

2018 - 2028

Beachcomber Regional Park Management Plan



Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Project Purpose and Process	1
1.2 Park Description	2
1.3 Park History	2
2.0 Site Overview	3
2.1 Existing Park Amenities	3
2.2 Current Park Uses	4
2.3 Plant Communities	5
2.4 Park Wildlife	5
3.0 Current Management and Issues	7
3.1 Current Park Management Overview	7
3.2 Current Management Issues	8
4.0 Future Park Management (2018-2028)	9
4.1 Public and Stakeholder Consultation Results	9
4.2 Summary of Future Management Actions and Costs	12
Appendix A: Public Consultation	
Appendix B: Biophysical Assessment	
Appendix C: Hazard Tree Assessment	
Appendix D: Archaeological Assessment (excerpt)	

1. Introduction

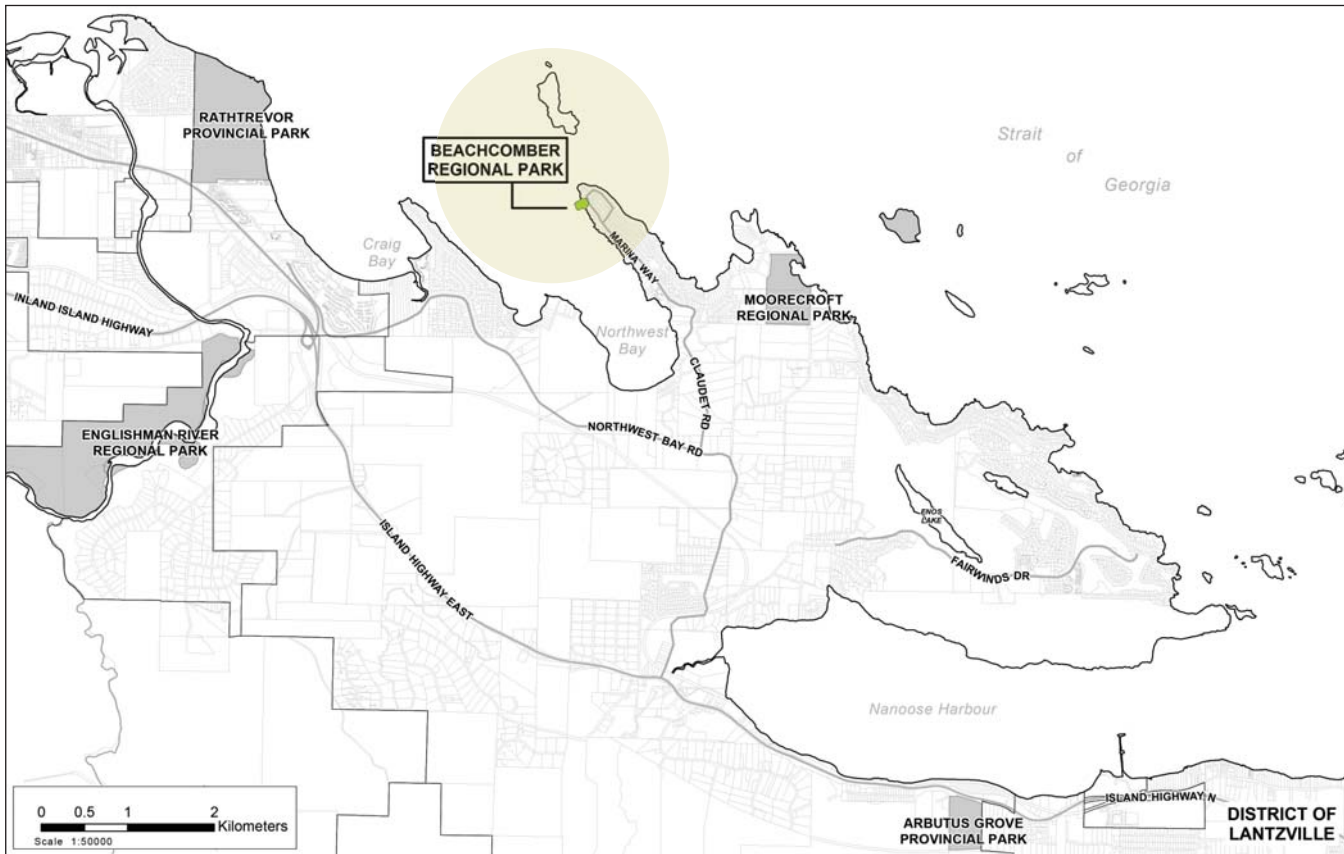


Rocky cliffs, Garry oak and Arbutus at Beachcomber RP

1.1 Project Purpose and Process

This is the first 10-year Management Plan for Beachcomber Regional Park. The purpose of the plan is to identify future park needs in terms of visitor safety and enjoyment, ecological protection, and annual maintenance costs. The plan development was also an opportunity for park staff to check in with the community about the current management of the park, to answer questions, and to receive ideas on future park management.

