



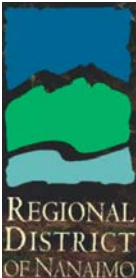
Regional District of Nanaimo



# REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS PLAN 2005 - 2015



DRAFT  
December 2004



*...trail from park to park...*

## Acknowledgements

This project was conducted and the Plan written by Lanarc Consultants Ltd. in collaboration with Parks and Recreation Department staff - T. Osborne, Manager of Recreation and Parks, J. Ainge, Parks Supervisor and J. Michel, Parks and Trails Coordinator. Their support, commitment and good humour were central to the project.

The RDN Regional Parks Plan Select Committee supervised the project. Their steady guidance made the process effective and greatly satisfying. They are:

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Director H. Kreiberg – Electoral Area A

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Director D. Bartram – Electoral Area H

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T. Sohler and K. House of the Mapping Division, Planning Dept. created and edited (many times) that most crucial planning element – the parks and trails concept map. Their creativity and willingness to go the extra km are greatly appreciated.

To the many RDN residents and visitors who gave of their time and resources in the review of this Plan through the public questionnaire, letters, emails and public meetings – thank you for providing us with your insights and many brilliant ideas. We hope that we have done them justice in this Plan.

Finally, we wish to thank the organizations and their representatives who provided their time and expertise through discussions, review and comments on this Plan.

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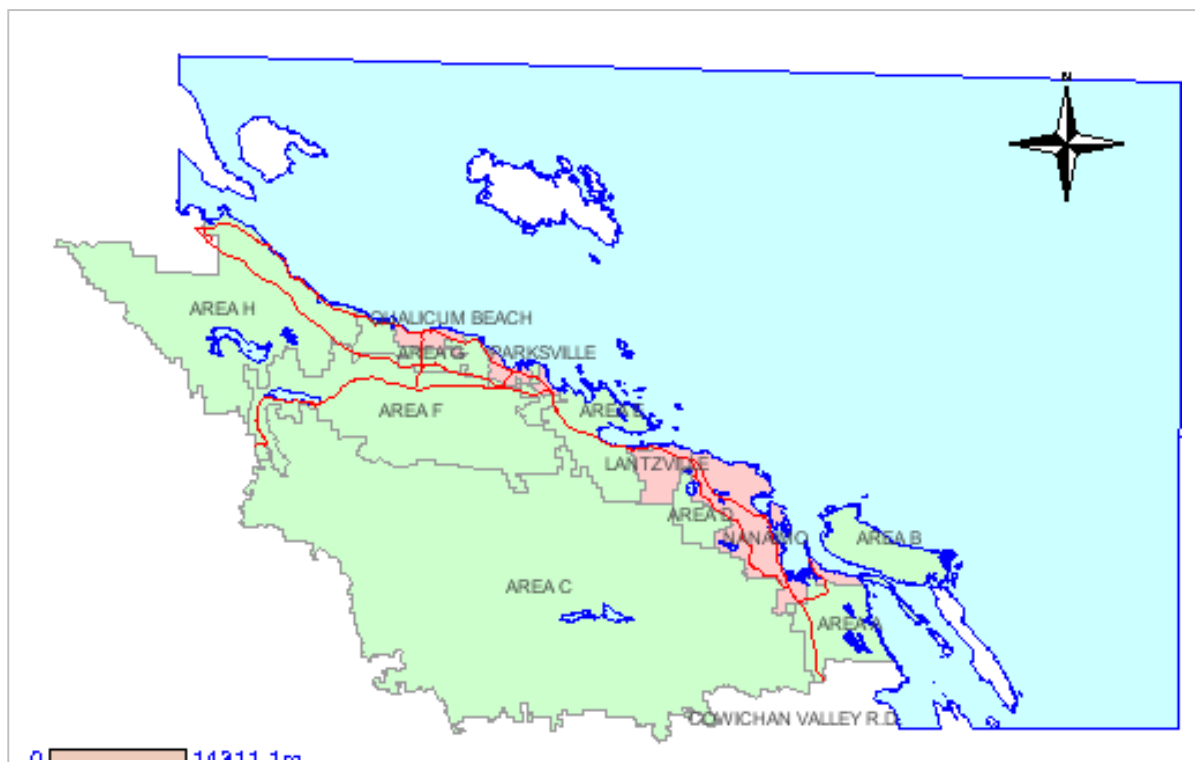
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## 1. Introduction

The Regional District of Nanaimo is an area rich in environmental diversity and natural and cultural landscapes. The regional parks and trails system plays an important role in protecting these features, thereby enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents of the Region.

Map 1: The Regional District of Nanaimo and its member municipalities and electoral areas



### 1.1 What we mean by “Regional” Parks and Trails

In this Plan, the “regional” parks and trails system refers to the parks and trails that are secured and administered by the Regional District of Nanaimo (the RDN). In B.C., regional districts have been involved in regional parks services since the 1960s. Regional parks have evolved to provide larger areas than can be provided by individual municipalities, particularly outside municipal boundaries.

As such, regional parks tend to be larger parcels of land outside urban cores, with limited facilities and an emphasis on environmental protection and/or outdoor recreation in natural settings. Regional trails extend beyond municipal boundaries, linking communities to parks and to other communities.

Regional parks and trails do not exist in isolation, but are intended to coordinate with and complement parks and protected areas at all levels - community, municipal, provincial and national - throughout the Region. The RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails system is only 15 years old, and linkages to

other park and trail systems in the Region may not yet be apparent. However, as the system grows, the hope is that a more ‘holistic’ approach to park and trail planning and development – and greater harmonization of environmental and recreational goals among all the levels of parks and protected areas – will evolve.

## 1.2 Regional Park Responsibilities

Regional parks and trails – as well as Electoral Area community parks and trails – are managed by the RDN’s Recreation and Parks Department (Figure 1-1). Funding for regional parks and trails are from two sources:

- Park land acquisition and major capital items are funded through tax requisition from the eight electoral areas.
- Park and trail operations and maintenance are cost shared with the four municipalities in the Regional District – the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and District of Lantzville – through a collective funding agreement with the RDN.

Regional parks/trails and community parks/trails are administered under separate programs, due to differences in mandates and funding sources. However, as Figure 1-1 indicates, both programs are run by the same staff – which creates significant challenges for staff in balancing their time and resources between the regional and eight community systems. (This balancing act is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.)

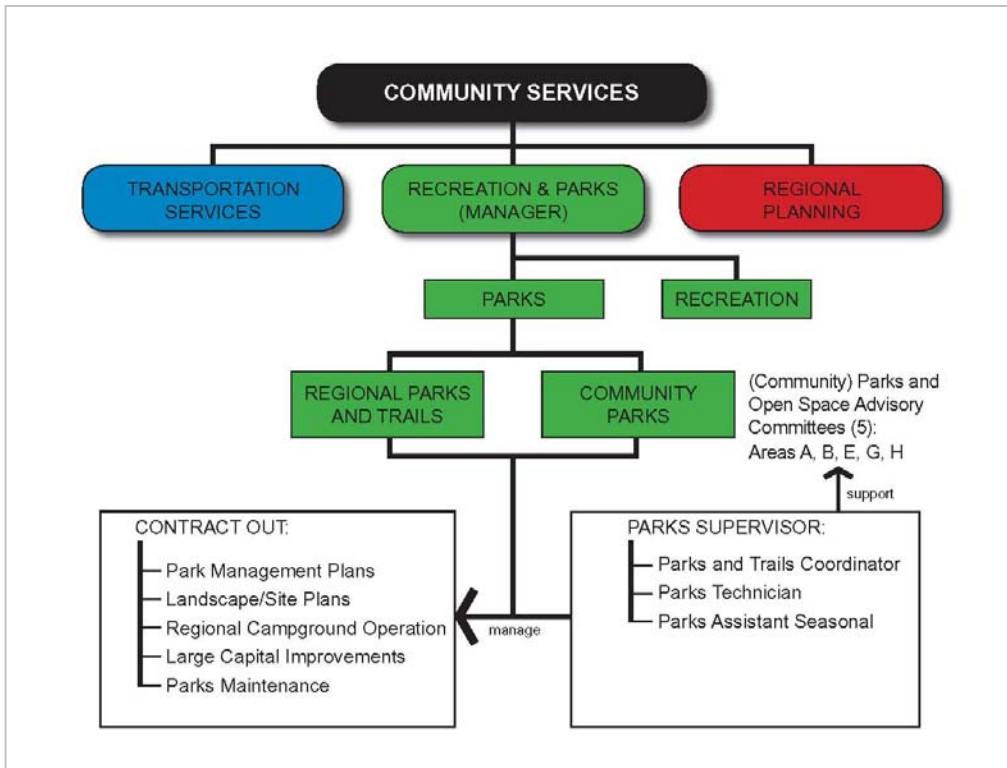


Figure 1-1: Current management structure for parks in the RDN

### 1.3 The Purpose of this Plan

Building from the existing 1995 Plan, the purpose of this Regional Parks and Trails Plan is *to define the future direction, policies, priorities and actions for the Regional District over the next 10 years (2005-2015)*.

This Plan is developed to support the RDN's regional park and trail function. This is separate and distinct from the community park functions in each of the Electoral Areas, several of which are assisted by parks and open space advisory committees. In addition, the four municipalities in the RDN each operate their own parks systems, and these areas are not part of this planning process.

Given a range of needs and limited resources, the RDN takes an innovative and pro-active approach, using a variety of methods to manage, improve and expand the regional parks and trails system. As such, this Plan is vital to supporting the following roles of the RDN Recreation and Parks Department:

- **Recognizing sites** and routes that are significant to the regional parks and trails mandate but that are not protected or managed as such. An active inventory of these lands will be maintained.
- **Advocating action** by other agencies and organizations to secure and manage open space and park resources within the Region. With less than 1.5% of the Region protected in park lands of all types, all agencies need to participate.
- **Establishing partnerships** in which the RDN works in cooperation with other agencies and organizations to plan, secure, develop and/or maintain park and open spaces.
- **Using various means** to secure parks and trails, from outright purchase to leases and covenants.

### 1.4 Plan Structure

This Plan has three main parts:

- *Introduction* –this chapter and chapter 2, which describes the process for conducting the review of the Plan.
- *The Current Situation* – chapters 3 to 5. which describe the context for regional parks and trails in the RDN, the system of parks and trails as it stands today, and the results of the questionnaire regarding residents' views on that system.
- *The Next 10 Years* – chapters 6 to 11, which present the vision, goals, priorities, relationships, stewardship policies, service levels and funding to guide the regional parks and trails system from 2005 to 2015.

## 2. Methodology - the Plan Review Process

This chapter describes the methodology used to review and update the Regional Parks and Trails Plan.

### 2.1 Approach

The review and revision of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan was conducted in four phases:

1. Analysis of the Current System
2. Outreach – Gauging the Demand
3. Plan Development & Review
4. Finalizing the Plan

The following table summarizes the process followed under these phases.

	2004							2005		
	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Phase 1:</b>										
Start-up meeting	Jun 25									
Roles, Analysis		█								
SC* Meeting #1		July 5								
<b>Phase 2:</b>										
Public survey				█						
Public Meetings				Sep 27-30						
Interviews				█						
SC Meeting #2					Oct 13					
<b>Phase 3:</b>										
Prepare Draft Plan				█						
SC Meeting #3						Nov 17				
Public Meetings t							Dec1-2			
SC Meeting #4 to review Draft							Dec 15			
<b>Phase 4:</b>										
Public review of Draft, gather comments							█			
SC Meeting #5								Feb 9		
Finalize Plan									█	
Present to RDN Comm of Whole										Mar 8
RDN Board Adoption										Mar 22

\*SC – Select Committee

## 2.2 Consultation

There were four key consultative components of the review process: the RDN Select Committee, public meetings and presentations, stakeholder contact, and a public questionnaire.

### 2.2.1 RDN Regional Parks Select Committee

The RDN Board established a Select Committee comprised of four Regional District Directors and three staff members (see sidebar) to guide the Plan review and development process. The Committee met formally five times to review strategies, results of key tasks and draft material. The Committee's input was invaluable to completing this Plan.

### 2.2.2 Public Meetings

A total of five public meetings were conducted in two rounds. Each meeting consisted of an open house with posters and members of the Select Committee, staff and consulting team available to discuss and answer questions, and a presentation by the consulting team. The meetings were conducted as follows:

- a) **September 27, 29 and 30, 2004:** Three meetings were held, one each at Lighthouse Community Centre (north), Oceanside Place (central) and Cedar Heritage Centre (south). The purpose was to inform the public about the regional parks and trails system, the Plan review purpose and process, of the Plan, the questionnaire, and to get initial input on priorities. About 30 people in total attended the meetings.
- b) **December 1 and 2, 2004:** Two meetings were held, one at Oceanside Place (north and central) and the other at Nanaimo Aquatic Centre (central and south). The purpose was to present the results of the public questionnaire, and to discuss key elements of the draft Plan as it was being developed. Almost 70 people attended. The presentation outlined and response forms were provided to give attendees the chance to comment on the following key elements:
  - Vision and Goals for the System;
  - Park and Trail Classification Scheme;
  - Representation (and gap analysis) in the System;
  - Park Acquisition priorities;
  - Park Management and Development priorities;
  - Trail management and development priorities;
  - Roles and responsibilities;
  - Funding; and
  - Naming regional parks.

Input at both sets of meetings was instrumental in defining and refining the key components and priorities for the next ten years. Those who attended the public meetings were generally supportive of the regional parks and trails system, but were dismayed at the small budget allocated to further regional park and trail acquisition. Many participants emphasized the urgency in acquiring lands for future parks before opportunities disappear. Given the

#### Regional Parks & Trails Select Committee members:

Director L. McNabb, Chair

Director H. Kreiberg

Director J. Stanhope

Director D. Bartram

N. Connelly, General  
Manager Community  
Services

T. Osborne, Manager  
Recreation and Parks

J. Ainge, Parks Supervisor

perception that the Province is divesting of Crown land at a rapid rate, several participants encouraged the RDN to voice their concern, calling for a stop in the further sale of Crown lands.

### **2.2.3 Public Questionnaire**

As a point of contact with the residents of the RDN, a questionnaire was circulated from August 15 to October 15 that asked about regional park and trail use and opinions about the current state and future priorities for the system.

The questionnaire was advertised via letters to stakeholders, press releases, and on the RDN's website. Copies were distributed at the RDN's offices, at the first set of public meetings in September, and as an online form on the RDN's website where residents could submit their responses directly. Access to the online questionnaire was included in notices and press releases.

The results of the Questionnaire are highlighted in section 2.3 and a full summary is provided in Appendix A.

Several letters and email correspondence were also received from individuals in response to the questionnaire or information provided at the public meetings.

### **2.2.4 Stakeholder Consultation**

The terms of reference also called for consultation with a variety of agencies and organizations. This occurred in the following ways:

- Representatives of 74 agencies, committees and organizations (Appendix B) were initially contacted by letter to inform them of the review, the questionnaire and upcoming public meetings in September.
- The consulting team met or spoke by telephone with 16 representatives from 10 agencies and organizations (Appendix C) to get their perspective on and any concerns regarding the regional park and trail system. A preliminary concept map of the future parks and trails system was instrumental in these discussions. Input from these meetings was a major source in defining roles, relationships and potential partnerships in this Plan.
- These agencies and organizations were also sent the draft Plan electronically for review and comment.

## 3. The Context for Regional Parks & Trails

This chapter discusses the stage for regional parks and trails in the Regional District of Nanaimo.

### 3.1 Regional Park Authority under the *Local Government Act*

In 1989, the RDN was given the authority to establish and operate regional parks as a regional service under Supplementary Letters Patent (Division CCVI) issued under the *Park (Regional) Act*. Then in 1996, the *Local Government Act* (LGA) allowed regional districts to convert its regional park service to one exercised under the authority of a bylaw (section 774.2 of the LGA). The RDN subsequently adopted the *Regional Parks and Trails Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 1231* in March 2001, which sets out the “Regional Parks Function” for the RDN.

Other changes instituted under the LGA that affect the operation of regional parks and trails include the following:

- The requirement for a regional park plan, approved by the Province, was eliminated – allowing regional districts to acquire land for regional parks or trails without having such a plan.
- General powers regarding regulatory authority replaced conventional prescriptive powers under the former *Park (Regional) Act*.
- Regulatory bylaws respecting regional parks and trails no longer need to be approved by the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.
- Parks now need to be dedicated by bylaw adopted under section 30 of the LGA. Hence, the RDN must amend Bylaw No. 1231 each time it acquires and dedicates a new regional park.
- Local governments are now allowed to establish long-term (greater than five years) contracts and agreements for various services.
- Finally, section 176 of the LGA provides local governments with the authority to make agreements regarding the provision and operation of activities, works and services. This provided the basis for the RDN to establish the Regional Parks Services Agreement with the Region’s member municipalities to contribute towards the operation and maintenance of regional parks.

### 3.2 Regional Growth and Development

The Regional District has been experiencing an average annual growth rate of 3% growth in its population since 1981. The Regional District’s population in 2001 (the last census) was 127,016 with 71% living in municipalities and 29% in electoral areas (these percentages will have changed with the incorporation of Lantzville in 2003).

