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Regional Parks



Additional land acquisitions and increased access to parks and recreational trails that respect Indigenous culture and conservation values

01 Strategy

STRATEGIES & PLANS

- › [Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan](#)
- › [Regional Growth Strategy](#)
- › [Climate Action Strategy](#)
- › [Special Task Force on First Nations Relations](#)
- › [2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan](#)
- › [Statement of Reconciliation](#)
- › [Regional Trails Management Plan](#)
- › [Land Acquisition Strategy](#)
- › Park Management Plans (various)

CORPORATE PLAN GOALS

- 7a Complete the strategic planning & engagement process
- 7b Access & equity
- 7c Enhance the protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity & natural assets in regional parks
- 7d Expand access to green space & outdoor recreation
- 7e Climate action & resilience
- 7f Reconciliation

02 Contacts

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03 Operating Context

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

1. Reopened the Sooke Hills Wilderness Trail at Waugh Creek.
2. Renewed the licence agreement with the T'Souke Nation for operation of the Spring/Salmon Campground and extended it to a five-year agreement.
3. Completed remediation of park and trail infrastructure affected by the Old Man Lake wildfire, leading to the reopening of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and Kapoor Regional Park.
4. Constructed new washroom facilities, expanded the parking lot, and made trail improvements at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Regional Park, in collaboration with First Nations.
5. Installed a Mobi-Mat to enhance beach accessibility at Island View Beach Regional Park.
6. Continued development of the Mount Work Management Plan in partnership with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council.
7. Advanced Phase 2 of the renewed Land Acquisition Strategy, which includes updated principles, criteria themes and process to better align with the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032.
8. Engaged with First Nations to support the development of the Regional Parks Cultural Use and Safety Policy.
9. Supported the Sc'ianew First Nation in hosting a Tribal Journeys cultural celebration at Aylard Farm in East Sooke Regional Park on July 30.
10. Completed below-deck repairs on the Selkirk Trestle as part of the trestle widening, lightening, and renewal project.
11. Refurbished 800 metres of the Lochside Regional Trail.
12. Supported the transition of regional trails responsibilities to the new Regional Transportation Service.

FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT OUR OPERATIONS IN 2026 AND BEYOND

- **First Nations Reconciliation:** The CRD supports working with First Nations on common interests and recognizes that how this is achieved will be an ongoing discussion with each First Nation and will evolve as priorities, capacities and governance structures shift over time. Reconciliation is a journey towards strengthened relationships with First Nations and overall increased cultural awareness and respect to improve management of regional parks and trails. The CRD's Regional Parks Division recognizes 19 distinct First Nations with territorial interests over CRD regional park lands.
- **Changes to Recreational Use Patterns:** With the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation comes challenges for meeting user objectives, including ensuring safety, mitigating environmental damage, and resolving conflict between users. There is also increased pressure for a diversity of recreational uses and greater advocacy from various recreational stakeholder groups such as trail biking and rock climbing.
- **Regional Trails Use and Development:** Regional Parks is working to support the Regional Transportation Service as it begins to actively plan, manage and operate the regional trails.

