

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SELECT COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016**

**12:00PM**

***(RDN Committee Room, 6300 Hammond Bay Road, Nanaimo)***

**A G E N D A**

**PAGES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**DELEGATIONS**

*Motion to receive late delegation.*

**MINUTES**

3-6 Minutes of the Regular Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held June 7, 2016

*Motion to approve Minutes.*

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

*Motion to receive Communications/Correspondence*

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**REPORTS**

7-19 Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects –June to August 2016

20-22 Coats Marsh Bats Recovery Strategy Report

23-41 Mt. Benson Regional Park/ Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail Parking Report

42-97 Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Parking Report

98-103 Regional Parks Parcel Tax Review Report

104-106 Salish Sea Marine Trail Proposal BC Marine Trails Network Association Report

107-109 Trans Canada Trail IT Licence Renewal Report

*Motion to receive Reports.*

## **BUSINESS ARISING FROM DELEGATIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Horne Lake Historic Regional Trail

### **IN CAMERA**

*That pursuant to Section 90(1) (e) of the Community Charter the Committee proceed to an In Camera Committee meeting to consider items related to land issues.*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn.*

### **NEXT MEETING**

***November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016***  
***RDN Committee Room***

**Distribution:** C. Haime (Chair), A. McPherson, M. Young, J. Fell, B. Rogers, M. Lefebvre, I. Thorpe, T. Westbroek, B. Veenof, B. Yochim, H. Houle, J. Hong, J. Stanhope, W. Pratt, D. Trudeau, T. Osborne, W. Marshall, L. Fesiak, E. McCulloch

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY JUNE 7, 2016  
12:00 PM  
(RDN COMMITTEE ROOM)**

**Attendance:** Director Haime, Chair, District of Lantzville  
Director Houle, Electoral Area 'B'  
Director Young, Electoral Area 'C'  
Director Rogers, Electoral Area 'E'  
Director Fell, Electoral Area 'F'  
Director Stanhope, Electoral Area 'G'  
Director Veenhof, Electoral Area 'H'  
Director Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach  
Director Lefebvre, City of Parksville  
Director Thorpe, City of Nanaimo  
Director Hong, City of Nanaimo  
Director Pratt, City of Nanaimo

**Staff:** Tom Osborne, General Manager of Recreation and Parks  
Dennis Trudeau, Interim Chief Administrative Officer  
Wendy Idema, Director of Finance  
Wendy Marshall, Manager of Park Services  
Ann-Marie Harvey, Recording Secretary

**Regrets:** Director McPherson, Electoral Area 'A'  
Director Yoachim, City of Nanaimo

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Haime called the meeting to order at 12:01pm.

**DELEGATIONS**

**David and Patti Kirk** – Parking at Benson Creek Fall Regional Park / Ammonite Falls

David Kirk and Patti Kirk presented their concerns and issues regarding parking on Creekside Place, Jameson Road and in the community park parking lot to access the Benson Creek Fall Regional Park Trail to Ammonite Falls. The delegation requested for an alternate access to the park, outside of a residential area be considered.

MOVED Director Young, SECONDED Commissioner Houle that the delegation be received.

CARRIED

**MINUTES**

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Minutes of the Regular Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee meeting held February 16, 2016 be adopted.

CARRIED

## **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

MOVED Director Stanhope, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the following Communication/Correspondence be received:

**B. Veenhof, RDN to Environment & Climate Change Canada, RE: Request for Legislative Amendments–Culled Migratory Birds**

**S. Poulin, Environment Canada to B. Veenhof, RDN, RE: Correspondence Received**

**T. Osborne, RDN to G. Adrienne, NALT RE: Memorandum of Understanding – Conclusion of Contribution Agreement**

**HR MacMillan/Grant Ainscough Arboretum Society, RE: Expanding the Boundaries of the Arboretum**

**B. Rogers, RDN to D. Lott, Moorecroft Stewardship Committee, RE: Fundraising**

**N. Doe, Gabriola Resident to T. Osborne, RDN, RE: Gabriola Marsh Trail Proposal**

**W. Marshall, RDN to N. Doe, Gabriola Resident, RE: Trail Development –Coats Marsh**

**A. Landry, GaLTT to W. Marshall, RDN, RE: Trail Building in Coats Marsh Regional Park**

**P. Jacobson – Arrowsmith Parks & Land-Use Council, to RDN RPTSC, RE: Hamilton Marsh Protection**

**L. Brookes, Arrowsmith Naturalists, to RDN Board, RE: Preservation of Hamilton Marsh**

CARRIED

### **REPORTS**

#### **Presentation – Regional Parks Overview**

Mr. Osborne gave a presentation of the Regional Parks and summarized each park's context.

#### **Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects –Feb – Apr 2016**

Ms. Marshall answered questions from the directors regarding items in the report.

MOVED Director Stanhope, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects February-April be received.

CARRIED

**Regional Park Management Plan for Fairwinds Lakes District –Enos Lake Protection & Monitoring Program**

MOVED Director Rogers, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Board approve the Regional Park Management Plan for the Fairwinds Lakes District with the submission of the Enos Lake Protection and Monitoring Program.

CARRIED

**Morden Colliery Regional Trail – Nanaimo River Bridge Update**

Director Thorpe, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Board receive the update report on trail and bridge planning initiatives for the Morden Colliery Regional Trail.

CARRIED

Director Thorpe, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Board allocate \$55,000 of the Regional Parks and Trails Capital Reserves to bridge development for the Morden Colliery Regional Trail so that a prerequisite hydro technical drilling assessment project can commence in the summer of 2016.

CARRIED

**Moorecroft Regional Park Buildings Report**

Director Rogers, SECONDED Director Lefebvre that the Board direct staff to remove Kennedy Hall and the Caretaker's Residence from Moorecroft Regional Park and that the Caretaker role be eliminated.

CARRIED

MOVED Director Rogers, SECONDED Director Lefebvre that the Board direct staff to complete a report on options for the placement and construction of a picnic shelter and toilet facilities at Moorecroft Regional Park.

CARRIED

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE/DELEGATONS**

**Parking at Benson Creek Fall Regional Park / Ammonite Falls**

MOVE Director Young, SECONDED Director Houle that the Board direct staff to report on options to relieve parking congestion at Creekside Place and Jameson Road caused by public use of area to access the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and the VIU woodlot.

CARRIED

**Coats Marsh Regional Parks Trails**

MOVED Director Houle, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the development of a trail from Stanley Road to Coats Marsh be postponed until other access routes are considered through the potential density transfer of lands and related land donation addition to 707 Community Park that is currently under review by Islands Trust.

CARRIED

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Parcel Taxes Services Agreements**

Mr. Osborne provided an overview of past Board reports and related resolutions on the establishment of the Regional Parks and Trails Parcel Tax.

Staff will bring forward a report to the Committee with various taxation options and updated financial information. Staff will also provide an update on current funding allocations related to the sports field and recreation services agreement as they were also considered by the RDN Board at the same time the parcel tax was implemented.

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Veenhof that the Parcel Tax information be received.

CARRIED

Director Hong left the meeting at 1:35.

**IN CAMERA**

MOVED Director Stanhope, SECONDED Director Houle that pursuant to Section 90(1) (e) of the Community Charter the Committee proceed to an In Camera Committee meeting to consider items related to land and legal issues.

Time: 1:35pm

CARRIED

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Rogers that the meeting be adjourned at 2:15pm.

CARRIED

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Chairperson

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**TO:** Tom Osborne  
General Manager of Recreation & Parks

**DATE:** September 8, 2016

**MEETING:** Recreation Commissions, RPTSC, EASC,  
POSACs

**FROM:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Park Services

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT: Monthly Update of Community Parks and Regional Parks and Trails Projects- June, July and August 2016**

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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks Update Report for June, July and August 2016 be received as information.

### Regional and Community Parks and Trails

During the summer staff have been involved with the following projects and issues.

#### Electoral Area Community Parks

##### *Area A*

Staff prepared revised construction cost estimates and design options for the Cedar Plaza Kiosks which were presented and discussed at the June 15 PRCC Meeting. A Development Variance permit application was submitted to RDN Planning and to the Province with approval received on July 28. Final engineer drawings were submitted for a building permit application on August 17 (with approval anticipated in September), and three construction bids from contractors were received on August 31. A contract will be awarded in early September and construction will be completed by December 31, 2016.

Staff provided parks comments regarding a Development Permit with variance application which involves a foreshore revetment in the unconstructed road right of way beside 1954 Shasta Road. Under condition of the approved permit there is a specific condition that “the applicant will construct a safe and appropriate public beach access along the portion of the revetment in the unconstructed road right-of-way...” The intention is that the new steps will be an enhancement to the existing step steps.

Survey work was completed and staff retained a structural engineer to prepare drawings and costing information for the proposed public access stairs at the Driftwood Rd water access.

Staff provided parks comments to Planning regarding a subdivision application on Shasta Rd in terms of potential trail / pedestrian circulation between Shasta Rd, Headland Rd and Pace Rd. Staff coordinated invasive plant removal and watering with contractors for a replanted section of the Morden Colliery Regional Trail at the Cedar Plaza.

A picnic table was installed at the Cedar Skatepark with funds donated by the Cedar Skatepark Committee.

At Nelson Road boat launch, improvements were done over the summer months, including a new toilet surround, safety line painting and brushing.

At Ivor Way Community Park, over a dozen large hazard trees were taken down, and an arborists report has been completed for the site. The report includes recommendations for both a monitoring program, and for some additional trees to be taken down in the fall or winter.

### **Area B**

Staff reviewed the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee referral request regarding the draft rezoning Bylaw Nos. 289 and 290 and prepared a Staff report to the Electoral Area 'B' Parks and Open Space committee identifying how the RDN's parks interests are affected by the proposed 136-hectare (336 acre) park land addition to the 707 Community Park as well as the potential additional 19.3 ha (47.7 acre) park land dedication which would result from future subdivision of the rezoned lands.

Staff submitted a grant application to Canada 150 Infrastructure Program for improvements to the Huxley Park tennis and sport courts. Grants will be awarded in October 2016.

A \$7,000 grant from the Nanaimo Foundation Community Fund for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> for the Huxley Park playground installation project was awarded.

Parks received a request to install baby change tables in both the male and female washrooms at Rollo McClay Community Park. This has been added to the 2017 parks budget.

Staff provided follow-up correspondence to G. McCollum in regards to the 1520 McCollum Rd. subdivision application requirement to pay the 5% cash-in-lieu of parkland.

Staff received a request to realign the existing trail that connects Fawn Rd to the 707CP's North Rd trail. The existing trail alignment crosses private property.

At Rollo McClay Park, numerous instances of vandalism (graffiti) have required costly painting. Staff are working with the RCMP and the community towards a solution.

A contractor repaired a damaged and failed seal around the overflow pipe of the irrigation pond at Rollo McClay Park.

Following recent survey work staff directed a contractor to begin trail improvements to provide increased access and use of the Whalebone Area trails. Staff met with a trail neighbour regarding trespass issues, and attended to the removal of a large, downed hazard tree, and a large branch at another location. Trail improvements have commenced and are scheduled to be completed in September.

At Huxley Community Park a site visit for assessing a suitable toilet location was carried out, and numerous new park signs were installed at the tennis courts.



Following May's site development work, a toilet was added to the enclosure at Joyce Lockwood Community Park,

Park staff attended a Gabriola Fire meeting, and assisted with Oceans Day preparations.

Staff looked at existing beach access stairs towards replacements options, and provided budget input.

Staff reviewed the Field House facilities at Rollo McClay Park, and identified maintenance requirements and future improvements.

### ***Area C – Extension***

Staff met with a park contractor to discuss amendments to park maintenance at Extension Miners Park; a plan was prepared for a bench installation.

A new culvert and drainage pipes were installed at Extension Miner's Community Park.

### ***Area C – East Wellington / Pleasant Valley***

Staff contracted a landscape company to carry out biannual weeding and pruning at Anders and Dorrit's Community Park; a loop trail was mowed in the hay field by the mowing contractor in July.

Staff prepared and submitted a building permit application to RDN Building Inspections for a picnic shelter at Meadow Drive Community Park. The permit was received on July 14. Project construction began in late August and completion is anticipated in fall 2016.

At Meadow Drive Community Park, staff attended to vandalism of the new toilet on several occasions, with physical damage incurred to the roof, door, toilet fixture and dispensers. In addition the cleaning contractor was required for emergency cleanings on 5 occasions within a two week period. Staff repaired the damage and closely monitored the site for several weeks. Signs were temporarily posted notifying the community and stating the area would be under surveillance. Modifications to the building were made to prevent vandals from exiting through a gap in the roof structure, and deadbolts were installed to make the building more secure when and if required.

At Benson Meadows Community Path, reflectors were attached to the boulders for public safety at night, and Park staff conducted trail maintenance.

At Anders and Dorrit's Community Park, brushing was carried out adjacent the parking lot entrance way to improve sight lines for vehicles when entering or leaving the park. The park field was hayed over the summer months.

Staff met with a contractor carrying out restorative work to the river bank on the neighbouring property, and inspected the continuation of the bank on the park property. The bank within the park is more secure due to existing tree and vegetation rooting structure.

### ***Area E***

Staff worked with GIS Mapping Services on registering two new community parks Oak Leaf Drive and Davenham Road.

Staff coordinated and attended a site meeting at Oakleaf Community Park on June 20<sup>th</sup> with POSAC members to discuss park development. A subsequent meeting with the Land Governance Manager from Nanoose First Nation occurred in the park to review the proposed plans and seek input. The Phase 1 plans for the park improvements will be occurring over the fall. Phase 2 improvements (fencing and interpretive signage mostly), will be revisited again with the POSAC.

Parks staff received a request for a playground in the Beachcomber area and suggested the request be brought forward to the Area E POSAC, either by letter or as a delegation.

At Stone Lake Drive Community Park staff removed fallen trees from the retention ponds and cleared brush from the fence.

At Brickyard Community Park a new garbage can was installed.

At Park Place Community Park staff graded the trail.

### **Area F**

Planning staff provided input on an amenity contribution and potential park connection to the Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail from the Springhill Road industrial development.

Staff provided ongoing feedback regarding the rezoning application on Springhill Rd. Staff attended the June 27<sup>th</sup> Public Information Meeting.

Staff walked the proposed Palmer Rd trail alignment with members of the POSAC trail sub-committee to determine project feasibility. Staff has received quotes for survey work and spoken with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure as well as owner of the adjacent wood lot to determine future development plans for this portion of undeveloped road.

Vehicle barriers were installed at the Cranswick Rd trailhead (Matterson Rd end). Advice from a local medi-scooter user was used to ensure that there is universal access to the trail.

A donation of \$1,730 was given to Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks to install a bear-proof garbage can the northern trailhead of the Errington School Community Trail.

Park inspections and routine park maintenance was conducted throughout the area.

At Meadowood Community Park staff removed a vandalized picnic table from the park and dealt with a variety of vandalism issues over the summer. A concrete picnic table purchased by the community was assembled on a new concrete Base installed by contractor and park staff.