According to the most recent estimates from BC Statistics<sup>1</sup>, the Regional District’s population is projected to increase to almost 160,000 by 2015 and 184,365 by 2025 - a 45% increase over the 2001 population.

This population growth will significantly increase the demand on parks and trails, compounded by the trend towards more and more outdoor leisure activities. Hence, it is essential to plan now for a regional parks and trails system that will meet the needs of present and future residents.

A critical part of that process will be acquiring a land base of natural areas before they are lost to development. Many opportunities for adding important parcels to the parks and trails system will continue to be compromised or lost.

### 3.3 The Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional Parks and Trails System Plan is also intended to be in accordance with the overarching policies of the RDN’s Regional Growth Strategy. Regional parks and trails are one tool, among many, that support the Strategy’s goals regarding environmental protection, improved mobility, a sustainable economy and cooperation among jurisdictions.

Of particular relevance are:

- Policy 4A: to work with member municipalities and individually “to protect open space that reflects the region’s landscape character and ecological integrity, and forms a system of interconnect areas and natural corridors capable of sustaining native plant and animal communities” (p.11).
- Policy 5A: to work with member municipalities and individually “to increase the opportunities for more environmentally-friendly modes of transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, transit).
- Policy 8D: to consider partnerships and alliances with the supportive groups and organizations.
- Policy 8E: to coordinate the RDN’s planning with First Nations.

### 3.4 Park Land in the RDN

As was noted in Chapter 1, the RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails system is just one part of the total parks and protected areas in the Regional District. Table 3-1 indicates where the Region stands when it comes to park lands; note, however, that statistics for municipal park systems may not be up to date. Regional parks account for about 15% of all

**Table 3-1: Park land in the RDN**

Jurisdiction	No.	Area (ha)
Provincial Parks	16	1449
RDN Regional Parks	9	451.5
RDN Community Parks	116	198
City of Nanaimo	234	589
City of Parksville	54	87
Town of Qualicum Beach	49	183
District of Lantzville	6	2.3
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>2959.8</b>
Total Area of RDN (approx)		207,000
<b>% of RDN in Park land</b>		<b>1.43</b>
Population (2001)		127,016
<b>Park land per capita</b>		<b>23 ha/1000</b>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.htm>

park land in the Regional District. Less than 1.5% of the Regional District is dedicated as parks.

### 3.4.1 The Role of *Regional Parks and Trails*

As can be seen, regional parks and trails are part of a larger network of parks, trails and protected areas whose components have some similar and some distinctive roles to play. Appendix D provides a summary of the different roles that are played by parks and trails at different levels of jurisdiction.

Within that overall network of parks, *regional* parks and trails in the RDN:

- Protect regionally significant natural environments and landscapes
- Are based on a natural area or feature – i.e., not a developed area or facility such as a ball field or swimming pool.
- Manage areas and their uses for ecological integrity, which means that there will be different levels of use and protection in different parks and trails.
- Provide opportunities for a range of outdoor experiences in a natural or semi-natural setting.
- Include a variety of types of trails, from wide, gentle multi-use trails to narrow, mountainous hiking trails, but are focused on non-motorized use.
- Link the region’s communities, parks (at all levels) and municipal trails to one another, and connect the RDN to neighboring region districts.
- Are aimed to meet the needs of RDN residents.
- Provide attractions for ecotourism.

### 3.5 Other Protected Areas and Mechanisms

Dedicated park land, however, is not the only form of protected area, and the RDN is certainly not the only player in conserving natural areas. There are other protected lands in the Regional District, including:

- Provincial ecological reserves (three in the Regional District).
- Provincial wildlife management areas (one - the *Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area*, established in 1993 under the BC *Wildlife Act* to protect and manage marine, estuarine and river habitat critical to fish and wildlife populations. The Area encompasses 1024 ha of coastal foreshore, estuary and river habitat between Craig Bay and the Little Qualicum River.)
- Privately held protected areas - e.g., South Winchelsea Island owned by the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC), and riparian sections of the Englishman River owned by the Nature Trust of BC (NT).
- The *Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve (MABR)* was established in 2000 by UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program to recognize the area’s environmental value and unique mix of ecosystems. Encompassing some 1200 km<sup>2</sup>, the Reserve extends from the top of Mount Arrowsmith to the bottom of the Strait of Georgia. While Biosphere Reserves carry no legal status or management authority, they do impart international status that strengthens local efforts to achieve protection and sustainable land use.

- Other means of protecting green space on private lands such as through development permits, conservation covenants and land use agreements.

### 3.6 Relationship of Regional Parks & Trails to Community Parks

As noted in Chapter 1, the RDN supports a community parks function as well as a regional parks function (see Figure 1-1). Community parks and trails differ from the regional system in several ways:

- Community parks are aimed at responding to local park and recreation needs, as well as securing locally significant natural features. They are not intended to attract or support use by the broader regional population.
- Unlike regional parks and trails, which is funded region-wide, each of the eight Electoral Areas in the Regional District funds its own community parks and trails service through taxes and development revenues (rezonings and subdivisions) collected within each electoral area. Consequently, the community parks and trails budgets differ among the eight Areas.
- Whereas most regional parks are acquired through rezoning negotiation or purchase of large tracts of lands, many community parks are acquired under the 5% parkland dedication requirement at time of subdivision.
- In addition, five of the 8 electoral areas have Parks and Open Space Advisory Committees to advise the Board and staff on their particular parks and trails. No such committee exists a region-wide level for regional parks and trails.

#### 3.6.1 Issues - Regional vs. Community Parks

**Physical linkages:** It is desirable to link community to regional systems, to provide Area residents the opportunity to connect readily to the broader range of opportunities throughout the Region. The degree to which that linkage occurs, however, is up to the individual Electoral Area residents. Some may embrace the regional trail system wholeheartedly, and wish to have regional trails close to or even through their communities. Others may be more content to be at the periphery of the system.

**Administrative 'competition':** While regional parks may not compete with community parks for financial resources, they do compete for staff time and resources. As Figure 1-1 shows, the same Recreation and Parks Department staff is responsible for both community and regional park systems. As such, they must be able to balance their efforts between the two systems.

However, given their greater immediacy and the presence of advocates (in the form of Advisory Committees as well as residents with local priorities), community parks and trails often 'win out' when it comes to occupying staff time and energy. Indeed, it is likely that most electoral area residents do not know the difference between 'regional' and 'community' parks – they simply want the parks and parks staff to respond to their needs and desires.

Without recognition of the increased planning and management needs at both levels, growth in the regional parks and trails system will continue to be limited.

### 3.7 Municipal Involvement

In March 2001, a “Regional Parks Services Agreement” was signed between the RDN and the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach that provides for the municipalities to contribute to the cost of the operation and maintenance of Regional Parks. The District of Lantzville, incorporated in 2003, has since joined the Agreement. Annual payments are set in accordance with the share of population between the municipalities and the electoral areas.

No municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new Regional Parks. The Agreement does provide for the Regional District to consult with the municipalities in the planning and coordination of future Regional Parks and Trails acquisition and development. As pressure mounts for more parks and trails – much of it generated by municipal residents – the absence of municipal help in acquiring park land outside their boundaries is coming under greater scrutiny.

### 3.8 Other Regional Issues

Population growth, limited staff resources, and administrative challenges are just some of the challenges faced by the regional parks and trails system. Following are some of the other issues that relate to the growth and development of regional parks and trails.

- ***Maintaining environmental integrity:*** ensuring ecological health is a significant challenge because most parks are fragments of altered landscapes and do not protect complete ecosystems. Park boundaries are often determined by property lines rather than ecological considerations. Park and trail environments are impacted by their surrounding land uses, over which there is little control. And park and trail ecosystems are impacted by their users, including the introduction of non-native, invasive species.
- ***Providing opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities:*** The traditional activities of hiking, walking, swimming, cycling and nature study contribute to a healthy lifestyle and quality of life. However, demands are growing for new activities – mountain biking, roller blading, personal motorized and watercraft use, ‘eco-challenges’ and eco-tourism. This means a wider variety of management techniques – such as effective education and interpretation to foster more responsible attitudes towards ecosystem protection.
- ***Declining access to Crown lands:*** Provincial Crown land was traditionally considered to be either permanently in the public realm or relatively available for application for park use. Land and Water BC manages crown land use and sales, and its current mandate is to make Crown land more accessible for economic development. This includes tenures but also sale of Crown lands “for the highest and best use”. This creates significant

challenges to the Regional District to acquire either land grants or new long term leases to Crown land for park and trail purposes.

- **Declining access to wilderness areas:** The majority of lands in the Regional District are privately owned, with much of the undeveloped ‘wilderness’ area held by timber companies. The public has been fortunate to have informal or managed access to much of this wilderness area. However, ongoing population growth and land development means that this type of informal access will continue to decline. Furthermore, concerns over fire, vandalism and liability for public access have caused timber companies to close their gates more frequently, denying access for users and for the RDN to develop trails.
- **Funding:** Regional Parks are supported primarily through property taxes. Everywhere, local governments are faced with increased financial restraint and greater competition for public money.
- **Acquiring new park lands:** The challenges here are growing scarcity of available lands to acquire, and rapidly increasing property values.
- **Integrating with land use planning:** Regional parks and trails need to be managed in the context of the rest of the landscape. They are influenced by, but also must influence, land use planning efforts. There are ten Official Community Plans covering the eight electoral areas, and each one contains policies and plans that relate directly to parks and trails – be they regional or community in function. Collaboration with the RDN’s Planning Department and with landscape planning by other levels of government is imperative.

## 4. The Current Regional Parks & Trails System 1995-2004

The chapter begins with a discussion of the evolution of the system since 1995, and then summarizes the components of the system as it stands in 2004.

### 4.1 A Brief History of the RDN's Regional Parks & Trails

The RDN's regional park function originated in 1989 when it was given the authority to establish regional parks by the Province under the then *Park (Regional) Act*. Since that time, several key steps have occurred in the RDN's development of a regional parks and trails system.

**1995 Parks System Plan:** The RDN's first Parks System Plan was approved by the Board and the Province in 1995 as the Official Regional Park Plan under the *Park (Regional) Act*. Through a process of consultation with the public, major landowners and interest groups it identified a number of sites and concepts that were recognized as significant to the region's parks, outdoor recreation and open space mosaic.

**1995-97 District 69 Trails 'Pilot' Initiative:** In late 1995, on the initiative of the Area H Director, a pilot project was initiated and a public committee was struck to investigate establishing an "east coast trail". After considerable public consultation, the "District 69 Trail System Development Plan Report" was submitted. The Board supported the report with further funding, and an "Implementation Plan for the District 69 Trail System 1998-2000" was submitted in 1997.

**1998 Trails Implementation:** Through 1998, a trails project manager and project coordinators were hired and volunteer teams initiated for three of the trail projects presented in the 1997 Plan: Rath Trevor to Top Bridge; the Lighthouse Country Trail, Bowser to Qualicum Bay section; and the Parksville-Qualicum Links.

**1998 Regional Parks Acquisition Program:** In October 1998, the Board approved in principle a Regional Parks Acquisition Program for the 1999 - 2005 period. It was undertaken following the provision of an expanded budget in March 1998 that placed an emphasis on trail development along with recognizing the need for an acquisition program to move the Regional Parks function forward.

The Acquisition Program focused on specific sites selected based on recommendations from the Regional Parks System Plan, Board Directors, community members and landowners. In addition to the two existing sites of Beachcomber and Benson Creek Falls Regional Parks, seven priority sites were identified: Gainsburg Swamp, Hamilton Marsh, French Creek, Lantzville Foothills, Nanaimo River, Sandwell/Locke Bay and an Historic Railway Trail. Nanoose Islands and Mount Arrowsmith were also listed as additional sites where the RDN could play a partnership role in aiding their acquisition or management.

As part of the review process, as many as twenty other regionally significant sites were considered but not included in the acquisition program. The sites that were chosen also provided for each of the eight electoral areas to have a significant regional park within the system by 2005.

**1999-2000 Trails Development:** Two development plans – one for the Lighthouse Country Trail and the other for the Parksville-Qualicum links – were approved. The Top Bridge Trail was officially opened in June 1999. Work continued with part-time coordinators and enthusiastic volunteer teams on the Lighthouse Country and Parksville-Qualicum links trails. Through the hard work of a volunteer bridge team, a \$35,000 BC2000 grant was acquired, which along with \$40,000 from the regional parks budget and a buy-a-piece-of-the-bridge fundraiser is sufficient to tender the construction of the Barclay Crescent Millennium Bridge over French Creek. The Bridge is officially opened in November 2000.

**2001-2003 Evolution to a Regional Trails concept:** Work continues on building (e.g., Lighthouse Country Trail) and fundraising (e.g., Top Bridge Poker Walk-Run-Ride), as well as planning for additional trails (e.g., trail up the Big Qualicum River). Gradually the District 69 system evolved into a Region-wide concept based on building a “trail from park to park” throughout the Regional District. By 2003, in addition to the District 69 Plan trails, the historic Arrowsmith Trail was under construction, the Trans Canada Trail had been adopted and developed – including the Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge, and the Morden Colliery community trail was evolving to regional status. In total, trail development had been initiated in five of the eight electoral areas.

**Park Acquisition Program update 2003:** The Acquisition Program and its priority sites were revisited in 2003. Five more areas were identified as potential priorities in acquiring a future regional park: Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges, the Notch, Little Mountain/Morison Creek, Englishman River, and Little Qualicum River.

The Acquisition Program was set up on the premise that the bulk of operational funds would be concentrated on the regional trail system rather than in parks over the 1999-2005 period. However, the acquisition of two Regional Parks with campgrounds in 2002 put more pressure on the operational side of the regional parks budget, as did the construction of trail bridges and other development projects.

As a result of these initiatives, there are now nine regional parks in the system, with a park in each of the eight Electoral Areas except for Area C.

## 4.2 Evolution of the Parks & Trails System since 1995

The 1995 Parks System Plan identified a total of 38 sites and 4 concepts of interest for park and trail potential in the Regional District, of which 24 sites and trail concepts were identified to be of “regional” (as opposed to community) significance. Nine of these sites were subsequently identified in the 1998 Acquisition Program and five more in the 2003 Acquisition Plan Update as priorities for acquisition at a regional level.

Since 1998, the RDN has secured five of these 14 priority sites, or their equivalent, as regional parks or trails (Table 4-1). Two of the original sites – the Qualicum River and Englishman River - are each represented by two regional park acquisitions. In addition, the RDN acquired Horne Lake Regional Park as well as developed seven other trails based on opportunities as they arose.

**Table 4-1: Status of the 14 priority sites identified in the 1998 and 2003 Acquisition Programs** (sites that have been acquired are noted in *italics*)

Priority Site	Elec. Area	Status 2004
Sandwell/Lock Bay ('98)	B	Replaced by purchase of nearby <b>Descanso Bay RP</b> (Gabriola Island).
Nanaimo River ('98)	A	<b>Nanaimo River RP</b> acquired with the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC).
Historic Trail ('98)	C,F	<b>Arrowsmith Historic Trail</b> from Cameron Lake to Mt. Cokely developed.
Nanoose Islands & Wallis Point ('98)	E	South Winchelsea Island purchased by the Land Conservancy of BC in 1998 as conservation area. Wallis Point of park interest.
Mt. Arrowsmith massif ('98)	C	Local mountaineering community is interested in establishing as a provincial park.
Lantzville Foothills ('98)	D	Foothills Development proposal may provide opportunity for regional trail extension.
Hamilton Marsh ('98)	G	Still privately owned.
Gainsburg Wetland ('98)	H	Still privately owned and Crown land.
French Creek ('98)	G	Community parks acquired along the Creek corridor.
Englishman River ('03)	G	<b>Englishman River RP</b> acquired with BC Nature Trust; <b>Rivers Edge RP</b> acquired as park dedication from development.
Little Qualicum River ('03)	F	<b>Little Qualicum River RP</b> acquired thru rezoning; <b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Conservation Area</b> acquired with Ducks Unlimited and TLC.
Mt. Benson/ Westwood Ridges ('03)	C	RDN supporting Mt. Benson Coalition in negotiations with landowners.
The Notch ('03)	E	Still privately owned.
Little Mountain/ Morison Creek ('03)	F	Province recently offered a 2-year nominal rent tenure but RDN wishes to pursue more permanent acquisition status.
		2003 – <b>Horne Lake RP</b> acquired through rezoning process.

Other sites of “regional significance” that were identified in the 1995 Plan but not pursued as priorities are listed in Table 4-2.

**Table 4-2: Other Regionally Significant Sites Identified in 1995 Plan**

These sites have not been actively pursued.

Site	Elec. Area	Comment
Rowbotham Ridge	C	Difficult to access other than on private logging roads.
Rhododendron Lake	C	Difficult to access other than on private logging roads.
Black Jack Ridge	C	Lower priority compared to Mt. Benson.
Stewart Road	E	RDN has applied to Province for a Free Crown Grant as a community conservation area.
Bonnell Creek (trail)	D	May be of interest in the future as part of regional trail network.
Dublin Gulch (trail)	F	Community trail potential.
Mant Farm	-	Within Town of Qualicum Beach.
Linley Valley	-	City of Nanaimo has acquired parkland in the Valley and is pursuing additional surrounding lands.
Harewood Plains	-	Of interest to City of Nanaimo.
Dodd Narrows	-	Land acquired by City of Nanaimo as municipal park.

