



Making a difference...together

## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018

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**SUBJECT**     Parks for All – An Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community

**ISSUE**

Enhancing Canadians’ connection to nature and nature conservation.

**BACKGROUND**

Parks for All is a project collaboratively led by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Canadian Parks Council (CPC) through the advice of a National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprised of Indigenous representatives, stakeholders and leaders throughout the Canadian parks community. The purpose of Parks for All is to initiate a new narrative with Canadians about parks in all forms, from city parks and playgrounds to vast wilderness areas. The Parks for All document (Attachment 1) is the result of a collaborative process of workshops about parks and public engagement.

The CPRA is a national organization dedicated to realizing the full potential of parks and recreation as major contributors to community health and vibrancy. Membership includes the 13 provincial and territorial parks and recreation associations and their extensive networks of service providers. Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks is a member through the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA). The CPRA published the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 – Pathways to Wellbeing*. Parks are recognized for their contributions in the Framework and Parks for All was created in response to Goal 3 of this document: Connecting People and Nature.

The CPC provides a Canada-wide forum for information sharing and collaborative action on parks and protected areas among federal, provincial and territorial governments. Through the CPC, park agencies work together to ensure that Canadians can continue to be proud of and enjoy the role parks play in preserving Canada’s natural capital. The CPC published *Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Well-being of Our Citizens* in 2014, which provided inspiration and motivation for Parks for All.

**SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Two significant changes in how Parks and Protected Areas are discussed in Canada are put forward in the Parks for All document; firstly, the role that Indigenous governments play in the identification and establishment of Protected Areas and, secondly, the significance of municipal and near-urban park system contributions to the health and well-being of Canadian communities.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Achieving the intent of Parks for All will be realized through individual Canadians taking personal action to engage with nature and nature conservation. Connecting Canadians with nature builds awareness of the interconnections that exist between humans and their environment. Recognizing that habitat loss is the single greatest contributor to biodiversity loss and weakening of the planetary systems that support life, Canadians’ support for the establishment and effective

management of parks and protected areas will result in greater protection of common and rare species of plants and animals. Parks for All draws attention to Canada’s commitment to international biodiversity targets, wherein at least 17% of Canada’s land and inland waters and 10% of coastal and marine areas are protected by 2020.

### **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are positive economic impacts of parks and protected areas related to direct employment, indirect employment and tourism generated revenues. Benefits are also realized through personal health and wellness, as parks and protected areas in Canada contribute to reducing health care costs through the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Traditional park experiences supported by park facilities such as trails, and programs such as guided hikes, have proven to successfully reduce recovery times of Canadians experiencing physical and mental health issues. Private and public sectors, including all levels of government, are recognizing the value of green infrastructure in addressing climate change.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Across Canada, and around the world, all levels of governments, including Indigenous governments, recognize the establishment of parks and protected areas as one of the best ways to stop biodiversity loss, address human health and well-being, and advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. In order to achieve the necessary network of connected parks and protected areas, governments within their jurisdictions will advance collaboration with each other, conservancies, land trusts and private land owners. The CRD Regional Parks Strategic Plan and Land Acquisition Strategy demonstrate how a Canadian jurisdiction is advancing growing a parks system through collaboration and cooperation with multiple partners. The recent land acquisition of St. John Point on Mayne Island is a good example of how CRD works with partners on common conservation goals.

### **CONCLUSION**

Parks for All represents a significant change in how Canadians will talk about the establishment and significance of parks and protected areas with each other and their elected officials. The CRD’s Regional Parks system is well positioned in Canada to continue leading in how to establish, grow and manage a park system.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That Parks for All – An Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community be received for information.

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

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Attachment: Attachment 1 – Parks for All