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## REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020

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**SUBJECT**     **Mount Work Regional Park Management Planning**

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

Initiation of management planning for Mount Work Regional Park.

### **BACKGROUND**

Mount Work Regional Park (Mount Work) is located in the District of Highlands, District of Saanich, and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area at the base of the Saanich Peninsula, between Gowlland Tod Provincial Park, Hartland Landfill, and Thetis Lake Regional Park (Appendix A). Mount Work is 729 hectares in size, and is officially classified as a Regional Natural Area in the 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan. It is primarily a forested park with three freshwater lakes, notably Durrance Lake, which provides accessible water-based recreation. The park was established in 1970 and although no management plan has been developed to date, various infrastructure and recreational amenities have been developed in the park over the years, notably several parking lots, information kiosks, and a developed hiking and mountain biking trail system.

Through management planning, the goals, objectives and policies of the park are set to guide ongoing development and management actions. A management plan is needed to provide direction for and safeguard critical environmental, cultural heritage and recreational values and opportunities in Mount Work, address known and anticipated issues, and help guide decision-making over the next 15-20 years. Management planning processes are also designed to engage First Nations and include public outreach and consultation. A management planning process is to be undertaken for Mount Work over the next two years, as per the project scope outlined in Appendix B and the engagement process provided in Appendix C.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### *Intergovernmental Implications*

Mount Work is within the traditional territory of the Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum, Pauquachin and Malahat First Nations and they will be invited to participate in the management planning process. Local, regional, provincial and federal agencies will be invited to participate in the planning process, as well, where they have legal, jurisdictional, or other interests relevant to the management planning process. This includes the Canadian Department of National Defence and BC Provincial Parks, since they have properties that adjoin Mount Work. In addition, Capital Regional District (CRD) staff responsible for the Hartland Landfill site and its long-term planning will be invited to participate in the planning process, as the site is located adjacent to the regional park and some of the designated mountain biking area trails are located on Hartland lands.

#### *Environmental & Climate Implications*

Mount Work has significant ecological and recreational values. The park protects portions of three watersheds, includes six sensitive ecosystems, three provincially red-listed ecological

communities and provides habitat for six threatened or endangered species. It is within the critical habitat for three species. The management planning process will consider how best to manage and protect environmental values, while providing compatible recreational opportunities.

#### *Social Implications*

The management plan will provide strategic guidance for the development and management of visitor facilities and services at Mount Work Regional Park. There are positive public implications for residents and visitors when the park is managed in an ecologically sound way and compatible recreational opportunities are provided. The planning process provides opportunities for public engagement.

#### *Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

The 2019-2022 Corporate Plan notes community needs relating to environmental stewardship, protecting natural resources and reconciling First Nations interests with respect to Park Management Plans. The management planning process includes opportunities to work together with First Nations and will outline goals and actions for environmental stewardship and protection of environmental values in the park.

#### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan indicates a priority to strengthen the management of existing parks and trails, and strengthen community involvement and partnerships. The strategic plan includes an action to complete or update park and trail management plans for priority parks and trails. The management planning process as presented is consistent with this direction and will include opportunities for stakeholder and public involvement. In addition, liaison will occur with the CRD Regional Parks Mountain Biking Advisory Committee as this group has been tasked with development of mountain biking guidelines.

#### *Service Delivery Implications*

Development and implementation of park management plans are a key aspect of the regional parks service.

#### *Financial Implications*

Costs associated with this project will be funded through core budget.

### **CONCLUSION**

At its May 27, 2020 meeting, the CRD Board approved a list of priority parks for management planning, and Mount Work was identified as a priority for Regional Parks to initiate this year. Accordingly, Regional Parks will begin a two-year management planning process for Mount Work Regional Park with opportunities for First Nations, local, regional, provincial and federal agency involvement, as well as stakeholder and public consultation, as per the attached project scope and engagement process. The completed plan will provide strategic direction for the effective management of Mount Work over the next 15 to 20 years by addressing environmental protection, recreational opportunities, cultural heritage management and park development.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Capital Regional District Board receive this report for information.

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: Location Map
- Appendix B: Project Scope
- Appendix C: Engagement Process