### 4.3 The Regional Parks & Trails System Today

Guided by the 1995 Regional Parks System Plan, the 1997 District 69 Trails Implementation Plan, and the 1998 and 2003 Parks Acquisition Programs, the Regional Parks and Trails system has grown from two small parks in 1995 to nine regional parks totaling more than 450 hectares and over 60 km of regional trail (See “Regional Parks and Trails Concept Map” attached).

Each electoral area except Area ‘C’ has a Regional Park, although the Area ‘E’ Beachcomber Regional Park represents more of a community park asset. Table 4-3 summarizes key facts about the current regional parks.

Regional trail development has occurred in five of the eight electoral areas. The Morden Colliery Trail has been developed as an Electoral Area ‘A’ community trail project not funded to date from the Regional Parks budget.

Significant bridge projects that link sections of trail have also been undertaken over the last several years. They cross Haslam Creek (on the Trans Canada Trail), McBey Creek (on the Arrowsmith Historic Trail), Hunts Creek, and French Creek at Barclay Crescent (on the Parksville-Qualicum link). Two bridges over Thatcher Creek are part of the Morden Colliery Trail. Table 4-4 summarizes key facts about the current regional trails.

Table 4-3: Regional Parks as of 2004

Park	Description/use	Year est'd	El. Area	Land status	Mgmt Plan	Area (ha)
<b>Beachcomber Regional Park</b>	Small waterfront park located near the end of Beachcomber Peninsula in Nanoose Bay. Road Access via Marina Way.	1955	E	Owned by RDN.	---	1.04
<b>Benson Creek Falls Regional Park</b>	Forested park on lower west slopes of Mt. Benson above Brannen Lake. Accessed from Doumont Road or Jameson Road. Steep ravines (up to 50m) of Benson and Flynnfall Creeks dissect the park. Two sets of waterfalls on Benson Creek. Informal trails; public discouraged from use of ravine trails due to high risk and erosion issues. Discussions with MWLAP ongoing bridge locations.	1991	D	Crown; 30-year lease from Province.	1999	22
<b>Little Qualicum River Regional Park</b>	Encompasses river corridor downstream of Little Qualicum Falls Provincial Park. Acquired as parkland dedication from Little Qualicum River Estates subdivision. Accessed (gated) from Corcan Road or Melrose Road. Development awaiting a management plan.	1998	F	Owned by RDN.	----	44
<b>Nanaimo River Regional Park</b>	Located downstream from the Hwy 19 bridge and Salmon Enhancement Project. Acquired with The Land Conservancy, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, and many smaller donors. North side of the river to be managed for public access; the remainder on south side to be conserved for its high fisheries habitat value. An existing riverside trail on the northern side of the river. Access from Fry Road or Thatcher Road.	2001	A	99-year lease from TLC.	2004 (in prep.)	56
<b>Descanso Bay Regional Park - Gabriola Island</b>	Oceanfront property, formerly known as the Gabriola Campground, located at 595 Taylor Bay Road, a short distance from the ferry terminal. Acquired from Nanaimo Credit Union for \$1 million (total). 30 camping sites; services for kayakers and other boaters, picnickers, campers and hikers.	2002	B	Owned by RDN	2003	16.2
<b>Horne Lake Regional Park</b>	Lakefront park adjacent to Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park. Acquired as park dedication from rezoning and strata subdivision of cabin properties. Contains campground, boat ramp, natural area.	2003	H	Owned by RDN	2003	109.3
<b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area</b>	Waterfront property at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River, adjacent to Marshall-Stevenson Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS). Purchased in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). Has tidal grass meadows, water channels, and a sandy beach; one of three sand spit estuaries along the east coast of Vancouver Island. Essential Management plan to be prepared to support managed public viewing.	2003	G	Co-owned with Ducks Unlimited.	----	4.6
<b>River's Edge Regional Park</b>	Several parcels on the south side of the Englishman River, acquired through parkland dedication at the time of rezoning and subdivision of River's Edge property development. Parcels offer protection to upper portions of Craig Creek, provide stormwater management for the subdivision, provide greenway and riparian corridors for environmental protection and potential trail linkages; and include forest buffers along Kaye Road and Highway 19. The Nature Trust of BC acquired additional 90 hectares along the Englishman River for protection of riparian habitat and sensitive river valley ecosystems.	2003	G	Owned by RDN	----	21.4

Park	Description/use	Year est'd	El. Area	Land status	Mgmt Plan	Area (ha)
Englishman River Regional Park	North side of the river from Allsbrook Road to Morison Creek. Acquired with Nature Trust of BC, TimberWest Forest Ltd, Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Province, City of Parksville, and several environmental organizations. Contains a community operated salmon hatchery, a network of informal recreational trails, and extensive wildlife habitat.	2004	G	99-year lease from Nature Trust	----	177
	<b>TOTAL AREA</b>					<b>451.5</b>

Table 4-4: Regional Trails as of 2004

TRAIL	EI. Area	APPROX. length 1-way (km)	Description	Land Status
Morden Colliery Trail	A	3.4	Off-road; follows former coal railway route that once linked the mines of South Wellington to Boat Harbour. Western portion accessed from Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park at the end of Morden Road; 1-km trail leads through the old mine site over Thatcher Creek to Nanaimo River. Eastern portion accessed at either Cedar Road or at Hemer Provincial Park. 2.4 km (one way) trail through forest and residential areas following the railway grade.	20-year licence of occupation from Province; needs to be renewed in 2015.
Trans Canada Trail - Extension Ridge Trail	C	6	Off-road: links south Nanaimo to the residential area of Extension. Access signposted from hydro lines on Harewood Mines Road.	Weyerhaeuser Ltd. and TimberWest Ltd. and some smaller landowners, access being provided through agreements.
Trans Canada Trail - Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge to Spruston Road	C	32	Off road: access off the north side of a gravel pit off Timberlands Rd., from the end of Timberlands Road, or from McKay Lake at the end of Spruston Road. Much of trail is under development with preliminary trail markers.	See Extension Ridge Trail.
Arrowsmith Trail	C,F	10	Off road - based on historic trail built by CPR IN 1912. Connects to trails to Mt. Cokely and Arrowsmith. Access from Cameron Lake day-use area (BC Parks) on Highway 4	Portions owned by Timber West and Weyerhaeuser; RDN has 5-year agreements for public access.
Parksville-Qualicum Links	G	8	Mostly on-road route using quiet streets as alternative to highway travel for pedestrians and cyclists. Links to designated bicycle routes within the two urban centres; includes off-road section (Fern Road Woods Trail) and Barclay Crescent Millennium Bridge over French Creek.	Road right of way
Rath Trevor Prov. Park to Top Bridge Municipal Park	G	5	Off-road route that links the provincial park to the Top Bridge Municipal and Mountain Biking Park.	Land use agreements with private landowner, BC Parks, Municipal Park; road right of way.
Lighthouse Country Trail	G,H	8	Off-road loops to eventually link Qualicum Beach to Bowser. Fundraising underway for bridge over Nile Creek to join the loops together.	Undeveloped gazetted highway corridor (1950), a community park and woodlot land.
Big Qualicum River Trails	H	12	Off-road: will eventually link the Big Qualicum Salmon Hatchery with Horne Lake. Some of route will be alongside the hatchery service road. Access and parking at the hatchery on Fisheries road (Qualicum Bay).	Partially federal lands; RDN and DFO have entered into agreement to open up public trails along the Big Qualicum River.



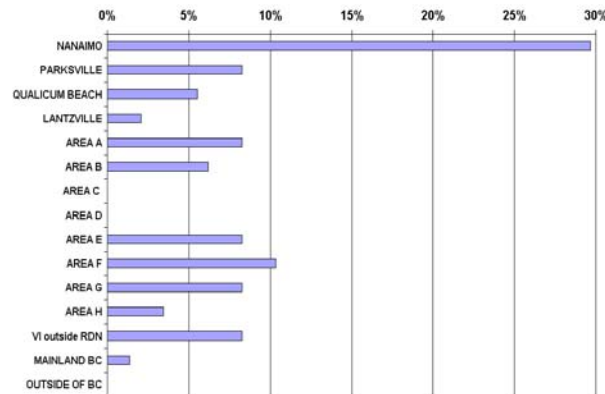
## 5. Questionnaire Results

This chapter summarizes the results of the public questionnaire that was distributed from August to October 2004.

In total, 145 responses were received, of which 73% were submitted online and 27% submitted by fax or mail. The highlights of these responses are summarized below. The complete survey summary, including all written comments, is provided in Appendix A.

### 5.1.1 Location of Respondents

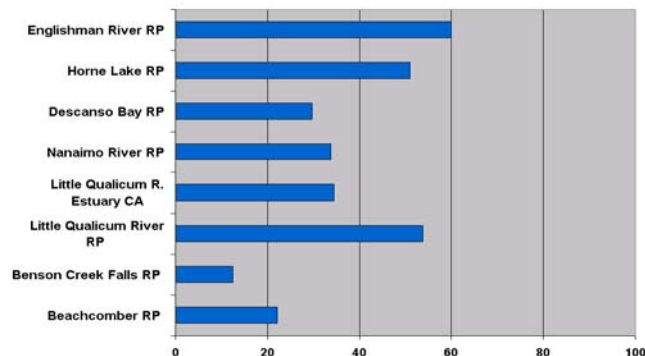
Almost 30% of respondents live in Nanaimo, with about another 20% originating collectively from the other three municipalities of Parksville, Lantzville and Qualicum Beach. All electoral areas were represented except for Areas C and D. Almost 10% of respondents originate from outside the Regional District.



### 5.1.2 Regional Park Visitation

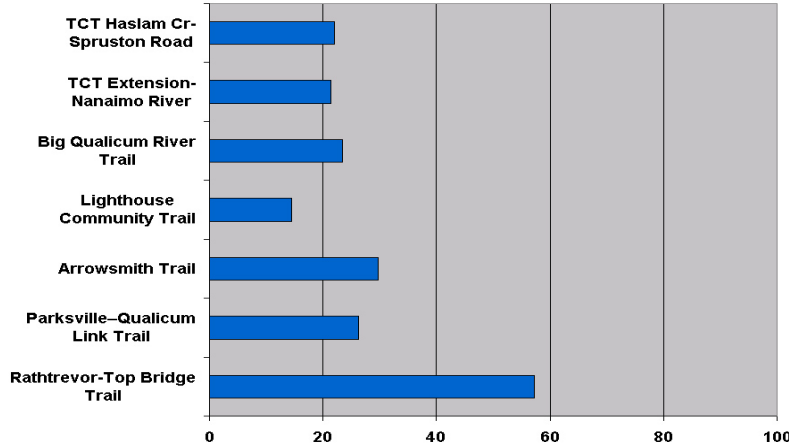
Highest visitation was reported to Englishman River RP (60%), Little Qualicum River RP (55%), and Horne Lake RP (51%). However, these results are somewhat suspect as respondents may have confused these Regional Parks with the Provincial Parks by the same or similar name.

Visits to other regional parks range from 34% (Nanaimo River RP) down to 12% (Benson Creek Falls RP).



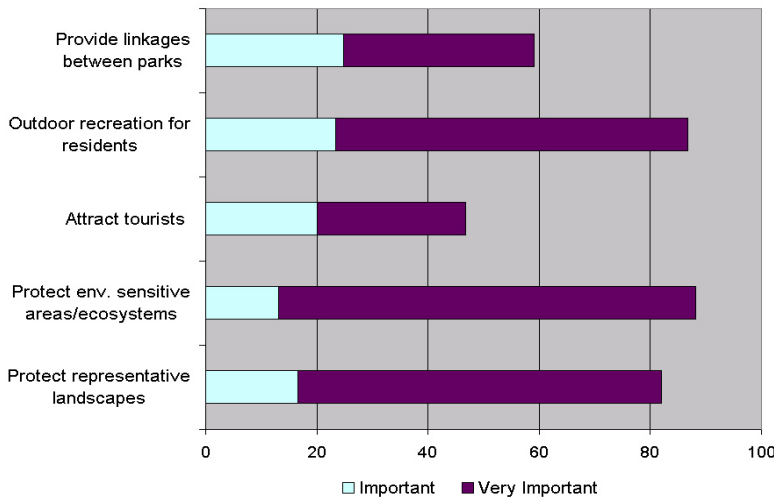
### 5.1.3 Regional Trail Visitation

The highest visitation was reported for Rathtrevor-Top Bridge Trail (57%) and Arrowsmith Historic Trail (30%). Visitation to other trails ranged from 15% to 26%.



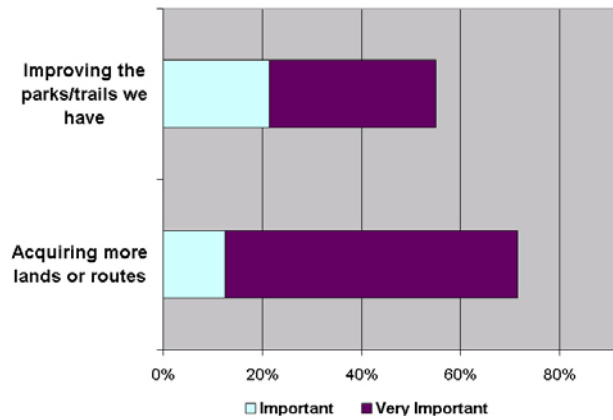
### 5.1.4 Roles of Regional Parks and Trails

Protecting environmentally sensitive areas, protecting representative landscapes and providing outdoor recreation opportunities were rated as the most important roles of the regional parks and trails system. Attracting tourists was a less important role. Accompanying comments also emphasized the role of regional parks and trails in educating about the value of the natural environment.



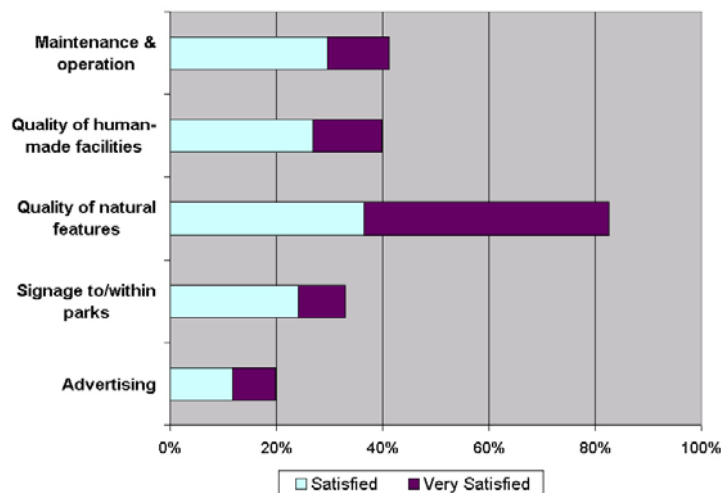
### 5.1.5 Priorities for Regional Parks and Trails

Acquisition of more parks and trails was considered generally a higher priority than development of the existing parks and trails. Comments indicated an emphasis on acquiring lands now as they are rapidly being lost to development or becoming too expensive to obtain.



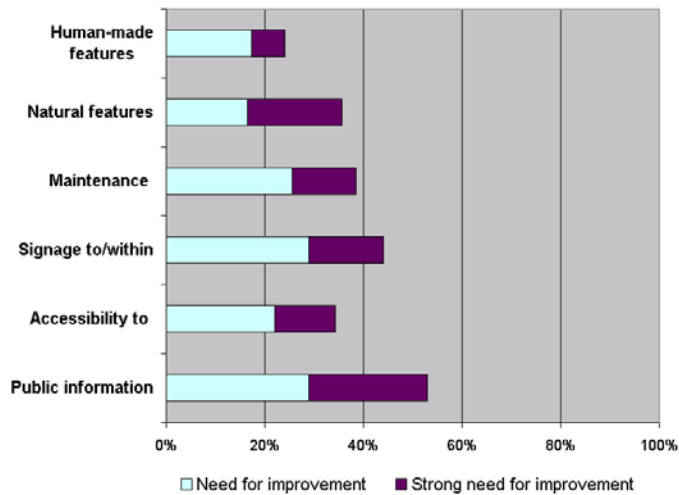
### 5.1.6 Level of Satisfaction

Respondents were most satisfied with the quality of natural features in regional parks and trails, and least satisfied with signage and advertising. Comments emphasized the need for more and better information about the system.