Staff also worked with event organizers and the Dashwood Fire Department to help ensure the successful provision of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Lighthouse Bluegrass Festival which was located at Meadowood Community Park this year. Road grading work was conducted.

At Arrowsmith Community Trail, staff completed work on the newly installed trailhead sign.

**Area G**

In June, Park staff advised Planning staff with regard to a proposed parklands dedication in conjunction with a subdivision application in Area G on Ganske Rd.

In August, Park staff advised Planning staff with regard to a proposed rezoning application of a property near Wembley Mall on the edge of the City of Parksville. No parkland dedication is required. Through an amenity contribution, there is the possibility of trail connections in the area around the development.

At Barclay Bridge, staff trimmed and cleared trail. Staff also met on site with a resident to follow up on a concern about the safety of numerous hazard trees adjacent to their property. The trees are on crown land and are not the responsibility of the RDN to remove. Staff corresponded several times with the Province to clarify the location and jurisdiction of the trees.

At Johnstone Road, staff removed, sanded and refinished a memorial bench.

At Top Bridge two cars were locked in due to them not reading the sign and not leaving the area by 9pm. In the morning when the security company came to open the gate they found that the lock was compromised. A new lock had to be made and installed.

Staff attended to complaints of illegal dumping presumed to be within the park boundary adjacent French Creek.

As per POSAC direction, plans to move forward with design and construction of Phase 1 of the Stanhope Trail are underway. Due to utilities in the corridor, staff prepared a request for proposals and an engineering firm has been retained to do the design work this fall. It is expected that construction of the first phase from Stanhope Road to the Wally's Way cul-de-sac will occur early in 2017. Phase 2 through the trees will happen at a later date.

Parks received suggestions for improvements to the Dashwood Community Park from an area resident and have contacted a playground inspector about the feasibility of using a play structure that was removed from a school ground. Any proposed changes to the park would be presented at a POSAC meeting.

**Area H**

A Picnic & Play event put on by RDN Recreation was held at Henry Morgan Community Park on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 15 adults and children attended.

RDN Parks worked with the BC Wildfire Service to complete a prescribed burn at Oakdown Community Park and the surrounding Crown lands on August 29<sup>th</sup>. This was a FireSmart Initiative and is a fuel management project.

Staff continued to assist GIS Mapping with the development of maps for non-RDN Crown land trails.

At Henry Morgan Community Park, the trail from Henry Morgan CP to Cordon Road was brushed and cleared of debris.

At Islewood Road Community Park, staff brushed and scrubbed out trail.

At Rose Community Park staff removed bike jumps from the park.

All Beach accesses were maintained. Some benches were refurbished over the summer months. Department of Fisheries and Oceans was contacted with regards getting new shelf awareness signs at the beach accesses.

A temporary portable toilet was delivered to Crane Road for the fishing season.

Park staff installed 2 garbage cans at the Lions Club ball fields and set up payment for collection. They were removed at the end of the ball season. They are currently stored at the Lions Club.

## **Community Works Projects**

### ***Area B***

Staff prepared background report on past RDN Parks involvement on MoTI road allowance (development permits and licences for water accesses and undeveloped road allowance), in relation to dealings with the Ministry and the Village Way project.

### ***Area E***

#### ***Blueback***

Further development occurred at Blueback including; a larger parking lot, a cedar toilet surround, change house, and a new trail.

Park Staff met with Arborist regarding hazard tree removal, delivered and spread gravel around toilet enclosure, removed silt fence, installed a bear proof refuse container and installed concrete wheel stops.

#### ***Oak Leaf***

Park staff expanded the parking lot and installed wheel stops. A trail was roughed in starting at the parking lot leading to an existing trail. Trees and trails were pruned and brushed.

## **Regional Significant Gas Tax Project**

### ***Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail***

Construction of the Rail Trail advanced at a good pace over the summer and is nearing the half-way complete mark. Weekly field inspection reports and photos provided by consulting engineer; monthly meetings held with engineer, contractor and sub-consultants. Work on construction and consulting engineer contracts concluded. Obtained revised Station Road crossing permit from MoTI. Continued to work with the City of Parksville concerning their handling of trail development within the City's Springwood Community Park. City staff unable carry out work as expected and main project contractor expected to take on the Springwood section. Met with Coldwater Strata owners to introduce the contractor and review development plans as concerns the SRW at the back of the Strata lots. Met with contractor, engineer and roadmasters from the Southern Vancouver Island Railway and the Alberni Pacific Railway to review safety procedures around the rail. Estimate for two pedestrian rail crossings to be installed by SVI received and materials ordered. Worked with residents, engineers and contractor to resolve a local drainage issue at the junction of rail trail and the private crossing serving the Coombs' property. Worked with the Manna Homeless Society and contractor on seeing some of the non-merchantable project wood delivered to the Society as donated firewood; contracted with firewood processor with work space kindly donated by B. Carpenter of Allsbrook Road. Environmental monitoring

reports received from consulting biologist; all findings good. Media interview and photographs for web site provided to Island Radio. Test surface gravel strips assessed. Liaised with equestrians and cyclists regarding trail use, access points and fixtures such as baffles. Liaised with Coombs business owners concerning the coming need for bike parking. Station crossing location returned to west side of junction further to consultation with Alberni Pacific Railway and adjusted trail path. Safety items examined including lighting at Station and Church crossings and some fencing (cedar split-rail) beside DBL pit and by large culvert installations. Allowances identified to accommodate potential crossing and link to a Springhill Rd community park.

## **Regional Parks and Trails**

### ***Arboretum***

Staff Cleared blackberry on the bank and along the fence as well as brushed the trail open. Garbage was removed from site on numerous occasions.

### ***Arrowsmith CPR Regional Trail***

Staff liaised with the Conservation Officer and posted a notice on the RDN web site that the trail would be closed for a week to allow time for a stalking cougar to clear the area.

### ***Benson Creek Falls Regional Park***

Park staff installed numbered trail markers for emergency locating purposes for Search and Rescue and the Coastal Wildfire Centre.

Park staff also conducted annual bridge maintenance.

Staff reviewed community correspondence, the management plan and various options for improving parking access to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, based on community input that the Creekside Place parking lot is problematic to the community and should be closed. Staff was directed to prepare a Board Report on the matter by the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee, which will be reviewed by the Board in September.

### ***Coats Marsh Regional Park***

Staff reviewed the *Recovery Strategy for the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-colored Bat in Canada* and provided a staff report regarding how Federal and Provincial Species at Risk legislation impacts bat conservation efforts in regards to RDN park management and development – specifically in terms of the planned demolition of the cabin at CMRP.

### ***Descanso Bay Regional Park***

Staff provided Public notice of a campfire ban on June 7<sup>th</sup>. This ban will remain in effect until advised to lift it by the local fire chief.

The annual Oceans Day event was held on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Staff provided posters and buttons as well as provided event advertising assistance.

### ***Englishman River Regional Park***

Long-time volunteer park warden Marlene Harm retired following the death of her dog and partner Kodiak.

Staff Liaised with Arrowsmith Search and Rescue on their GPS and mapping plans for the park; put them in touch with the GIS Mapping Coordinator.

Staff responded to maintenance issues identified by the Volunteer Park Warden including; garbage issues, ATV trespass, vandalism, graffiti and suspect hazardous trees.

### ***Horne Lake Regional Park***

Staff Liaised with the Horne Lake Strata on member efforts to get MoTI to improve Caves Road conditions. RDN Park's long-standing interest in seeing road improvements was restated.

Staff updated the park map and started on updating the kiosk signs at the park.

### ***Horne Lake Regional Trail***

Staff prepared briefing notes on the historic regional trail initiative which dates from 2001 and the rezoning of lands around Horne Lake.

Staff provided Public notice of a campfire ban on August 17<sup>th</sup> as well as a Notice advising of the lifting of the ban on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Lighthouse Country Regional Trail***

New wheel stops were installed at the Lioness parking lot.

### ***Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area***

A representative from the BC Conservation Foundation and the Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers met with Parks staff on site to review the current research and vegetation re-establishment project underway. Additional plantings are planned for this fall and will be monitored for survival with those that went in previously.

### ***Little Qualicum River Regional Park***

Staff received an updated proposal for structural engineering services for the replacement of the bridge, and are awaiting a report from a Geotechnical Engineer assessing the conditions of the existing bridge footings.

Park staff cleaned two culverts of beaver debris on a weekly basis over the summer months, to allow for proper water flow and avoid access road damage.

Garbage was constantly being cleaned up and removed during the weekly visits.

Ongoing vandalism and willful disregard of the bridge closure is a common occurrence. Staff spoke with welder to look to solve repeated vandalism to gate and locking pins.

### ***Moorecroft Regional Park***

Park staff installed three new picnic tables in the Meadow.

Park staff followed up with Bylaws Services and Animal Control following complaints of unleashed dogs within the park.

Staff met with members of the Nanoose Fire Department and walked the property. The Fire Department gained additional familiarity with the park, and provided parks with suggestions for areas of improvement for firefighting access. Parks supplied the fire department with updated property maps and gate keys.

Staff met with the park caretakers as part of the transition and elimination of the position.

Staff attended the site with an Environmental Consultant to review and update the hazmat reports for the Caretakers house and Kennedy Hall buildings scheduled for demolition.

An Archaeologist was contacted to review the demolition sites for Kennedy Hall, and confirmed that part of the building is located within a mapped archeological area. Evidence of a midden was found under part of Kennedy Hall and an application has been made for a Site Alteration Permit.

Building Permits for the upcoming demolitions have been applied for from the RDN Building Department.

Staff began considering options for toilets and a picnic shelter in the park. Plans to meet with the Area Director and the Nanoose First Nation in September are in motion regarding the concept of a Longhouse and to discuss how all proposed facilities planned for the park will work well together into the future.

Staff have begun to explore the option of formalizing the trail access into Moorecroft from the west side. This will involve a formal agreement with the Strata who own the land adjacent to the park.

### ***Morden Colliery Regional Trail***

Staff continued to work with project consultants, the Province and the Agricultural Land Commission on planning and design initiatives related to the bridge and trail development over the Nanaimo River.

Staff removed the bike jumps that were built in the park near the Thatcher Bridges.

### ***Mount Benson Regional Park***

Staff cleared woody debris from the logging road trail to allow access for Search and Rescue and maintenance vehicles and a turnaround was created as requested by search and rescue.

Staff investigated a report of unauthorized trail construction within the park; however a site visit confirmed the constructions was not within the park boundary.

Staff reviewed community correspondence and various options for improving parking access to Mount Benson Regional Park. The current parking lot at the Witchcraft Lake trailhead does not meet demand and a long-term solution is needed. A Board Report was prepared and will be reviewed by the Board in September.

### ***Nanaimo River Regional Park***

Park staff added river rock at the outlet of a perched culvert to prevent further erosion and potential sediment.

Staff met with Ron Stone (Volunteer Warden) regarding Culturally Modified Tree issue and checked barriers due to complaint from an area user. Staff spoke to Emcon regarding moving barrier to block access and confirmed Emcon would complete ASAP.

Staff provided updated GPS information to mapping for the locations of the Fire Department well located within the Park

Staff are monitoring a complaint of uncontrolled dogs within the park. Temporary signage has been posted at the Kiosks as part of an awareness campaign.

Interpretive signage planning is underway for the research forest at Nanaimo River Regional Park. Staff will collaborate with representatives/managers of the research forest and will work with a graphic designer to produce attractive and educational signage to display in the park.

### ***Parksville Qualicum Beach Links***

#### ***Top Bridge Regional Trail***

#### ***Trans Canada Trail***

Temporary closure of the Extension Ridge section of the TCT extended and then terminated, further to industrial activity in the area by landowner Island Timberlands.

Obtained updated licence offer from Island Timberlands for use of their private forest lands for the TCT. Prepared report to the RPTSC and Board (September meetings).

Staff installed new posts and signs along the Extension Ridge Trail.

#### ***Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail***

In June and July, permission was obtained from the City of Nanaimo and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for a proposed parking expansion at Witchcraft Lake, the trailhead for Mt Benson Regional Park. Staff mailed letters and site plans to all Benson View Rd residents for information and feedback.

In August, staff reviewed community responses to the proposed parking expansion on Benson View Rd; due to substantial opposition, the parking issue was deferred to the Regional Parks and Trails Committee and residents were informed by letter that the RDN would not proceed with the proposed works. A Board Report was prepared on the subject (see Mount Benson Regional Park above).

### **Miscellaneous**

Staff continued work on the following:

- Park inventory spreadsheet and effective registry of the park portfolio.
- Worked with GIS Mapping on the identification and civic numbering of community parks to be included in new ARC-GIS park finder.
- Attended SMS legal seminar on contracting.
- Participated in MIA webinar on insurance requirements for construction contracts.
- Provided interview to Business in Vancouver regarding non-BC Park campgrounds as a relatively unknown but great alternative to BC Parks.



- Met with the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region and Oceanside Tourism on MABR's Amazing Places project. Reviewed process and approaches. Public input will be solicited through to the end of September, RDN Parks consulted as applicable, and first results expected to be viewable on the web by end of November.
- Liaised and met with the BC Marine Trail Network Association on their current project to create a Salish Sea Marine Trail as part of the Trans Canada Trail and in time for the TCT's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Further to the Association's July presentation to the Regional Board, worked with the Association on a draft partnership agreement. Prepared a board report on the project for the September RPTSC and Board.
- Received and reviewed Tourism Vancouver Island's Phase II Hiking Experience report prepared by consultant Stantec.
- Received update from UBCM on Off-Road Vehicle legislation; conference call scheduled for mid-September to discuss interest in the Province's offer to local government to include their lands under the new legislation.
- Worked with Recreation staff to provide content and imagery for the Fall/Winter Active Living Guide.
- The new staff position of Superintendent of Parks Operations and Capital Projects was filled, and Mark Dobbs started in the early July.
- The new staff position of Parks Secretary has been posted and filled; Jenny Bannatyne has accepted the position and will start September 19th.
- Staff followed the improvements underway at Nanoose Place, including the preparation and construction of an expanded paved parking lot and new signage.
- Playground inspections were conducted throughout the region.
- Staff followed up on a request about "No Motors" signage at Spider Lake, conducted a site visit, and provided information obtained to RDN Planning Department.
- Parks Staff and Contractor provided regular watering's of unestablished trees and plantings throughout the district during the hot dry weather.

### ***Park Use Permits and Events***

#### **Area A**

Continued to work with the Nanaimo Skateboard Association on a permit for the September fundraiser in support of refurbishing Nanaimo's Hammond Bay skatepark. Site visit held with organizer to review issues arising from last year's event. Volunteer assistance with traffic management kindly being provided by JSK Traffic Services of Cedar.

Responded to a request to close the Nelson Road Boat Launch for several days in order to provide for construction access to a waterfront retaining wall site. Liaised with MFLNRO, MoTI, and Planning Services; provided brief for Area Director. Further to August 23<sup>rd</sup> Board resolution to deny closure of the Boat Launch for any significant time period, a set of conditions for Boat Launch use under a park use permit was issued to applicant.

