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REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020

SUBJECT Regional Parks – Management Planning Priorities

ISSUE SUMMARY

To establish consistent evaluation criteria and process to prioritize regional parks and regional trails for management plan development, as well as provide recommendations for new management planning processes.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 states that “management plans provide strategies to protect the environment, and they define appropriate levels of activities.” Through management planning, the goals, objectives and policies for a park are set to guide ongoing development and management actions. Management planning processes are designed to engage First Nations and include public outreach and consultation.

The development of a park or trail management plan takes between one and three years, depending on the complexity of issues, degree of collaboration with First Nations and level of public engagement. In rare cases, planning processes may extend five to ten years due to complexity or unforeseen issues. Typically, after 15 years, or if significant changes are required, management plans should be updated. Currently, 13 regional parks do not have management plans or interim management guidelines and, in three cases, the management plans are more than 20 years old.

Given the finite resources Regional Parks has to conduct management planning, each new management planning process must be focused on a regional park or regional trail that is seen as a priority. In 2018-2019, Regional Park’s staff completed a project to establish evaluation criteria and a process for determining priorities for developing new or updated management plans for regional parks and trails and develop a priority list for consideration by the Regional Parks Management Team (RPMT) prior to initiating new management planning processes.

The project team collaboratively analyzed each park using the evaluation criteria and scoring method (Appendix A) to come up with a list provided as a recommendation to the RPMT of priority parks and trails for future management planning, based on total scores (Appendix B). Included in Appendix B is the year of approval of a management plan (if one exists) for that regional park or trail. Several regional parks do not appear on the list because in 2019 management planning processes were either recently completed (Mt. Parke or St. John Point) or Interim Management Guidelines were developed and approved (Mill Farm). In addition, one management plan remains in-progress (Island View Beach), pending the progress of ongoing work and discussions with the Tsawout First Nation.

Subsequently, the Regional Parks Management Team, after consideration of additional factors, established the top three management plan projects for 2020 as i) Mount Work, ii) East Sooke, and iii) combining Matheson Lake and Roche Cove into one planning process (as they are adjacent to each other). Additional influencing factors included staff capacity and existing work commitments, potential efficiencies and project balance across the region, First Nations interest and capacity for involvement, and timeframe required for plan development. Emphasis was

placed on undertaking work on regional parks that have never had a management plan completed, which meant that Mount Work, East Sooke and Matheson Lake/Roche Cove regional parks were placed ahead of several regional parks that do have management plans in place, such as Thetis Lake, Elk/Beaver Lake and Witty's Lagoon. Two other regional parks without management plans (Horth Hill and Jordan River) and near the top of the list will be considered as candidates for Interim Management Guidelines rather than full management plans.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That staff proceed with management plans for Mount Work, East Sooke and Matheson Lake/Roche Cove regional parks.

Alternative 2

That staff proceed with plans for those parks that have the highest priority ranking.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

This prioritization work helps Regional Parks meet the strategic action “to complete or update park and trail management plans for priority parks and trails” from the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Management plan processes include opportunities for First Nation involvement, and can lead to reconciliation of interests of First Nations with respect to parks management plans. This helps meet the CRD 2019-2022 Corporate Plan Community Need 6d.

Service Delivery Implications

This process should be undertaken every five years to reevaluate priorities, including giving consideration to new parkland acquired within that timeframe.

CONCLUSION

As Regional Parks has finite resources to conduct management planning, and many regional parks do not have management plans in place yet, staff have developed a process and evaluation criteria for prioritizing management plan projects and have ranked regional parks and trails accordingly. After additional consideration was given to factors such as whether a park has a management plan in place or not, degree of existing work plan commitments, First Nation and staff capacity, and potential efficiencies and project balance across the region, Mount Work, East Sooke and Matheson Lake/Roche Cove regional parks are identified as the next three potential management planning projects.

RECOMMENDATION

That staff proceed with management plans for Mount Work, East Sooke and Matheson Lake/Roche Cove regional parks.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Evaluation Criteria

Appendix B: Priority List of Regional Parks and Trails for Management Planning