### 5.1.7 Need for Improvement

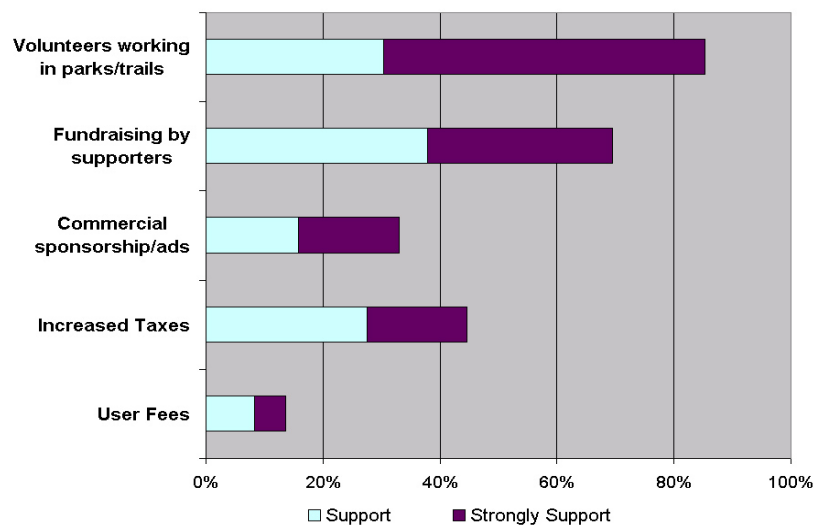
Like the previous question, more information and signage were identified as the aspects in most need of improvement.



### 5.1.8 Funding Options

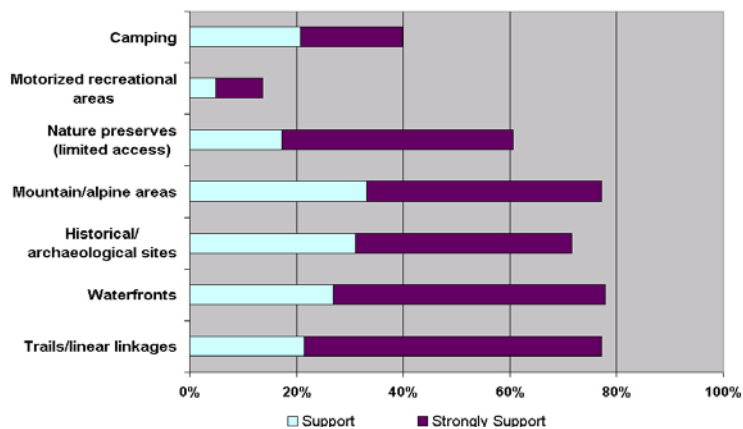
Support to volunteers and fundraising through donations were the favoured means of funding parks and trails. Surprisingly, almost 45% supported increased taxes. User fees received the least support.

5.



## Additions to the System

Mountain and alpine areas, waterfront lands, more trails, historic/ archaeological sites were supported as additions; motorized recreational areas received the least support.



### 5.1.10 Comments Summary

Readers can review the several hundred comments received on all the questions in Appendix A. The following highlights key points that were repeated by many respondents.

#### ***Roles of regional parks and trails:***

- Education is as important as preservation and recreation.

#### **•Priorities:**

- Acquisition is a higher priority than development at this point in time.
- Emphasis on acquiring more trails, waterfront, and alpine areas.

#### ***Development and management:***

- “Keep it natural” was the key message.
- Provide more information about the system.
- Be strategic in the use of funds for facilities.

#### ***Funding:***

- Limited use of user fees to specific services – e.g., tours.
- Allow “discrete” commercial sponsorship and advertising.
- Pursue donations – e.g., set up an endowment fund.
- Support volunteers.

## 6. The Future Regional Parks & Trails System 2005-2015

This chapter discusses the underlying premises of the regional parks and trails system for the next 10 years.

### 6.1 The Vision

Building from the 1995 Plan and public input, the vision for the RDN's Regional Parks and Trails for the next 10 years is a system that:

- *Secures, protects and stewards lands and water features of environmental significance and natural resource value;*
- *Provides rewarding outdoor recreational opportunities;*
- *Fosters education and appreciation of the Region's natural environment; and*
- *Enhances livability for the current and future residents of the RDN.*

### 6.2 The Goals

Again building from the 1995 Plan and public input, the goals of the RDN is to secure for all time a system of regional parks and trails that:

- *Represents and protects the key landscapes and ecosystems of the Region;*
- *Encompasses unique natural, historic, cultural and archaeological features;*
- *Promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of regional parks and trails in a manner that assures their qualities are unimpaired for generations to come;*
- *Provides education and interpretation of the Region's natural features;*
- *Links components within the system as well as with other parks and trails in the Region and adjacent Regional Districts;*
- *Provides opportunity to all RDN residents to access and enjoy regional parks and trails; and*
- *Assists the economy of the Regional District by attracting tourists and generating revenue, as appropriate, to support the parks and trails system.*



### 6.3 Representation in the Park System

Regional parks and trails can be characterized according to aspects of the Regional District that we would like to have represented in the park system. This form of classification helps to identify **gaps** in the system, which is a factor in determining the types of parks and trails, and the park sites themselves that should be added in the future.

Based on the Vision and Goals, three attributes of the Region are considered desirable to be represented in the parks and trails system:

- Electoral areas;
- Landscapes; and
- Sensitive ecosystems.

Each of these representation attributes is discussed below.

#### 6.3.1 Representation by Electoral Area

The distribution of parks and trails among Electoral Areas A to H acts as an indicator of equitable geographic distribution, and thereby accessibility, of regional parks and trails.

**Table 5-1: Representation of Electoral Areas in the regional parks & trails system**

Regional Park	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Beachcomber					•			
Benson Creek Falls				•				
Descanso Bay		•						
Englishman River							•	
Horne Lake								•
Little Qualicum River Estuary CA							•	
Little Qualicum River						•		
Nanaimo River	•							
River's Edge							•	
Regional Trail								
Arrowsmith Historic			•			•		
Big Qualicum River								•
Lighthouse Country								•
Morden Colliery	•							
Parksville-Qualicum link							•	
Rath Trevor- Top Bridge							•	
Trans Canada			•					

In general, the regional park and trail system is less well represented in the southern part of the Regional District. Area C has portions of two trails but no regional parks, and Areas B, D and E have no trails as yet.

### 6.3.2 Representation by Landscape Type

Five general landscape types occur in the Regional District (Table 5-2). River systems and forests are well represented in the RDN’s regional parks, lakes and coastal areas less so, and mountain/alpine landscapes not at all.

**Table 5-2: Representation of landscapes in regional parks**

Regional Park	Ocean/ coastline	Lakes	Rivers/ streams	Mountain / alpine	Forest
Beachcomber	●				
Benson Creek Falls			●		●
Descanso Bay	●				●
Englishman River			●		●
Horne Lake		●	●		●
Little Qualicum Estuary CA	●		●		
Little Qualicum River			●		●
Nanaimo River			●		●
River’s Edge			●		

### 6.3.3 Representation by Sensitive Ecosystems

The *Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory for Southeast Vancouver Island* defines seven types of unique natural habitats that are becoming increasingly endangered by growing development, as well as 2 important ecosystems that are less threatened but significant in their wildlife habitat value (Table 5-3).

While a detailed inventory of sensitive ecosystems has not been done in the regional parks, a rough estimate based on preliminary knowledge of the parks indicates that all but the sensitive “terrestrial herbaceous” (vegetated outcrops) ecosystem and the important “flooded field” ecosystem are represented in the parks.

**Table 5-3: Representation of sensitive ecosystems in regional parks**

Regional Park	Coastal Bluff	Terr. Herba- ceous	Older Forest	Wood- land	Cliff, dune, spit	Wetland	Riparian	Flooded fields	2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest
Beachcomber	●			●					
Benson Creek Falls							●		●
Descanso Bay	●			●					●
Englishman River			●				●		●
Horne Lake						●	●		●
Little Qualicum Estuary					●				
Little Qualicum River									●
Nanaimo River			●				●		●
River’s Edge							●		

## 6.4 Park Classification

A classification system is a means of distinguishing the different roles that individual parks play in achieving the goals of the regional parks and trails system. Classification can help determine where different outdoor activities can occur most appropriately, and guide park management accordingly.

In the 1995 Parks System Plan, four classes were proposed: Conservancy, Nature, Trails and Greenbelts/Greenways.

Since that time, the parks and trails system has evolved into a four class system that differs somewhat from the 1995 Plan (Table 5-4):

- **Regional Conservation Area, Regional Natural Area and Trails** are similar in objectives and nature to the “Conservancy”, “Nature” and “Trails” classes from the 1995 Plan.
- **Regional Recreation Area** is a new class to reflect the acquisition of Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks, and other future parks of a more recreationally-oriented nature.

The “Greenbelt/Greenway” class has been dropped due to the overlap with “Conservation Area” objectives and because the regional park function has not taken on the mandate of protecting linear buffers proposed for this class in the 1995 Plan. The RDN may wish to reconsider this or a similar class in future revisions of this Plan.

**Table 5-4: Regional Parks and Trails Classification**

Management Class	Primary Focus	Applies to...
Regional Conservation Area	Protection of the natural environment. Limited, low impact outdoor activities permitted but may be restricted to specific areas. Environmental interpretive facilities permitted provided they have minimal impact.	Little Qualicum Estuary Conservation Area
Regional Natural Area*	Protect the natural environment and provide opportunities for range of appropriate outdoor experiences and activities. These areas protect key natural areas that are significant to the environmental character of the region. They are not as ecologically sensitive as RCA's but may contain some sensitive ecosystems.	Beachcomber Benson Creek Little Qualicum River Nanaimo River River's Edge Englishman River
Regional Recreation Area*	Provide opportunities for a wide range of outdoor experiences, adventure activities and events; managed to accommodate a relatively high number of visitors.	Descanso Bay Horne Lake
Regional Trail	Connect regional parks to other parks and trails, key points of interest (natural and cultural) and communities. In or near urban areas, to encourage non-vehicular modes of transportation.	All trails; see the next section for a discussion of classes of trails

Table 5-4 describes the primary management focus of each class and the existing parks and trails to which they apply. It is important to note that Natural and Recreation Area parks may also have conservation and/or natural

area components within them, which would be managed for those features through, for example, the definition of management 'zones' within a park.

## 6.5 Trail Classification

Trails are evolving in the RDN into the following three general classes.

### 6.5.1 Shared Roadway

Shared roadways are of two types:

- Lightly used residential or rural roads that provide pleasant cycling and walking opportunities.
- Highways with wide (greater than 1 meter) paved and maintained shoulders.

Shared roadways are promoted as recreational and commuting routes. They are mostly used by cyclists, but also walkers. They can be long distance routes connecting local trails as part of longer loops.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Line painting and roadside directional signage.
- Roadside sweeping and debris removal.
- Road widening if required.

### 6.5.2 Multi-use Trails

Multi use trails are heavily use pathways suitable for walking, cycling, and horseback riding. Usually with some separation from roads and adjacent land uses, they are at least 2 meters wide and are part of a larger system that provide lengthier routes and access to significant destinations. They are used by local residents as well as visitors and tourists.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Grading to improve access and minimize steep sections.
- Resurfacing with gravel, rock chips, mulch, asphalt or other to minimize erosion and damage during wet weather.
- Bridges constructed with heavy decking and high handrails.
- Other structures such boardwalks on limited basis.
- May include parking, occasional washroom facilities, interpretive kiosks, etc.
- Maintenance to ensure good drainage and to keep trail clear of vegetation and debris.
- Overhead clearing to allow easy passage on horseback.

### 6.5.3 Walking/Hiking Trails

These trails are restricted to supporting pedestrian use only due to difficult terrain, environmental sensitivity and/or local community desires. Their objectives may include recreation, alternative travel options, and access to natural areas.

Anticipated improvements to this class of trail include:

- Minimal resurfacing with gravel, rock chips, or mulch to minimize erosion and damage during wet weather.
- Structures such as bridges, steps, boardwalks, and drainage improvements to address terrain and hydrological features and avoid erosion and other environmental impacts.
- May include parking, washroom facilities at trailheads, interpretive signs.

## 7. Regional Parks – Priorities for 2005-2015

In this chapter, priorities for regional parks over the next ten years are presented under two headings: *acquisition* of more parks, and *development and management* of the existing parks.

### 7.1 Future Park Acquisition

#### 7.1.1 Criteria

The following criteria will factor into determining future park acquisitions:

- **Priority sites from past Plans:** As section 4 indicates, there are still 10 priority sites identified in the 1998 and 2003 Acquisition Programs that have still not been secured. These sites remain primary considerations in future acquisitions. Other sites identified in the 1995 Parks System Plan but not prioritized will also be considered if other criteria apply.
- **Regional significance:** Potential sites must be of interest to the whole region; more localized sites may be considered within the community park mandate.
- **Level of public interest:** This is an obvious criterion that has been gauged through public input in this review process, as well as past and future interaction with the residents of the Region.
- **Gaps in representation:** As discussed in section 5, this refers to the absence of parks that represent and protect:
  - Key landscapes,
  - Sensitive ecosystems, and
  - Distribution across all electoral areas.
- **Availability for acquisition:** The RDN will consider sites only where there is a willing seller or donor of land, access, tenure or covenant.
- **Opportunities that arise:** As occurred with Horne Lake Regional Park, sometimes the opportunity simply arises through development applications, donation or sale to acquire a 'prime' parcel that meets the goals of the regional parks and trails system – even when the parcel may not have been previously identified as being of interest. These opportunities should not be foregone.

#### 7.1.2 Approach

Given that its resources are limited, the RDN will use its acquisition funds as a leveraging tool, to catalyze and promote partnerships in acquisition projects and to find creative means of financing land acquisition.

Partnerships in regional park acquisitions mean that there may be different roles for the RDN in both the acquisition process and later, in the management of the acquired sites. As in the case with Nanaimo River and Englishman River Regional Parks, the RDN may not be the landowner but

rather the long-term leaseholder and manager of parks under agreements with the organizations that own the land.

In future partnerships with other park agencies, such as BC Parks or the City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Dept., the RDN may share its management role, and the park may not be solely a “regional” park.

### 7.1.3 Priority Areas of Interest

Based on the criteria described above, the areas of interest for acquisition in 2005-2015, and the potential roles that the RDN will play in securing them, are presented in alphabetical order in Table 6-1.

#### Priorities for Future Regional Park Acquisition (from Table 6-1):

French Creek (G)  
 Gainsburg Swamp (H)  
 Hamilton Marsh (G)  
 Horne Lake addition (H)  
 Little Mountain/ Morison Creek (F)  
 Mt. Arrowsmith Massif (C)  
 Mt. Benson/Westwood Ridges (C)  
 Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp (A)  
 The Notch (E)

## 7.2 Existing Parks Development and Management

### 7.2.1 Objectives

Management and development of existing parks, and parks that are acquired over the next ten years, will be guided by the following objectives:

- Ensure public safety.
- Minimize environmental impacts of public use.
- Meet management commitments associated with the park, such as commitments made to park partners like the Land Conservancy of BC and Nature Trust of B.C.
- Respond to public interest and use in determining, constructing and maintaining park facilities and services.
- Provide information on the park system.
- Generate revenue where appropriate.

### 7.2.2 Regional Park Development Priorities

Based on the above objectives, the priorities for development and management for 2005-2015 in each of the existing regional parks are listed in Table 6-2.