- **Sustainable Service Delivery:** Major infrastructure in regional parks, such as trails, bridges, and dams, is nearing the end of its lifespan and requires upgrades to meet demands it was not originally designed to handle. In recent years, rising material costs and increased project complexity have significantly driven up the cost of major capital projects. Looking ahead, additional cost pressures are expected due to the need to maintain regulatory compliance, manage risks, and meet public engagement expectations. These expenses will need to be funded through increased requisitions, debt servicing, and grants to sustain service delivery.
- **Demographic Changes:** The population within the capital region is aging overall and becoming more ethnically diverse. The current population over 65 is near 23% and is expected to increase to 28% by 2030. Additionally, accessibility is increasingly becoming a foundational component of service delivery. This demographic change is projected to continue over the next two decades and will create demands for different forms of recreation and new ways of using open space.
- **Events:** Regional parks provide locations for recreation activities, events, tourism and filming, all of which are major contributors to the regional economy. However, there is also growing demand for economic activity in the parks, arising from activities such as athletic events, and numerous group events. The number of permits to allow these types of events to occur within the system is anticipated to increase with 62 event permits issued in 2023, 61 in 2024 and 65 expected in 2025.
- **Ecological Integrity:** Over several years, there has been increased interest in understanding the region's biodiversity and reaching national climate targets, as well as including Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Increased pressures stem from the need to provide funding, supervision and expertise to support conservation programs that maintain and monitor ecological integrity.
- **Human Disturbance:** Conflict can occur between the need to protect ecological, geological and cultural features and visitor access or recreational activities. While some park features, such as streams, coastal dunes, and similar natural ecosystems, may be considered attractive for some recreation pursuits, they may not be suitable for many activities because of their vulnerability to irreversible change. The CRD has a responsibility to protect species and ecosystems at risk, as well as areas with Indigenous cultural values.
- **Species At Risk:** A total of 161 species at risk (both federally and provincially listed) occur within regional parks and trails, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, vascular and non-vascular plants, lichen, and fungi. Effective management of species can be complex and requires specialist expertise. Threatened species recovery is a long-term process, and success may take time and be financially costly.
- **Climate Change:** Regional Parks continued to mitigate and respond to the impacts of climate change (drought, unseasonably warm temperatures, wildfire, increasing rain, snow and wind events) on park assets and natural resources.
- **Monitoring and Research:** Increased monitoring and research will be required to evaluate the success of conservation programs, the impact of activities on parks and to determine where additional efforts may be required.

- **Land Acquisition:** Expanding the regional parks and trails system to meet increasing recreation demand and conservation needs, while respecting First Nations rights and sovereignty, presents a unique challenge for CRD staff. It requires meaningful engagement and rethinking traditional acquisition processes to foster collaborative relationships that advance the CRD's broader reconciliation goals.
- **Changes to Regional Development:** The region is experiencing growth in multi-family developments, development sites and intensity of development. According to the latest population projections from BC Stats (February 2025), the region's population is expected to increase by approximately 19% over the next 20 years. This is leading to more pressure for recreational space on nearby regional parks.
- **Dam Management Program:** Regional Parks staff continue to focus on dam management to ensure compliance with dam safety regulations and to manage and mitigate risks associated with dam ownership. Regulatory drivers will necessitate the need for capital investment in dam infrastructure.

2024 OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

- | | |
|--|--|
| ▶ 9.3 million visits | ▶ 376 km of official trails within regional parks |
| ▶ 33 regional parks | ▶ 14 dams (7 rated high or very high failure consequence rating) |
| ▶ 4 regional trails (95 kms) | ▶ 78 FTEs |
| ▶ 13,350 hectares of regional park lands protected | ▶ 28,935 auxiliary staffing hours |

04 Services

The services listed below rely on the support of several corporate and support divisions to operate effectively on a daily basis. More information about these services is available in the Corporate Services and Government Relations Community Need Summaries.

SERVICE BUDGET REFERENCES¹

1.280 Regional Parks

1. REGIONAL PARK PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Description

Contribute to effective and efficient decision making through plan and policy development, including the Strategic Plan and park management plans, natural and cultural resource management, capital development planning, asset management, including the Dam Management Program, and project management. Provide oversight of the Land Acquisition Program.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Evaluate the prioritization of regional parks management needs and work towards increasing the percentage of management plans that are less than 15 years old and develop Interim Management Guidelines for recent acquisitions.
- ▶ Advance First Nations reconciliation. Develop work plans and traditional use agreements with willing First Nations. Seek economic development opportunities for First Nations in regional parks.
- ▶ All new management plans will seek to have First Nations section written by First Nations.
- ▶ Evaluate candidate properties for land acquisition. Update the 10-year land acquisition strategy objectives, criteria, process and principles.
- ▶ Provide planning and project management for capital projects. Procure grants to support capital development.
- ▶ Procure engineer assessments of critical built assets (dams, trestles, bridges) up to \$225,000 annually. Prepare a five-year critical asset assessment schedule.
- ▶ Manage asset inventory data and the Asset Renewal Plan to establish capital project planning for five, 10 and 20-year capital plans.
- ▶ Provide spatial and GIS data analysis and collection for a range of purposes, including existing and new digital data-sharing agreements.
- ▶ Respond to development referrals that impact regional parks and trails.