#### **Area B**

Worked with non-profit Pacific Sport and the Gabriola Recreation Society on a park use permit for a three-day sports camp at Rollo McClay Community Park. In the end, the event was cancelled because of lack of enrollment.

**Area C**

Obtained confirmation that VIU/Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve will take ownership of the GLORIA high-alpine vegetation monitoring plots (part of an international global warming monitoring project) installed at four locations at Mount Arrowsmith Massif Regional Park prior to the Region's acquisition of the park. Park use permit issued to VIU to address the summer 2016 revisiting of the plots.

Worked with the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust on a park use permit to work with VIU on an update of vegetative plots identified in the 2006 Ursus review of then new Mount Benson Regional Park; permit approved.

**Area E**

Worked with Quality Foods on concluding the park use permit for their annual Teddy Bear Picnic at Jack Bagley Community Park; liaised with Corporate Services; permit issued.

Concluded work on a park use permit for use of Moorecroft Regional Park for an early August weekend wedding.

Continued to work with Chesapeake Shores film company and MoTI on use of Moorecroft Regional Park for parking of film vehicles. In the end, the firm identified a more appropriate arrangement for their vehicle parking and only one of four weeks' proposed use was made of the Regional Park.

Began work with Nanoose Elementary School Principal on start-up of 2016-17 outdoor classroom use of Moorecroft.

**Area F**

Continued to work with Bluegrass Festival organizers, Dashwood Volunteer Fire Department and Corporate Services on a park use permit for the July long weekend festival at Meadowood Community Park. Provided responses to concerns raised by residents in the neighbourhood. Engaged security firm for drive-by inspections of roads leading to the Festival over the holiday weekend; liaised with RCMP. Given plan approvals by all involved authorities and required insurance proof, park use permit for Festival approved. Event went off without issue, though at a financial loss for the organizers.

Received a park use permit application from the Corcan-Meadowood Residents' Association for a Canada Day Picnic at Meadowood Community Park; approved.

Worked with applicant on a park use permit for a wedding at Errington Community Park in October. Liaised with Errington Hall Board Association overseers of the Park regarding use of the Market's stage and power supply. Permit approved.

Worked with the BC Conservation Foundation regarding a permit to cover summer maintenance of their large woody debris (LWD) structures originally installed along Little Qualicum River Regional Park riverfront in 2003. BCCF obtained DFO and Provincial backing for structures over the long-term.

**Area G**

Concluded permit work and provided final assistance including gift bags to the Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society (MVIHES) for their 7<sup>th</sup> annual June River Run event at Englishman River Regional Park (ERRP). Worked with MVIHES and RDN WaterSmart on a second park use permit, this for

installation of water flow data loggers along the ERRP waterfront at BC Conservation Foundation large woody debris sites; permit approved. Work with MVIHES in process on another permit for the staging of a Streamkeepers workshop along the side channel at ERRP in September.

Issued a park use permit to the Nanoose Walking Club for vehicular access and a walk and hatchery visit at Englishman River Regional Park.

**Area H**

Concluded a park use permit with the Silver Spur Riding Club regarding use of Wildwood Community Park and the Lighthouse Country Regional Trail (North Loop) as part of a weekend-long 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Island Memorial Trail Ride in support of Oceanside Hospice. The event was staged out of the MFLNRO compound next door to Wildwood.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Per/ Manager of Parks Services



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General Manager Concurrence

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**TO:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Park Services

**DATE:** August 30, 2016

**FROM:** Elaine McCulloch  
Parks Planner

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 20, 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT:** Review of the *Recovery Strategy for the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-colored Bat in Canada*

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### RECOMMENDATION

That the Board direct staff to allocate \$5,000 in the 2017 Regional Parks Budget to complete an environmental assessment of the cabin at Coats Marsh Regional Park to determine if the structure provides critical bat habitat and to determine mitigation measures to implement with the planned decommissioning of the structure if the building is found to provide critical bat habitat.

### PURPOSE

To review the *Recovery Strategy for the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-colored Bat in Canada*, and to determine how Federal and Provincial Species at Risk legislation impacts bat conservation efforts in regards to RDN park management and development.

### BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo received correspondence from the Canadian Wildlife Service on July 22, 2016 requesting review and feedback of the draft *Recovery Strategy for the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-colored Bat in Canada*. At the July 26, 2016 Regional District of Nanaimo Board meeting the following resolution #16-561 was carried:

*“That the Board direct Parks staff to review the information provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service regarding critical habitat for two endangered bat species and provide feedback to the Species at Risk Recovery Team, copied to the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee.”*

Staff have reviewed the *Recovery Plan* and spoken with Federal and Provincial biologists to determine how Federal and Provincial Species at Risk legislation impacts bat conservation efforts in regards to RDN park management and development.

Once a species is added to the federal *List of Wildlife Species at Risk*, prohibitions against harm apply to the listed species on federal lands therefore, as the RDN does not currently manage any Federal Crown land as park, no RDN comments were provided regarding the Recovery Plan. Within Provincial jurisdiction, the BC *Wildlife Act* protects all bat species in BC from being killed, wounded, captured, hunted, trapped, or transported however, since no bat species have been designated as provincially Endangered or Threatened, there are no additional habitat protections for bats in BC.

Although the protection of bat habitat on RDN Park land is not regulated at either a federal or provincial level, the *Recovery Strategy* provides other organizations such as the RDN, with information to help take action on species conservation. In addition, the BC Ministry of Environment has recently published *Best Management Practices Guides for Bats in British Columbia, February 2016* ) and the Community Bat Programs of BC has also published a *BC Guide for Managing Bats in Buildings (February 2016)*.

As a landowner, the RDN can play an important role in bat conservation by striving to minimize the destruction of bat habitat as a result of park management decisions and/or development. After a review of upcoming regional park projects, it is recommended that an environmental assessment by a qualified bat biologist be completed of the cabin at Coats Marsh Regional Park prior to its scheduled demolition in 2018. This assessment is required first to identify if bats are present and, if they are, to identify which species they are and to determine mitigation measures.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board direct staff to allocate \$5,000 in the 2017 Regional Parks Budget to complete an environmental assessment of the cabin at Coats Marsh Regional Park to determine if the structure provides critical bat habitat and to determine mitigation measures to implement with the planned decommissioning of the structure if the building is found to provide critical bat habitat.
2. That the staff report be received as information and alternative direction be provided.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

\$5,000 will need to be added to the 2017 Regional Parks budget to complete an environmental assessment of the cabin at Coats Marsh Regional Park.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Board Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identifies a strong focus on protecting and enhancing the environment in all decisions. Completing an environmental assessment to determine the presence of bats in the cabin at Coat Marsh Regional Park prior to its decommissioning follows this priority.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

The Regional Board at their July 26<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting directed staff to review and provide feedback on the draft *Recovery Strategy for the Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and Tri-colored Bat in Canada*.

In their review of the Recovery Plan, staff determined that no official RDN response regarding the Plan was required as the *Species at Risk Act*, and therefore the *Recovery Plan*, only pertains to federally managed Crown lands and does not apply to private lands and / or RDN-owned parks. There are no additional Provincial habitat protections for bats on Vancouver Island as there are no bat species listed under the British Columbia endangered species legislation, however, bats in general are afforded some protections under the *BC Wildlife Act*

In an effort to play a role in bat conservation, the potential destruction of bat habitat within RDN parks can be minimized through thoughtful, well-informed park management and development by ensuring that an environmental assessment is completed where bat habitat is suspected. As a first step, it is recommended that \$5,000 be allocated in the 2017 Regional Parks budget to complete an environmental

assessment of the cabin at Coats Marsh Regional Park to identify if bats are present and if so, what mitigation measures are recommended prior to the planned decommissioning of the structure in 2018.



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Report Writer



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Per / Manager Concurrence



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General Manager Concurrence



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C.A.O. Concurrence

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**TO:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Park Services

**DATE:** August 29, 2016

**FROM:** Kelsey Cramer  
Parks Planner

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 20 / 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT: Mount Benson Regional Park & Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail Parking**

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board direct staff to continue to explore a long-term parking solution for Mount Benson Regional Park and the Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail.

### PURPOSE

To examine the current parking situation on Benson View Road and consider options for providing more parking space near the trailhead to Mount Benson Regional Park and Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail.

### BACKGROUND

Mount Benson Regional Park is situated on the upper north-eastern face of Mount Benson, preserving the picturesque backdrop to Nanaimo. It was acquired by the RDN in 2006, with the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust fundraising half of the purchase cost. The approximately 5-hour round-trip hike to the top is becoming increasingly popular by individual and group users. Trail counter data from July 17 to August 5, 2016 indicated an average of 54 users per day. Parks staff have also had inquiries about permitting organized running events up the Mountain, and are working towards an event in 2017.

The park is accessed by Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail, the only formal public access to the park, which passes through the VIU Crown Woodlot 0020 and City of Nanaimo parkland at Witchcraft Lake. This trailhead is located on Benson View Road and provides roadside parking for approximately 24 vehicles and a kiosk map. The parking lot was installed, under permit with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in 2010 and cost approximately \$34,000.

As is evidenced by the trail counter data over a two-week window in mid-summer, there is currently an insufficient number of parking stalls for the number of users to the site. This is further supported by correspondence received by Benson View Road residents in June of 2015, including photographs of a congested road and stating upwards of 66 vehicles parked along the road shoulders (*Appendix A*). The correspondence suggests an expansion of the parking lot towards Witchcraft Lake as a possible solution, creating a complete parking lot off the road similar to that on Creekside Place, which services Benson Creek Falls Regional Park.

In the late-spring of 2016, staff proposed a short-term improvement with the addition of 12 more roadside parking stalls west of the trailhead and a letter was sent to the residents expressing the intent. The idea was quickly given a negative response. Letters from the residents were sent to the RDN, copying representatives from NALT and VIU, voicing numerous concerns that have arisen since the

formalization of Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail and Mount Benson Regional Park (*Appendix B*). The letters clearly reject the proposal for more roadside parking as it will not address the long-term sustainability of this site as a trailhead to this popular hiking route. In addition to the road congestion created by vehicles parking along the narrow road shoulders, other concerns noted include: litter left by park users, noise from loud conversations, barking dogs and partiers, illegal use of off-road motorcycles on the trail and bridge, speeding on the road, blockage of the cul-de-sac and emergency/fire access by vehicles parked in the no-parking zones, a lack of enforcement for these infractions, a decrease in property values over the last 10-years since the park was acquired, and a loss of enjoyment of the rural setting.

Given the current situation and the expected growing interest from the public in hiking Mount Benson, a long-term parking solution is needed. Suggestions from the residents' letters include expanding parking towards Witchcraft Lake or the purchase of land from adjacent land owners.

An overview of various parking options is presented below for information; however all have limitations (see corresponding map in Appendix C):

*A. Expand the Existing Parking Area towards the Lake:*

Witchcraft Lake ranges between approximately 40m away at the west end and 27m away at the east end of the existing parking area. Best management practices would keep any works beyond 30m of the lake's high water mark. Any parking lot development towards the lake would impact lands within 30m of the lake, involve the removal of many trees and likely require fill retention to create a level parking surface on the downward slope to the lake. An engineer and a biologist would be required to design the parking lot, including ingress/egress, and to assist with any regulatory permit applications and mitigation measures related to works near lake. Permission would be required by the City of Nanaimo and by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. A preliminary sketch of the site (*Appendix D*) shows that about 44 vehicles could be accommodated in an off-road lot at this site.

Similarly, the area on the west side of the trailhead could be considered for parking lot development as it provides more space beyond 30m of the lake. However, the slope down to the lake is steeper which, if feasible, would result in a higher retaining wall or greater footprint to support the parking lot. Many trees would require removal. This site may be sufficient to accommodate approximately 26 vehicles (*Appendix D*). Given the numbers, both of these parking lots together would be necessary to service the current numbers of vehicles at the site. This would be a costly project, both financially and environmentally and will likely not serve future demand.

*B. Additional Roadside Parking on Benson View Road – South side:*

In the spring of 2016, Staff prepared a concept plan that shows 12 new parking stalls in the road shoulder west of the existing parking lot. This project would involve the installation of a culvert and fill to create a parking area similar to that on the east side of the trailhead. Very few, if any trees would need removal. Permission from MoTI and the City of Nanaimo would be required. This option was not viewed favourably by the residents of the area.

*C. Road Shoulder Parking on Benson View Road – North side:*

The narrow shoulder on the north side of the road is intercepted by driveways, hydro poles, ditches and rocky outcrops. Any parallel parking formalized on this side would be somewhat piece-meal and would do little to alleviate congestion on the road. It would also result in hikers having to walk a long way down Benson View Road to the trailhead.



*D. Road Shoulder Parking on Benson View Road – South side:*

Similarly to the above option, formalizing additional shoulder parking east of the existing parking lot is limited by proximity of the lake, ditches and private residence driveways. A long walk down Benson View Road to the trailhead would also result.

*E. Parking on Crown Land east of the last residence on the south side of Benson View Road:*

The Harrow Road ROW runs along the south shore of Witchcraft Lake and contains partially developed trail. The trail peters out before connecting with Benson View Road an approximate 750m from the Witchcraft Lake bridge. The option to develop parking off Benson View Road at this junction or on the adjacent crown land would be ideal as there is a direct trail opportunity via the undeveloped Harrow Rd. In addition, vehicles would not need to travel farther up Benson View Road where all of the residential properties exist. Unfortunately, steep, ravine-like topography on the crown land in this location limits parking development here.

*F. Northwood Drive undeveloped right-of-way:*

Approximately 1,750m west of the Witchcraft Lake bridge is the dead ended Northwood Road, accessed off Jameson Rd. Staff explored the feasibility of this site as an access point for both Mount Benson Regional Park and Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, as the undeveloped Harrow Road right-of-way presents a possible link between the two parks. A steep, narrow and rough logging road, with very rough terrain on both sides, leads into the crown land. This terrain limits this site as a likely solution to improving the parking in the Mount Benson area.

*G. Property purchase from adjacent land-owners:*

This option requires further investigation, but could present a viable long-term solution to establishing a parking and staging area for the Witchcraft Lake trailhead to Mount Benson Regional Park.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. That staff continue to explore options for improving parking over the long-term since no short-term parking solutions are viable at this time.
2. That staff engage an engineer and biologist to assess and design a parking lot expansion and/or new parking lot between Witchcraft Lake and Benson View Road (Option A above).
3. That the Board provide alternative direction to staff.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Given the terrain, developing a parking area for Mount Benson Regional Park/Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail within the lands near the trailhead would be a costly endeavor, requiring engineering and biological services, permission from the City of Nanaimo and relevant regulatory permits. A preliminary cost estimate for such a project could be provided once an engineer has been engaged.

The 2016 Regional Parks and Trails Budget has \$20,000 included for the construction of the expanded roadside parking. No other funds have been identified for Mount Benson Parking in the five-year financial plan.