Table 6-1: Priority Areas of Interest for Acquisition 2005-2015

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Ownership	RDN's Role
<b>French Creek corridor</b>	Electoral Area G From Inland Island Highway to the estuary (potential future interest in upstream portion)	Conservation for fish habitat and riparian habitat corridor Build on and link existing community parks along corridor.	Natural area and/or trail	Mix of RDN, Qualicum Beach and private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire lands in concert with future development applications and/or negotiate leases and covenants with landowners as opportunities arise.</li> </ul>
<b>Gainsburg Swamp</b>	Electoral Area H Approximately 20 acres located between Highways 19 and 19A. Accessed via trail from Gainsburg Road off Highway 19A	Wetland ecology with associated biodiversity, regionally significant waterfowl and insect habitat, 2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest. Informal trails around the swamp; locally popular for walking and wildlife observation. Possible connection to the Regional Trail system along a gazetted highway right of way. Protection would also benefit the unconfined aquifer that supplies Deep Bay Waterworks District.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area	Crown and private; latter is in Agricultural Land Reserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On private portion, explore interest of landowner in selling or covenanting. Alternatively, seek acquisition if change in land use proposed in the future.</li> <li>On Crown portion, negotiate for acquisition as part of larger review of Crown lands within the Regional District.</li> <li>Explore potential acquisition and management partnerships with Ducks Unlimited (DU), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and MWLAP.</li> </ul>
<b>Hamilton Marsh</b>	Electoral Area F/G About 80 hectares (200 acres) located to the northwest of Highway 4; accessed via short trail off Hilliers Road.	Exceptional wetland habitat; recognized by CWS as one of most productive ecosystems in the Region. Prime views over the Marsh to Mt. Arrowsmith. Potential node or feature for Regional (District 69) Trail system. Education site – current used by District 69.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area	Private - Weyerhaeuser Co. Company staff willing to discuss but concerned about loss of land base for timber production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew discussions with Weyerhaeuser to define Marsh boundaries and extent of upland area needed to provide access and protect wetland ecology.</li> <li>Explore possible acquisition and management partnership with Town of Qualicum Beach, DU, the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC), CWS, and School District 69</li> <li>Explore possibility of land swap for productive timber land with Weyerhaeuser and Ministry of Forests.</li> </ul>
<b>Horne Lake RP addition</b>	Electoral Area H	Property comprises entrance and associated facilities for Horne Lake Regional Park.	Addition to Horne Lake RP	Crown federal – Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize lease as an interim measure; continue to negotiate acquisition in the long term.</li> </ul>

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Ownership	RDN's Role
<b>Little Mountain/ Morison Creek</b>	Electoral Area F North side of Englishman River, Bellevue Road area	Morison Cr. is tributary to Englishman, significant fish and riparian habitat. Extensive trail network on south and east slopes of Little Mountain. RDN interested only in lower part of Little Mountain. LWBC is in agreement with this, as Province wishes to retain the top of the mountain for the revenues generated from leases for communication towers. RDN would have to subdivide the parcel accordingly.	Natural Area	Crown	RDN's interest originates in 1995 when Province indicated that it would turn area over for regional park. The Province offered a 20-year lease in 2001 but was declined by RDN Board at the time. Current provincial policy is to offer only a 2-year nominal rent tenure but RDN wishes a more permanent status. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply to Province for Free Crown Grant or long term lease.</li> </ul>
<b>Mt Arrow-smith massif</b>	Electoral Area C Accessed from Arrowsmith Historic Trail via Mt. Cokely, or from Cameron Main Line (Weyerhaeuser property).	At 1,817 metres, highest peak on southern Vancouver Island and a landmark for the entire Region. Characterized by alpine lakes, tarns, alpine meadows and glacial landscape. Regional/provincial destination for hiking, climbing and backcountry activities. Most popular trails and climbing routes accessed from Weyerhaeuser lands.	Natural Area	Crown	Local chapter of the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) has expressed desire to launch campaign to have the massif designated a provincial park by 2005, the 100-year anniversary of the ACC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form partnership with ACC and ACRD towards establishment as a provincial park.</li> <li>Alternative option is to partner to acquire the property through a Free Crown Grant as a regional park.</li> </ul>
<b>Mt. Benson/ Westwood Ridges</b>	Electoral Area C prominent (1000m) mountain over- looking City of Nanaimo, with Westwood Ridges on its northeast flank. Accessible from City's Westwood Lake Park (Westwood Ridges) and Witchcraft Lake off BensonView Drive (Mt. Benson).	2nd growth forest with some small sites of old growth; terrestrial herbaceous communities on rocky bluffs; sub-alpine at summit Hiking trails, mountain biking trails and viewpoints with spectacular views of Nanaimo, Strait of Georgia and mountains to the south and west.  * 525 acres around summit and north face owned by Pennclan Co (Ont) Ltd. Northeast slopes owned by Weyerhaeuser and Dept. of National Defence.		Crown (north slopes) and private*	A collective of community interests, led by Nanaimo Area Land Trust (NALT), has formed the Coalition to Save Mt. Benson to raise community support and negotiate with owners and the Province. City of Nanaimo may also be interested in acquiring portions of Westwood Ridges and possibly the summit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short term: support negotiations by Mt Benson Coalition with landowners and the Province.</li> <li>Medium term: explore partnership with City of Nanaimo, province and Coalition in acquiring ownership of key parcels and</li> </ul>

Site	Location	Regional Interests	Potential Classification	Ownership	RDN's Role
					access for regional trail in other areas.
<b>Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp</b>	Electoral Area A On southwest boundary of Nanaimo River Regional Park..	Current entry facilities for Nanaimo River RP are inadequate. This property would be useful in providing space for parking, toilets and other staging facilities for the Park.	Extension to Nanaimo River RP	Crown – Min. of Transportation	MOT has indicated that the property may be surplus to their needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue discussions with MOT for acquisition or long term tenure.</li> </ul>
<b>The Notch</b>	Electoral Area E Prominent feature on northwest side of Nanoose Peninsula; accessed from Powder Point Rd.	Sensitive woodland (Garry Oak) and terrestrial herbaceous habitats. Popular area locally for walking, plant and bird observation. Viewscapes over Nanoose Bay, nearby mountains, Strait of Georgia. Identified in the Nanoose Parks Plan as a priority.	Conservation Area	Private – Fairwinds Development Corp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek acquisition through future rezoning as Fairwinds extends its development and/or purchase as opportunity arises.</li> </ul>
<b>Wallis Point</b>	Electoral Area E Southeast corner of Nanoose Peninsula; accessed from Fairwinds Drive.	2 <sup>nd</sup> growth forest, some woodland (Garry oak, arbutus) sites, accessible pebble and rocky foreshore. Bird and deer habitat. Excellent views over Nanoose Bay and Strait. Informal trails – locally popular for walking, beach access. Identified in the Nanoose Parks Plan as a priority.	Natural Area and/or Conservation Area	Federal Crown – Dept. of National Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short term: establish access agreement with DND.</li> <li>Mid to long term: work with the Province to establish a park.</li> </ul>

Table 6-2: Management and Development Priorities for Existing Regional Parks 2005-2015

Park	El. Area	Area (ha)	Management Status	Development Priorities for 2005-2015
Beachcomber Regional Park	E	1.04	Owned by RDN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managed as community park; basic signage .</li> </ul>
Benson Creek Falls Regional Park	D	22	30-year lease from Province. Management Plan completed 1999.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage</li> <li>Upgrade trail network, provide loops.</li> <li>Install bridge across Benson Creek, if can achieve relaxation of Top-of-bank to Top-of-bank requirement from MWLAP.</li> </ul>
Descanso Bay Regional Park – Gabriola Island	B	16.2	Purchased. Management Plan completed 2003.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picnic table replacement.</li> <li>Trail improvements.</li> <li>Investigate how best to restore the summer residence on the site for public use . The park operator may bear this cost for upgrading if he deems it necessary. Not a priority for RDN in 5 yr term.</li> <li>Replace water system (&gt; 5 years).</li> </ul>
Englishman River Regional Park	G	177	99-year management lease from the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Plan in 2005 to be funded by NTBC, RDN &amp; Arrowsmith Water Services: must address security issues.</li> <li>Hatchery: completion of management agreement with DFO and Community Fisheries; future interpretive use.</li> <li>Signage – directional, interpretive, regulatory.</li> <li>Parking lot and develop Middlegate Rd entry.</li> <li>Trail upgrades.</li> <li>Access to water for Arrowsmith Water System. Not a Parks cost.</li> <li>(Long term) Naturalization of old gravel pit. Wetland development opportunity + parking area on-site near gravel pit. Possible infrastructure location for AWS.</li> </ul>

Park	El. Area	Area (ha)	Management Status	Development Priorities for 2005-2015
<b>Horne Lake Regional Park</b>	H	109.3	Management Plan completed 2003, under review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Business Plan and RFP: long-term lease agreement (15-20 years) with private operator/developer, capital improvements and finance operations at owner/developers cost.</li> <li>• Legal costs to develop business strategy</li> <li>• Complete signage</li> <li>• Rezoning: the property is currently zoned as 'resource land', which does not allow for campgrounds and other intensive outdoor activities.</li> <li>• Mgmt Plan updates as phases occur (no RDN financial cost)</li> <li>• Campground expansion (phased). Operator cost</li> <li>• Installation of fire suppression equipment, power, new septic and water systems. Operator cost.</li> </ul>
<b>Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area</b>	G	4.6	Paying off RDN contribution; co-manage with TLC and DU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Plan: must take into account the covenant regarding the management intent and limited access.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Fence replacement – split rail to mirror Marshal-Stevenson Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Viewing platform at the property's edge to allow viewing into the property without direct access (as per covenant)</li> </ul>
<b>Little Qualicum River Regional Park</b>	F	44	RDN property. No management plan but use will increase as surrounding area is developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a 5-year Management Plan; will need to sort out what to do with the existing road and bridge, interface with Little Qualicum Falls Prov Park.</li> <li>• Basic infrastructure: signs, toilets, parking, trails, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Nanaimo River Regional Park</b>	A	56	99-year lease from TLC. Management Plan nearing completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic infrastructure: signage, picnic tables, toilets, parking.</li> <li>• Baseline inventory of fish habitat – TLC commitment.</li> </ul>
<b>River's Edge Regional Park</b>	G	21.4	Established in part as stormwater management system for Rivers Edge development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Develop the 2 river access points dedicated for RP</li> <li>• Investigate trail access commitments with The Nature Trust (TNT) lands along top of bank and below. (Covenant agreement speaks to this being addressed in TNT Mgmt Plan, but no assignment as to who pays for trails)</li> </ul>

## 8. Regional Trails – Priorities for 2005-2015

The priorities for regional trails over the next ten years focus on the development, management and extension of existing trails as well as the development of new trail networks.

### 8.1 Objectives

The management and development of the regional trail system will be guided by the following objectives:

- Ensure public safety.
- Complete linkages both within trail systems and among trail systems.
- Minimize environmental impacts from public use of the trails.
- Meet management commitments, where they exist – such as commitments made to landowners where trail access is acquired through their agreement.
- Respond to public interest and use in determining appropriate facilities, standards and services to provide on any specific trail.
- Provide information on the trail system.
- Take advantage of opportunities for trail extension and development as they arise.

### Existing Trails – Development and Extension

Based on the above objectives, the priorities for development and management for each of the existing regional trails are presented in Table 7-1.

### 8.3 Future Trails – Establishment and Development

Also based on the above objectives, the priorities for establishing and developing new trails in 2005-2015 are presented in Table 7-2.

Table 7-1: Development Priorities for Existing Regional Trails 2005-2015

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Bridges completed	Management Status/ Plan	Priorities for 2005-2015
<b>Arrowsmith Historic Trail</b>	C,F	McBey Cr.	Portions owned by TimberWest and Weyerhaeuser; RDN has 5-year agreements for public access.	Having raised the profile, this trail now requires upgraded management and maintenance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew licences starting in 2005.</li> <li>• Remediate trail erosion.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> </ul>
<b>Big Qualicum River Trail</b>	H		Federal lands; RDN and DFO have drafted an agreement to formalize public trails along the Big Qualicum River. Awaiting DFO response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure agreement with DFO for portion along Hatchery service road.</li> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Develop multi-use roadside trail.</li> <li>• Maintain "south-side" walking only trail</li> </ul>
<b>Lighthouse Country Trail</b>	H		On gazetted ROW from Wildwood Park to Lighthouse Community Centre; intended to continue through woodlot to create two loops. Lighthouse Country Trail D69 Trail System Project 2 Report March 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize railway crossing at south end, adjacent to Lighthouse Community Centre.</li> <li>• Signage – on trail, and locational signs from highway.</li> <li>• Bridges over Nile, Ridgewell and Nash Creeks.</li> <li>• Boardwalks</li> </ul>
<b>Morden Colliery Trail</b> currently part of community park system	A	Thatcher Cr.	20 year License of Occupation from Province; expires 2015. Morden Colliery Trail Mgmt Plan 1998; Area A Community Trails Study 2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officially transfer from EA 'A' community park to regional trail system.</li> <li>• Secure tenure through Free Crown Grant.</li> <li>• Resolve route through ALR (from Wheatsheaf Inn to Nanaimo River).</li> <li>• Extend trail to Boat Harbour through future development/ rezoning.</li> <li>• Nanaimo River bridge crossing (long term, \$500,000)</li> </ul>
<b>Parkville-Qualicum Links/Fern Rd Trail</b>	G	Barclay Cres. (French Cr)	Roadside trail with off-road connector on Fern Rd ROW and pedestrian/cycle bridge. Trail Corridor Links between Parkville and Qualicum Beach - D69 Trail System Project 3 Report March 1999.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road marking.</li> <li>• Garbage and landscape maintenance.</li> <li>• Engineering bridge inspections.</li> <li>• Consider a bridge replacement fund or for major upgrades/repairs after 2015</li> </ul>

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Bridges completed	Management Status/ Plan	Priorities for 2005-2015
<b>Rathtrevor to Top Bridge Municipal and Mountain Bike Park</b>	G		Land use agreements with private landowner (PCI) and City of Parksville (for municipal park and roadside trail). Rathtrevor to Top Bridge - D69 Trail System Project 1 Report Nov 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew partnership agreement with all municipality, BC Parks and private landowner.</li> <li>• Signage upgrades.</li> <li>• Discuss and confirm trail corridor with City with respect to future zoning and development of their property and PCI's.</li> <li>• Top Bridge crossing – applied for Federal/Provincial infrastructure grant. Estimated cost in 2001 was \$300,000; approximately \$31,000 available - \$11,000 from PV Bike Advisory Group and \$20,000 through fundraising and donations.</li> </ul>
<b>Trans-Canada Trail:</b> - Extension Ridge - Haslam Creek to Spruston Road	C	Haslam Cr. Suspension Bridge	Working with Weyerhaeuser, TimberWest and smaller landowners to secure access over private land.	<p>This is a high profile trail with ATV access at many points; requires a high level of management and maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Trail upgrades.</li> <li>• Coordinate link with Cowichan Valley Regional District at south border.</li> <li>• Develop a volunteer trail stewards program (like CRD trail system) – needs coordinator.</li> <li>• Bridge over Nanaimo River to complete linkages</li> </ul>

Table 7-2: Priorities for establishing Future Regional Trail 2005-2015

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Status	Priorities for 2005-2015
E & N Right of Way	All but B	The E&N ROW is being acquired by the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and develop partnership with ICF for developing a commuter trail along the E&amp;N, continuing the trail now in place in Nanaimo.</li> <li>Most beneficial locations will be through Nanoose Bay; Cassidy to Nanaimo; Bowser-Rosewall Creek PP; Parksville to Cameron Lake; around Cameron Lake&amp; onto ACRD</li> </ul>
Gabriola Island - Descanso to Drumbeg and On-road trails	B	Proposed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will likely be achieved through community parks and local initiatives by the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust Society.</li> </ul>
Heritage Trail system	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a long-term concept plan for extending the Morden Colliery trail concept (historical interpretation) to other historical sites and areas. The concept should aim to eventually link the various heritage trails and sites together. Horne Lake Historic Trail would fit with this too.</li> </ul>
Horne Lake Historic Trail	H	<p>Big Qualicum Trail to Horne Lake: When Texada Land Corp sold DL 251 to the Horne Lake License Holders Assoc., the former Caves Road was made public and widened by 5 metres. A 1-m ROW was created alongside in favour of the RDN, effectively replacing the 1911 gazetted road through this section.</p> <p>Horne Lake to Port Alberni: proposed along the 1911 gazetted road ROW; approximately 20km.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct trail (approximately 8 km) uphill from Horne Lake Caves Road behind the strata development.</li> <li>Consult with First Nations.</li> <li>Locate/survey 1911 gazetted road ROW beyond HLRP. Alternatively, work with Weyerhaeuser Co. to locate similar route that may be more user friendly and reduces impact on logging operations.</li> <li>Initiate discussions with ACRD to develop linkage with Log Train Trail and lookout.</li> <li>Develop trail on 1911 road section.</li> <li>Pursue application for Proclamation of Historic Trail with Province.</li> </ul>

TRAIL	Elec. Area	Status	Priorities for 2005-2015
Lantzville Foothills	D to E thru Lantzville	Lantzville Foothills Development Corp. is proposing a substantial (800 acre) park through the centre of its 1800 acre property to be dedicated to District of Lantzville.  Community woodlot licence to be issued soon for Crown land on north side of Foothills; public access is a required element of a woodlot plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop partnership with District of Lantzville to create a regional trail and side trails through the future parkland associated with the Foothills Development.</li> <li>Explore opportunities/develop partnership with Lantzville and the future woodlot licence holder for continuing the regional trail (or providing alternative route) through the Crown land woodlot.</li> </ul>
Other prospective or proposed trail networks, loops and linkages (Shown on Map)	A	Extension of Morden Colliery Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire access as opportunities arise.</li> </ul>
	A,C	Nanaimo to Cedar/Ladysmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parkway Trail and rail corridor.</li> </ul>
	C	Benson Creek Falls RP to City of Nanaimo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roadside? Connect to rail corridor and Parkway Trail.</li> </ul>
	D,E,F	Rathtrevor to Nanoose Bay and Lantzville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E&amp;N corridor?</li> </ul>
	F	Top Bridge to Englishman River Prov. Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Via Little Mtn and Morison Ck; Bridges?</li> </ul>
	F,G	Englishman River Prov. Park to Little Qualicum Falls Prov. Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydro corridor or Area F community trails and rail corridor.</li> </ul>
	F,G	Parksville/Qualicum Beach 'bypass' trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire access across woodlots.</li> </ul>
	G	Qualicum Beach to Big Qualicum River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1950 gazetted ROW and/or E&amp;N Corridor. Requires bridge over Little Qualicum River and Fletcher Creek, and one railway crossing.</li> </ul>
	G	Qualicum Beach to Little Qualicum RP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire access across Crown land.</li> </ul>
	H	Lighthouse South extension Lighthouse North Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect to Big Qualicum trails; consult with Fort Nelson Band Land Development Corp.</li> <li>Thames Creek to Rosewall – via E&amp;N corridor?.</li> </ul>
	H	Horne Lake to Bowser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire access across Crown and private forest lands.</li> </ul>
H	Horne-Spider-Cameron Lakes link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire access across Crown and private forest lands</li> </ul>	

## 8.4 Bridges

Bridges represent a major capital expenditure, and therefore deserve some specific attention in this Plan. The following table lists the bridges that are required to complete the park and trail system and their approximate costs. Note that exact locations are not known for many of these bridges, nor is there a full understanding of the terrain to be addressed; hence, the cost figures in many cases are 'ballpark' estimates only.

