

STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

TAKE A TOUR

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



Regional Parks and Trails Guide

RDN PARKS | 250-248-4744 | parks@rdn.bc.ca



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

User Groups



Adventure
Hiker



Mountain
Biker



Equestrian



Hiker



Hybrid Biker



Runner



Walker



Everyone



Nature
Lovers

Activities



Picnicking



Swimming



Winter Sports



Viewing



Fishing



Salmon Viewing

Ammenities



Boat Launch



Car Top
Boat Launch



Toilets



Potable Water

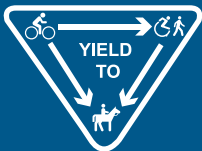


Accessible



Parking

Find the tabs at the top of the page for the most common user groups at the park or trail!



Park and Trail Etiquette

Most of our Regional Parks and Trails are multi-use. The user triangle shows who has the right-of-way. Pets must always be under control and owners are responsible for picking up after their pet.



Welcome

Get out there

The Regional District of Nanaimo invites you to explore the rich diversity of its natural and cultural landscapes and enjoy a multitude of exciting recreational opportunities. There's something for everyone. Let our precious watercourses and shorelines, woodlands and wildlife inspire you to move, stretch out, try something new, de-stress and achieve that healthy lifestyle we all seek.

How it works

It takes a community to grow and support a park system: many levels of government, land and conservation trusts, private landowners, users, donors and volunteers. Please get involved, get informed and help build the region's growing park and trail legacy. Your contribution is an invaluable part of our work as stewards of the land and together, we can make sure there's lots of park and trail for everyone and the critters that live there in the years ahead.

Get involved

Visit us at www.rdn.bc.ca for public engagement tools, ways to participate in committees and great information about the environment and culture of our region.

What do you want to do today?

STRETCH YOUR LIMITS



TAKE A TOUR



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



CAMPING



GO ON AN EPIC ADVENTURE!

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| Benson Creek Falls Regional Park & | 9 |
| Ammonite Falls Regional Trail | |
| Mount Benson Regional Park & | 10 |
| Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail | |
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VISIT OUR REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS FOR A 1/2 DAY OR FULL DAY EXCURSION!

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WHATEVER YOUR ABILITY, CHOOSE A SHORT OR LONG STROLL TODAY!

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BY THE LAKE OR NEAR THE OCEAN, OUR STUNNING CAMPGROUNDS AWAIT YOU!

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STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

Visit these Regional Parks and Trails

The parks and trails here are loaded with adventure! They have steep climbs and rugged terrain and require a higher level of mobility and ability to navigate. The level of difficulty is noted for each trail; it ranges from ‘difficult’ to ‘moderate’. A ‘difficult’ level trail has many grade changes along the way, often steep climbs, and the surfacing is uneven and may present challenges for access. A ‘moderate’ level trail has some grade changes along the way, with fewer steep climbs, and the surfacing may present some challenges for access. Please check the length of trail and access points to help determine how long you will need to complete your trek.

Prepare a pack with water and what you might need for your adventure, bring your hiking boots or your mountain bike or your equine friend, and head out to explore our region! In case of emergency, check the back of the trail signs for a geo-location.

Wildlife share our parks and trails! Be aware and be safe.

For more information about private road access to the park’s trailheads, please refer to Island Timberlands’ blog:

blog.islandtimberlands.com

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TRAIL
1

Arrowsmith CPR Regional Trail

The Canadian Pacific Railway built this historic trail in 1912 to serve its Cameron Lake resort guests. The views from the mountain trail remain spectacular today. Situated on private forest lands under licence to the RDN, the trail rises through deep woods from Highway 4A, develops into a loop, and finishes at an old ski hill in Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District's park below Mt Cokely. Ascent typically takes about four hours, and elevation gain is about 1000 m. Be prepared for changeable weather and dress appropriately.

Trail length

15km, full loop


Trail length to lookout

5km, one way



DIFFICULT



Follow us on   



2 PARK TRAIL

Benson Creek Falls

Regional Park

Ammonite Falls

Regional Trail

This rugged 32 ha park of creeks and waterfalls, steep ravines and big mossy woods sits at the north end of the Crown woodlot operated by Vancouver Island University. The RDN has leased Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from the Province since 1991 and is now embarking on significant park upgrades that will help users better enjoy one of Nanaimo's most prized natural sites, Ammonite Falls. In time, visitors will find better access to the base of the falls, a pedestrian bridge over Benson Creek and a new parking lot on Weigles Road.