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identifies a focus on relationships, and through this process, the RDN will aim to foster and strengthen the two-way communication with the local community. The Plan also addresses recreational amenities as a core service. The need to secure and provide long-term access to regional parks and trails is an important goal for the region. Our decisions must also have a strong focus on protecting and enhancing our environment.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

Staff have been aware of the parking challenges at the Mount Benson Regional Park and Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail access site since June of 2015, when correspondence was received by the residents of Benson View Road. No simple long-term solution is available and a short-term proposal for 12 additional roadside parking stalls was proposed. This concept was quickly rejected by the residents as it would not address the parking issues or any of their other concerns with this trailhead location. Staff have presented an overview of various parking options, all with limitations. Staff are recommending the Board continue to explore long-term parking and staging area solutions for this site.



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Report Writer



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Manager Concurrence



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GM Concurrence



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A/CAO Concurrence

## Appendix 'A'

**From:** [Marshall, Wendy](#)  
**To:** [Harvey, Ann-Marie](#)  
**Cc:** [Oshorne, Tom](#); [Cramer, Kelsey](#); [van Ossenbruggen, Chris](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Mt. Benson Regional Park - Parking Issues  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 08, 2015 11:14:53 AM

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Hi Ann-Marie,

Can you please include this correspondence in the next agenda of the RPTSC. I will forward the pictures as well.

Wendy

*Wendy Marshall*

*Manager of Parks Services*

Regional District of Nanaimo Recreation and Parks Dept.

Oceanside Place

830 West Island Highway

Parksville, BC

V9P 2X4

Ph: 250-248-3252 or 1-888-828-2069

Fax: 250-248-3159

[www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)

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**From:** Marshall, Wendy  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 08, 2015 11:13 AM  
**To:** 'rjodonnell@shaw.ca'  
**Cc:** 'patdc@shaw.ca'; 'trholmes@shaw.ca'; Paridaen, Margaret  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Benson Regional Park - Parking Issues

Hi Randy,

Thank you for forwarding the information on the parking issues at Mount Benson Regional Park. I will send your email for inclusion in the next agenda of the Regional Parks and Trail Select Committee on June 16. We are in the process of doing a five year Management Plan Review for the park so this information is timely. We will include some comments regarding the increased use of the park and the parking issues. We are aiming to present the Management Plan report at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

There are no plans to expand the parking lot at the end of Benson View Drive at this time. We have only recently started hearing about the increased parking issues at this site. As you mention in your email, this site is complicated and requires the involvement of several parties. The parking lot at Creekside Community Park for Benson Creek Falls was first installed years ago as part of the park dedication during the development of the subdivision. Last year we resurfaced and expanded the existing site to provide space for the Regional Park parking.

Once the parking issue has been presented to the Select Committee, we can add this to our list of projects for consideration for 2016. The work plan and budget has already been set for 2015. In the

meantime, any other information you can provide on the parking, such as the number of vehicles during the summer weekends, the long weekends and weekdays, would be most helpful.

I will let you know the outcome of the Select Committee meeting.

Regards,

Wendy

*Wendy Marshall*

*Manager of Parks Services*

Regional District of Nanaimo Recreation and Parks Dept.

Oceanside Place

830 West Island Highway

Parksville, BC

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Fax: 250-248-3159

[www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)

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**From:** Randy J. O'Donnell [<mailto:rjodonnell@shaw.ca>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 07, 2015 3:34 PM

**To:** Paridaen, Margaret

**Cc:** [wmarshall@ren.bc.ca](mailto:wmarshall@ren.bc.ca); [patdc@shaw.ca](mailto:patdc@shaw.ca); [trholmes@shaw.ca](mailto:trholmes@shaw.ca)

**Subject:** Mt. Benson Regional Park - Parking Issues

Good afternoon, Ms. Paridaen;

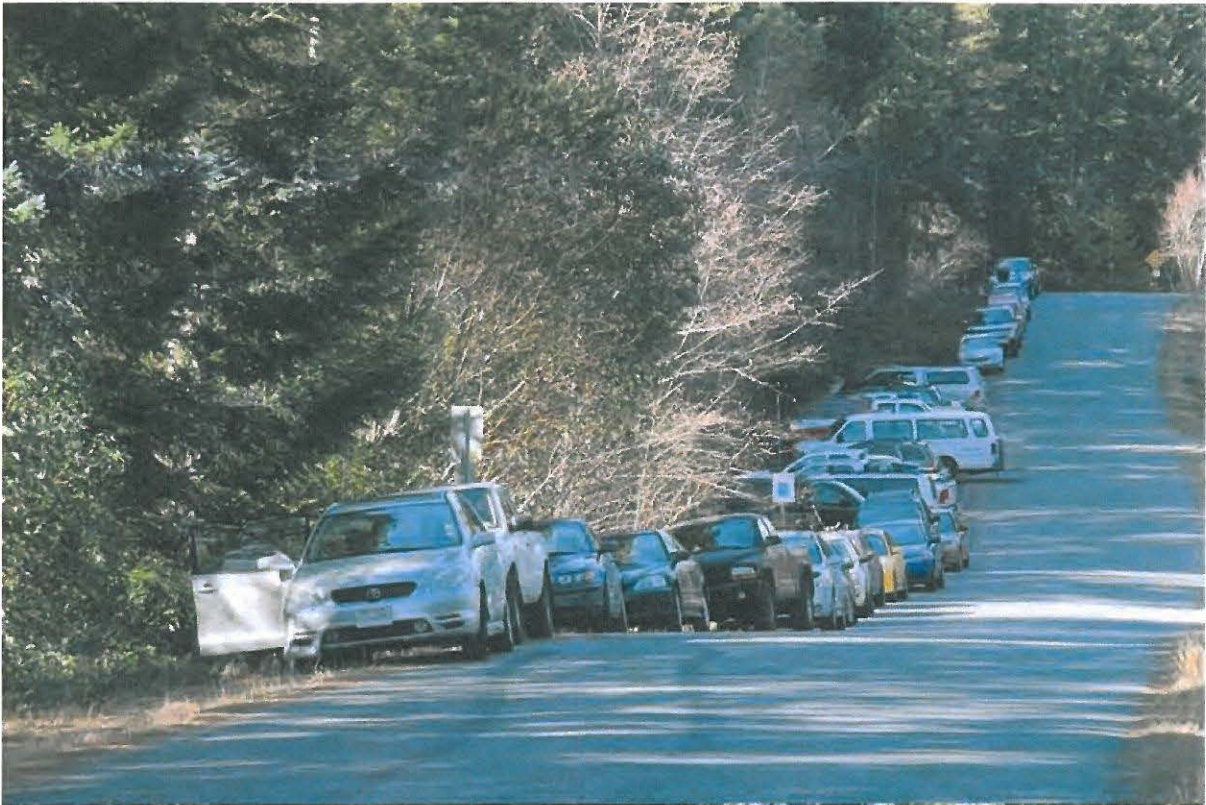
I am a resident of 'Area C' living at 2920 Benson View Road. Our property is across the road from the parking area for **Mt. Benson Regional Park**. As you may be aware, the popularity of the park has increased exponentially since the parking area and trail improvements were made. The route has become known as Nanaimo's 'Grouse Grind' and on any given weekend the parking area is fully occupied early in the morning. Overflow traffic lines one and sometimes both sides of Benson View Road and due to the narrow to non-existent shoulder, impedes the driving lanes of the road.. While the parking area accommodates roughly 20 vehicles, we have had as many as **66 vehicles** on a weekend day. The 'overflow' often occupies not only the **designated 'no parking' areas**, but those areas **designated as 'emergency parking'** for the East Wellington Fire Department.

I have had discussions with each of the neighbours affected by those parking along Benson View Road and all agree that it is time the parking lot be expanded to accommodate the needs of local hikers. The four property owners affected all feel that their quality of life has been drastically altered with the restricted parking and that it is unfair that we carry the burden of increased traffic and noise for the benefit of those choosing to access the park. I understand that a solution will require some study since access to Mt. Benson Regional Park requires access through City of Nanaimo, VIU and Regional District property – as well as the co-operation of MOT. I broached the subject at a recent 'Area C' Parks and Open Spaces Committee meeting, and the RDN parks planner promised to take it to the appropriate authorities on our behalf.

After checking the topography and giving consideration to the 'best' solution for the residents, our preference is to see the parking lot expanded towards Witchcraft lake rather than further along the roadway. The parking lot for Benson Creek Regional Park (see attached photo) is an example of what we feel should be considered. I am attaching a few photographs to illustrate the current problem – they were taken on a 'typical' weekend and not a long weekend or summer weekend when both sides of the road can be filled with vehicles. The fourth photo shows the Benson Creek parking area which is much better designed but has little occupancy.

We trust your staff will give consideration to solving this problem and will consult with the residents before remedial action is undertaken. Thanks for your attention and we will look forward to working with you.

Randy O'Donnell  
2920 Benson View Road.  
(250) 591-8363





## Appendix 'B'

To: Lesya Fesiak – Park Planner, Regional District of Nanaimo

Cc: Bill Veenhoff, Board Chair RDN; Colin Haime Deputy Board Chair RDN; RDN Board members: Alex McPherson; Howard Houle; Maureen Young; Bob Rodges; Julian Fell; Joe Stanhope; Bill McKay; Bill Bestwick; Jerry Hong; Jim Kipp; Wendy Pratt; Ian Thorpe; Bill Yoachim; Mark Lefebvre; Teunis Westbroek.

RDN Parks and Recreation: T. Osborne, Manager of Recreation and Parks, J. Ainge, Parks Supervisor and J. Michel, Parks and Trails Coordinator.

NALT: Gail Adrienne, ED; Cyndi Pitvor; Paul Chapman; Jenny Webb; Holly Blackburn; Jennifer Davidson; Dean Gaudry (Chair); Allan Hawryzki; Linda Nichol; Charlee Touchette; Wally Wells; Fraser Wilson; Jim Young; Barbara Hourston; John Manning, Andre Sullivan; Mike Delves

Malaspina University/College: Louise Mandell, Chancellor; Dr. Ralph Nilson, President/Vice Chancellor; Dan Hurley, Ex. Dir. University Relations

June 15, 2016

Dear Ms. Fesiak

The proposed addition to parking on Benson View Road accessing Mt. Benson Regional Park is but an expansion of the existing problem. Rather than a solution, it exacerbates and compounds the situation, further impacting additional residential properties. This plan has been presented to residents as a *'fait accompli'*, with no consultation or input, but a planned completion *"before the winter of 2016"*.

We are not opposed to the regional park, recognizing the benefit it provides to the population of both the city of Nanaimo and the regional district. Nonetheless, the *Regional District of Nanaimo* in partnership with the *Nanaimo Area Lands Trust* and *Malaspina University*, has created this serious ongoing problem, and together, you must find a solution that mitigates the *apparently unanticipated* problem inflicted upon the residents.

The affected are not recent purchasers. Owners did not purchase property in anticipation that a heavily trafficked regional park would become a part of 'rural life'. We are not 'NIMBYS'. Homeowners directly affected are primarily seniors who have owned their properties for at least a decade and in some cases, twenty years or more. All residents have invested heavily in their properties - financially, physically and emotionally.

Components of the problems we experience due to the new park include but are not limited to:

1. **Traffic and parking** issues. Weekends, holidays and summer days produce an ongoing stream of traffic with scores of drivers using the cul-de-sac as a turnaround. As many as 77 cars have been parked, with the overflows occupying both shoulders of Benson View Road. Since 8 cars often park in the same shoulder area, adding 12 spaces is obviously not a viable long-term solution.
2. **Garbage**. Residents are on constant garbage detail. Attempting to maintain our quality of life and property values, we pick up fast food containers, liquor containers and even condoms. When garbage is discarded by others, day hikers feel no personal obligation to dispose of it themselves.
3. **Noise**. Arriving hikers tend not to realize they are in a residential area. We contend with large groups in loud conversations, multiples of barking dogs (including professional dog walkers) and partiers.
4. **Off road motorcycles**. Despite *numerous complaints* to all levels of local authority, nothing has been done to prevent or discourage 2 stroke motorcycles from accessing the trails. Motorcyclists use the bridge over Witchcraft Lake as well as the logging road extending from Northwood Rd. These vehicles create tremendous noise, destroy the hiking trails and on more than one occasion, riders have *physically threatened* residents.

(Over)



5. Fire access. A major concern for residents is fire access. Witchcraft Lake is the water source for our volunteer fire department and the designated 'fire access only' signs are ignored on busy days. The additional 12 spaces in your plan will not mitigate this serious safety issue, as the population and park popularity continues to increase.
6. Financial impact and loss of enjoyment. Properties along Benson View Rd. represent *significant financial investment* by the owners. We have seen our property values diminish due to the problems associated with the park. Furthermore, we residents invested in our properties expressly for the rural quality of life that existed prior to the creation of Mt. Benson Regional Park.

The present 'parking lot' is wholly inadequate and sound initial planning would have anticipated future need – population is expected to expand 45% over 2001 by 2025. Current parking is simply an widening of the shoulder, enabling cars and trucks to 'nose in' rather than parallel park on the roadway. Pick up trucks for example, often extend over the pavement and with 'shoulder parkers', make Benson View Rd. a congested, single lane street. The proposed expansion is simply a low cost bandaid imposing a bad situation on more residents. We cannot and will not, accept an *expansion* of an unworkable situation.

We are calling on all regulatory authorities - Ministry of Transportation, Regional District of Nanaimo, City of Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Area Lands Trust and Malaspina University/College – to work together in conjunction with local residents to find a workable and acceptable solution to this serious problem. It may involve expansion of parking into the lake foreshore area, the purchase of land from adjacent land owners or some other possibility, but given the present volume and the likelihood of additional future numbers of park users, a more workable and reasonable accommodation must be found.

Respectfully

Owner: Larry Bonnie Address: 2910 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Lee Shelley Holmes Address: 2880 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Tania & Dylan Proctor Address: ~~1-778~~ 2761 Benson View Road

Owner: Al & Diane Pennington Address: 2790 & 2800 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Steve Bell Address: 2830 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Nancy Murray CID Address: 2920 Benson View Rd.