Management Plan development began in the fall of 2016 with public consultation (Open House and Survey) and included ecological and archaeological assessments and consultation with local stakeholders. The project was completed in December 2017 following a public review of a draft plan and a final Open House, pending final plan approval by the Regional Board.



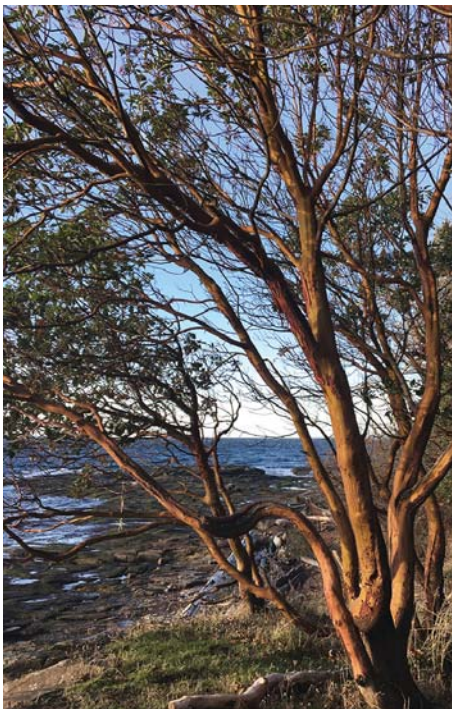
Location of Beachcomber Regional Park in Nanoose, BC.

1.2 Park Description

Located on Marina Way at the end of the Beachcomber Peninsula in Nanoose, Beachcomber Regional Park is a one-hectare oceanfront property that is cherished by neighborhood residents and visitors from throughout the RDN for its woodland trails, bluffs and rocky outcrops, tidal pools, views across Northwest Bay to Mount Arrowsmith, and views across the Strait of Georgia to the mainland coastal mountains.

1.3 Park History

Established in 1964 by the Beachcomber Park Association, Beachcomber Regional Park was gifted to the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) by the residents’ group in 1988, thereby becoming the RDN’s first regional park. The park is located within the traditional territory of the Snaw-Naw-As First Nation and the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Communities from the north—K’omoks, Qualicum, We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nations—likely utilized resources seasonally in this area as well. Site modifications and features, as identified and assessed by the project archaeological field crew (consisting of team members from Ursus Heritage Consulting and Snaw-naw-as First Nation), confirm traditional use of the park site by First Nations prior to European settlement.



Beachcomber shoreline with Arbutus

2. Site Overview



Benches overlooking the shoreline

2.1 Existing Park Amenities

Beachcomber Regional Park is a sparsely developed park intended to provide safe, low-impact public access to the sensitive coastal ecosystems. Existing park amenities include roadside parking, information kiosk, entrance sign, regulation signage, recreational trails, stairs, toilet, garbage can and benches.



Beachcomber Regional Park Site Plan

● signage	🚻 toilet	- - - trails	■ benches
P parking	stairs	🗑️ garbage	📍 kiosk



Hikers in Beachcomber RP.

2.2 Current Park Uses

Beachcomber Regional Park is a passive park intended for low-impact nature recreation. Based on site observations by park staff and feedback received during the project public consultation process, the park is popular with both neighbourhood residents and visitors from throughout the Regional District of Nanaimo. Current park activities include walking, birdwatching, tidal pool exploration, diving, swimming, relaxing, enjoying views, dog walking and picnicking.

2.3 Plant Communities

Beachcomber Regional Park is within the Coastal Douglas Fir moist maritime (CDFmm) biogeoclimatic zone (BGC). This CDFmm is limited to lower elevations (below 150m elevation) along the southeast coast of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and a narrow strip along the Sunshine Coast. Forests in this zone are dominated by Douglas fir, grand fir, and western red cedar. The typical understory in undisturbed areas such as Beachcomber Regional Park is salal, dull Oregon-grape and oceanspray. Garry oak, arbutus and several species of the lily family occur in dry areas of the park along the rocky shoreline.

