

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

SUBJECT Regional Parks – Interim Management Guidelines

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide information on interim management guidelines that are used to inform the management of CRD-owned parkland prior to a park management plan being in place.

BACKGROUND

The CRD established a management planning process in 2006 with the development of The Pathway for Regional Parks and Trails Management Planning (see Appendix A). Utilizing this process, management plans take on average 3+ years to develop from project initiation to completion. Depending on the number of management planning processes underway, it may take multiple years before a management planning process can be initiated after a new acquisition.

To guide the development and use of CRD-owned parkland prior to a management plan being in place, staff develop interim management guidelines (IMGs) for each newly-acquired park. IMGs provide direction for engagement with First Nations and gathering information needed to inform the development of a park management plan, while protecting and promoting park values.

To date, IMGs have been developed for Ayum Creek, Sooke Potholes, and Mill Farm regional parks. The Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve Interim Management Guidelines (see Appendix B) were the last IMGs approved by the Parks & Environment Committee in 2019. Plans are in place to develop a set of similar IMGs for Wrigglesworth Lake, Mountain Forest and Royal Oak Golf Course regional parks.

IMPLICATIONS

First Nations Reconciliation

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (Strategic Plan) establishes that the CRD is to form *strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership*. The use of IMGs supports this goal by providing guidance and expanded timelines to engage with First Nations to learn how First Nations knowledge and practices can be incorporated into the future management and operation of regional parks. This includes maintaining an open dialogue with First Nations to confirm that cultural values and traditional uses are respected, and management priorities and actions are relevant and meaningful. The CRD is having active discussions with local First Nations on the future of the Royal Oak Golf Course regional park.

Social Implications

While an IMG is in place, a precautionary approach is taken when considering developing park infrastructure and sanctioning visitor uses to ensure park values are protected. A broader range and higher intensity of development and use may be considered after sufficient site information

has been gathered and vetted through a management planning process.

Financial Implications

Identifying budget allocations to implement interim management actions will occur through the CRD's regular annual budgeting planning process.

Service Delivery Implications

The IMGs improve service delivery in the following ways:

- Management direction is provided that guides the development of basic park infrastructure and sanctioning of low-impact visitor uses that utilizes existing infrastructure until such time that a management planning process is undertaken;
- A public-facing IMGs document is prepared for each park, which includes a park development concept drawing and list of interim management actions that are to be completed; and
- Interim park management is standardized and incorporates direction from the Strategic Plan.

Environmental & Climate Implications

The IMGs are intended to ensure environmental values are identified and not negatively impacted through interim development or public use. The IMGs also outline ecological and archaeological information that will be gathered in advance of the development of a future park management plan.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The use of IMGs supports the following Strategic Plan Climate Action & Resiliency priority:

- 4-4 Ensure the long-term and consistent management of regional parks and protected natural areas.

The following action was developed to meet the above priority, and is further supported by utilizing IMGs:

- 4.4b Engage and involve First Nations governments, stakeholders and the public in the preparation and implementation of park management plans to ensure transparency, knowledge sharing and adaptability.

An IMG is monitored, evaluated and revised, as necessary, to ensure alignment with ongoing First Nations engagement and to adapt to new information or changing priorities.

CONCLUSION

CRD staff prepare IMGs to guide the development and use of newly acquired parkland. IMGs prioritize relationship-building with First Nations, information-gathering, and protecting park values until such time that a management planning process is undertaken, and a greater diversity and intensity of uses may be considered. Plans are in place to develop IMGs for Wigglesworth Lake, Mountain Forest and Royal Oak Golf Course regional parks and will be brought to the Regional Parks Committee for decision.

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

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: The Pathway for Regional Parks and Trails Management Planning (March 2006)

Appendix B: Mill Farm Regional Park Reserve – Interim Management Guidelines (November 27, 2019)