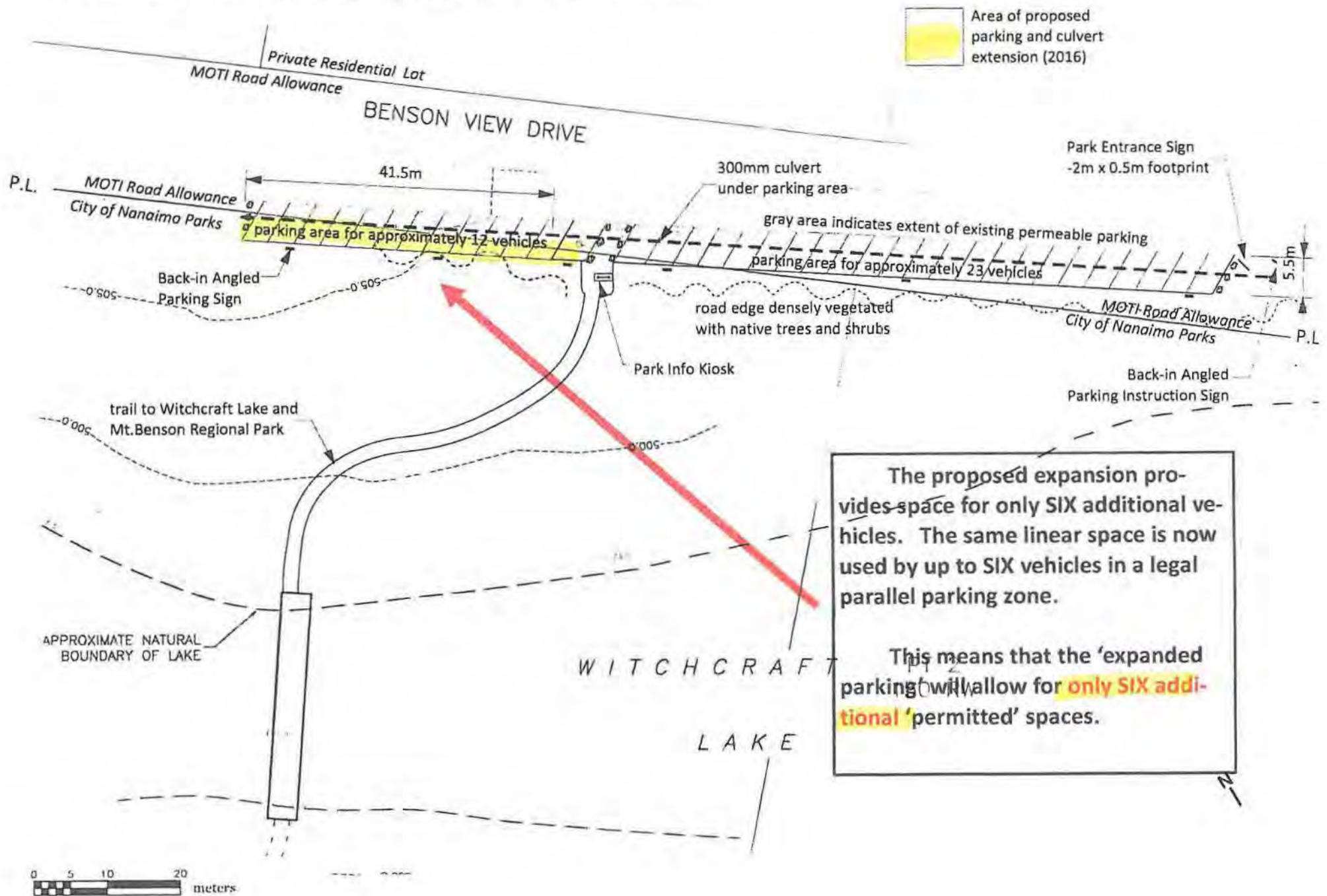
Owner: Larry Address: 2765 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Jimmy Address: 2420 Benson View Rd.

Owner: Walt Address: 2726 Benson View Rd.

# WITCHCRAFT LAKE PARKING EXPANSION - BENSON VIEW DRIVE, NANAIMO

Mt.Benson Regional Park Trailhead, Regional District of Nanaimo, May 2016



The proposed expansion provides space for only SIX additional vehicles. The same linear space is now used by up to SIX vehicles in a legal parallel parking zone.

This means that the 'expanded parking' will allow for only SIX additional 'permitted' spaces.

Tom and Shelley Holmes  
2880 Benson View Road,  
Nanaimo, B.C.  
V9R 6W7

June 15, 2016

Regional District Of Nanaimo

11. 250-714-0667

Attention: Lesya Fesiak

The expanded parking notice arrived in my mailbox this week. Where did you seek input for this plan? Did you ask any of the residents along this street what they would like to see? This parking area is a skinny little piece off the side of the road, and we, the residents are not in favour of this plan for many reasons.

Last year you were given a proposal which we, the residents felt would solve a great many of our concerns going forward. The proposed plan would be to have a regular parking lot constructed BELOW the street, as there is room in the forested area between the lake and the road for a regular parking lot. I see the end of Jameson Road had a good sized parking lot built across and away from the residents' homes. Our park gets significantly more use than Jameson Road does, yet we have no proper parking lot like theirs, and that is what is needed here.

The cheapest plan is not always a plan that is any good. You might as well do it prudently so the parking situation is dealt with properly, by constructing a parking lot that achieves the intended goal. A parking lot that actually can hold a larger number of cars is long overdue, as 12 additional parking spots as you have planned for, is so inadequate, it is not worth even stating to build it. There are upwards of 60 or more cars here all along our residential street on summer and weekend days. Why not a proper parking lot that can hold 40 or more cars, as that number is topped on many days?

Our home is located at 2880 Benson View Road and directly across from our property is the emergency vehicle No Parking zone to enable fire trucks to get their hoses into Witchcraft Lake, should a fire arise. I have the list of 12 vehicles, their make, license numbers, etc., from last Sunday as every weekend day that no parking zone is packed full of cars. I called the RCMP, and the ministry of transportation last week about the concern we have. So the 12 cars parking now in the fire zone will just fit and fill up your tiny expansion.

In addition to the current parking area, and the emergency zone that is used as a parking area, our street has cars all up and down it. Car doors slamming, litter from lunches and snacks left for residents to pick up, kids and pets making a racket, people blowing their horns to get their hiking party back. All these crowding and congestion problems have made for a less than enjoyable place for us to live. Our quality of life is diminished, and our property values have fallen due to this ongoing congestion and inadequate parking that has been banded over, but not properly dealt with to date.

(over)

We, as residents have our life saving in our homes, and the enjoyment of our properties has been diminished more and more with the increase of parking and noise. We pay taxes, and deserve to not have this park and its problems shoved down our throats like we are not to be considered important enough to have a say in what type and where the parking area is to be constructed.

The proposed parking area plan which was given to you last year, is screened from the road, is far larger than the 12 car proposal of yours. Signage should also be placed prominently to state that this park is for dawn to dusk use only, and that to note that they are in a residential area and to keep their noise down. I see cars speeding past my home at 80 plus kph and I only live some 60' feet from the parking lot.

This is not the peaceful country existence my husband I and I chose 12 years ago when we purchased our home. On that note, the 5 properties most affected by the park entrance and parking congestion have lived on this street for an average of close to 20 years! We deserve to be respected and heard, as we were here first, and new inadequate infrastructure outlined in the letter I received this week is not the answer here.

Due to our summer plans, my husband and I will not be present should any public meetings regarding this important issue occur in July or August. We are stating our feelings via this letter, and will be actively supporting in the fall an alternative plan that will be more likely to have a positive result for everyone's enjoyment, safety, and peace.

I urge you to consider all the aspects of park use, and who is affected, and how the public's access to these parks can be allowed, yet the residents' interests are also taken into consideration.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of our concerns for our residential area.

Shelley Holmes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelley Holmes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name. It features a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

To: Lesya Fesiak – Park Planner, Regional District of Nanaimo

Dear Ms. Fesiak;

Others have addressed the numerous problems the installation of Mt. Benson Regional Park has created for the adjoining residents, so I will focus on the nature of the neighbourhood itself.

We are 'original owners, purchasing our home from the builder 22 years ago. For the majority of years, our family enjoyed the peace and tranquility on which we made our purchase. While the properties are 5 acres, due to the terrain, slope and native forest cover, all of the impacted homes 'front' onto Benson View Rd. with our 'living space' between house and road.

Because our home is the last on Benson View Rd., we experience literally scores of cars turning in our cul-de-sac with many using our gravel driveway. At peak periods the cars create 'convoys', each following the other into the turnabout. Some hikers prefer to access the trail by crossing private property adjacent to us, parking in the clearly marked 'no parking' areas of the cul-de-sac. Some hikers, when asked to respect the 'no parking' signs have been verbally abusive, suggesting that because the parking lot is full or because this is a rural area there should be no issue with their parking.

The extension of the parking will only encourage more people to access the trail by trespassing and will do absolutely nothing to solve the greater problem

Prior to the implementation of the park and 'parking lot' we had our home evaluated at \$998,900. Ten years later, we have had the house re-evaluated and despite numerous and costly upgrades, three realtors have said a value of \$850,000 would be realistic, despite what has been a 'hot' housing market.

By contrast, a home in the Benson Meadows area (incidentally, across from the proper parking lot for Ammonite Falls) with a **lower B.C. Assessment value, similar size and no view**, recently sold for \$1,099,000. It is apparent that the park has had a severe negative impact on property values in our area.

At the same time, we have been paying taxes based on *assessed values*, which are largely based on 'recent sales of similar properties in the area'. Yet we have had no sales in our neighbourhood in several years. Our 'assessed value' has been determined by sales activity of homes in Benson Meadows which are unaffected by the problems we face. In effect, we have seen our homes devalued while being assessed at values unrelated to our neighbourhood or circumstance.

There has even been discussion amongst residents regarding a class action suit against the Regional District of Nanaimo, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Area Lands Trust, based on loss of value and enjoyment of property due to inadequate planning, lack of consultation and blatant disregard for the legitimate complaints and concerns of residents.

We trust that before this 'expansion plan' is enacted, there will be consultation with residents and that a resolution will be implemented based on resolving the problem, rather than simply minimizing costs.

Respectfully  
  
Randy and Mary-Lou O'Donnell 2929 Benson View Rd.

June 18, 2016

Regional District of Nanaimo

Attention: Lesya Fesiak

I am assuming I missed the planning meeting you held with the neighbors of Mount Benson Regional Park to discuss the further expansion of the parking area. If consulted, I would have voiced my concerns and helped with a plan to benefit rather than alienate its closest neighbors and only neighborhood watch for the area.

So, since we were not included in the planning, I feel it is necessary to voice our concerns. The initial park expansion and parking lot has forced our hand to move and caused us to rent out our home of 24 yrs. Since the initial expansion, our property value has decreased drastically and the noise level has increased to a 24/7 intolerable amount. Now with the further increase of parking stalls, we will be at an even greater disadvantage.

How you ask? By inviting people to our neighborhood without providing garbage receptacles to house their waste and inviting them to hike for an hour, a day or overnight without providing outhouses for them to use. Where do you think they are going to use the washroom? My incredible neighbors take turns at picking up the litter consisting of condoms, syringes to papercups and beer cans. If we were still there---- we would be on garbage duty too. As well, we have called the police many times to attend to unruly groups of people outside our home since it is a park with an open invitation and not regulated with security. Several times we have not been able to leave our home and acreage due to vehicles parked too close to our driveway.

Thank you for hearing our concerns and we look forward to creating a safe and sustainable plan for the future of the park and its adjoining neighbors.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Larry and Bonnie Lemmon. The signature on the left is 'Larry' and the one on the right is 'Bonnie'.

Larry and Bonnie Lemmon 2910 Benson View Rd

Nanaimo BC V9R 6W7

email *bonnie\_lemmon@hotmail.com*

To: Lesya Fesiak, Park Planner, Regional District of Nanaimo

Re: Parking Expansion on Benson View Road

Date: June 16, 2016

Dear Ms. Fesiak:

I certainly have concerns regarding the proposed parking expansion on Benson View Road. In my opinion adding an extra 12 parking spaces would be an absolute waste of time, energy and tax payer money and will not alleviate any of the problems which have been imposed upon area residents.

These problems include not only the obvious parking and road safety issues (including large numbers of off leash dogs in the area) but also:

- Noise pollution (which is often magnified by the mountain – people talking on the other side of the lake sound as if they are in the driveway): traffic noise, loud conversations, car stereo systems, car alarms, car horns, car locking/unlocking 'beeps', dogs barking, motor cycles on trails.
- Overnight camping/parking/partying.
- Driveways being used as turnarounds with accompanying loss of gravel/surface and resulting pot holes.
- Loss of peaceful rural life style.
- Diminished property values.
- Garbage.

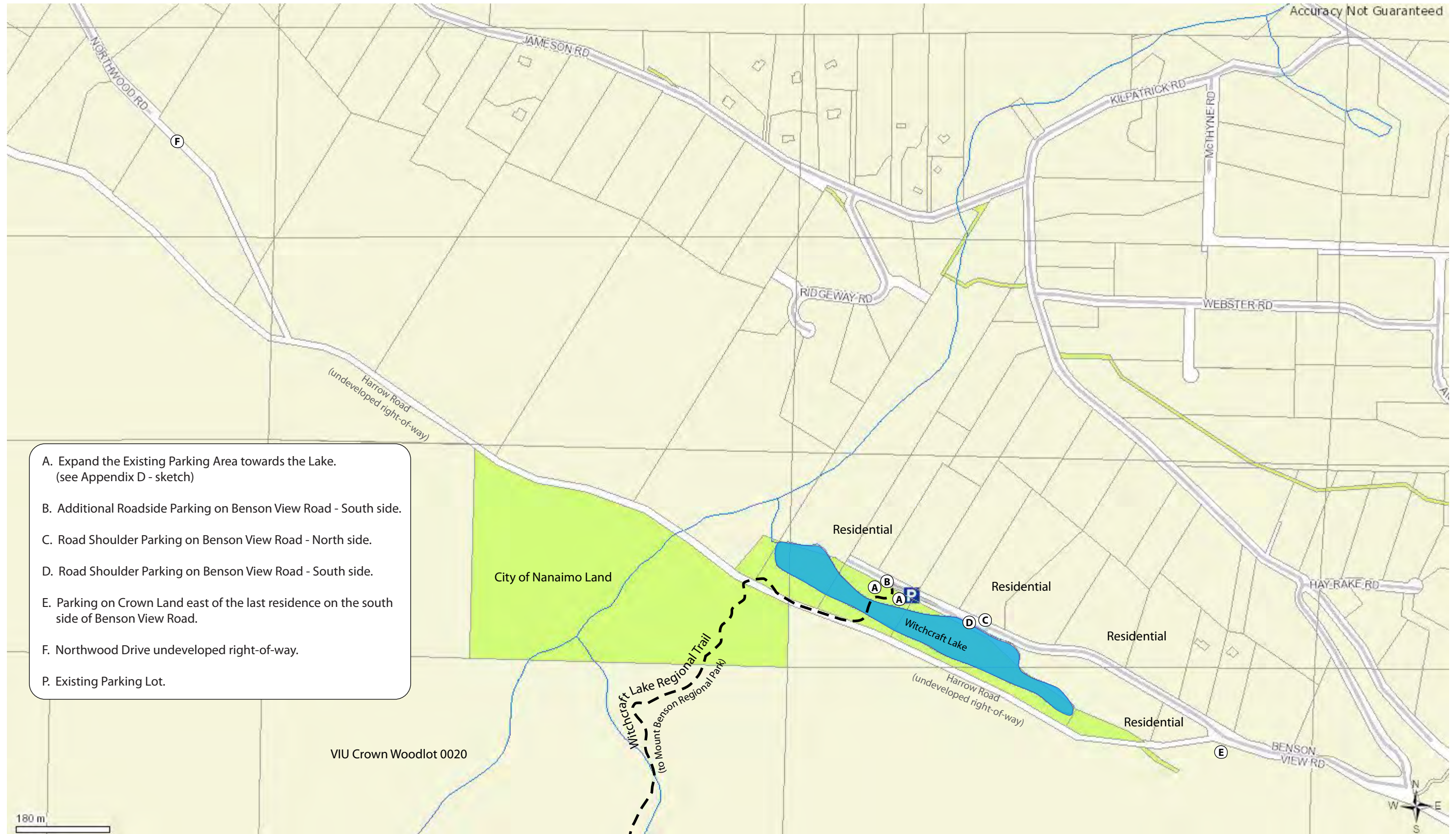
Any proposed solutions to the above problems must be accompanied by enforceable regulations. I understand illegal parking at the end of Jamieson Road was addressed by towing the offenders – this seems entirely appropriate. There also needs to be consequences for littering, overnight parking/camping and riding motor bikes on trails. Putting up signs saying these activities are not allowed is a waste of time and money unless there are consequences.

