

**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023**

---

**SUBJECT**     Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Update

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To inform the Regional Parks Committee that a Regional Parks and Trails resident survey is being prepared in 2023 and will be mailed to 7,650 Capital Regional District (CRD) households in early 2024.

**BACKGROUND**

CRD Regional Parks conducted resident surveys in 1992, 1998, 2005 and 2017. The surveys helped document public satisfaction, confirm visitor activities in the parks, assess understanding of the benefits of parks for conservation and recreation and to get feedback on priorities for park management and facilities.

Data collected through the surveys provided guidance for the conservation and management of natural environments (i.e., management plans), helped develop new recreational activities and transportation routes, and supported land acquisitions. Understanding public needs and interests, and monitoring changes over time, is key when setting priorities and being responsive to public expectations.

The last survey was completed seven years ago. In line with Priority Action 3-1c of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2023-2032, it is time to obtain up-to-date feedback through a statistically valid resident survey.

CRD staff have obtained a third-party vendor, Malatest, with expertise in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in the development of the 2024 survey. The survey will be approximately 30 questions (with multiple statements to be replied to) and is designed to take 15 to 25 minutes to complete. The survey will remain open for a minimum of four weeks and may be extended, depending on survey response rates.

The survey invitation will be mailed to 7,650 randomly selected households in the five geographic sub-regions of the CRD: Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island, Saanich Peninsula, Core Communities, Westshore, and the District of Sooke and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Based on past survey response rates, a 25-30% response rate is expected. All information collected will follow the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any incentives offered will adhere to the federal *Competition Act* and *British Columbia's Gaming Control Act*.

Results of the resident survey will be presented to the Regional Parks Committee in summer 2024.

**IMPLICATIONS**

*Social Implications*

The aim of the resident survey is to better understand regional parks and trails use, and to measure public values, attitudes, expectations and satisfaction toward the protected area system and regional services, over time.

Following the adoption of the 2023-2026 Board Priorities and the approval of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032, residents will participate in a survey that collects up-to-date information about public priorities for outdoor recreation (visitor use) and environmental conservation, while gathering information on the additional strategic priorities of reconciliation, climate action and resiliency, and access and equity.

The survey will:

- estimate the frequency of use of regional parks and trails.
- document the type of activities residents participate in while in regional parks and on regional trails.
- assess understanding of the importance and benefits of regional parks and trails.
- determine residents' views about the management of regional parks and trails and management priorities.
- explore the role of regional trails as transportation routes.
- explore residents' support for the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2023-2032 priorities.
- include new and revised demographic questions on accessibility, income, gender and household type.
- include new questions that address access and equity, reconciliation and climate resiliency.

The survey methods described in the Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Methodology (Appendix A) offer the rationale behind the sample methodology, size and area proposed to conduct the survey with statistically valid results.

### *Financial Implications*

The estimated cost to complete the resident survey is \$65,000 and is being funded through the Regional Parks core budget. Costs include a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion review of the questionnaire and the production of a mail-out survey package (an invitation to a web-based or telephone questionnaire using a unique code, with an option for a physical questionnaire to be mailed on request). The physical mail-out will include a cover letter, frequently asked questions letter, reminder postcards, and the option for a physical questionnaire with a postage-paid return envelope. The third-party contractor will administer the survey, track the web, phone and physical questionnaire responses, and manage incentives, data entry, statistical analysis and reporting.

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

Initiating the resident survey is identified as a priority action in the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (3-1c), specifically to “Undertake resident surveys to assess visitor use satisfaction and emerging trends related to regional parks and regional trails” (every five years).

## **CONCLUSION**

The Regional Parks and Trails resident survey will collect up-to-date information about residents' use of regional parks and trails and their opinions about priorities for conservation, recreation (visitor experience), reconciliation, climate action and resiliency and access and equity. This will guide staff in planning for the future and adjusting delivery of services. Results of the resident survey will be presented to the Regional Parks Committee in summer 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, 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: Regional Parks and Trails Resident Survey – Methodology