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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026

SUBJECT Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan – 2025 Progress Report

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District's (CRD) 2025 Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report, which identifies progress toward the CRD's Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (Strategic Plan), approved by the Board in July 2023, establishes a decade-long framework for guiding actions and priorities within the CRD's regional parks and trails. It informs annual service delivery, which is directly linked to the Board-approved financial planning process. The CRD is committed to reporting on Strategic Plan progress annually.

The Strategic Plan has five overarching goal areas and identifies 13 strategic priorities and 57 supporting actions. The goal areas are:

- **Reconciliation:** Strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations through working in partnership.
- **Conservation:** Regional parks protect the region's natural assets and cultural heritage for future generations.
- **Visitor Experience:** Visitors to regional parks are involved in stewardship and have enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.
- **Climate Action & Resiliency:** Regional parks and trails are resilient and take action on climate change.
- **Access & Equity:** Regional parks and trails are inclusive and accessible.

Regional Transportation Service

In June 2025, the CRD established the Regional Transportation Service (RTS) under Bylaw No. 4630 to consolidate transportation planning and regional trail management across the capital region. The RTS reports to the Board through the CRD Transportation Committee. With the establishment of the RTS and the transfer of regional trail planning, capital development and management functions, 2025 marks the final year in which regional trail initiatives will be reported out through the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report (with the exception of the current and future Gulf Islands regional trails).

PROGRESS SUMMARY

The 2025 Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report (Appendix A) provides a detailed overview of activities completed between January and December 2025. It outlines progress across all goal areas and includes a comprehensive report card summarizing metrics self-reported by the service areas responsible for implementing the actions. Staff assigned a 'status' to each goal area and related priorities.

Statuses are determined using these descriptions:

- On track: 75%-100% of the yearly target was progressed as envisioned.
- Opportunity for improvement: 50%-75% of the yearly target was progressed as envisioned.
- Attention required: <50% of the yearly target was progressed as envisioned.

Results

The overall status for 2025 was assessed as on track, with all five goal areas achieving the same rating. The highlights below summarize key metrics and accomplishments from the year, with a fulsome report provided in Appendix A.

Reconciliation

- Delivered 101 Indigenous-focused programs and events, reaching over 4,000 participants.
- Supported Scia'new First Nation (Beecher Bay) in hosting Tribal Journeys at East Sooke Regional Park.
- Engaged First Nations cultural monitors across multiple parks to guide land-altering work and protect culturally significant sites.

Conservation

- Established the new 21.7-hectare George Hill Regional Park on North Pender Island.
- Completed 8.2 hectares of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species treatment.
- Initiated the EcoMonitor Program to collect rare plant data in partnership with the province and local municipalities.

Visitor Experience

- Delivered 264 interpretive programs and events, reaching over 9,200 participants.
- Engaged 668 volunteers, contributing over 8,220 hours, a 45% increase in volunteer hours since 2022.
- Visitation to regional parks reached 5.2 million (1.1% increase over 2024), and visitation to regional trails reached 4.5 million (7.2% increase over 2024).

Climate Action & Resiliency

- Completed key regional trail priorities, including renewal and paving on the Lochside Trail at North Weiler and critical below-deck repairs on the Selkirk Trestle.
- Two new electric vehicle charging stations were installed at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park.
- Compared to 2024, total energy consumption of Regional Parks buildings and fleet increased by about 13%, while emissions decreased by approximately 11% due to fleet electrification and fuel switching to lower-emission energy sources.

Access & Equity

- Captured Google Street View imagery for 13 parking lots and day-use areas and approximately 20 km of park trails within eight regional parks, allowing visitors to preview terrain and facilities on desktop and mobile devices.
- Completed an annual audit to identify minor accessibility barriers (i.e., seasonal erosion) in day-use areas and on user-friendly or accessible trails across the parks system and remedied 58% of identified defects.
- Delivered the following accessibility infrastructure upgrades in regional parks:
 - Island View Beach—accessible parking stalls, seasonal mobi-mat
 - East Sooke—accessible parking stalls
 - Roche Cove—accessible parking stall
 - Elk/Beaver Lake—modified the accessible fishing dock at Elk Lake and installed automatic push-button doors at four washroom buildings

Staff continue to advance major strategic initiatives; however, opportunities remain to strengthen progress in several areas. For example, initiating Traditional Use and Access Agreements with First Nations has been slower than anticipated and will require focused effort and continued relationship building to advance. Additionally, increasing the proportion of regional parks with management plans less than 15 years old remains a key commitment. The Mount Work Management Plan continues to advance, with staff working closely with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council to ensure cultural values, interests, and knowledge are meaningfully reflected throughout the plan. Efficient approaches to updating management plans will be explored through the development of the Regional Parks Stewardship Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2025, the Regional Parks and Trails operating budget totaled \$21.3 million, with approximately 88% funded through requisition. The remaining revenue was generated from payments and grants in lieu of taxes, fees and rental income, internal recoveries, and prior year-end surplus. This funding supports the management of 34 regional parks and four regional trails, comprising more than 13,350 hectares of land across the CRD system.

CONCLUSION

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 guides the CRD towards its desired vision for regional parks and regional trails. In 2025, the CRD made progress in all five goal areas of the Strategic Plan, and the overall progress status was identified as ‘on track’.

As the Regional Transportation Service (RTS) now assumes responsibility for the majority of regional trail planning, development, and management, Regional Parks will continue to focus its efforts on delivering the Strategic Plan’s park-related goals while supporting a smooth transition of trail functions to the RTS. The CRD remains committed to working closely with First Nations’ communities, other orders of government, organizations, institutions and residents in the region to reach the desired vision of the Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: 2025 Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report
Presentation: 2025 Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report