A background review completed by EDI Environmental identified a total of 13 at-risk ecological communities that have the potential to occur within the park; however, a site assessment completed in June 2017 confirmed that site conditions do not meet the criteria for listed ecological communities because they are not in a climax state. These ecological communities could develop on site if human disturbance and invasive plant species are effectively controlled.

A total of 48 plant species were observed during field visits by project biologists. There were no SARA Schedule 1, Provincially-listed, or COSEWIC-listed plant species identified. Invasive plants, including Scotch broom, spurge laurel, hawkweed, Himalayan blackberry, thistle and English ivy were noted in several locations throughout the park. No noxious weeds were observed. A detailed assessment is included in **Appendix B - Biophysical Assessment**.



Stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*)



Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*)



Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*)

2.4 Park Wildlife

A preliminary background review completed by EDI Environmental identified a total of 16 at-risk wildlife species that have the potential to occur within the park, including Great Blue Heron, Olive-side Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Western Screech-Owl and Townsend's Big-eared Bat. However, during a site visit in October 2016, no species at risk were confirmed. The project biologist did observe 29 bird species, an Eagle nest tree, and two mammal species (Red Squirrel and Black-Tailed Deer). A complete inventory is included in **Appendix B - Biophysical Assessment**.



Yellow-rumped warbler



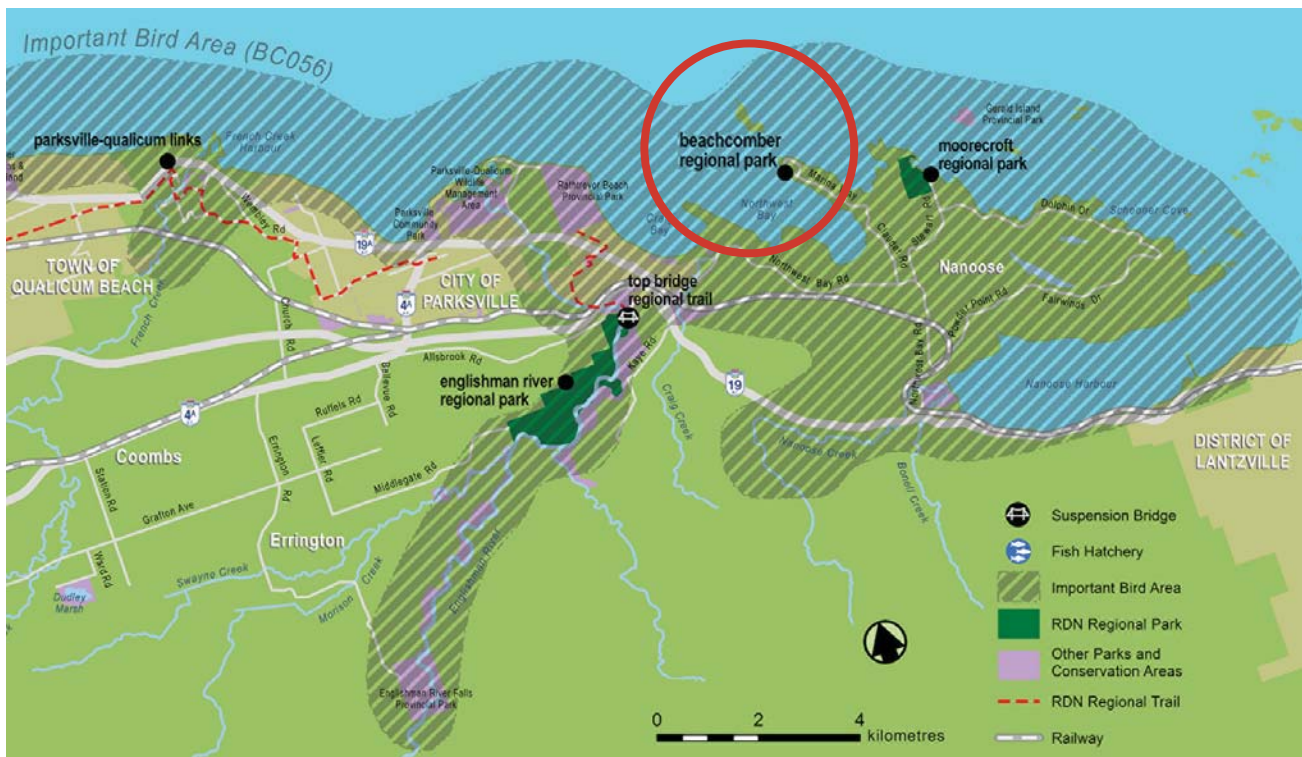
Harlequin Duck



Bald Eagle

2.4.1 Important Bird Area

Beachcomber is located within an internationally recognized Important Bird Area (IBA). The area between Little Qualicum Estuary and Nanoose Bay (shown on the map below) has been identified as one of 11,000 IBAs worldwide. Amongst the 250 species known to occur in the IBA, there are several marine and land birds commonly seen in Beachcomber including Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Harlequin Ducks.