**Table 7-3: Priorities for New Bridges 2005-2015**

Trail/Park	Watercourse	Cost Estimate
Morden Colliery Trail	Nanaimo River	\$500,000 estimated from 1999 study
Trans Canada Trail	Nanaimo River	\$250,000 estimated by staff based on current trail location
Benson Cr Falls Regional Park	Benson Creek	\$100,000 estimated by staff assuming ability to relax Provincial top-of-bank requirements
Benson Cr Falls Regional Park	Flynnfall Creek	Not scoped out, but bridge would assist providing loop trail within Park
BCF Regional Park	Benson Creek	Not scoped out, but 2 <sup>nd</sup> bridge could span above falls and close the loop
Rath Trevor to Top Bridge Trail	Englishman River (at Top Bridge)	\$300,000 estimated from 2001 grant application
Lighthouse Country Trail	Nile Creek	\$125,000 estimated by staff
Regional Trail System extension	Ridgewell Creek	\$62,500 estimated by staff
Regional Trail System extension	Nash Creek	\$62,500 estimated by staff
Regional Trail System extensions	Little Qualicum River Fletcher Creek Morison Creek Thames Creek	Not scoped out
Regional Trail System extension	E & N rail corridor	Numerous - not scoped out

In addition, replacement or major refits to existing bridges may need to be considered, though probably beyond the timeframe of this Plan. They include:

Trail/Park	Watercourse	Notes
Arrowsmith Trail	McBey Creek	Constructed 2002
Big Qualicum Trail	Hunts Creek	Installed 2003 at DFO Big Qualicum hatchery. Engineered retrofit of a dock ramp
Horne Lake Regional Park	Qualicum River	Forestry road bridge built in 1980s, acquired with transfer of land to RDN.
Little Qualicum River Regional Park	Little Qualicum River	Road bridge of unknown age; will be transferred to RDN during term of this Plan
Morden Colliery Trail	Thatcher Creek	Two bridges installed 1998
Parksville-Qualicum Link	French Creek	Constructed 2000 at Barclay Crescent
Trans Canada Trail	Haslam Creek	Suspension Bridge constructed 2002

## 9. Roles, Relationships and Partnerships

The RDN cannot expand or manage the Regional Parks and Trails system alone. We depend on working with agencies, organizations and residents to fulfill the regional parks and trails mandate.

The following table identifies the various participants in regional parks and trails and the nature of their involvement. These relationships are becoming increasingly important as public demand for parks and trails goes up but budgets and resources remain finite. The RDN intends to foster these relationships and expand opportunities for partnerships to meet the goals of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan.

**Table 8-1: Participants in Regional Parks & Trails and their Roles**

	Acquisition	Tenure or Use Agreement	Development	Maintenance / Operation	Fund raising
RDN Planning Dept.	●				
Provincial Government	●	●	●*		
Federal Government	●	●	●*		
First Nations		●			
Municipalities	●**		●**	●	
Forest Companies		●			
Conservation Organizations	●	●	●		
Community Organizations	●		●	●	●
Other Landowners		●			
Volunteers			●	●	●
Corporate Sponsors	●		●		●
School Districts, Mal UC		●	●		

\* Through infrastructure funding programs.

\*\* Not a current relationship but potential in the future.

## 9.1 Provincial Government

### 9.1.1 Crown Lands

Many participants in the Plan review expressed concern about the disposition of provincial Crown land under Land and Water BC's (LWBC) current mandate to make Crown lands available "for the highest and best use". Some expressed the opinion that the RDN should be identifying all Crown land within the Regional District as priorities for future acquisition, and that the RDN should participate in the call for a stop to the further sale of Crown land.

Until the last few years, Crown land was considered to be either permanently in the public realm, or relatively available for application for park use. The changes since 2001 to provincial Crown land policies dictate a more strategic approach to identifying the RDN's interests in Crown land for park purposes.

The RDN is working on cataloguing Crown lands in the Regional District in collaboration with LWBC. The current inventory of Crown land is incomplete, but a rough guess places it at 10-20% of the land base in the Regional District. It behooves the RDN to determine the extent of Crown land and its interests in those lands. Regional as well as community park objectives are paramount in those interests, and therefore, Parks staff need to be directly involved in these efforts.

*The RDN, through its Planning Department and Recreation and Parks Department, will work with Land and Water BC to:*

- *Finalize a comprehensive and accurate inventory of Crown lands within the Regional District.*
- *Look at all the Crown lands collectively to identify the RDN's interests in these lands for park and trail purposes, and to determine the best methods for meeting those purposes, be that through long-term tenure, Crown Grant, access agreements, acquisition through future development, or purchase.*

### 9.1.2 Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

#### Provincial Parks:

As noted in Chapter 6, a primary role of the Regional Trail system is to link parks to parks. However, the RDN also recognizes that trails within provincial parks may not always be of a multi-use nature that can support increased public use that a regional trail system may bring.

*Accordingly, whenever a regional trail is proposed that would provide access to a provincial park, the RDN will work with Parks staff within the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to:*

- *Identify the most appropriate site for accessing the park.*
- *Determine the nature of the interface with the park – e.g., whether cyclists and/or horse riders can continue onward within the park or would have to stop and access the park on foot.*
- *If need be, divert the main regional trail around the park, with access to park trails provided for limited uses.*

### **Ecological Reserves:**

Ecological Reserves are designated under the provincial *Ecological Reserves Act* to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key role of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. While most ecological reserves are open to the public for hiking, nature observation and photography, they are not created for outdoor recreation.

There are three Ecological Reserves within the Regional District –at Bowser (Area H), Haley Lake (Area C) and Hudson Rocks (off Nanaimo).

***The RDN will avoid routing trails to or through Ecological Reserves in future trail planning, to help to protect their sensitive ecological features and habitats.***

### **Old Growth Management Areas:**

Managed by the Ministry of Sustainable Resources, old growth management areas (OGMAs) are areas that contain or are managed to replace “structural old growth attributes”. They are defined through provincial landscape/forest planning on Crown lands with the intent of meeting the Province’s biodiversity targets. While none have been yet been designated in the Regional District, there are several proposed.

Unlike ecological reserves, OGMAs are available to outdoor recreation activities. In fact, there may be some benefit in establishing regional parks next to OGMAs to provide larger function ecological units and recreational areas. Similarly, with appropriate design, trails extending through and from OGMAs may provide more viable wildlife corridors as well as provide opportunities for interpretive and education programs of the Region’s forest systems.

***The RDN will work with the Regional office of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management to:***

- *Find out where OGMAs are being considered or designated.*
- *Collaborate in planning and developing regional parks and trails to take advantage of OGMAs where it is beneficial to the goals of this Plan and the OGMA program.*

### **9.1.3 Provincial Road Rights of Way**

The RDN makes use of undeveloped road rights of way (ROW) in planning and implementing its trail networks, for which it has received great cooperation from regional staff at the Ministry of Transportation (MOT).

The Ministry’s policy is to support local government development of trails, as this represents a managed use of public access ways. For this purpose, MOT issues permits for trail construction in road ROWs to local governments on the understanding that should the Province need the ROW in the future, that the permit will be reclaimed. The permits are also issued on the basis that the local government takes on the liability for trail use, and responsibility for liaising with ROW neighbours.

On occasion, MOT will consider selling unused ROWs if they are surplus to the Ministry's needs. However, MOT regional staff refer any applications for purchase of unused ROWs to the RDN.

MOT also owns parcels of land, some of which may be considered surplus to the Ministry's needs and which would be available for purchase. An example is the Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp property, located adjacent to the Nanaimo River Regional Park. Acquiring that property would allow the RDN to better parking and staging areas for the Park.

*The RDN will continue to work in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation in planning and developing regional trails within provincial road rights of way.*

*The RDN will also continue to negotiate with MOT regarding the acquisition of the Nanaimo Fire Suppression Camp property.*

## 9.2 Federal Government

### 9.2.1 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Lands

DFO holds most of the land along the Big Qualicum River associated with the Big Qualicum River hatchery that influences the future development of the Big Qualicum Trail. Currently, hikers, cyclists and horseback riders use the service road and informal trails along the north side of the River. A second trail is being planned along the River's south side.

DFO also holds property on Horne Lake, including the parcel at the entrance to Horne Lake Regional Park.

*The RDN will work with DFO to:*

- *Plan, develop and manage the Big Qualicum River Trail in a manner that is compatible with DFO's activities along the River.*
- *Acquire the property at the entrance to Horne Lake Regional Park.*

### 9.2.2 Dept. of National Defence (DND) Lands

DND owns key parcels of land on Wallis Point at the southern end of the Nanoose Peninsula. The RDN wishes to establish an agreement with the Department to provide access for local residents across DND land to Wallis Point.

*The RDN will work with DND to define a satisfactory access agreement for use of a trail to Wallis Point.*

## 9.3 First Nations

There are three First Nations in the Regional District: the Qualicum, Nanoose and Snuneymuxw First Nations. The RDN recognizes that lands within the Regional District are subject to aboriginal title interests. Some of these lands are the subject of land claims and may be acquired by First Nations through treaty negotiations with the federal and provincial governments. This may affect some of the lands identified in this Plan, and that they may not be available for future park acquisition.

The RDN also recognizes that First Nations governments have influence and decision-making powers that can affect the future of the RDN parks and trails system. The success of this Plan will be affected by how well it works with land use priorities established by adjacent First Nations.

RDN Parks staff is already working with the Qualicum First Nation in establishing a provincially-recognized historic trail along the Horne Lake trail route. Staff hope to expand this relationship to other aspects of the trail as well as other parks and trails in the system.

*The RDN is committed to working with First Nations in the Regional District to:*

- *Promote and encourage an understanding of First Nations issues and culture through appropriate interpretation (e.g., signage and programs) within the Regional Parks and Trails system;*
- *Find common goals in securing lands for regional parks and trails where the interests of the First Nations and the RDN coincide.*

## 9.4 Member Municipalities

As noted earlier, the four municipalities contribute under the “Regional Parks Services Agreement” to the cost of the operation and maintenance of Regional Parks. However, there are other ways in which the municipalities can contribute to the regional parks and trails system.

### 9.4.1 Linkages with Municipal Parks and Trails

In its trail planning, the RDN endeavours to link regional trails directly to municipal trails and parks at municipal boundaries.

*RDN Parks staff is committed to working with their municipal counterparts in ensuring continuity between the regional trail system and municipal trail networks.*

### 9.4.2 Potential Partnerships on Park Acquisition

While the Regional Parks Service Agreement requires the RDN to consult with the municipalities on future regional parks and trails acquisition and development, no municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new regional parks. However, there are situations where municipal residents are heavy users, or consider lands outside their boundaries to be integral to the character of their community. This provides a rationale for direct municipal contribution to park lands outside their municipal boundaries.

Case examples include future acquisition of lands on Mount Benson and Westwood Ridges, in association with the City of Nanaimo, and the acquisition of Hamilton Marsh in association with the Town of Qualicum Beach.

*The RDN will seek partnerships with the four municipal governments in contributing to land acquisitions for park lands where the municipality has a direct interest in lands outside its boundaries, or alternatively examine options for revising the Regional Parks Function to include municipal members as full participants.*

The forms that these potential partnerships in park acquisition might take are discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

### 9.4.3 Potential Partnerships in Park Management

Similarly, a municipality may have a direct interest in park land outside its boundaries. Due to proximity and/or the availability of more extensive resource, municipal Parks staff may be in a better position than the RDN to provide services and maintenance to that park.

*As part of partnerships with municipalities in future park acquisition, the RDN will be open to shared park development and management where the municipality expresses a desire and ability to do so.*

## 9.5 Forest Companies

Over the last 10 years, the RDN Parks staff has developed good working relations in planning and developing trail networks with the two main forest companies that have extensive land holdings in the Regional District, Weyerhaeuser Co. and TimberWest Forest Corp. The main concerns of these companies are:

- Liability for public uses and activities on their lands.
- Public “ownership” of developed trails that create conflicts when the forest companies intend to log, or when access must be cut off due to fire hazard. Users of trails on these lands must understand that the primary use of the land is for forestry.
- Use of logging roads to access trails and parks, and the liability associated with that use.

The RDN has worked with these companies on several of the regional trails (e.g., the Arrowsmith Historic Trail and the Trans Canada Trail) to develop access agreements that for the most part, address these concerns. Under these agreements, the RDN takes on the responsibility for trail development and maintenance, thereby adopting the liability for their use.

*The RDN will continue to work cooperatively with forest companies in the following ways:*

- *Through the development and renewal of access agreements associated with regional trails across forest lands.*
- *By providing information to the public about the nature of these agreements, the fact that the areas that the trails access are managed for forestry, and that the surrounding landscape and the route itself may change as a consequence.*
- *By working with the forest companies to find routes that are accessible and minimize impacts on both forest practices and trail use; and*
- *By working with the forest companies to provide information and interpretation of the “working forest” to trail users.*
- *By endeavouring to meet with staff from the forest companies on an annual basis to review logging plans and coordinate the above activities.*

## 9.6 Woodlot Owners

RDN Parks staff has been working with woodlot owners and operators for some time to coordinate trail linkages and other recreational activities in regional parks that are adjacent to woodlots. Access agreements can address the concerns that such owners/operators may have about allowing public access.

*The RDN will continue to develop working relationships with owners and operators of woodlots adjacent to regional parks and trails.*

## 9.7 Conservation Organizations

The RDN has collaborated with several provincial and regional conservation organizations in acquiring and subsequently managing regional parks – such as:

- Participating in a partnership led by the Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) to acquire a large parcel on the Nanaimo River and subsequently entering into a long-term lease with TLC to manage the property as a Regional Park.
- Participating in a very similar arrangement with the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) on the north side of the Englishman River that led to the Englishman River Regional Park. Other funding partners on this property included the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Environment Canada, the Vancouver Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, MWLAP and several anonymous private donors.
- Partnering with TLC and Ducks Unlimited to establish and co-manage the Little Qualicum River Estuary Conservation Area.
- Most recently, supporting the Nanaimo Area Land Trust in endeavours to negotiate protection and potentially acquisition of lands on Mount Benson.

*The RDN will continue to create and foster partnerships with conservation organizations in meeting the goals of the Regional Parks and Trails system and regional conservation.*

## 9.8 Educational Institutions

School Districts 68 and 69 use areas of ecological and recreational value as part of their educational curriculum. There may be opportunities to collaborate on the development of educational tools and programs within regional parks and trails. Also, school groups can be enthusiastic participants in parks and trails projects.

*The RDN will endeavor to develop relationships with School District 68 and 69 in working towards common priorities in outdoor recreation and education programs.*

Malaspina University-College operates an extensive woodlot on the slopes of Mt. Benson that could support the regional trail network in that area.

*The RDN will explore the interest of Malaspina University-College in supporting the regional trail system through their woodlot.*

## 9.9 Community Organizations

Many trail development projects over the last 10 years would not have happened without the efforts of local resident and stewardship organizations and volunteer committees. To name just a few, such projects included trail planning and building along the Morden Colliery Trail, the Arrowsmith Historic Trail, the Trans Canada Trail, the Lighthouse Country and fundraising for the Barclay Crescent Bridge and Top Bridge.

Community service organizations such as Rotary, Gyro and Kiwanas clubs are traditionally active in their communities in supporting park and trail development.

*The RDN will continue to work with its existing community partners as well as endeavor to expand these partnerships to a wider range of organizations to meet the objectives of this Plan.*

The activities and resources to foster these relationships are discussed in more detail under “Volunteers”.

## 9.10 Volunteers

The Regional Parks and Trails system would not be where it is today without the efforts of many volunteers, both collectively and individually. Volunteers are not an “option” – they are a vital and necessary component of the parks and trails system if it is to continue to survive and grow.

Moreover, the Public Questionnaire indicated strong support (85% of respondents) for supporting volunteerism in regional parks and trails. At public meetings and in written comments and letters, several organizations and individuals indicated an interest in working with the RDN to supplement existing park and trail services.

### 9.10.1 Volunteer Programs

The effectiveness of volunteerism could be greatly improved and the resulting benefits expanded through a more organized system of volunteer programs. These programs can provide a significant ‘value-added’ to the park and trail function.

The Capital Regional District, for example, encourages volunteerism through a variety of programs advertised through its website. The following ideas are drawn from the CRD and are applicable to the RDN.

- *Wardens* hike in a designated park at least once a week, educating visitors about park conservation and bylaws, providing maps and advice and reporting on maintenance issues.
- *Naturalists* answer questions, provide information on local flora and fauna and work as members of a team to share their love of parks.
- *Community Service volunteers* give their time to remove invasive plants. They may also clean up garbage and debris left behind in

parks or undertake planting projects. These groups, which may include schools, Guides, Scouts, businesses and hiking clubs.