Staffing Complement

Regional Park Planning & Development: **12 FTE² + 1 Manager**

¹ Service budget(s) listed may fund other services.

² Approximately 2 FTE anticipated to be transferred to Regional Transportation Service for trail development and management. Staffing complement will be 10 FTE + 1 Manager after transfer.

2. REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Description

Regional Park Operations is responsible for the operations and maintenance of all regional parks and regional trails. Park Operations staff operate and maintain all regional park facilities and critical infrastructure, including bridges, dams, roads and trails within the regional park system. The operation of regional parks occurs 365 days per year, with high-use facilities being serviced once or twice daily on average.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Operate and maintain over 2,900 built structures and facilities in 33 regional parks and on four regional trails to host over 9.3 million annual visits. This includes inspecting, maintaining, and servicing 51 washroom facilities, 24 beach areas, 184 waste receptacles, and 81 parking areas.
- ▶ Deliver public safety-related programs including maintenance and surveillance of 11 dams and annual hazard tree inspections of 346 target areas within regional parks.
- ▶ Operate three seasonal regional campgrounds with a target occupancy rate of 65% on weekends.
- ▶ Over 350 km of park trails are managed and regularly maintained, with larger trail projects undertaken through a Trail Repair Program.
- ▶ Snow clearing and ice management of priority areas within regional parks.
- ▶ Maintenance of 6,260 identification, directional, regulatory, interpretive, safety and conservation signs for parks and trails and fabrication of approximately 1,300 signs annually through the Sign Program.
- ▶ Infrastructure replacement and repair for 20+ assets annually.
- ▶ Respond to infrastructure damage that is resulting from climate change including floods, high winds, and snowstorms.
- ▶ Support large special-use events in regional parks.

Staffing Complement

Regional Park Operations & Maintenance: **43.6 FTE² + 1 Manager**

3. REGIONAL PARKS VISITOR EXPERIENCE & STEWARDSHIP

Description

Regional parks and regional trails are vital to the region, supporting health and wellbeing, offering social connections, and improving quality of life. Regional parks provide over 450 km of trails and a range of opportunities for outdoor recreation, experiencing nature, learning about natural and cultural heritage, participating in park stewardship, and gathering for events. CRD Regional Parks Visitor Experience and Stewardship staff contribute to quality visitor experience in regional parks through public education, a compliance and enforcement program (park rangers), public engagement, communications, and stakeholder support. Through conservation and stewardship initiatives, including the volunteer program,

² Approximately 0.8 FTE anticipated to be transferred to Regional Transportation Service for trail development and management. Staffing complement will be 42.8 FTE + 1 Manager after transfer.

staff monitor and support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in regional parks. Staff serve the public by answering public inquiries in a timely manner, coordinating park use permits and managing online registration for regional parks camping.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ 700+ volunteers (7,000+ volunteer hours annually) delivering parks and trails condition checks and invasive species removal.
- ▶ Deliver 280+ natural and cultural educational programs, nature outings and outreach events annually.
- ▶ Process 250+ park use permits annually.
- ▶ Undertake 20 conservation projects per year.
- ▶ Ongoing ecological and species at risk monitoring.
- ▶ Ongoing visitor use and outdoor recreation monitoring.
- ▶ Conduct 5,000+ hours of compliance and enforcement patrol annually utilizing CRD Bylaw Officers and CRD Park Rangers.
- ▶ Deliver at least three public awareness campaigns related to regional parks and trails annually.
- ▶ Conduct annual accessibility audits of all 33 regional parks and four regional trails.
- ▶ Undertake regular recreational impact assessments for 25 of the most frequently used areas.
- ▶ Work with recreational activity license agreement holders to improve recreational experiences.