Ammonite Falls Regional Trail length
2km, one way from Creekside parking lot



rdn.bc.ca/benson-creek-falls-regional-park



PARK
TRAIL

3

Mount Benson

Regional Park

Witchcraft Lake

Regional Trail

In 2006, the RDN partnered with the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust to secure 213 ha of forest lands along the eastern slope of Mount Benson, thus preserving forever the green backdrop to the Harbour City. Trail access to the mountain runs through the Crown woodlot operated by Vancouver Island University. At the top, take in panoramic views of the Salish Sea and the Island's highland mountains. Park and access trails are steep and rough: allow five to seven hours for a return trip and be prepared for all kinds of weather.

Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail length

2km, one way to park boundary only



DIFFICULT



rdn.bc.ca/mount-benson-regional-park



4 PARK TRAIL

The Great Trail (The Trans Canada Trail)

Nanaimo backcountry enthusiasts helped the RDN launch this 22 km section of the Trans Canada Trail in 2001. In two pieces either side of the Nanaimo River, and largely running through private forest lands under licence, this rough trail crosses diverse landscape from exposed mossy ridge to the dramatic Haslam Creek canyon with its 48 m hanging suspension bridge. By the Spruston Rd trailhead, a Back Country Horsemen of BC staging area now provides access to extensive Crown recreation lands further inland.

Trail segment lengths

- Extension Ridge** - 5km, one way
- Pipeline** - 6km, one way
- White Pine/Haslam** - 7km, one way from Haslam trailhead to Spruston Rd







TAKE A TOUR

Visit these Regional Parks and Trails

The parks and trails here get you out for the day, exploring our region! They have moderate climbs and varied terrain and require an easy to moderate level of mobility and ability to navigate. The level of difficulty is noted for each trail; it ranges from 'easy' to 'moderate'. An 'easy' level trail has even grade with few bumps along the way, it has compacted surfacing and presents no challenges for access. A 'moderate' level trail has some grade changes along the way, with fewer climbs, and the surfacing may present some challenges for access. Please check the length of trail and access points to help determine how long you will need to complete your trek.

Be sure to pack what you need for up to a half day or even full day excursion. Good walking and hiking equipment is encouraged. Don't forget to take your hybrid bike out for a spin too!

Wildlife share our parks and trails! Be aware and be safe.

For more information on Gabriola Island amenities, please visit:

www.galtt.ca

www.gabrielaisland.org

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TRAIL 5



Top Bridge Regional Trail

Inaugurated in 1999, this rough and ready 5 km trail takes you from the ocean at Rath Trevor to the river canyon and original crossing site of the Englishman known as Top Bridge. In 2007, a magnificent pedestrian-cyclist suspension bridge reconnected both sides of Top Bridge, linking the community and regional parks that touch on the trail. Used as a film location, Top Bridge was voted one of 10 Amazing Places in the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (www.mabr.ca). Whatever the time of year, there's always something of interest to see and do at Top Bridge.

Trail length
4km, one way



EASY



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6 PARK

Englishman River Regional Park

In 2005, the RDN partnered with The Nature Trust of BC, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Province of BC to acquire this 205 ha property. The river corridor lands represent important salmon habitat, enhanced with 4 km of Fisheries and Oceans Canada side channel and a community hatchery. Home to a wide range of wildlife including elk, bear and cougar, the park offers lots of room for walkers, cyclists and equestrians to roam and feel at one with nature.



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PARK 7

Nanaimo River Regional Park

The RDN entered into a 99-year lease in 2000 to manage this 56 ha conservation property. Owned by the Land Conservancy of BC and now by The Nature Trust of BC, the park represents one of the few remaining natural forests along the lower reaches of the Nanaimo River. A good example of a mature coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem, the park is also the site of provincial research into improved Douglas-fir stock for harvest. Learn about the forest, walk the trails, take a dip, and admire one of Vancouver Island's great rivers.



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8 TRAIL

Morden Colliery Regional Trail

The RDN has held a provincial licence on this old railway corridor since 1995, with trail developed at western and eastern ends, and a connecting bridge and middle trail section in the plans. Eventually, the goal is to see trail run all the way to Boat Harbour as the old railway once did. For now, look at the historic Morden Tipple and take a short ramble to the Nanaimo River, or meet a friend at the Cedar Plaza kiosk tipple and head off to Hemer -- delightful bridle path for walkers, cyclists and equestrians.

