

Community Need

2022 Summary



Parks & Natural Resources Management

Strategy

Target Outcome

We envision additional land acquisitions and increased access to parks and recreational trails

Strategic Context

Strategies

- [Regional Climate Action Strategy](#)
- [Regional Parks Strategic Plan](#)
- [Land Acquisition Strategy](#)
- [Special Task Force on First Nations Relations](#)
- [Statement of Reconciliation](#)

Trends, risks and issues

- **Changes to the system** – From 2000 to 2020, Regional Parks has grown by 4,842.9 hectares, growing the land base by 37%. This is coupled with increased visitation of more than 36% over 10 years. 2020 alone saw an increase of 25% to the system. While the land base has grown exponentially, as well as pressures to the system, FTEs have not increased at a comparable rate.
- **Changes to Regional Development** – The region is experiencing growth in multi-family developments, development sites and intensity of development. This is leading to more pressure for recreational space on nearby regional parks.
- **Changes to Recreational Use Patterns** – There is increased pressure for a diversity of recreational uses and greater advocacy from stakeholder groups. Overcrowding in key areas, such as fresh water swimming locations, results in limited resources diverted to high-use areas for increased services, compliance and enforcement. Increased use in the backcountry, including unauthorized uses, such as off-trail hiking and mountain biking, is creating a need for more education, communication, monitoring, compliance, and decommissioning of unauthorized trails. 2020 saw unprecedented use in the system. Although this use may decrease slightly post pandemic, it signals what increased use will look like in the regional parks system as the population and pressures grow.
- **Sustainable Service Delivery** – Major infrastructure in regional parks is nearing its lifespan and needs improvements to support demands they were not built for. In recent years, the increased cost of materials and the complexity of projects has led to high costs for these major capital projects. As well, the volume and complexity of these projects requires a level of staff oversight that is unsupportable with current resources.
- **First Nation Reconciliation** – Projects, management plans and initiatives are increasingly complex, as it is important to provide for meaningful engagement, plan for land altering works, celebrate indigenous

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perspective through education and communication, and protect cultural values in regional parks.

- **Demographic Changes** – The population is aging overall but is also trending to a high proportion of young people in some parts of the region. The ethnic composition of the population is becoming more diverse. This trend is anticipated to continue and will create demands for different forms of recreation and new ways of using open space. It also raises the need to help new migrants to learn about the regional parks and trails, to fully enjoy the park experiences, and to understand and respect the environment of the regional parks and trails system. These demographic changes will give rise to different recreation demands for people with differing needs and abilities.
- **Events** – The regional parks provide locations for recreation activity, 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 commercial filming, and numerous group events. The number of permits continues to increase to allow these type of events to occur within the system.
- **Volunteers** – There is an increased interest in volunteering in regional parks and trails. Volunteer input is a valued and essential contribution to the regional park system; however, it requires investment to manage and facilitate volunteer programs.
- **Ecological Integrity** – Over a number of years, there has been increased interest in understanding the region's culture and biodiversity. There is a worldwide trend toward maintaining the viability of ecosystems rather than species management. The regional parks play an important role in managing entire and relatively intact ecosystems, and allowing people to experience the sights and sounds of nature and to participate in the management of the parks. Meeting these expectations places pressures on providing the 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.
- **Listed Species** – Effective management of threatened plant and animal 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** – Weather events associated with climate change are unpredictable and at times create a significant pressure on the regional parks system.
- **Monitoring and research** – Ongoing monitoring and research is required to evaluate the success of conservation programs, the impact of activities on parks and to determine where additional efforts may be required.