Patricia Cuttriss

2900 Benson View Road

Nanaimo BC V9R 6W7

APPENDIX C - Mount Benson Regional Park and Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail Parking - August 2016



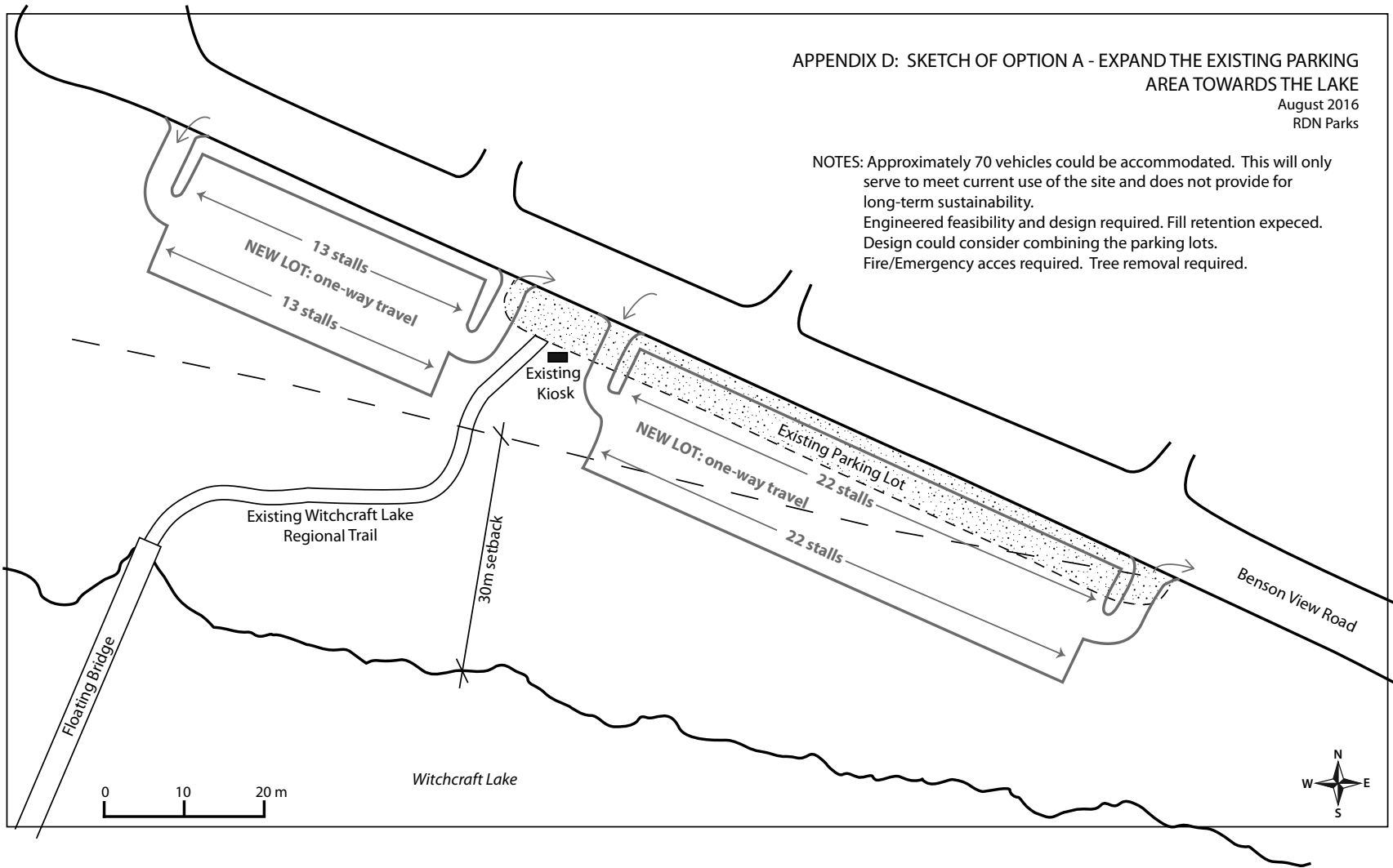
- A. Expand the Existing Parking Area towards the Lake. (see Appendix D - sketch)
- B. Additional Roadside Parking on Benson View Road - South side.
- C. Road Shoulder Parking on Benson View Road - North side.
- D. Road Shoulder Parking on Benson View Road - South side.
- E. Parking on Crown Land east of the last residence on the south side of Benson View Road.
- F. Northwood Drive undeveloped right-of-way.
- P. Existing Parking Lot.



APPENDIX D: SKETCH OF OPTION A - EXPAND THE EXISTING PARKING AREA TOWARDS THE LAKE

August 2016  
RDN Parks

NOTES: Approximately 70 vehicles could be accommodated. This will only serve to meet current use of the site and does not provide for long-term sustainability. Engineered feasibility and design required. Fill retention expected. Design could consider combining the parking lots. Fire/Emergency acces required. Tree removal required.



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**TO:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Park Services

**DATE:** August 31, 2016

**FROM:** Kelsey Cramer  
Parks Planner

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 20, 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT: Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Parking**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Creekside Place parking lot remain open as the primary access and trailhead parking area for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from the south.
2. That the Board direct staff to continue to monitor the Creekside Place parking lot and maintain open communication with the residents of the area regarding issues and mitigation measures.
3. That, pending lease renewal with the Province of BC, staff be directed by the Board to examine the feasibility of developing a parking lot within the undeveloped road allowance leading towards Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from Weigles Road, and that staff examine formalizing the loop trail through the crown woodlot W0012.
4. That, pending lease renewal with the Province of BC, staff be directed by the Board to engage the services of a geotechnical and structural engineer to assess the feasibility and design options for pedestrian access across Benson Creek and to the base of Ammonite Falls, as per the Management Plan.
5. That, pending lease renewal with the Province of BC and evidence of parking demand/capacity requirements at the Jameson Road trailhead, staff be directed by the Board to present long-term options for consideration of developing additional parking at this site, under permit with MOTI, or at the end of Longview Place or Galloway Gulch, under agreement with the Province and the operators of the VIU crown woodlot W0020.

**PURPOSE**

To re-examine options for parking access for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. To specifically review the parking situation at Creekside Place off Jameson Road, the southern trailhead access point to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park via the Ammonite Falls Regional Trail, based on neighbourhood input that this parking lot is problematic to the community and should be closed.

**BACKGROUND**

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park is the Region’s second oldest Regional Park, managed under Provincial crown lease issued in 1991, for a 30-year term. The Park’s first Management Plan Brief was prepared in

1999. In 2014, an updated 10-year Management Plan was produced, within which, access was a primary focus (see Appendix A for the relevant sections from the Management Plan). Access includes both to the park (parking and trail connections) and within the park, to the regionally touted “Ammonite Falls.” Two creeks, Flynnfall Creek and Benson Creek, traverse the park, and two falls are located along these watercourses – one on Benson Creek, known regionally as “Ammonite Falls” and Flynnfall Falls, located farther downstream at the confluence of the two creeks.

Much of the advertisement for the park and the falls has come outside the RDN’s communications, stemming from online blogs, social media and tourism websites. Benson Creek Falls Regional Park is virtually at the City of Nanaimo’s backdoor: the park and surrounding lands are highly used by recreationalists for hiking, biking, and dog-walking, and it is expected that demand for access to these lands will only increase in time. The lands around the park are a mix of crown land (managed as woodlot W0020, W0012, and gravel quarry) and private resource lands (forestry and gravel quarry). See Appendix B for a map of the park and surrounding lands.

The park is formally accessed at two locations: from Weigles Road to the north and from Jameson Road to the south. It is important to note for context that the access from the south (Jameson Road) provides an easier and more direct route to Ammonite Falls. While the trail to Ammonite Falls from the south is approximately half a kilometre longer than from the north, the route is much less difficult from Jameson Road. As such, when people visit the park with the goal of seeing Ammonite Falls, they most likely begin their hike from south of the park. Formal trail access via the Ammonite Falls Regional Trail was established in the spring of 2015 by inclusion within the RDN’s existing Provincial Recreation Site and Trail Partnership Agreement for the Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail. Recreationalists also access the park from the east, at the end of Galloway Gulch via relatively flat logging roads in the crown woodlot W0020. However, this route has not been formalized by the RDN with the Province or the Woodlot Operator.

From the Weigles Road end, hikers need to descend the steep and wide Benson Creek ravine, making it a very challenging route. At the bottom, there is no bridge, but a fallen log provides the crossing. This difficult route is not advertised by the RDN, and signage marks it as unmaintained trail. The Management Plan addresses the constraints of the ravine and recommends a geotechnical and engineering study to assess the feasibility of stairs and/or a bridge crossing to provide easier access across the channel. For added context, the span of the Capilano Suspension Bridge in North Vancouver is 137 metres; the anticipated length of a bridge across Benson Creek (at top of bank), as noted in the Management Plan, is 160 metres. Beyond hiking difficulty and hiker safety, there is environmental concern with trails scouring and eroding down towards the Benson Creek channel. While some people using the Weigles Road trailhead may be on-route to cross Benson Creek, it is expected that the majority of users who enter the park from the north are not crossing the creek, but are making use of the myriad of trails in the woodlot and surrounding lands. There is one trail in the woodlot W0012 that creates a loop with the RDN’s trail to the park. This loop is highly frequented by dog-walkers and is a loop that the RDN hopes to formalize one day with the Woodlot Manager.

Another important point to note is that the RDN is currently in communications with the Province regarding an early lease renewal for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. Some of the projects identified in the Management Plan (referenced above) involve a high level of investment and capital works, which warrant a long-term agreement with the Province prior to pursuing. The Ammonite Falls site itself also requires significant work to improve safety and environmental and recreational sustainability of the site. The current lease expires in 2021. An early renewal of the 30-year lease now would mean the park is secured until 2046. All major capital works regarding this park, including additional parking lot development, should await confirmation of this lease renewal. Furthermore, regardless of whether the lease is renewed with the RDN, the land remains crown land and a public amenity. If Benson Creek Falls

Regional Park ceases to exist as a regional park, the draw towards the falls and the myriad of mountain biking and hiking trails in the area on crown land will remain strong.

***The Current Parking Situation:***

Parking at both the north and south trailheads has been problematic in the past, and this was confirmed during the Management Plan public consultation process. (See map in Appendix B for corresponding locations).

*A) Weigles Road (north access)*

The Weigles Road parking area is a small disorganized roadside lot, often filling up, resulting in vehicles parking along the Weigles Road shoulder. While this is not ideal, the surrounding land use is resource-based; therefore there is no conflict between a residential community and congested roadways. The Management Plan identifies an Action to upgrade, reorganize and expand the Weigles Road parking lot. There is room available within the undeveloped road allowance to create an off-road parking lot that could hold approximately 20-30 cars. This would require detailed design and would involve the removal of several trees, grading the site, and installing one or two access points to/from Weigles Road. A permit would be required by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to construct and maintain the lot. A parking lot at this site has been on the radar for Parks staff since prior to the Management Plan, and would be a substantial upgrade to what is there now. A cost for this would be available following detailed design.

*B) Jameson Road/Creekside Place (south access)*

At the Jameson Road end, during and prior to the Management Plan, vehicles parked along road shoulders at the end of Jameson Road and on Creekside Place, causing congestion and impeding residents of the area from passing through. This issue was a concern for residents as well as for general safety because the gate at the end of Jameson Road would sometimes be blocked by parked cars. The Management Plan process looked at this parking issue in 2013 and explored three possible options to formalizing parking at this site (see Appendix A). Public Open Houses were held and options to improve the situation were reviewed (see Appendix C for relevant pages from the Management Plan).

As a result of the management planning process, the option to improve an existing parking lot on Creekside Place (Option P1) was deemed the least-cost and most effective for improving the congestion in the area. The Creekside Place parking lot straddles the road allowance and the RDN's Creekside Place Community Park. In the fall of 2014, the parking lot on Creekside Place was improved to formally accommodate 24 vehicles, and 'No Parking' and directional signs were installed on Jameson Road, all under permit with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

In the months following, residents noted low compliance with people continuing to park on the road and not in the parking lot. To re-inforce the message, flyers were placed on vehicles that continued to park on Jameson Rd and the RDN website and social media was used to advertise the parking lot. RDN inquired with RDN Bylaw, MOTI and the RCMP on next steps towards enforcement.

Jurisdiction of these roads falls with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, not with the City of Nanaimo or the RDN. The roads and signage are governed under the Motor Vehicle Act, including signage installed under permit by the RDN. The RCMP enforces the Motor Vehicle Act, and therefore can enforce the traffic signs on Jameson Rd and Creekside Place. As a legal requirement (advised to Parks staff by the RCMP), additional signs were installed under MOTI permit along Jameson Road and upper Creekside Place on January, 21, 2015 stating "vehicles will be towed at owners' expense." The RCMP

indicated, with the signs now installed, they would begin patrolling the Jameson area. Their enforcement program would involve issuing warning tickets as a first measure and towing repeat offenders. People returning to find their vehicle towed could contact the RCMP non-emergency line (250-754-2345), or Mid Island Towing (250-758-1728). Any parking or traffic complaints for the Jameson area should be directed to the 24-hour RCMP Non-Emergency line.

Footprints Security was also engaged by the RDN to patrol the area and report on traffic violations. All of their reports are provided in Appendix D. A summary of their 2015 reports is below.

<i>Footprints Security Report Summary</i>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>General Comments</b>
2015	Feb 21-22	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Feb 28-Mar 1	Nearly full compliance, 1 truck parked illegally: RCMP/Towing called by Guard (truck left before RCMP arrived). Off-road vehicles noted (entered woodlot at gate).
	Apr 4 - 5	Nearly full compliance, 1 car parked illegally, RCMP called by Guard and car was ticketed. Parking lot full on the 5 <sup>th</sup> , 4 cars parked on road legally.
	May 16 - 17	Full compliance with parking regulations.

For the remainder of 2015, there was little correspondence on the situation from the Creekside area residents.

In March 2016, the area residents provided a summary to the RDN outlining concerns (Appendix E: *“Ammonite Falls Parking Concerns of Creekside Place/Jameson Road Property Owners”*). At this time, some of the possible solutions to their concerns, as noted in their correspondence include: larger, clear signage; regular towing of parking offenders; a clear process for neighbours to report offenders; enlarge the parking lot south towards Jameson to increase capacity and improve visibility of the parking lot from the intersection; install garbage cans and notices about bears active in the area; and organize a collaborative brainstorming session for other improvements. Parks staff and the Electoral Area ‘C’ Director met with area residents in April 2016 to discuss concerns and possible solutions, and again in May 2016, along with a representative from the RCMP and MOTI.