Eastern portion of Important Bird Area BC056 (location of Beachcomber Regional Park shown with red circle)

3. Current Management and Issues



Kiosk and stairs at entrance to Beachcomber RP.

3.1 Current Park Management

Management of Beachcomber Regional Park follows standard park guidelines and practices as outlined in the RDN Park Use Bylaw 1399 (2004), the RDN Parks and Trails Guidelines (2013), and the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Plan (2005-2015). The annual park maintenance cost for Beachcomber Regional Park, which includes items such as incidental repairs, vegetation management and contractor services, is approximately \$3000. Park operational costs are funded by all seven electoral areas and all four municipalities within the Regional District of Nanaimo through the Regional Parks and Trails Function.

3.2 Current Management Issues

Beachcomber Regional Park has very few incidents of park use violations or vandalism. The following five management issues have been identified by either park neighbours or park staff:



Steep descent at south entrance



Criss-crossed trail network



Hazard tree

TRAIL ACCESS: An unmaintained park access involving a scramble down a rock cliff is located at the south end of the park. The closure of the south entrance, along with several secondary, informal trails throughout the park, is under consideration for reasons of public safety and ecological protection. The construction of stairs with handrails along the north park entrance is also under consideration for increased park accessibility.

TREE CARE: Because the park is surrounded on three sides by water, the mature stands of arbutus, Garry oak and Douglas-fir are exposed and vulnerable to breakage from wind, severe rains and snow. Extensive tree pruning and removal has been required in recent years and is anticipated as an ongoing safety and maintenance concern.

INVASIVE PLANTS: Several invasive plant species have been identified by staff and inventoried by the project biologist. The park's small size and location within a residential area makes invasive plant management an ongoing challenge.

CAMPFIRES: Although campfires are prohibited in Beachcomber by Park Bylaw 1399, incidents of beach fires during summer months are becoming a growing concern for neighbouring residents. Because the beach fires are within the foreshore and outside the park boundary, enforcement falls outside the jurisdiction of the RDN. Local residents require further information on who to call and who will respond when a campfire occurs.

INCREASED USE: With increased park use there have been parking issues along Marina Way. The small lot at the kiosk location does not always satisfy the need for parking at the park resulting in overcrowding or haphazard parking along the side of the road. It is challenging for residents adjacent the park as their driveways often become unwanted parking areas or turnarounds at peak times.

4. Future Park Management (2018-2028)



View of Craigs Bay from Beachcomber RP

The purpose of this plan is to outline future park needs in terms of visitor safety and enjoyment, ecological protection, and annual maintenance costs. Future needs were identified through public and stakeholder consultation and site assessments.

4.1 Public and Stakeholder Consultation Results

The public consultation process for the Management Plan involved two Open House events and two on-line surveys. Public consultation findings are summarized below and provided in detail as **Appendix A - Public Consultation**.

Key stakeholders, including neighbouring First Nations, Nanoose Volunteer Fire Department, Nanoose Naturalists and the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust (NALT), were invited to participate in plan development and draft plan review. Any input received has been incorporated and referenced within the final document.

4.1.1 Open House and First Public Survey

On December 7, 2016 an Open House event was held at the Nanoose Place Community Centre to share information and answer questions about the park management plan. A public survey was available at the Open House as well as online between December 7, 2016 and January 7, 2017. During that time, 33 surveys were completed. Key survey findings, which address current park uses and future needs, are summarized below:

ISSUE	COMMUNITY RESPONSE
General Satisfaction	32/33 respondents (97%) were generally happy with existing park amenities and the current level of maintenance services
Improvements or Additions	21/30 respondents (70%) felt that no new park amenities or services should be considered in the future
	9/30 respondents (30%) felt that some future additions would benefit the park, these include invasive plant removal, larger parking area, picnic tables, a small play area for children, and accessible paths and stairs (requested by 6 of the 9 respondents)
Secondary Trail Closure	19/33 respondents (58%) supported the closure of secondary trails for reasons of public safety and ecological protection; several of these respondents reiterated the need for an accessible primary trail/stairway to the beach, preferably on the north side of the park
	14/33 respondents (42%) did not support closure of secondary trails because visitors enjoy the trails and closure would only encourage the development of new paths