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Services

Core Services Levels	
Service	Levels
<p>Planning, Resource Management & Development</p> <p>Contribute to effective and efficient decision making through plan and policy development, natural and cultural resource management, capital development planning, project management and geographic mapping; development of the Strategic Plan and park management plans. Provide oversight of the land acquisition program. Guide the implementation of scientific and technical work related to environmental management.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage two Management Plan processes per year, with at least one approval annually; direct and conduct engagement with, on average, three First Nations per plan. • Evaluate 20 candidate properties for land acquisition and complete two acquisition per year. Annual budget of \$4M. Develop activity reports and strategy documents. • Support planning and provide project management, where needed, for capital facility projects, annual expenditures to \$3M. • Manage two contracts per year for technical planning studies or services. • Undertake five conservation projects per year • Manage asset inventory data and coordinate renewal forecasting asset management and capital project planning. • Provide spatial and GIS data analysis and collection for a range of purposes, including existing and new digital data sharing agreements and up to 200 public and internal cartography products for 34 parks and 100s of sign posts, park facilities, trails, etc. • Maintain and develop asset management data • Respond to around 70 development referrals per year.
<p>Regional Parks Operations</p> <p>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. The operation of regional parks occurs 365 days per year with facilities being visited once or twice daily on average. The regional park system geographically spans from the Southern Gulf Islands to Jordan River and requires staff to travel large</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and maintain 400 km of park trails, 55 washrooms and 132 garbage containers (most serviced daily). • Capital project management and implementation; undertake 20+ infrastructure and facility replacement and repair projects annually. • Every year, prepare or update a Facilities Plan and 33 Operating Plans. • Manage three regional campgrounds; meet target of 65% weekend occupancy rate at Sooke

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<p>distances to visit facilities daily, weekly and monthly. Over 10,000 hours of vehicle travel is logged annually by operations staff.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<p>Potholes and Island View Beach (from May to September).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct 5,000 compliance and enforcement patrol hours annually (CRD bylaw enforcement officers and CRD park rangers).
<p>Visitor Services & Community Development</p> <p>Contribute to quality visitor experience in regional parks through education, communication products, and planning for recreational activities. Create opportunities for volunteer engagement. Serve the public through responses to public inquiries. Issue permits for events, commercial use, and other. Monitor trends in visitor use through park use and resident surveys. Manage online registration for regional parks camping.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 580 volunteers delivering 5,700 hours of engagement, parks and trails condition checks and invasive species removal. Deliver 120 educational programs, 130 nature outings and 10 outreach events annually. Process 240 special events permits annually. Conduct up to eight Visitor Use Surveys annually. <p>(subject to COVID-19 health protocols)</p>
<p>Regional Trails</p> <p>Manage Regional Trails system to protect and operate three 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate, manage and maintain 95 km of multi-use regional trails Conduct 250 km of boom flail vegetation removal annually
<p>Support Services</p> <p>The core services listed rely on the support of several corporate and support divisions to effectively operate on a daily basis. These services are reported on in the Accountability Community Need Summary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services include Asset Management, Facility Management, Financial Services, Information Technology & GIS, Information Services, Human Resources & Corporate Safety, Corporate Communications, Legislative Services, Legal Services, Risk & Insurance and Real Estate Services.

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Initiatives					
Ref	Initiative	Description	Year(s)	2022 impacts	
6a-13	Elk/Beaver Lake Aerator Maintenance	Maintenance and monitoring of new aeration equipment	2022	--	\$100K requisition
6a-18	Accessibility Study	Evaluate current regional parks system against accessibility standards/best practices	2022	--	\$30K requisition
6g-1	Regional Parks Service	Comprehensive service level review of Regional Parks services	2022	+26.0 FTE ongoing	\$3.5M New funding model + allocations + requisition

Business Model

Funding
<p>Who contributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 13 Municipalities and 3 Electoral Areas• Support Services: varies per service <p>Funding Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requisitions, grants, donations and non-tax revenue

Reporting Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Parks Committee

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Performance			
Definition and Source	2020 Actual	2021 Forecast	2022 Target
Metric 1: 100% of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system in good or better condition Percentage of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system that is in good or very good condition; data from asset management sustainable report cards.	78%	89%	92%
Metric 2: Maintain a visitor experience satisfaction rate of 85% or better for Regional Parks and Trails 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 2017 (collected every 5 years)	85%	85%	85%
Metric 3: A 25% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners Percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund contributions annually that comes from community partners; data from Land Acquisition Updates	10%	25%	25%
Metric 4: Maintain a volunteer base of greater than 500 people Number of active volunteers in Regional Parks and Trails; data from volunteer registry	500	500	500

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Discussion

Link to Target Outcome

- 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.
- 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. This is supplemented by information about visitor satisfaction to ensure that expectations are met and that CRD actions and initiatives are facilitating a good experience for visitors.

Discussion

- COVID has had a significant impact on regional parks volunteer base.
- Metric 3: Since 2000, with the support of partners, the regional parks system has grown by 4,843 hectares through a number of land acquisitions valued at \$64M. The CRD partners in land acquisitions have contributed almost \$17M, or 27% of the overall cost of the purchases. Going forward, the CRD will seek an average of 25% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners.