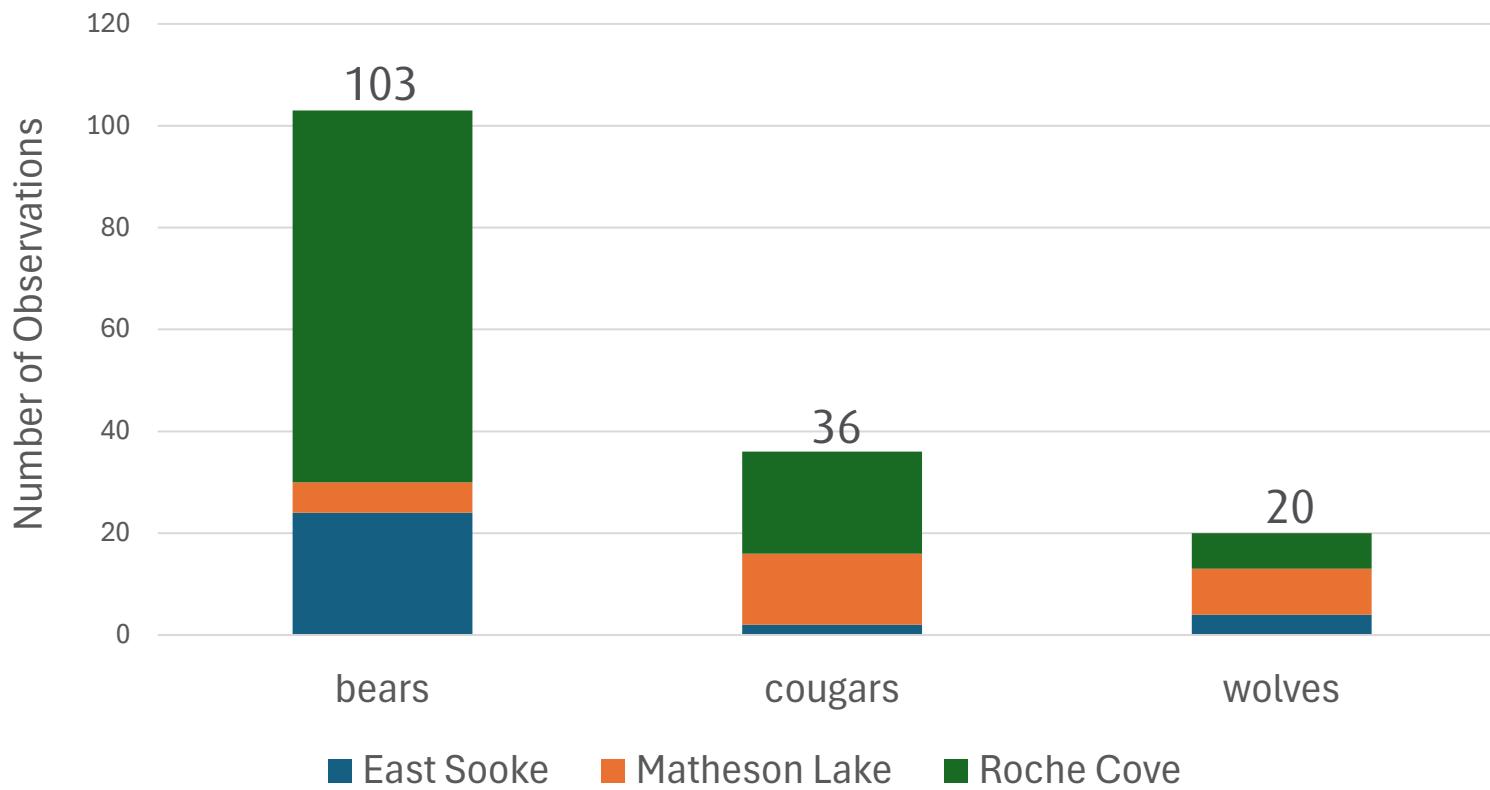
Video - black bear



East Sooke
Regional Park

Key Findings

Number of observations by species



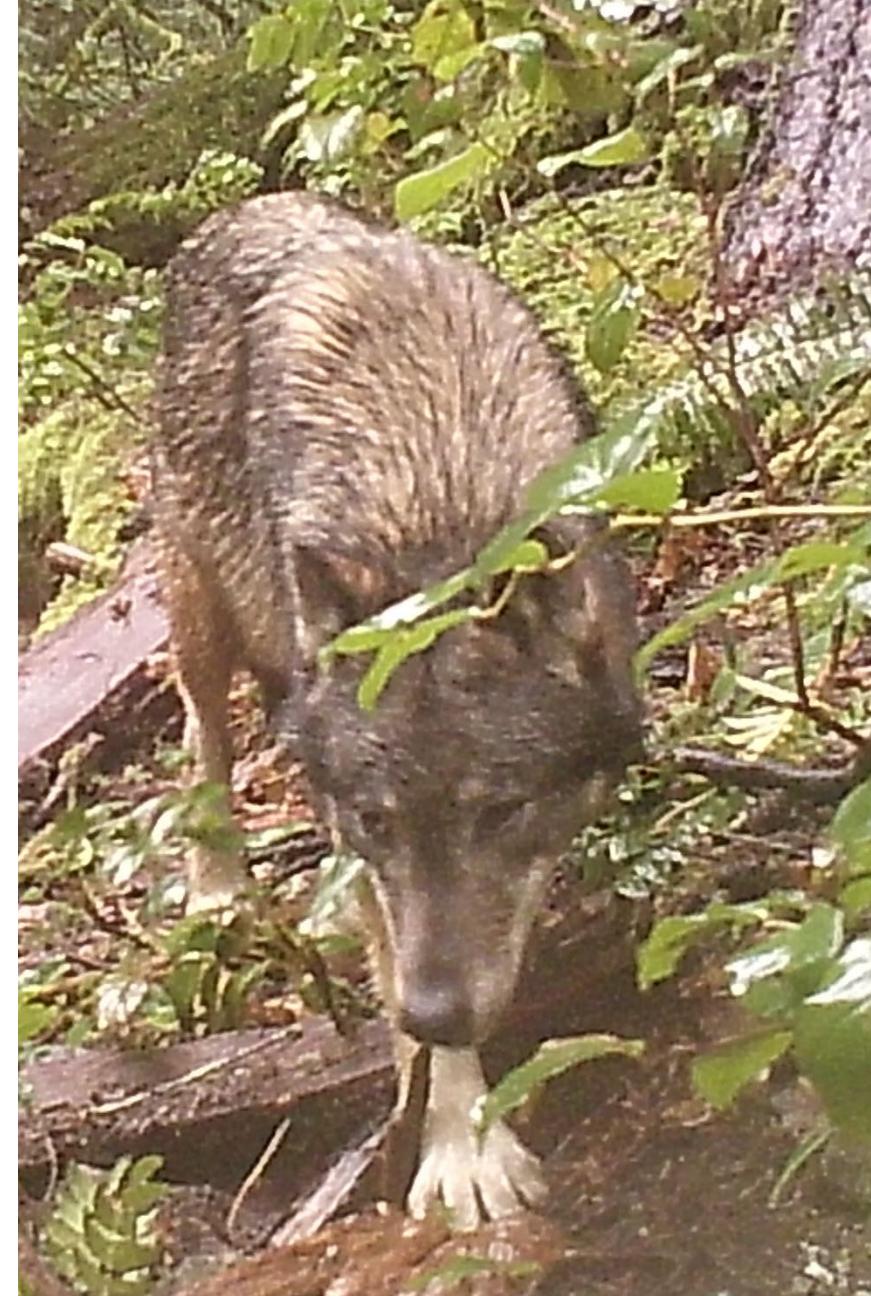
These results are biased by:

- Number of cameras in each park.
- Duration of camera placement.
- Selection of camera location by staff.

Key Findings

Observations by species

	Black Bears	Cougars	Grey Wolves
Habitat Use	Relatively active year-round in forests and riparian habitat		
Overlap with recreation	High overlap with trails	Occasional overlap with trails	Little overlap with trails
Habitat Features Identified	5 bear dens observed	3 potential travel corridors observed	1 travel corridor observed



Implications

Environmental

This project:

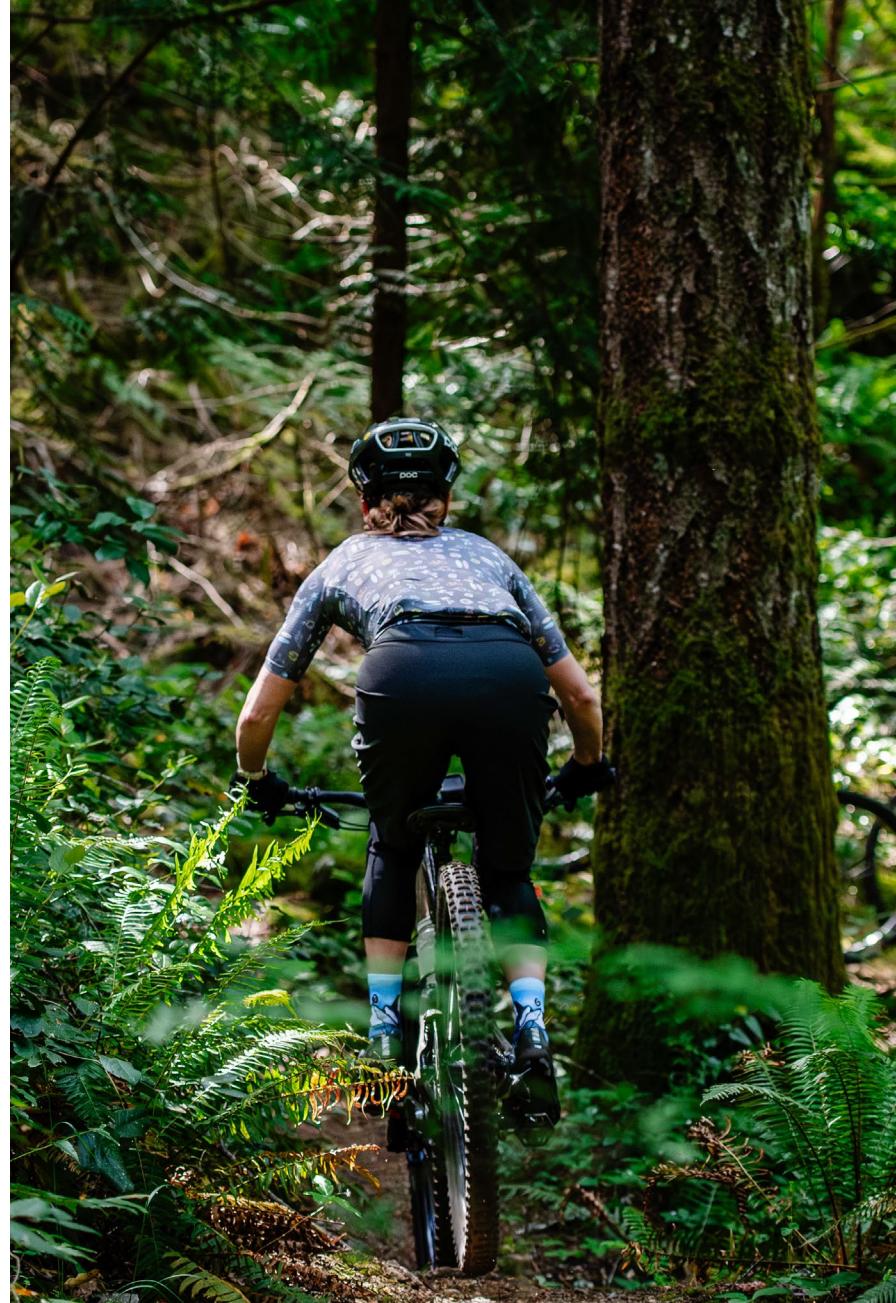
- Identifies important wildlife features within regional parks.
- Guides future regional park planning, management and conservation priorities.
- Builds on existing partnership with University of Victoria research group.
- Supports relationship building with community partners, academic affiliations, First Nations and other governmental organizations.



Implications

Social Considerations

- Findings reveal carnivore habitat overlap with recreational trails.
- Staff can mitigate potential human-wildlife conflict through park signage, public communications, interpretive programming and ranger patrols to ensure park visitors:
 - Secure food attractants
 - Stay on trail
 - Keep dogs on leash in designated areas



Conclusion

- **Preliminary baseline data established:** The pilot project confirmed consistent presence of black bears, cougars, and coastal wolves in East Sooke, Matheson Lake, and Roche Cove regional parks and identified key wildlife features.
- **Planning implications:** Findings emphasize the importance of integrating wildlife considerations into park planning and visitor management, especially where habitats overlap with park trails.
- **Next steps:** Continue the monitoring program and collaboration with partners to strengthen conservation efforts, support biodiversity, and ensure compatibility with recreation use.





Questions?



Capital Regional District



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