

A person wearing a hat and a backpack is standing in a field of yellow flowers. The image is overlaid with a green semi-transparent filter. The text is centered over the image.

Volunteer Services Plan 2026-2031

Regional Parks Committee

May 27, 2026



Agenda

1. Volunteer Program Background
2. Why We Work with Volunteers
3. Current State of the Volunteer Program
4. National Trends & Challenges
5. Volunteer Satisfaction Survey
6. Volunteer Services Plan 2026-2031 Goals

Volunteer Program Background

- Started in 1966 with spontaneous acts of goodwill by the community removing litter or cleaning trails.
- First formal volunteers in the 1970s with work experiences for students.
- Formal volunteer program began in 1982 with volunteer beekeepers and volunteer wardens.



Why We Work with Volunteers?



Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the strategic vision of Regional Parks:

- Protecting biodiversity and restoring habitats.
- Offering compatible outdoor recreation.
- Educating the public.
- Fostering appreciation and good park etiquette.
- Building community and goodwill between the CRD and the public.

Current State of the Volunteer Program

Today, the program includes several types of volunteering that are both long-term and short-term:

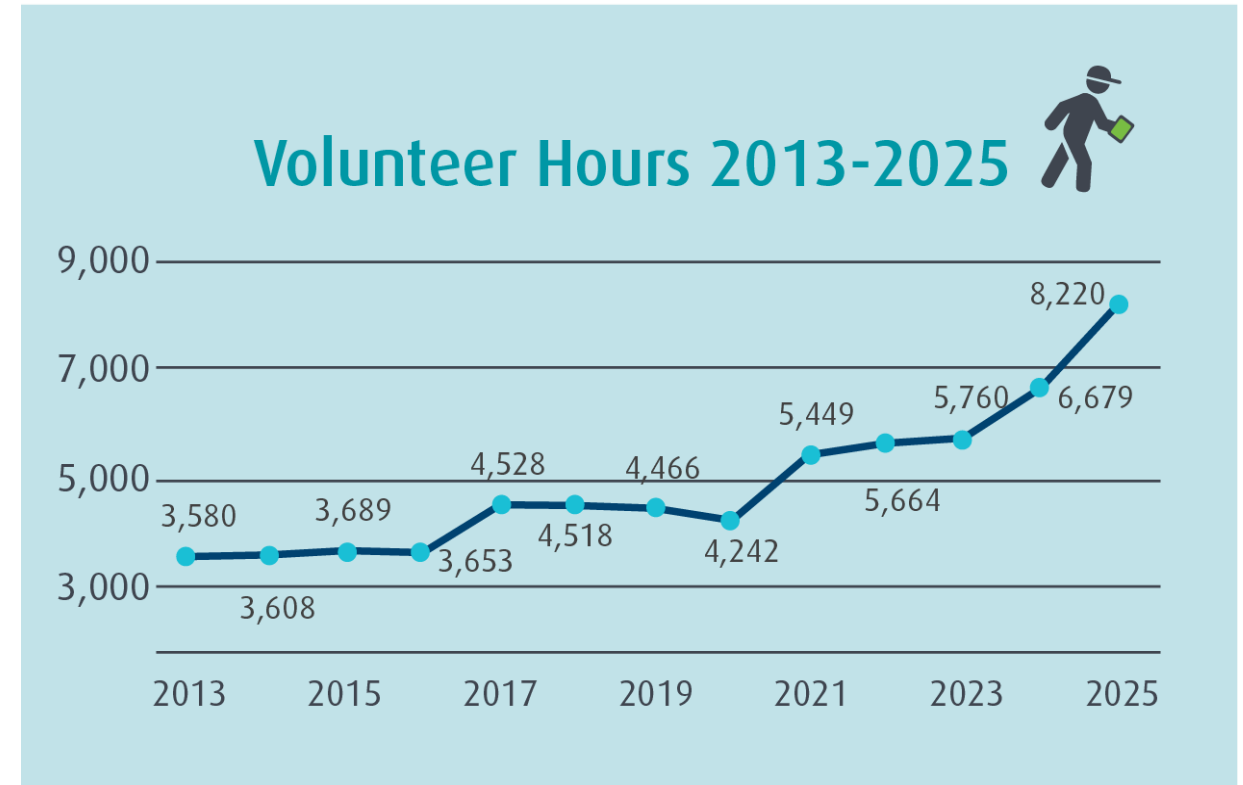
- Individual volunteers
- Group volunteering
- Stewardship agreement groups
- Recreation license groups
- Student work experience



Current State of the Volunteer Program (cont.)

In 2025, the CRD had:

- Over 630 parks volunteers
- More than 8,200 hours donated
- Six stewardship groups – 25% of total hours
- Three recreation license groups
- 139 staff-led restoration events
- 133 naturalist shifts at nature houses
- 1,317 park steward shifts



National Trends & Challenges

- Declining participation
- Mutual benefit
- Accessibility
- Equity and decolonization
- Virtual engagement
- Flexibility





Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

In 2023, Regional Parks conducted a volunteer satisfaction survey.

Key findings:

- Volunteers reported high levels of satisfaction, and the program was described as well organized.

Areas for improvement:

- Diversify participation.
- Enhance reporting and data collection.
- Build community among volunteers.

Volunteer Services Plan 2026-2031 Goals



Diversify Participation:

- ✓ Engage a broader demographic.
- ✓ Identify and address barriers to participation.
- ✓ Develop recruitment partnerships.
- ✓ Offer flexible scheduling and varied opportunities.



Promote, Recognize and Appreciate Volunteers:

- ✓ Strengthen promotion of volunteer opportunities.
- ✓ Improve data collection and reporting.
- ✓ Continue meaningful recognition.

Volunteer Services Plan 2026-2031 Goals (con't)



Foster Opportunities for Learning and Connection:

- ✓ Provide ongoing education, training and skill-building opportunities.
- ✓ Create more opportunities for volunteers to connect socially, both in-person and digitally.



Update and Maintain Program Administration:

- ✓ Uphold the high standards of the program.
- ✓ Refresh the volunteer mission and vision.
- ✓ Update policies, procedures and handbooks, ensuring they are accessible online.



Questions?



Capital Regional District



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