Out of this meeting, the RCMP proposed a ticketing and towing "blitz" and residents recommended this be done on long-weekend afternoons. Residents were also provided the RCMP non-emergency line to report traffic violations. The RDN arranged for Footprints Security to continue patrols and report incidents of parking violations and parking lot overcrowding (see 2016 summary below and Appendix D for full reports). In addition, staff made plans to improve signage on site.

<i>Footprints Security Report Summary</i>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2016	Mar 19, 20, 26, 27	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Apr 23-24	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	May 21-22	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Jun 25-26	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Jul 2-3	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Jul 9-10	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Jul 16-17	Nearly full compliance, 2 cars parked illegally on the 16 <sup>th</sup> , both were towed.
	Jul 23-24	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Jul 30-Aug 1	Full compliance with parking regulations.
	Aug 6-7	Full compliance with parking regulations.

In May 2016, community members attended the East Wellington/Pleasant Valley Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee and were advised to present their concerns at the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee (RPTSC) meeting in early June 2016, as the issue is related to regional parks and trails. The correspondence provided by the residents to the RPTSC is included in Appendix E: *“Creekside/Jameson Roads Community Issues.”*

The message presented to the RPTSC by the residents was a request that the parking lot at Creekside Place be closed; that the Community Park be restored and; that the main entrance to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park be at Weigles Road, with a new parking lot developed there. The letter states:

*“In an attempt to ease the parking situation, the RDN chose to use our Community Park to create a parking lot for people using the Benson Falls Regional Park, rather than develop a parking lot off of Weigles Road, which already has a dedicated road into the park for that purpose. (Please see attached plan.) The result was a rapid increase of traffic to our neighbourhood, with social media promoting of Jameson Road/Creekside as now being the main access for Ammonite Falls.”*

From this paragraph, there appears to be a misunderstanding that the Jameson Road trailhead parking improvement was chosen instead of the Weigles Road parking improvement. This is not the case: the Creekside Parking lot was developed to improve the parking congestion situation on Jameson Road. Improving parking at Weigles Road has been, and still is, a major goal for the Parks Department since the long-standing sanctioned trail access to the park is from this side. Parking improvements at the Jameson Road end were never intended to replace improvements at the Weigles Road end. If the concern, as described in the above paragraph, is that the parking lot on Creekside Place straddles the Community Park boundary, the Management Plan did offer Option P2: to develop parking at the corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place in the road allowance. Option P2 (see Appendix A), received equal support during the public consultation process but, since it was more difficult and costly to install, the option to improve the existing lot on Creekside Place (Option P1) was pursued.

Additional points of concern noted in the letter include: cars blocking driveways and impeding the intersection; trespassing on private lands; litter and concern about attracting bears; use of trails and community park as an outdoor bathroom; illegal activities and overnight camping; speeders and people doing “break stands” on roads; inadequate RDN signage, and; inability of RDN, MOTI to ticket/tow and RCMP ranking concerns as low priority. Until the new parking lot (on Weigles Road) is created, the letter explains that most residents would like to see improved signage, more RCMP and Footprints Security Checks, the “Dead End” sign moved to the right side of Creekside Road to improve visibility of it and that

the RDN contact various website editors to request removal of directions to Ammonite Falls that reference Jameson Road or the Creekside Place parking lot. The letter also indicates that most residents do not want the RDN to install a toilet, garbage can, kiosk sign, path alongside Creekside Place from the parking lot to Jameson Road, or any expansion of the existing parking lot, expressing that these amenities will invite illegal camping in the lot, and that fewer services will deter parking lot users.

Several of the previous suggestions noted in the March 2016 correspondence from the residents to attempt to mitigate some of their concerns, were identified in the June correspondence as no longer wanted and the desire is now for the parking lot to be closed. Regarding the reference to social media above, the RDN used social media to educate hikers about the parking lot in an effort to encourage improved compliance with the parking changes in the area. Social media outside of the RDN has for many years directed people to Jameson Road as the main access to Ammonite Falls because it is the more direct route to the falls. Staff have attempted to inform tourism and hiking related websites of the parking issues at Jameson Road and have requested them to amend their sites to reflect the parking requirements of the area.

The outcome of the June RPTSC meeting was the following resolution, which was then approved by the Board on June 28, 2016:

*# 16-481 "That the Board direct staff to report on options to relieve parking congestion at Creekside Place and Jameson Road caused by public use of area to access the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and the VIU woodlot."*

In addition to concerns about parking issues, the RDN and the RCMP received correspondence from a resident of Creekside Place at the end of June 2016 about "burn-outs" in the cul-de-sac. The correspondence notes that while some issues have been brought to the RCMP's attention over the years, the problems have been made much worse since the parking lot was developed. RDN Parks staff responded that the RCMP had proposed a ticketing "blitz" in the area for the up-coming long-weekend (Canada Day); that the RDN will be installing improved signage, as requested by the community, and; that a report to the Regional Board addressing the community's request that the Creekside parking lot be closed, would be prepared. RDN staff also noted that public roads are not within the jurisdiction of the Regional District so the RDN is not able to monitor driving infractions or make repairs to roads.

Following the long weekend, the RCMP Constable assigned to the area to patrol for parking infractions notified Parks staff on July 5, 2016 that, due to no observed violations in three separate attendances to the area (weekdays and a long week-end afternoon (specifically 3:45pm on July 2, 2016)), they would not continue with any form of planned enforcement in the area. However, time permitting; he would continue to check on things in the area. Specifically regarding the issue of "burn-outs", the RCMP Constable offered comment that it is a fact of living in a rural area where people know the risk of getting caught is low, citing Cedar as an example of an area where many "burn-outs" occur. He further expressed that closing the parking lot, in his opinion, would make the issue worse. The trail access in the area will continue to be used, parking or no parking, noting that closing the parking lot will not change bad driving, and that the hiking crowd is mostly not the same as the "burn-out" crowd. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting traffic violations to the RCMP's non-emergency line.

In August 2016, Parks staff visited multiple other locations around the Park in an attempt to identify if any other sites could serve the purpose of additional or relocated parking/trailhead for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. The sites that staff reviewed were either noted in the Management Plan as possibilities or, not noted in the Management Plan, but visited by staff to assess suitability at a

preliminary level. A summary of alternative parking options is below (See map in Appendix B for corresponding locations).

***Alternative Parking Options:***

*Other Parking Options as noted in the Management Plan:*

Two other parking options (P2 and P3) were explored in detail in the Management Plan (see Appendix A). Additionally, two other sites, Galloway Gulch and Longview Place, were noted as possible sites to explore in more detail because they both offer trail access towards Benson Creek Falls Regional Park (from the east and south, respectively). Staff visited each of these sites in August 2016 and spoke with the Woodlot Operator, who manages the land related to the P3, Galloway Gulch and Longview Place options.

- C) *Management Plan Option P2:* This option is a new parking lot in the road allowance at the corner of Jameson Rd. and Creekside Pl. It received equal support to the P1 Option (to expand the existing Creekside Pl. parking lot). This site could be explored further to provide additional parking at the Jameson Road end. The lot will be smaller than the existing Creekside Place lot and may face constraints due to slope, possibly requiring slope retention on the north/east side of the parking lot. Engineered design would be required, as would permission from MOTI.
- D) *Management Plan Option P3:* This option explored the creation of a new parking lot within woodlot W0020, inside the gate at the end of Jameson Rd. This option received the least support during the management plan public process. The sloping topography within the woodlot makes finding an ideal site challenging. Furthermore, the access road at the end of Jameson Road is narrow. Significant improvements to the road to allow for two-way travel would be required. Permission from the woodlot operator, the Province and MOTI would be required.
- E) *Galloway Gulch:* At the end of this road, which is accessed from roads off Jingle Pot Road, a gate marks the entrance to the VIU woodlot W0020. Two logging roads diverge into the property. There is a relatively large flat area at the junction of these roads that could be cleared, graded and designed for a parking lot. Parks staff contacted the Woodlot Manager to explore the possibility of developing a parking lot at this site. Currently, this is not something they are willing to explore. A recent reduction in the size of the woodlot due to private forestry lands no longer forming a part of the greater W0020 woodlot means the woodlot manager is reluctant to lose any more lands, including for the purposes of a parking lot. Furthermore, the process would require permission from the Province and all referrals that would occur during that process. During the conversation with the Woodlot Manager, he indicated that he too has received requests that access to the woodlot from the end of Jameson Road be blocked, but explained that he is unable to deny access to public land.

A secondary option at this site is the possibility of creating roadside parking on the north side of the road allowance at the end of Galloway Gulch. The road allowance is quite wide, and appears to offer enough space to develop roadside parking similar to that at the Witchcraft Lake trailhead. This would require permission from MOTI, following design work. A sanctioned trail agreement through the woodlot to the park would also be required by the Province, in consultation with VIU.

- F) *Longview Place:* Similarly to Galloway Gulch, Longview Place, which is accessed from Jameson Road, is terminated with a gate that marks the entrance to the VIU woodlot W0020. A single narrow logging road/trail leads into the property. The area immediately inside the gate appears to be relatively flat and large enough to offer space for a parking lot. However, similarly to Galloway Gulch,



and Option P3, the Woodlot Manager is not currently interested in exploring parking lot development within the woodlot itself.

As a long term possibility, Galloway Gulch and Longview Place could function as additional formal trailheads and parking areas into the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and surrounding lands. On-going dialogue with VIU and the Province regarding this possibility should remain. Another factor to consider is that formalizing parking/trailheads at either of these locations has the potential to generate a similar reaction from these rural neighbourhoods as has occurred in the Creekside area. Clear and open communication with neighbouring landowners during the planning of any future parking lot development should occur.

*Other Parking Options explored by staff in August 2016:*

Further to the suggestions noted in the Management Plan, Parks staff visited additional road ends in the vicinity of the park to assess, at a preliminary level, the feasibility of new parking lot development. The sites visited include: Northwood Road, Englewood Drive, Manly Road, and farther west along Weigles Road. The ends of Biggs Pit Road, Andres Road and Richards Road were not visited because they are all currently serving the gravel quarries in the area.

None of the four locations listed below offer a reasonable site for parking lot development, which is surely why they were not suggested in the management plan when parking options were reviewed at that time. (See map in Appendix B for corresponding locations).

- G) *Northwood Road:* The dead ended Northwood Road is accessed off Jameson Rd. Staff explored the feasibility of this site as an access point for both Mount Benson Regional Park and Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, because the undeveloped Harrow Road right-of-way presents a possible link between the two parks. A steep, narrow and rough logging road, with very rough terrain on both sides, leads into the crown land. This terrain limits this site as a likely solution to improving the parking in the Benson Creek/Mount Benson area.
- H) *Englewood Drive:* This site, at a preliminary level, did not appear to offer a suitable location for parking lot development. The road end was very enclosed, with fencing of neighbouring properties bordering it and quite vegetated. Furthermore, this road terminates at the VIU woodlot W0020 and the same concerns/restraints to developing parking on woodlot land, as noted above, would exist.
- I) *Manly Road:* The end of the developed Manly Road is currently providing access to a private residence. The undeveloped portion of Manly Road is inaccessible because a ravine intersects the road allowance immediately beyond the private driveway. The topography in the area is the main limitation to parking lot development at this site.
- J) *Weigles Road (farther west):* An existing logging road in the crown woodlot W0012 heads west from Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and meets Weigles Road about 1.17 km west of the existing parking area on Weigles Rd. This site was explored, but because it emerges on a bend in Weigles Road, it did not appear to be a safe place to consider additional parking. Furthermore, the walk into the park from this location is much longer. The issues with crossing the Benson Creek ravine also remain.

Of all of the sites explored, the ones that appear to offer a feasible option for additional off-road parking space are:

<b>Site (Appendix B location reference in brackets)</b>	<b>Permissions</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Existing Weigles Road trailhead (A)	MOTI	Short-medium term
Corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place (C)	MOTI	Short-medium term
End of Galloway Gulch (E)	MOTI/VIU/Province	Long term
End of Longview Place (F)	VIU/Province	Long term

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That Creekside Place parking lot remain open as the primary access and trailhead parking area for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from the south and staff maintain clear communication with area residents regarding concerns and proposed improvements to mitigate concerns. Staff continue to monitor compliance and enforcement with the RCMP. Pending lease renewal with the province, staff be directed to pursue parking lot development within the undeveloped road allowance leading towards Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from Weigles Road. And, pending lease renewal with the province, staff pursue engineering studies required to formalize a crossing of Benson Creek and to ensure safe access to the base of Ammonite Falls.
2. That Creekside Place parking lot be closed and the Community Park is restored as per the residents request and, pending lease renewal with the province, staff be directed to explore the option of developing a new parking lot at the corner of Jameson Rd and Creekside Pl within the road allowance to provide off-road parking in the area. Pending lease renewal with the province, staff would then also be directed to pursue parking lot development within the undeveloped road allowance leading towards Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from Weigles Road. And, pending lease renewal with the province, staff pursue engineering studies required to formalize a crossing of Benson Creek and to ensure safe access to the base of Ammonite Falls.
3. That Creekside Place parking lot remain open as the primary access and trailhead parking area for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from the south for the foreseeable future and that, pending lease renewal with the province, staff be directed to explore the long-term option of developing parking within the VIU crown woodlot W0020 at the end of Longview Place or Galloway Gulch.
4. That staff be directed to not renew the lease with the Province and the land no longer be designated as a Regional Park upon expiry of the Lease and the land becomes the complete jurisdiction of the Crown.
5. The Board provides alternative direction to staff.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To date, all works associated with improving the parking lot on Creekside Place have come from funds under the Regional Parks function. Depending on the direction provided, a new parking lot will likely be required at Weigles Road or at the corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place, or possibly both in the longer-term. Parking lot development will require survey and engineering services to best locate and design the lot. An allowance of \$10,000 to \$15,000 could be allocated for this purpose. The construction costs will depend on the design, ease of access to the site, and timing of construction. It is difficult to assign a value for construction at this time.

Costs associated with keeping the Creekside parking lot open include: on-going patrols by Footprints Security, if continued monitoring is deemed necessary; additional amenities at the Creekside Place parking lot, if deemed valuable to aid in mitigating community concerns; and signage to improve communication about the parking lot, respecting the neighbourhood and directional information.

Costs associated with closing the Creekside parking lot, assuming it is restored to a natural vegetation state, will include removal/disposal of gravel, culverts and signage; importing and installation of clean growing medium, and; planting, watering, and maintenance of a restoration area for several years until the site becomes established.

Costs for geotechnical and engineering design for a Benson Creek crossing and for a safe descent at Ammonite Falls were estimated at a combined value of \$75,000 in the Management Plan. Costs to construct would follow, depending on the design outcomes. Other costs may arise in relation to any studies or permissions required to undertake the described works.