Nineteen additional comments were submitted by respondents (all of which are included in **Appendix A - Public Consultation**). The majority of comments reiterate satisfaction with current park amenities and services and request that no changes be made to the park. A few comments address the need for a more accessible trail to the beach. These comments reinforce requests received directly by park staff during the Open House event for the construction of a primary trail / stairway with handrails on the north side of the park to accommodate senior residents and others with mobility issues.

4.1.2 Draft Plan Review, Final Open House and Second Public Survey





A draft of the Beachcomber Regional Park Management Plan was available in hard copy and online on August 14, 2017 and was available to October 31, 2017. On October 4, 2017 a final Open House event was held at the park entrance to share information and answer questions about the park management plan. The second public survey gauged the public's support for the Draft Management Plan. The following is a summary of the input received:

ISSUE	COMMUNITY RESPONSE
Support Level	23/34 respondents (68%) supported strongly and very strongly the recommended management actions outlined in Section 4.2 (page 11)

Thirty additional comments were submitted by respondents (all of which are included in **Appendix A - Public Consultation**). As in the first public survey, many of the comments were in support of the park to remaining the same, to be natural, and any maintenance completed would be to enhance the natural beauty of the park. Nine of the 30 comments requested a railing at the north end trail as a good addition to the park for accessibility while few respondents felt new stairs should be built. The south end trail had mixed reviews on whether it should be kept as an access point to the waterfront, with 4 out of 30 in favour and 6 out of 30 opposed. Four out of 30 felt strongly enough about a playground not being a park amenity to include it in their comments. Maintenance in the form of hazardous tree removal and invasive plant removal was an important item for 7 out of the 30 respondents. Discussion relating to fire safety and emergency contacts occurred at the Open House event and is reflected in some of the comments provided by the survey respondents. Concerned residents are looking for direction from the RDN on who to contact should an incident arise (fire, overnight camping, etc) whether within the park boundary or not as there has been no response by the authorities when called.

4.2 Summary of Future Management Actions and Costs

The following table summarizes all recommended park improvements and actions as identified through public consultation and project site assessments in support of keeping the park as is. Detailed information can be found in the following appendices:

-  **Appendix A: Public Consultation**
-  **Appendix B: Biophysical Assessment**
-  **Appendix C: Hazard Tree Assessment**
-  **Appendix D: Archaeological Assessment**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST
Trail accessibility	Construction of one main accessible trail along north entrance from parking area to beach with stairs and handrail that is natural and in keeping with the landscape	2018	\$15,000
	Post signage at the south end trail directing visitors to the main accessible trail at the north end	2018	\$200
Fire/Emergency	Work with RDN Bylaw and Fire Coordinator on a response protocol	2018	n/a
	Post signage in park with response protocol to follow	2018	\$200
Park use	Monitor park use and parking issues	2018-2028 (ongoing)	n/a
Signs	Update and consolidate signs	2019-2022 (2-5 years)	\$1000
Invasive plant species	Initial mechanical removal of Himalayan blackberry and spurge laurel; replanting with native plants	2018	\$1000 – \$2000 (landscape contractor)
	Ongoing maintenance to prevent recolonization: touch ups in spring during flowering season, before fruiting	2018-2028 (ongoing)	variable (landscape contractor)
Eagle nest tree	Ongoing monitoring of eagle nest tree to prevent disturbance; mitigative design and implementation if future trail construction or park development is required	2018-2028 (ongoing)	n/a
High risk hazard trees	Urgent removal of five trees as per Hazard Tree Assessment; topping / wildlife tree creation of one tree	2017	completed
Moderate or low risk hazard trees	Future monitoring and possible removal / pruning of 11 identified trees with compromised structure and potential for hazard to trail users	2019-2022 (2-5 years)	\$1200
Madrone canker	Detailed assessment by an ISA Certified Arborist of the Madrone canker epidemic within park	2018	\$1,700
	Potential future pruning / removal of nine infected Arbutus trees (following detailed assessment)	2018-2028	\$1000 – \$2500
Areas of archaeological sensitivity	Completion of detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment before any future park development / site disturbance	2018-2028 (as required)	\$7500
	Site protection through avoidance by project design	2018-2028 (as required)	n/a