

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2017**

SUBJECT **Regional Invasive Species Coordinator – Alternative Service Options**

ISSUE

The Environmental Services Committee (ESC) asked staff to consider alternate service delivery options for regional coordination of invasive species, including housing the function within Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks.

BACKGROUND

At its September 13, 2017 meeting, the ESC received a staff report (Appendix A) responding to requests for the CRD to investigate the implications, feasibility and recommendations to house the duties of a Regional Invasive Species Coordinator. Capital Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) had undertaken this role in recent years; however, the CRISP model is no longer sustainable and it had proven difficult to retain a permanent coordinator.

Invasive species affect, or have the potential to affect, lands and waters associated with CRD services (e.g., Regional Parks, drinking water Supply Areas and Housing properties), as well as other public and private lands. Risks from invasive species continue to impact public and private infrastructure and natural assets.

The September report presented a model whereby the CRD would create a regional service for the function and hire a half-time coordinator to perform the work. The ESC directed staff to come back with information on alternative approaches to providing the service within an existing service authority, such as Regional Parks.

ALTERNATIVES

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

Alternative 1

1. That the CRD support regional coordination of invasive species management (communication, education and cooperation) through the Climate Action Service; and
2. That the new program be supported by a half-time (0.5 FTE) coordinator funded through existing Regional Parks, Environmental Protection and Integrated Water Services budgets, and provincial funding for 2018. Staff will propose service level changes, if necessary, for 2019 and beyond.

Alternative 2

1. That staff be directed to bring forward an up-to-date establishing bylaw for the Regional Parks service, which includes the coordinating of Invasive Species management and education in the Capital Region; and

2. That the new work be supported by a half-time (0.5 FTE) coordinator and provincial funding for 2018. Staff will propose service level changes, if necessary, for 2019 and beyond.

Alternative 3

That the Capital Regional District not pursue Regional Invasive Species management, coordination and education.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Climate Action Program (Alternative 1)

The Climate Action Program (CAP) has “adaptation” within its service description. Climate change is having a significant effect on invasive species, which are becoming established and spreading with climate changes. This option does not require an amendment to the CAP service establishing bylaw but will need to be reflected in 2018 Service Plans.

CRD Regional Parks (Alternative 2)

The CRD Regional Parks’ extended service is established under Letters Patent and CRD Bylaw No. 1749. This establishment is limited to acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of Regional Parks. Coordination of invasive species outside Regional Parks does not fit within this definition and, therefore, an amendment to the establishing bylaw would be required to fully assume responsibility for the delivery of this service.

Recent interactions with the Inspector of Municipalities have indicated that when bylaw amendments are submitted, there is an expectation to (where needed) bring the rest of the bylaw up to current standards, such as updating outdated language and references to legislation. It is anticipated that the Regional Parks extended service establishing bylaw, adopted in 1989, would require significant updating, with approval from two-thirds of participants.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As presented in the previous staff report, the cost of delivering an invasive species function in 2018 is approximately \$95,000: \$75,000 for labour and \$20,000 for operating expenses. Regardless of how the function is established, the labour and supporting costs are the same.

Under Alternative 1, the budget for invasive species coordination (~\$95,000) will be funded in 2018 by contributions from Regional Parks (~\$30,000), Integrated Water Services (\$30,000) and Environmental Protection (~\$35,000) core budgets, less any provincial funding and other grants.

It is estimated that Alternative 2 would involve a large amount of staff time to fully review and update the CRD Regional Parks establishing bylaw to current standards.

CONCLUSION

Staff have revisited the options for including a regional invasive species coordinator within the CRD. The function can fit within the existing Climate Action Service mandate and aligns with the

CRD's environmental protection, watershed protection, drinking water protection, climate change and biodiversity roles for the region. Funding for 2018 can be secured from existing internal services that currently have a role in invasive species management within CRD boundaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the CRD support regional coordination of invasive species management (communication, education, and cooperation) through the Climate Action Service; and
2. That the new program be supported by a half-time (0.5 FTE) coordinator funded through existing Regional Parks, Environmental Protection and Integrated Water Services budgets, and provincial funding for 2018. Staff will propose service level changes, if necessary, for 2019 and beyond.

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Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

DG:cam/ss

Attachment: Appendix A – Staff Report to Environmental Services Committee, September 13, 2017 – Regional Invasive Species Coordinator