Staffing Complement

Regional Parks Visitor Experience & Stewardship: **21 FTE + 1 Manager**

4. REGIONAL TRAILS OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Description

Manage regional trails system to protect and operate four regional trails that provide a transportation and recreation function and that provide non-motorized trails for active transportation and recreation to connect municipalities, electoral areas and the region with adjacent jurisdictions.

What you can expect from us

- ▶ Operate and maintain nearly 100 km of multi-use regional trails that host over 4.2 million visits per year. This includes inspecting, maintaining, and servicing regional trail assets, including five washrooms, 38 waste receptacles, 10 parking areas, and 10 drinking fountains.
- ▶ Manage vegetation along 95 km of trail corridors and in key areas for public safety and enjoyment.
- ▶ Provide snow clearing and manage ice conditions in 23 key locations on regional trails.
- ▶ Provide basic maintenance of regional trail facilities including fence repairs and gravel surface renewal projects in localized areas.

Staffing Complement

Regional Trails Operations & Maintenance: **FTEs included in the divisional FTEs noted above**

05 Initiatives

Below are the initiatives listed in the [Capital Regional District 2023-2026 Corporate Plan](#) and the related initiative business cases (IBCs). For an overview of the financial impacts, including cost of staffing, please refer to the Provisional Budget report.

Initiative	Implementation year(s)
Goal 7a: Complete the strategic planning & engagement process	
7a-1 Finalize the Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan	2023
Goal 7b: Access & Equity	
7b-1 Conduct research, develop and implement Accessibility Guidelines to improve inclusion and accessibility in regional parks and trails	2024-2026
▶ <i>RELATED IBC see 4b-3 Implement the Regional Trails Closure Policy in Transportation Community Need Summary</i>	2024-ongoing
Goal 7c: Enhance the protection of biodiversity, ecological integrity & natural assets in regional parks	
7c-1 Conduct research and prepare and implement a Natural Areas Conservation Plan ³	2023-2026
7c-2 Develop and implement Impact Assessment and Best Management Practice Guidelines	2023
▶ IBC 7c-3.1 Elk/Beaver Lake Water Quality Monitoring*	2024-2026
▶ IBC 7c-3.2 Elk/Beaver Lake Oxygenator Operation (withdrawn)*	
▶ IBC 7c-4.1 Regional Parks Maintenance Workers*	2025-ongoing
Goal 7d: Expand access to green space & outdoor recreation	
7d-1 Develop and implement an Outdoor Recreation Plan ²	2023-2025

³ Natural Areas Conservation Plan and Outdoor Recreation Plan to be combined into the Stewardship Plan

Initiative	Implementation year(s)
7d-2 Undertake the Resident Survey	2023-2024
7d-3 Develop an Interpretive Program Plan	Planned for 2027
Goal 7e: Climate action & resilience	
7e-1 Plan for and implement bike parking and e-bike/electric vehicle charging stations at high-use regional park accesses	Ongoing
7e-2 Update the Land Acquisition Strategy to incorporate criteria that reflects First Nations interests	2023-2027
IBC 7e-3.1 Asset Management Engineered Structure Inspections*	2024-ongoing
NEW IBC 7e-5.1 Dam Safety – Regional Parks*	2026
Goal 7f: Reconciliation	
7f-1 Work with First Nations to develop and implement priority initiatives related to regional parks and regional trails	Ongoing
► IBC 7f-1.1 First Nations Strategic Priority Initiatives	2024-ongoing
7f-2 Develop a policy for supporting and clarifying Indigenous cultural use and cultural safety in regional parks	2024-2025
7g-1.1 Regional Parks Operations Manager*	2027-ongoing