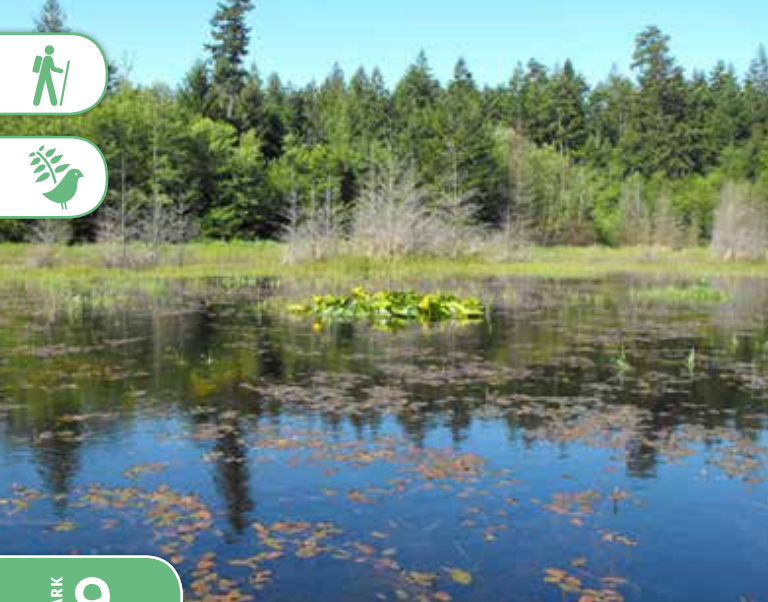
Trail length

West side - 1km, one way

East side - 2km, one way



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PARK 9

Coats Marsh Regional Park

In 2008, a long-time Gabriola landowner used the federal eco-gift tax program to help The Nature Trust of BC and the RDN acquire and protect this 46 ha parcel of environmentally sensitive wetlands and forest. The southern Gulf Islands have only 1.7 per cent of their land base in wetlands, and Coats represents the first protected wetland on Gabriola Island. Rough trails in the park permit nature lovers to view the marsh habitat and take in the bird life in this special place.



P

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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Visit these Regional Parks and Trails

By yourself or with a group, walking, running, riding or rolling, incorporate these easy-to-access parks, trails and cycling routes into your daily routine! Depending upon how long you stay out, a low degree of mobility and ability is all you need. Ramp up your distance and time spent outside to stretch the physical challenge. Otherwise, relax, enjoy the quick access to nature, the amenities, and come again real soon.

A reminder to those who head out with their four legged friends to keep pets under control and to clean up after them.

Even close to town, we share the land with wildlife. Learn about them, be aware and be safe.

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TRAIL **10**

Lighthouse Country Regional Trail

The north and south loops of the Lighthouse Country Regional Trail provide a great introduction to the Crown forest lands inland of the railway in Qualicum Bay-Bowser. The north loop has over 2 km of footpath popular with walkers and equestrians. In 2010, the 2.5 km east half of the south loop was improved to accessible standard. A 2 m wide graveled trail includes a tapping rail for the visually or balance impaired, bridges, boardwalks, benches, picnic table, wood carvings, and accessible toilets and parking lot. A trail for everyone.