- *Gatekeepers* help keep parks safe and secure by opening and closing park gates.
- *Special Projects volunteers* use their skills to assist staff with specific projects such biological inventories, research or construction projects.
- *Work Experience volunteers* contribute skills, time and energy in exchange for valuable work experience. These placements are available for people enrolled in school or employment programs.
- *Facilities volunteers* contribute skills in design, construction or artistry to make signs, build footpaths and boardwalks, or design interpretive materials. Retirees who like to have a 'project', enjoy the outdoors and/or wish to contribute to their community are great resources.
- *Operations volunteers* can run seasonal concessions, conduct tours, and organize and conduct special events. Many of these activities can generate revenues for the parks and trails system.

### 9.10.2 Need for Volunteer Program Coordination

While the benefits of volunteerism can be many, working with volunteers requires a substantial investment in staff time to coordinate and develop. Some examples of the tasks that are required to successfully implement a multi-faceted volunteer program include:

- Responding to telephone queries from residents about RDN volunteer opportunities.
- Providing program information and follow-up.
- Meeting with school groups, conservation organizations, and sports associations, and individuals to discuss needs and opportunities, individuals.
- Providing information about regional district resources and priorities that support or direct volunteer efforts.
- Developing awards or other volunteer recognition programs.
- Documenting the benefits provided by volunteers and reporting back to the RDN Board about effectiveness and program priorities.
- Liaising with school district to make school facilities available for public recreation and coordinate facility development.

It also requires a commitment of resources on the part of the RDN to support volunteers by providing training, supervision, equipment, and safety and liability coverage.

*The RDN will create a new Parks staff position in 2006 that focuses on "field" projects and the coordination of volunteer programs throughout both regional and community parks and trails systems.*

## 10. Stewarding Regional Parks and Trails

This section of the Plan presents management principles and policies that apply generally to all parks and trails in the Regional system. The purpose of these policies is to ensure that acceptable standards of environmental protection, risk management, operation and maintenance are applied in all of the Regional parks and trails. These stewardship policies and actions should enhance the character, quality and safety of parks and trails.

### 10.1 Regional Park and Trail Management Plans

Park stewardship is coordinated for each regional park through individual park management plans. A park or trail management plan is a document developed to oversee the activities of an individual park given the natural resources and environmental values, the designated purpose of the park, the aspirations of the community, and the available resources of the RDN.

*A Regional Park or Trail Management Plan will be approved and adopted by the Regional Board for each regional park. A management plan will be completed before any significant development of new or upgraded facilities and services occurs in the park.*

*Development of Regional Park Management Plans will include public involvement in accordance with the RDN's "Coordinated Public Consultation/Communication Framework".*

Park Management Plans and their development should, at a minimum, cover such topics as:

- Purpose of the plan.
- Public input.
- Inventory – biophysical, archaeological, historical, cultural.
- Environmental and cultural protection measures.
- Suitability assessment – types of outdoor recreational uses that are compatible and where they are allowed.
- Service types and levels.
- Site plan – boundaries, location of facilities, etc.
- Implementation strategy – priority management actions with a schedule and budget.

*Regional Park and Trail Management Plans will be reviewed and revised as needed to accommodate new information, growth, opportunities and change.*

#### 10.1.1 Park Zoning

Park use and management zones within parks, and trails, allows areas to be defined and managed according to their environmental or cultural features and the relative sensitivity of those features to public use. Zones reflect the capacity of areas within a park to accommodate different intensities of park

use. Typical zones are “intensive recreation use”, “natural environment” and “conservation”. Their purposes are similar to the Park Classifications defined in Chapter 6.

*Regional Park Management Plans will employ park use zones to define areas of different levels of protection and public use, to protect the ecological integrity and special environmental and cultural features of a park, and reduce conflicts between protection and public use.*

## 10.2 Environmental Protection

Park lands and trail areas contain valuable a natural, historic, archaeological or cultural features that are often sensitive to disturbance. All of these features and their protection are addressed in this section under the umbrella of “environmental” protection.

The RDN is at a critical stage where small changes can have significant impacts on the long-term vitality of its natural systems and historic/cultural features. For example, the most dramatic adverse effects on a watershed typically occur during very low-density development.

A more enlightened public attitude and a general desire to allow for outdoor recreation in a way that does not threaten ecological integrity presents both challenges and opportunities to park and trail management.

*To meet this challenge, the RDN will apply the “Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC” (MWLAP, 2004), as it is updated from time to time, in planning facilities and managing operations in regional parks and trails.*

*The RDN will also continue to work with its environmental and conservation partners in complementing the RDN’s operational and management functions with the science- and conservation-based expertise of these organizations.*

## 10.3 Risk Management

The RDN recognizes that for all park and trail lands that it has acquired or manage under lease or use agreements, it is an occupier of land and therefore, subject to the conditions of the *Occupiers Liability Act* which states:

“An occupier of premises (including land) owes a duty to take care that in all circumstances... a person and his property on the premises, and the property on the premises of a person, whether or not that person himself enters the premises, will be reasonably safe in using the premises.”

The RDN recognizes that risk management has become a strong influence in the management of parks and trails. Liability concerns play an important role in management decisions regarding lands made available for public use, but they cannot completely overshadow other public interests. The RDN wants to promote a sense of personal responsibility on the part of all park and trail users.

*The RDN will design and maintain park facilities and improvements to optimize public safety, reduce exposure to liability, and enhance the public’s*

*recognition of natural hazards and sensitivity to the natural character and quality of experience within the park and trail environment.*

Risk management begins with inspection and documentation of conditions in a park or trail for the purpose of increasing public safety and minimizing liability. For this purpose, the RDN has adopted a “**Park Inspection Policy**” (March 12, 2002) that provides a systematic approach to inspecting and documenting potential hazards and actions required and taken to address these hazards.

*The RDN will employ the measures set forth in its Park Inspection Policy to implement risk management in its regional parks and trails.*

### 10.3.1 Hazard Trees

Trees within high use areas of parks, along trails or adjacent to structures on neighbouring properties can pose a hazard from overhanging branches or if they are dying or dead. The RDN is liable for any damage or injury that these might cause. At the same time, the desire to remove potentially hazardous trees needs to be tempered by the value of such trees as sources of wildlife habitat and food.

There are many sources of information on wildlife or hazard tree management; e.g., the website of the provincial Wildlife Tree Committee <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/wlt/> provides a wealth of useful information and policy direction. A set of guidelines for hazard tree management is beyond the scope of this Plan, but is something that should be pursued as a regional parks and trails policy.

*With the assistance of Planning Department staff, the RDN will establish guidelines for management of hazard/wildlife trees in regional parks and trails.*

### 10.4 Park Reserves

Park reserves refer to park land that is acquired with few or no improvements and with no immediate resources to develop and maintain them as formalized regional parks. Park reserves are an important aspect of risk management and development programming by indicating where public access and use will not be encouraged or promoted.

*Park land that is acquired with few or no improvements will be held in reserve until a management plan is prepared and adopted for the site. In public plans and information, the RDN will be clear about which regional park properties are being held in reserve until such time as the need and resources are available to develop a management plan and the facilities to ensure adequate public safety and environmental protection.*

### 10.5 Regulation

As the Region’s park and trail system grows in size, use and development, regulations are needed to clarify what constitutes inappropriate use of these parklands and to define sanctions that will apply in the event of inappropriate use.

After public review and comment, the Park Use Regulation Bylaw No. 1399, 2004 that applies to all parks under the RDN's jurisdiction was adopted in November 23, 2004. Modeled on park use bylaws from other jurisdictions on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland, the bylaw addresses the typical issues associated with public use of parks, such as disruptive activities and the unlawful cutting of park trees.

Schedule 'A' of the Bylaw details all properties subject to park use regulation, broken down by electoral area and level of development. While most parks in the Region are as yet relatively undeveloped, the two campground parks, Horne Lake and Descanso Bay, are quite developed in terms of public use and require the most regulation of all RDN parklands.

Parks staff as well as Park Operators for each of the campground parks will be designated bylaw enforcement officers in order to facilitate effective and timely regulation of these park properties. These staff and operators are in addition to existing bylaw enforcement staff in enforcing the park use bylaw throughout the Region.

A number of community parks and regional parks along with all Regional trails and beach accesses are secured by lease, license or permit and not title. These leased lands may be owned by the Crown or private landowners. Legal opinion confirmed that the Bylaw has effect wherever the Region is exercising its park function and is not affected by the nature of the land holding, unless specifically stated in the lease, license or permit.

Improved park use regulation and increased ability to enforce use on parklands managed by the RDN should also help in convincing landowners to contribute land for parks or access for trails.

*The RDN will regulate inappropriate behavior and damaging activities through a Park Use Bylaw. The Bylaw will be implemented in a variety of ways:*

- *The RDN and its park operators will promote understanding and respect of the regulations as a priority over strict enforcement. For this purpose, all parks staff, operators and bylaw enforcement officers will become conversant with the Bylaw and its regulations, and methods for their communication and enforcement.*
- *The RDN will attempt to establish good neighbourly relationships with residents adjacent to parks and trails in order to encourage monitoring assistance.*
- *The RDN will develop volunteer steward programs that assist in promoting awareness and monitoring activities in parks and trails (see section 8.10).*

## 10.6 Information and Promotion

Better information about regional parks and trails was identified in the public questionnaire as the most important aspect of the system in need of improvement. Many suggestions were made about the methods and means of improving this information, most focusing on improved directional signage to and within parks and trails, and better maps in paper format and downloadable from the RDN's website.

*The RDN will allocate budget resources to improving the information about the regional park and trail system. These resources will focus on improved signage and better maps and accompanying descriptive information provided in brochure format and on-line.*

Expenditure of these resources will be prioritized for the various parks and trails according to:

- The relative “profile” of the parks and trails – i.e., the level of use and general knowledge of individual parks and trails.
- The capacity of the park or trail to support public use – determined by such factors as level of development, environmental sensitivity, etc.

*To help it determine the most cost-effective use of budget and staff resources, the RDN will commission the development of an information and promotion strategic plan.*

## 10.7 Education

Responses to the public questionnaire were emphatic about the role of the park and trail system in promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the Region’s environmental, historical, archaeological and cultural values. Education can also support risk management in informing park and trail users of hazards and safe use. Finally, education programs can help to generate revenue to support the park and trail system.

Measures for facilitating the educational role of regional parks and trails include:

- Interpretive signage.
- Interpretive tours (revenue generation opportunity).
- Student courses – school day, weekend, and week-long programs.
- Information and presentations within the school system.
- Seasonal information kiosks run by volunteers.

*The RDN will promote the use of regional parks and trails as educational venues by:*

- *Exploring the use of parks and development of curriculum-based programs with School Districts 68 and 69.*
- *Entertaining and encouraging proposals from park operators and eco-education/tourism operators for programs at Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks.*
- *Working with community groups and individuals in developing interpretive trails and tours.*
- *Working with the forest companies in developing forestry interpretation signs along trails through their lands.*

## 10.8 Volunteer Recognition

Section 8.10 addresses the many benefits that volunteerism can bring to the regional parks and trails system. It provides the rationale for a ‘field’ staff

person whose role would be to supervise volunteer activities and organize and liaise with volunteers in support of the park and trail system.

Recognition programs for existing and future volunteers are identified as a priority project.

*The RDN will allocate appropriate resources to recognize and celebrate the volunteer efforts in regional parks and trails through such methods as:*

- *A Volunteer Awards program that identifies and recognizes significant volunteer contributions.*
- *An annual event that would not only celebrate volunteer input but also provide an opportunity for communications between organizations, (sport, conservation, etc.), and provide a public profile for community participants.*

## 10.9 Visitor and Group Use

The RDN maintains its parks and trails for appropriate activities identified in this plan and in individual regional park management plans. The RDN does not, in general, develop or maintain parks for occasional 'high volume' demands or specific requirements of short-term special events.

*Notwithstanding, the RDN may allow for the use of a park or trail by an organization or non-profit group for a special event provided that the use is compatible with the purpose and management of the particular site, and the group accepts full responsibility for maintaining and restoring the existing conditions of the site during and after the event.*

The RDN issues special use permits under the Park Use Regulation Bylaw for special events in regional parks and trails.

## 10.10 Commercial Services

Regional parks and trails provide opportunities for commercial services that can enhance the experience of visitors as well as provide some revenue to support the regional park and trail system. Such services include guided environmental education walks, eco-tourism tours, cycling, hiking, and kayaking training. These services need to be provided in a way that will not spoil the natural environment or another park visitor's experience.

*In accordance with the requirements of the Park Use Regulation Bylaw, the RDN will allow commercial services that are program-oriented, personal services, such as guided programs or outdoor recreation activity training, and that meet the following conditions:*

- the service or activity is an appropriate outdoor recreation activity,
- the service is compatible with the particular regional park management plan,
  - the service could not be operated effectively outside the park or trail boundary,
- the business has demonstrated successful operation and has a proven record and credentials,
- all business licences and standards required by the RDN are current,

- the use will have a minimum environmental impact,
- site selection and use are sensitive to the natural environment and the experience of park visitors.

## 10.11 User Fees

The majority of respondents to the public questionnaire opposed general user fees for regional parks and trails. User fees were acceptable if they were applied to specific services – such as camping, tours or rentals – and all revenues were put back into the parks and trails budget.

*The RDN will not charge fees for entry, parking or general use of regional parks and trails. Fees will be considered for specific services on an at-cost operational basis and or to assist in offsetting associated capital costs for park and trail infrastructure.*

## 10.12 Facilities and Improvements

### 10.12.1 Types

There is potentially a wide range of facilities and improvements that could be made to cater to many different uses.

*The RDN will accommodate only those improvements required to support appropriate activities within regional parks and trails. The choice of such improvements will be determined by the park/trail classification and the specific regional park or trail management plan.*

### 10.12.2 Standards

The RDN intends to provide for essential facilities in a recognized standard of quality. The preparation of a design standards document and design detailing at the time of construction are the main tools for establishing an acceptable standard. These tools are especially required where improvements and facilities are being provided under limited supervision and for contracting out, to ensure quality and consistency.

*The RDN will commission the preparation of a design standards document that addresses typical improvements within the parks and trails system.*

Among other things, such a document would address:

- Landscape modification.
- Trails and footpaths.
- Parking.
- Picnic tables.
- Pit toilets.
- Washrooms.
- Camping sites.
- Boat ramps and launching facilities.

Design details indicate specifically how improvements are to be implemented on a site, and should be in compliance with the design standards and the specific regional park or trail management plan.

*All improvements will require the preparation of design details, whether provided by staff, a contractor or volunteers.*

### 10.13 'Low-maintenance' Design and Development

The management of park facilities should be undertaken in a way that minimizes their impact on the natural environment. The construction and maintenance of outdoor facilities can cause a variety of impacts. In recent years, however, a variety of new tools, techniques, and equipment have been developed to modify past practices to reduce the overall impact of these facilities as well as improve the financial bottom-line.

*The RDN will develop park services and facilities with low maintenance objectives in mind.* Park facilities will be designed to reduce the requirement for ongoing maintenance through a variety of means, including:

- providing trails that respond to user desire lines;
- developing facilities that are robust and vandal-proof;
- Use plant material and develop vegetation management plans that match the surrounding natural areas;
- Coordinate park design with stormwater management plans and develop park designs that support stormwater management objectives.

*The RDN will adopt a "strategic" approach to the development of improvements:*

- Signs and facilities in high use areas such as park entrances and picnic areas will be designed, built and maintained to have a high quality, professional appearance.
- Signs and facilities in areas outside high use zones will be constructed to a more rustic level.
- All improvements will be developed to require minimum ongoing maintenance and high resistance to vandalism, to help reduce maintenance and operations costs.

### 10.14 Signs

Signs are an integral component of facilities development, information and promotion, and education within the parks and trails system. The RDN has adopted a Sign Policy to guide the design and application of signs according to their use. However, given the many and varied situations in which signs are used in the parks and trails system, some of these design criteria may need adaptation.

Furthermore, volunteer expertise can be used to enhance the sign program. With guidance on design criteria and specifications and provision of basic materials, budding or retired carpenters and builders are often keen to construct signs and take great care and pride in their products. They can offer suggestions on ways of keeping costs down while maintaining quality and

robustness. One participant at a public meeting pointed to the signs built by volunteers in the Powell River area as a good example.

Volunteer expertise can also assist in planning, writing, designing and building interpretive signage. Information kiosks and signage at Buttertubs Marsh Conservation Area in Nanaimo have been initiated, designed and built largely with volunteer efforts, much of it through the Nanaimo Field Naturalists.

*The RDN will develop a sign development and management program that assigns priorities to sign construction and installation based on:*

- *Type - the relative needs for direction, entrance, information, regulation and interpretation.*
- *Location - the relative needs of higher profile parks and trails.*
- *Use - the relative need of high visibility (e.g., entranceways, roadside) versus low visibility (e.g., backcountry trail) use.*
- *Upgrading - the relative need to maintain signs in high use versus low use parks/trails or areas thereof.*

*The RDN will apply the Sign Policy in guiding the design and construction of signs in regional parks and trails.*

*The RDN will also explore ways of utilizing willing and able volunteers in the design and construction of directional and interpretive signs in regional parks and trails.*

## 10.15 Pets in Parks

The Park Use Regulation Bylaw contains general requirements for the control of domestic animals in all RDN parks, requires excrement to be removed, and provides the authority to post signs that require leashes or prohibit such animals in certain areas.