*Not captured in the 2023-2026 Corporate Plan

06 Performance

GOAL 7A: COMPLETE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Targets & Benchmarks

- Board approval of the Strategic Plan indicates general First Nations and public support for the plan.
- Actions identified in Strategic Plan form the basis of annual Board-approved service and work plans.
- Progress on the implementation of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan is reported annually. Reporting indicators are identified in the Plan for each strategic priority area.
- Collaboration with First Nations governments, municipalities, park agencies, CRD divisions and stakeholders form the basis for implementing the Strategic Plan.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	Percentage of Strategic Plan indicators identified as "on track"	Quantity	96%	100%	100%	→
2	Percentage of Strategic Plan indicators that have First Nations involvement and/or support First Nations interests	Quantity	35%	35%	42%	→

¹ Indicator status is based on the 2024 Regional Parks & Trails Strategic Plan Progress Report

² First Nation participation in implementation of the Strategic Plan will be through the development/implementation of priority initiatives

Discussion

- In 2024 the overall progress of the Strategic Plan was on track in all five goal areas. Full results are available here: <https://www.crd.ca/media/file/regional-parks-trails-strategic-plan-2024-progress-reportpdf>
- Implementation of some high-priority actions will help to set the policy framework for the management of regional parks and trails.
- Minor amendments to the Strategic Plan will be brought forward when necessary to update factual information and to update park and trail classifications, as new additions to the system are identified and established.

GOAL 7B: ACCESS & EQUITY

Targets & Benchmarks

- Information about visitor satisfaction ensures that expectations are met and that CRD actions and initiatives are facilitating a good experience for visitors.
- Measuring the level of asset renewal investment and condition of parks and recreation trail infrastructure is a good indicator of how well-maintained, and therefore accessible and inclusive, the infrastructure is.
- Auditing and responding to accessibility barriers provide a direct indicator of access and equity.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	Maintain a visitor experience satisfaction rate of 85% or better for regional parks and trails	Quality	79%	N/A	N/A	→
2	100% of critical bridge and boardwalks in the Regional Parks and Trails system in good or better condition	Quality	83%	85%	99%	↑
3	Complete annual accessibility maintenance audits to identify barriers to accessing key park facilities and opportunities, and address 75% of barriers identified	Quantity	75%	75%	80%	→

¹ Percentage of visitors that described their overall experience with Regional Parks and Trails as 'quite satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'; data from CRD Regional Parks Resident Survey 2024 (collected every ~five years).

² Percentage of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system that is in good or very good condition: data 2024 Annual Inspections Report and the Asset Registry - Regional Parks.

Discussion

- Resident Survey was completed 2024 and full results are available here: <https://www.crd.ca/parks-recreation/regional-parks-trails/regional-parks-plans-reports>
- Regional Parks is continuously enhancing its asset management program to ensure the long-term safety, functionality, and sustainability of all assets, including critical infrastructure such as bridges, boardwalks, and dams. This supports reliable service delivery, preserves public access, and addresses the evolving needs of park and trail users.

GOAL 7C: ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY, ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY & NATURAL ASSETS IN REGIONAL PARKS

Targets & Benchmarks

- The CRD receives the gracious help of many volunteers who support the preservation and enjoyment of regional parks and trails through positions like naturalists, restoration volunteers, park stewards and trail ambassadors, as well as recreational activity groups.
- Our target is to maintain or better the existing volunteer base.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	Maintain a volunteer base of greater than 500 people	Quantity	711	720	750	→

¹ Number of active volunteers in Regional Parks and Trails; data from volunteer registry.

Discussion

- Regional Parks is beginning a youth volunteer pilot with School District 62 starting fall 2025, therefore anticipating increase in near future.
- CRD restoration volunteers and staff spend a total of 3,600 hours restoring and enhancing regional parks.