Trail length

North loop - 2km, full loop

South loop - 6km, full loop



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11 TRAIL

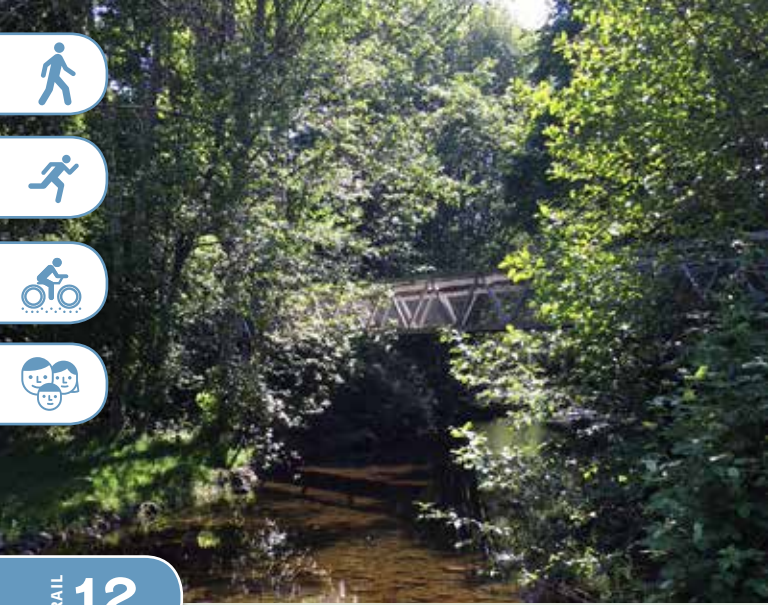
Big Qualicum River Regional Trail

The fall brings huge chinook salmon and pinks to the Big Qualicum and there's no better place to view them than at Fisheries and Oceans Canada's hatchery. Afterwards, or any other time of year, explore the signed hatchery trails and then head out onto the riverside track. This level route runs inland for 10 km and offers a great place to take the family for a relaxing walk, run or ride. Use the hatchery and trail to kick-start your exploration of Lighthouse Country.

Trail length
10km, one way



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TRAIL **12**

Parksville – Qualicum Beach Links

Looking for a quiet walking or cycling route between Qualicum Beach and Parksville? Don't like cycling on the Highway? The Links run from downtown to downtown along quiet suburban streets and the occasional off-road trail, with only one hill. The accessible Barclay Crescent Millennium Bridge gets you across French Creek. The entire route is signed, and at each end as well as at the bridge there is a large area map showing the route. Start your exploration of Oceanside with the Links.

Links length
13km, one way



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13 TRAIL

Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail

Opened for use in late 2016, this 3 m wide level accessible gravel path is an exercise course for everyone. Walk, run or ride alone or in large groups: there's room for all. It's 7 km from Springwood Park in Parksville to the Station Rd trailhead in Coombs. Markers along the way help you gauge your pace. The many fine establishments of downtown Coombs provide plenty of reward for those who do the whole 7 km. Make the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail a regular part of your healthy living and active transportation regime.

Trail length
7km, one way



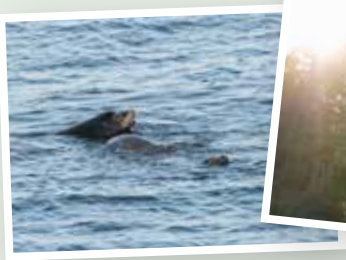
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PARK **14**

Moorecroft Regional Park

With financial assistance from The Nature Trust of BC and the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust, the RDN was able to purchase this 34 ha community jewel in 2011. Operated as a youth camp since the mid-1930s and now subject to a conservation covenant held by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, oceanfront Moorecroft is home to precious Garry Oak meadow and coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime ecosystems. Walk the trails, picnic by the water, and gaze at the splendor of the Salish Sea and snow-capped Coastal Mountains.



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CAMPING

in the Regional District of Nanaimo

For Horne Lake Regional Park camping, reservations can be made beginning April 1st at 8:00am and all the way until September 30th. Please call 250-248-0500.

Want more information? Go to www.RLCParks.ca.

For Descanso Bay Regional Park camping, reservations can be made beginning May 1st at www.descansobaypark.com. For special inquiries please email descansobaypark@gmail.com or call 250-247-8255.



| | | |
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| 16 | Descanso Bay Regional Park | 31 |



PARK 15

Horne Lake Regional Park

In 2002, the RDN took ownership of this 105 ha park and campground nestled below the spectacular cliffs of Mount Mark. Camp in the forest or beside the lake, launch your motor boat, rent a canoe or stand-up paddle board, have a picnic, drop a fishing line, and try out the range of programmed recreation offered at the park. Two group camping sites, one with large tent accommodation, are available. There's always plenty to do at Horne Lake Regional Park, and adjacent Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park.



Follow us on [f](#) [t](#) [i](#)




16 PARK

Descanso Bay

Regional Park

Acquired in 2002 thanks to a generous donation by the Coastal Community Credit Union, this 14 ha oceanfront park offers 32 campsites and group camping opportunity, a small boat launch, trails and two glorious oyster bays to explore. The park is situated within walking distance of the ferry and is a designated camping site on the Salish Sea Marine Trail (www.bcmarinetrails.org). Across the street at Cox Community Park is a large network of forest trails connecting you with the heart of Gabriola.



Follow us on   



While you're there...

- leave only footprints, take only pictures.
- take your litter away with you when you go.
- stay on designated trails.
- admire but do not cut or damage vegetation.
- wildlife are wild – leave them alone!
- clean up after your pet.



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

For more information please go
to our website

www.rdn.bc.ca/parks

or call RDN Parks

1 888 828 2069 or

250 248 4744