As user visits to the regional park and trail system increase, the need for a 'Pets in Parks' policy may be required – at least in some of the higher use parks and trails. The aim of such a policy would be to provide a safe enjoyable environment that meets recreational needs while protecting sensitive wildlife and habitat and avoiding conflicts with other users. A policy would:

- Focus on current or potential problem areas based on levels of visitor use, reported complaints or input sought from the public.
- Would be developed in consultation with park and trail users – both pet owners and otherwise.
- Promote education and a 'Code of Conduct'.
- Support the delivery of events in communities that focus on responsible dog ownership and activities for owners and their pets.
- Include staff training on strategies to deal with difficult circumstances.
- Consider designated off-leash parks, trails or areas within them, and the information and facilities that should be provided.
- Provide for effective enforcement measures (fines, legal action, etc.).

## 10.16 Interface Fires

Following the experience of Kelowna and other interior BC communities during the summer of 2003, a renewed awareness of the potential damage from interface fires has emerged. The rural communities and residences of the RDN may also face a similar threat. Steps that might be taken by RDN parks to response to this threat are discussed below.

By way of background, the full report prepared by the province, Firestorm 2003 is available at:

<http://www.2003firestorm.gov.bc.ca/firestormreport/default.htm>.

This report identifies strategies based on the following three concerns:

- Forest Management,
- Fuel Build-up, and,
- Fireproofing.

### 10.16.1 Forest Management Strategies

Although generally beyond the scope of a park and trails plan, the RDN parks should follow up on the recommendations of the Firestorm 2003 by developing a forest management strategy that addresses equipment, training, and similar measures. The Firestorm 2003 report identifies the need for the province to take a leadership role in cooperating with local governments to prepare forest management strategies. Assistance may be available from the Province to developing such a strategy.

A forest management strategy should focus on parts of the parks and trails system that are in proximity to communities and rural residences. In more remote parts of the system where fire is a more natural process, many of the steps described below may be inappropriate.

### 10.16.2 Fuel Build-up

Understanding the impacts of fuel build-up within parks is an issue that cannot be ignored as part of this strategic plan. At the present time no risk assessment has been done for RDN parks. As a first step in preparing a management response for interface fires a risk assessment prepared by a qualified forest management specialist is required. Based on the results of this review the RDN may take steps to:

- Manage fuel build-up in parks by chipping or removing debris,
- Cooperate with provincial government fuel treatment pilot projects, (Firestorm 2003)
- Prepare fire prevention plans which would minimize the impact of fires if they were to start in a regional park,
- Work with surrounding landowners to identify risks and development maintenance strategies that will risk,
- Prepare an interface fire education program to advise of risk and focus on fire prevention strategies.

*The RDN will undertake Interface Fire Risk Assessments as part of Regional Park Management Plans, where needed, to determine a cost effective program for maintenance and risk assessment in the particular regional park.*

### 10.17 Park Names

The RDN's "Parks Naming Policy" (May 9, 1995) states that regional parks should be named for the significant geographical features for which the park has been established. It further states, "regional parks should be named after people only when that person has donated the land for the park and when that person specifically requests that the park be named after them."

To date, regional parks have been named largely on the basis of the first policy – i.e., significant features. However, so have several provincial parks in the Regional District. This creates some confusion and difficulty in distinguishing regional from provincial parks, which became apparent in the responses to the public questionnaire. Specific overlaps are with Englishman River Falls, Qualicum River and Horne Lake Caves Provincial Parks.

The confusion may only increase as these regional parks are developed and promoted over time.

Alternative 'themes' by which to name regional parks include:

- First Nations place name – in collaboration with the First Nation in the local area.
- Historical places, events or local characters that may relate to the park site.
- The ecological community that is represented.

*The RDN will consider revising its Parks Naming Policy to address existing or future overlap with the names of provincial parks or other protected sites and areas.*

## 11. Service Levels and Funding

This chapter looks at proposed changes to service levels (staffing) and funding arrangements for regional parks and trails over the next 10 years.

### 11.1 Service Levels

Tables 6-2 and 7-1 outlined a number of priority projects for park and trail management and development over the next 10 years. Section 8.10 presented the vital role that volunteers play, or could play with encouragement and support, in sustaining the regional parks and trails system.

However, both of these aspects of the regional parks and trails function require more staff support than current staffing levels can provide. To meet these Plan commitments, Figure 10-1 illustrates proposed changes in staffing in the Recreation and Parks Department to address the growth in both regional and community parks and trails functions:

- Starting in 2005, two summer students will be hired to assist staff in organizing and operating programs in both regional and community parks and trails.
- A staff person responsible for coordinating and supporting volunteer programs in regional and community functions will be hired in 2006.
- Also in 2006, a Regional Parks and Trails Committee will be established to act as an advisory body and advocate for the regional park and trail system. In preparation during 2005, staff will generate and present options to the Regional District Board regarding the structure, membership and mandate of this Committee.

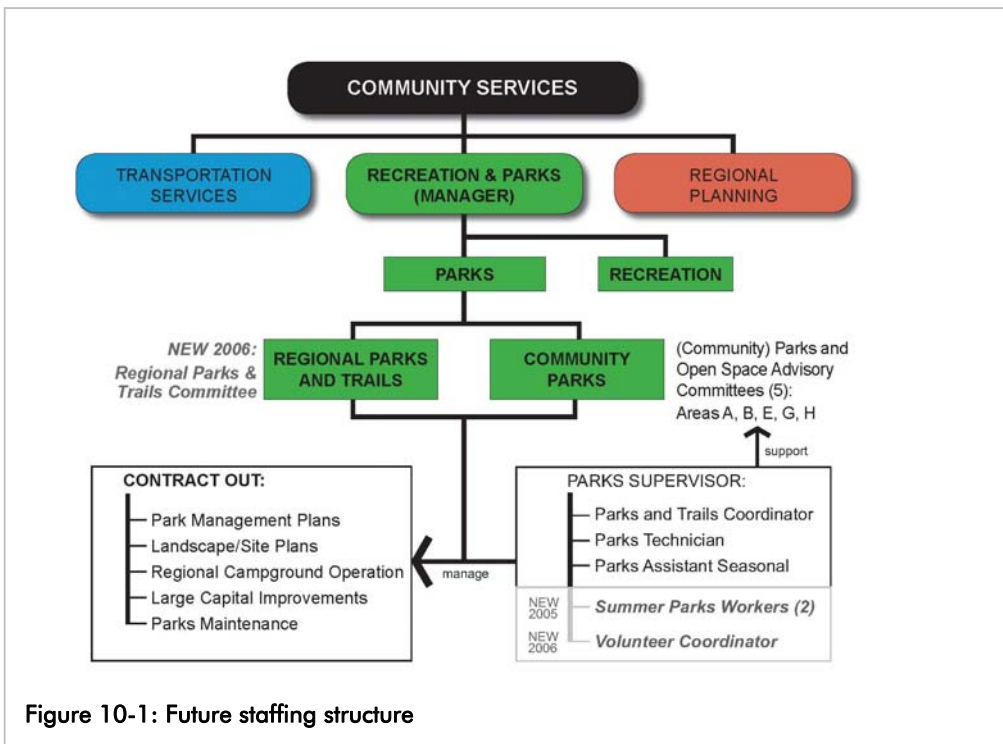


Figure 10-1: Future staffing structure

## 11.2 Funding - Current Status

As noted earlier, the regional parks and trails function is supported primarily from property taxes. The regional parks and trails budget is divided between –

- *Acquisition* (purchasing land for regional parks) and *major capital items* (such as bridges) and
- *Operations* (which includes development and maintenance).

Table 11-1 summarizes how the regional parks and trails budget requisitioned from property tax revenues was distributed between acquisition/ capital items and operations over the last seven years.

**Table 11-1: Budget allocations from tax requisition for regional parks & trails**

	Acquisition	Operations	Total
1997			\$96,000
1998	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
1999	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
2000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$400,000
2001	\$100,000	\$131,250	\$231,250
2002	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
2003	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$400,000
2004	\$150,000	\$316,000	\$466,000

**Acquisition:** The 1998 Acquisition Program emphasized that funds allocated to the regional parks function would be used primarily as seed funds to support the RDN in taking a leadership role in achieving the acquisition of priority sites. It assumed that funding and ownership partnerships would be developed and other creative financing strategies explored to combine with these seed funds to support the program.

The acquisition program was set up on the basis that from 1998 to 2005, there would be a minimal operational and development program in regional parks. Instead, operational funds would be focused on regional trail development. It was assumed that once the nine sites identified as priorities were acquired by 2005, the program's resources would be reallocated to regional park development and operation.

**Operations:** Since 1998, the limited development program for regional parks focused on keeping park sites safe and in good repair, with little spending on major infrastructure projects. Operational funds were focused on trail development, which has been accomplished with a combination of small contracts, volunteers and staff resources.

With the acquisition in 2002 of Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks with their campground operations, more pressure has been placed on the operational side of the regional parks budget. Bridges and some other trail development projects have also had significant cost implications, and there are ongoing items associated with park maintenance and development to

address insurance liability issues as the parks become better known to the public.

### 11.2.1 Funding Sources and Cost Sharing

As noted earlier, regional park acquisition/major capital items has been funded entirely by the eight electoral areas. Operational costs are shared by the electoral areas and the four municipalities under the Regional Parks Service Agreement. Under that agreement, the contribution of each municipality is determined by a formula based on the proportion of each municipality’s population to the total RDN population.

The agreement also requires the RDN to consult with the municipalities on planning and coordination of future park acquisition and development. All parties have to agree on additions to the inventory of parks covered under the agreement.

Table 11-2 illustrates how the regional parks and trails function is cost-shared based on funding sources in 2004.

**Table 11-2: Funding sources in 2004**

2004 Budget	Acquisitions & Capital Items	Operation & Maintenance
Electoral Areas’ contribution	\$150,000	\$82,665*
Municipalities’ contribution	----	\$233,335
Operating revenue	----	\$11,250**
Surplus from previous years	\$251,345	\$46,510
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$401,345</b>	<b>\$373,760</b>

\* The Electoral Areas also have individual budgets from property tax requisitions to support the development and operation of **community parks** within each Area.

\*\* From campgrounds at Horne Lake and Descanso Bay Regional Parks.

### 11.3 Future Funding – Acquisition & Capital

The RDN’s five-year financial plan for 2005-2010 projects an annual 2% increase in tax requisition for regional park/trail acquisition and capital items. Starting in 2005 with an allocation of \$153,000, the annual allocation for acquisition would grow to just under \$169,000 by 2010. If the same projection was extended to 2015, the annual allocation by that point would be about \$186,500.

However, from 2005 to 2007, this acquisition allocation along with all surplus funds from previous years is fully committed to pay off the purchase of Descanso Bay Regional Park and the RDN’s portions of the acquisition of Little Qualicum River Estuary Conservation Area and Englishman River Regional Park, along with necessary construction and upgrades of trail bridges. This

means that no funds are available for new acquisitions until 2008, when by current projections and after other capital items, about \$72,000 per year becomes available for new acquisitions.

Obviously, the RDN will be in no position to offer even seed or contributory funds should opportunities arise before 2008; thereafter, its contribution is small relative to the cost of land purchase. Given the public priority on acquisition evidenced through the public questionnaire and meetings, the RDN needs to reconsider its budget allocations and funding sources for acquisition. There are several acquisitions funding options that will be pursued over the next 10 years.

### 11.3.1 Municipal Involvement in Regional Parks Acquisition

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 9, no municipal funding is provided for the acquisition of new regional parks. However, municipal interests in lands outside their boundaries may increase as they exhaust the supply of available land for sizable parks within their boundaries, or as their residents apply pressure for nearby lands of special concern to be preserved. The municipalities may be willing to participate in the acquisition of future parks or trails that benefit their residents – e.g., the City of Nanaimo’s interest in Westwood Ridges and Mt. Benson.

The regional park function now defined under the RDN’s Regional Parks and Trails Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 1231 limits the role of acquiring regional parks and trails to the RDN, but that function is now being reviewed. Municipal contributions to park land acquisition occur:

- On a case by case basis, in which the municipalities would co-fund specific acquisitions that directly benefit their constituencies; or
- By expanding the current Regional Park Service Agreement to include contributions from the four municipalities to future acquisitions based on criteria that could be specified in the agreement. The Agreement is due for review and renewal in 2005, so it is timely to examine this option.

*In 2005, the RDN will examine the range of options for involving the four municipal governments in contributing to land acquisitions for parks, from individual partnerships in specific acquisitions where a municipality has a direct interest in lands outside its boundaries, to revising the Regional Parks Function to include municipal members as full participants. In collaboration with the four municipal governments, the RDN will seek a partnership arrangement or arrangements that serve both municipal and regional interests in acquiring future regional parks.*

### 11.3.2 Development Cost Charges

Authorized under the *Local Government Act*, development cost charges (DCCs) are monetary charges that a local government can place on new development to assist in providing certain services for the future residents of the new development. The provision of parks is one of the services for which DCCs can be charged. While park DCCs are commonly applied at the municipal level for municipal and community parks, they have as yet not been applied in

B.C. for regional parks. However, this does not preclude the RDN from examining the logistics and issues involved in setting up DCCs for regional parks on future developments proposed in the unincorporated areas of the regional district.

*The RDN will examine the potential for instituting DCCs for future regional park and trail acquisition.*

### 11.3.3 Donations

Many respondents of the public questionnaire encouraged the RDN to consider various means of encouraging donations to the parks system. One of the attractions of making donations towards regional parks and trails is that as a local government, the RDN is able to issue income tax receipts for the donation amount.

*The RDN will promote the fact that tax receipts can be issued for monetary donations towards regional parks and trails.*

#### **Project-specific donations:**

RDN parks staff have worked with a variety of community groups to seek funding and donations toward specific park and trail related projects in their communities, such as the Barclay Crescent Bridge (completed) and the Top Bridge project.

*The RDN will continue to work with volunteers and community groups to promote donations to fund specific projects, such as bridge construction, in the regional parks and trails system.*

#### **Endowment Fund:**

An endowment fund to support general development and operation of regional parks and trails was mentioned by several respondents. An endowment fund provides prospective donors with a tangible recipient and some assurance that their donation will be used for the purposes that they support.

*The RDN will examine the creation of a regional parks and trails Endowment Fund that would accept donations towards development, operation and maintenance of the system. An endowment fund could be supported and promoted by a volunteer group, with administrative assistance and oversight by the RDN.*

#### **Commemorative gifts:**

While more of a means of funding operational rather than acquisition functions, commemorative giving can provide a range of opportunities for individual and corporate residents to contribute directly to a park or trail of their choice. Donations may be in the form of cash for equipment or facilities or as land given for recreational use or environmental protection.

Other local governments have established a variety of targeted giving options such \$100 for a recycling station, \$250 for a bicycle rack, \$800 for a picnic table, or \$1000 for an interpretive sign. At a corporate level, gifts may include \$20,000+ for public facilities such as washrooms and picnic shelters.

Such gifts are typically commemorated by a plaque, label or sign on the item funded.

While this is one method for acquiring equipment and facilities within parks and trails, the downside is the obligation that is created to maintain the item or facility and its commemorative label in the long term.

*The RDN will explore the establishment of a Commemorative Giving Program to support specific infrastructure and facilities in regional parks and trails.*

#### **11.3.4 Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund**

In 2000, the Capital Regional District set an interesting precedent by establishing a CRD Parks Land Acquisition Fund based on a special 'tax' or levy charged on residential properties throughout the CRD, in both municipalities and unincorporated areas, for a 10-year period. The establishment of the Fund was supported by the public in an opinion poll held in several municipalities during municipal elections in 1999. The cost to property owners in 2002 was \$4.28 per \$100,000 assessed residential property value or about \$10 per average household. The Fund generates about \$1.6 million per year. <sup>2</sup>

Establishing a similarly structured fund in the Regional District would require the agreement and 'buy-in' of the municipalities, to make any proposed levy on properties equitable across the Region. This could be discussed in conjunction with the review of the Regional Parks Function.

*The RDN will explore the potential for establishing a Regional Parks and Trails Acquisition Fund within the Regional District.*

### **11.4 Future Funding – Operations**

While acquisition remains a priority, the RDN realizes that more resources than in the past must be focused on developing and maintaining parks and trails if the system is to continue to be used safely, not to mention expanded.

As Table 11-1 shows, the allocation to operations in 2004 was \$316,000, based on municipal (74%) and electoral area (26%) contributions. Budget projections for 2005-2010 estimate operational budgets of \$330,000-340,000 per year.

These budgets should be adequate to cover current service levels and the priority management and development projects for existing parks and trails referenced in Table 6-2 and Table 7-1 respectively. However, additional operational funding will be required to support the new staff position and a coordinated information and promotion strategy (see section 9.6).

*The RDN will commit additional operational funds to support:*

- 1. additional summer workers starting in 2005;*
- 2. a Volunteer/Field Coordinator in 2006;*
- 3. development (in 2006) and implementation (2007-2015) of an information and promotions strategy.*

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<sup>2</sup> From CRD Parks, Land Acquisition Fund Bulletin 3 - Summary of 2002 Acquisitions.