GOAL 7D: EXPAND ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE & OUTDOOR RECREATION

Targets & Benchmarks

- The Land Acquisition Fund provides funding for the purchase of land for regional parks and trails. Tracking community contributions helps demonstrate the sufficient availability of funding and community support for the strategy that has been put in place. The target is to achieve a 20% of contribution of land acquisition funds from partners.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	A 20% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners	Quantity	0%	0%	20%	→

¹ Percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund contributions annually that comes from community partners: data from Land Acquisition Updates.

Discussion

- No acquisitions were completed in 2024 and as of writing this report, no acquisition have been completed in 2025.
- CRD staff are actively pursuing multiple properties of interest, with potential contributions from acquisition partners anticipated in 2026

GOAL 7E: CLIMATE ACTION & RESILIENCE

Targets & Benchmarks

- Regional Parks is contributing to the development of complete and connected communities by improving multi-modal access to regional parks by installing electric vehicle charging stations at high-use regional parks.
- Reductions in Regional Parks' operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contribute to achieving corporate GHG reduction targets.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are installed in high use parks	Quantity	2	4	4	→
2	Reduction of 5% in operational greenhouse gas emissions	Quantity	+2.8%	-5%	-5%	↓

¹ Future charging stations within regional parks will involve working in partnership with agencies to install chargers within regional parks.

Discussion

- Two Electric Vehicle chargers installed at Beaver each 2024 and two installed at Witty's Lagoon in 2025.
- GHG from the Regional Parks Division increased by 2.8% in 2024, compared to 2023.
- Regional Parks' Mill Hill facility produces approximately 13 tonnes of CO₂e annually, most of which will be mitigated with planned facility upgrades including an HVAC system retrofit.
- To support the transition away from internal combustion engines, the division acquired an electric ride-on mower and six electric vehicles. Electrifying the remainder of the Regional Parks fleet, as planned, will mitigate over 100 tonnes of CO₂e annually.

GOAL 7F: RECONCILIATION

Targets & Benchmarks

- The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032 emphasizes strengthening government-to-government relationships and mutual understanding between the CRD and First Nations. The CRD remains committed to open dialogue with First Nations to ensure Indigenous cultural values and uses are respected, and that priorities and actions remain relevant and meaningful.
- Regional Parks is aiming for reconciliation work plans and traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region.
- Regional Parks is developing several planning initiatives which require meaningful engagement with First Nations, including a Cultural Use and Safety Policy, update to the Land Acquisition Strategy, park management plans and a Stewardship Plan. Regional Parks provides capacity funding to support this engagement.

Measuring Progress

Ref	Performance Measure(s)	Type	2024 Actual	2025 Forecast	2026 Target	Desired trend
1	Traditional use agreements are initiated with all First Nations in the region	Quantity	2	0	2	→
2	First Nations participation in key Regional Parks Planning initiatives	Quantity	16	18	19	↗

Discussion

- The Strategic Plan includes the development of workplans with each First Nation, as such this previously was a reported progress metric. Beginning in 2024, this approach was superseded by a corporate-wide process, led by First Nations Relations, to develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each First Nation. Where regional parks priorities are identified in these MOUs, Regional Parks will participate in implementing the corresponding action items.
- Engagement with First Nations on a Cultural Use and Safety Policy is underway with Board approval anticipated in late 2025.
- Engagement with First Nations on the updated Land Acquisition Strategy began in 2024 and will proceed in 2025 and 2026 leading up to Board approval of the Strategy in 2026.
- Engagement with First Nations on the Stewardship Plan is anticipated to be initiated in 2026.

07 Business Model

PARTICIPANTS	All municipalities and electoral areas
FUNDING SOURCES	Requisitions, grants, donations and non-tax revenue
GOVERNANCE	<u>Regional Parks Committee</u> <u>Transportation Committee</u>