As there is a significant amount of financial investment that could be targeted for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park in the short to medium term, Parks staff initiated an early lease renewal process with the Province. Confirmation that the park is secured for an additional 30-year lease term should be received from the Province prior to pursuing any capital works related to this park.

Should the Board decide to no longer manage the lands as a Regional Park, responsibility of its management would shift to the Province. The Province would then need to determine what the highest and best use of the lands would be and manage the lands accordingly. This option could lead to a loss or reduction of public access to this popular recreational area depending on the direction the Province may take. This in turn could have a negative impact to the Region with the lands being less accessible for the eco-tourism sector as well as for area residents.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identifies recreational amenities as a core service and the need to secure and provide long-term access to regional parks and trails is an important goal for the region. The crown lands in the Benson Creek area, while managed mostly for resource-use, are highly used for recreation by residents of and visitors to the City of Nanaimo and the region. Securing the Regional Park and access to it should remain a priority for the RDN; however, if the park lease is no longer in place, the land could potentially continue to function as a public asset into the future. The Strategic Plan also focuses on relationships, and the RDN will aim to strengthen the two-way communication with the local community, and continue to work in collaboration with the Province, Woodlot Managers, VIU and private land managers into the future.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

Trail access from Jameson Road has been unofficially used by the public since at least 1991, with people using trails and logging roads on the private forest land as well as on the crown land. With the subdivision plan for the Creekside area coming into effect in 2005 and the rural residential neighbourhood developing, problems with traffic congestion have slowly grown. People are continuing to access the lands at the end of Jameson Road, and now in more numbers, as the unique geographical feature, Ammonite Falls, is becoming more well-known and advertised over online media.

Within the 2014 Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan, solutions to improve the Jameson Road parking situation were explored and the option to improve an existing parking lot on Creekside Place was carried out. Around the same time, a trail alignment from the end of Jameson Road to the Park (through the crown woodlot) was sanctioned with the Province as an official public route to the Park from this popular access point.

Initially, it appeared that this parking lot was not being used and residents continued to experience congestion on the roads. RDN Parks staff attempted to educate hikers about the new parking lot with flyers on vehicles and social media. Improved signage indicating vehicles would be towed was installed and enforcement, by way of Footprints Security and RCMP patrols was renewed in the spring of 2016. Reports from the Footprints Security patrols for 2016 show that compliance with the parking regulations in the area has improved, and very few incidents of parking violations are noted in their reports. At the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee meeting in early June 2016, the area residents requested, that the Creekside Parking lot be closed. A motion from that meeting directed staff to produce a report on the subject. This report has attempted to summarize the last three years on the topic, since the time the Management Plan for the park was commissioned in 2013. Research, planning and correspondence between Parks staff, Footprints Security, the RCMP, and residents has been presented, as well as various steps that have occurred to mitigate the parking congestion at the end of Jameson Road.


Prior to requesting that the Creekside Parking lot be closed, correspondence from the residents included some ideas that may serve to help mitigate some of the issues. Parks staff wish to revisit the ideas that were put forward in more detail, as there is concern that closing the parking lot will lead to further problems for the community. Jameson Road is a long-standing access point to trails in the adjacent crown land and Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and it will be extremely difficult to prevent people from parking in the area. Parks staff recognize that it has become more popular over recent years, mostly due to word-of-mouth in the community (both on- and off-line). A similar situation is currently occurring on Benson View Drive, where the parking lot provided for the Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail and Mount Benson Regional Park is not meeting current demand, causing traffic congestion in this neighbourhood as well.


As more people learn about the recreational opportunities in the City of Nanaimo's backyard, these sites (and others) will feel the pressure of increased use. Effort is needed to monitor and manage the Jameson Road trailhead so as not to compromise the residential neighbourhood. Short-term improvements to the site, such as improved signage, garbage cans, and continued reporting of non-compliance should be revisited with the community. If the Creekside parking lot is closed, it is expected that serious congestion on Jameson Road and Creekside Place will resume; some form of parking in this area will be needed. As demand increases, the idea of expanding the parking lot or developing additional parking at the corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place should also be reviewed.


Once the lease renewal with the Province is confirmed, efforts to move towards developing the Weigles Road parking lot should occur. This has been a long-standing project since sanctioned trail access into Benson Creek Falls Regional Park from this location has been in place for many years. However, until engineering feasibility, design and construction of a suitable Benson Creek crossing occurs, access to Ammonite Falls from Weigles Road will not be promoted by the RDN. Furthermore, the descent to the base of Ammonite Falls is currently extremely unsafe and environmentally hazardous, and there may be merit in prioritizing engineering work for this site over the Benson Creek crossing.


Access to the public lands, via public roads is not something that can be denied to the greater community. The RDN is a land manager, ready to work with other land managers (VIU, Province, Forestry and Gravel operations) around Benson Creek Falls Regional Park to support the safe use of the lands for

recreation, conservation, resource extraction and educational purposes into the future. RDN staff also acknowledge the need to ensure open and on-going communication with residential neighbours to parks and trails and the importance of promoting respectful recreational use of parks and trails within the community.

  
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Report Writer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Per/ Manager Concurrence

  
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General Manager Concurrence

  
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CAO Concurrence

### 6.2 Park Access

**The Issue:** Benson Creek Falls Regional Park has two main access routes: Weigles Road on the north side of the Park and Jameson Road on the south side of the park. Both of these primary access routes have limitations.

In Spring 2013, the RDN installed trail counters at the Weigles Road and Jameson Road access points. **Table 1** shows the number of people accessing BCFRP between May and August 2013.

**Table 1: Trail Counter Data – May to August 2013**

Access Route	May	June	July	August	Total <sup>9</sup> (4 months)
Weigles Road	1,388	1,108	1,118	1,580	5,194
Jameson Road	1,023	1,218	1,256	1,158	4,655

Trail counts suggest that both routes to BCFRP are well-used. While further counts will identify trends, it appears that Weigles Road may be used more consistently throughout the year as a destination for regular visitors, such as dog walkers. The Jameson Road route may have more frequent use during summer as a popular route for visitors accessing Ammonite Falls.

#### **Policy 3:**

**Secure two public access routes to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park – one to the north side of Benson Creek and one to the south side.**

#### **Weigles Road Access (North Access)**

The Weigles Road Park Access is the official entrance to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. There is a small existing parking lot with space for about 8-10 vehicles and the RDN has a lease that provides trail access from the parking lot to the main area of the park.

The parking lot is small, poorly organized and, on busy days, overflow parking spills onto Weigles Road. The lot is also in relatively poor condition with uneven grade and potholes.



*Disorganized parking at the Weigles Road parking lot.*

#### **Action 2:**

*Upgrade, reorganize and expand the Weigles Road parking lot.*

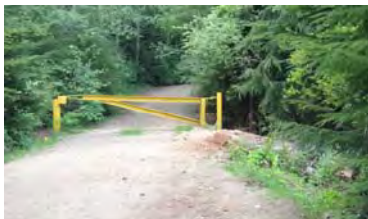
<sup>9</sup> Trail counts may include both park entry and exit of an individual during a single park visit.



To help keep people from parking on Weigles Road, expansion and improvements to the organization of the parking lot are recommended. Key considerations when planning parking lot improvements:

- Connect with the adjacent Crown Lot lease-holder of Woodlot #W0012 regarding opportunities for aligning future forestry access with parking lot improvements.
- Confirm the legal boundaries of the parking area to determine if the lot falls within the BCFRP lease area or within the road ROW.
- Contact the adjacent gravel quarry to identify opportunities for obtaining gravel for parking lot development.

### *Jameson Road Access (South Access)*



*Woodlot gate at the Jameson Road Access Route.*

Jameson Road is a popular park access point, but currently does not have official access agreements in place and does not have sufficient parking.

The north access at Weigles Road is popular for park users accessing shorter trail loops or bike routes at the north end of the park; however, people destined for Ammonite Falls typically enter the park from an unofficial access point at the end of Jameson Road on the south side of the park. The trail to Ammonite Falls in this location is shorter and easier than the route from Weigles Road. However, park users must cross privately-leased Crown woodlot (Woodlot Licence W0020) to access the trailhead.



*Informal parking on Jameson Road and Creekside Place.*

There is no formal parking at the Jameson Road entrance which results in roadside parking at the intersection of Jameson Road and Creekside Place, a concern for local residents. On busy days at the park, on-street parking may restrict access for large vehicles, including emergency vehicles.

During the management planning process, several options to address the access and parking issues were considered, including:

- Securing official parking at Jameson Road and a formalized access route through the woodlot into the park;
- Improved trail access to Ammonite Falls from the Weigles Road access to make it a more attractive and easier route; and
- Identifying an alternative access point to the park from the east.

A review of these options identified that the best short-term solution for public access to Ammonite Falls was from Jameson Road. While improvements to the trails from Weigles Road are planned (see Section 6.3.1), the terrain through Benson Creek Ravine will continue to be a barrier for those with lesser mobility. Several access points from the east were also investigated, but land ownership and parking were identified as deterrents to



these routes. It was also determined that Jameson Road provides the best emergency access point to the park and surrounding area.

**Action 3:**

*Develop an off-road parking area at the Jameson Road Access point.*


Because it is anticipated that Jameson Road will remain a popular park access point for the foreseeable future, a parking solution is required to resolve on-street parking concerns. During the plan development, three potential parking lot options were identified. **Table 2** shows preliminary analysis of the three options.

**Table 2: Summary of Parking Options**

Option	Potential Layout Study	Potential Pros	Potential Cons
<p>P1: Creekside Place Community Park using the Existing Parking Lot</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lowest cost</li> <li>▪ Could be implemented immediately at low cost</li> <li>▪ Minimal disturbance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Could affect available parking for Community Park</li> <li>▪ Longer walk to Park</li> </ul>
<p>P2: Corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very close to existing informal parking on Jameson Road</li> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> <li>▪ Safe sightlines</li> <li>▪ Keeps traffic out of residential area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Higher cost including costs for grading and building new lot</li> <li>▪ Retaining walls may be needed at edge of ravine</li> </ul>





Option	Potential Layout Study	Potential Pros	Potential Cons
P3: Inside Woodlot Gate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closest to the park entrance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highest cost, including costs for clearing, grading, retaining and road access to parking</li> <li>Requires agreements with Crown/MOTI</li> <li>No passive surveillance/potential security issues</li> <li>Potential closures during fire season</li> </ul>

The three parking options were presented for public review and feedback during Open House #2. Feedback suggested that:

- Option P1: Creekside Place Community Park using the Existing Parking Lot and Option P2: Corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place were equally preferred.
- Option P3: Inside Woodlot Gate received the lowest support due to challenges with access, cost, potential conflict with Woodlot uses and potential security issues.

Based on this feedback the following approach to parking at the Jameson Road Access is provided:

- Complete minor improvements at Creekside Place Community Park to upgrade surfacing and potentially expand the existing parking area (Option P1).
- Install 'No Parking' signage at corner of Jameson Road and Creekside Place (where people are currently parking and blocking access) with direction to parking at Creekside Place Community Park.
- Monitor parking demand through one summer season and identify if people are parking at the park and if parking in that area is sufficient.
- If demand exceeds capacity in that location, or people do not abide by 'No Parking' signs, consider development a new parking lot at the corner of Creekside Place and Jameson Road (Option 2). Parking lot in this location will require design development for grading and creek protection prior to development.



**Action 4:**

Obtain a formal agreement with MFLNRO, with support from the Woodlot #0020 Manager, for a public access route from Jameson Road to BCFRP.

Typical components of the trail application will include:

- Completed application form
- Updated Management Plan
- Rationale for selecting the route
- Information that addresses potential issues (e.g. parking impacts) that could arise through formalization of the route

Public input noted that the existing Jameson Road Access Route has several steep and difficult slopes. During development of the Management Plan, an existing alternate route with gentler slopes was identified and supported by the Woodlot manager. See **Figure 3: Potential Jameson Route Alignment** for an approximate alignment for this route.

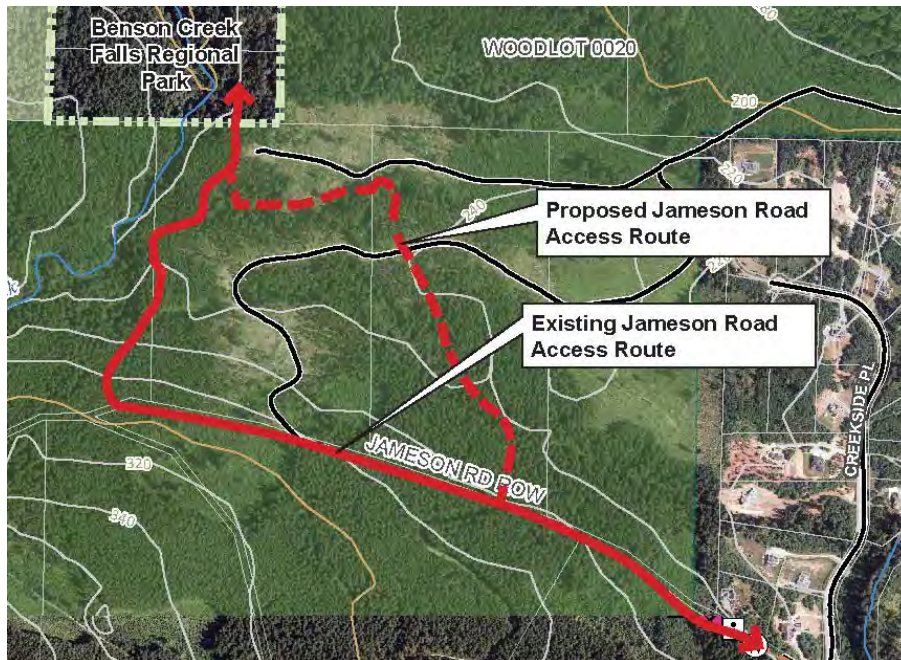


Figure 3: Potential Jameson Route Alignment



During Open House #2, public feedback about the proposed alternate route was mixed – with participants both supporting and not supporting the route.

Concerns about the route included:

- Potential conflicts with motorized/equestrian users on the alternate route.
- Development of an alternate, easier route may make it ‘too easy’ to access the park – inviting increased use and potential impacts to the environment and local neighbourhood.
- Some prefer the challenge of the existing route.

It is recommended that the RDN investigate potential route alternatives prior to identifying and securing the preferred access to the park.

A Section 56 Provincial Trails Partnership Agreement for this route may warrant consideration to establish this route and require its consideration during future resource planning.

### 6.3 Park Trails

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**The Issue:** Commonly used trail sections within the park have identified challenges to public use.

Three priority trail routes within BCFRP were identified during the management planning process. See **Figure 4: Priority Trail Routes** (next page) for approximate alignment of each route.

These routes are the most commonly used and were identified as having the highest priority for improvements:

- The North-South route from the Weigles Road parking lot to the south boundary of the park (just past Ammonite Falls);
- The Jameson Road access route from Jameson Road to the south boundary of the park (connecting with the north-south route); and
- The short trail loop at the Weigles Road entrance that includes the BCFRP access and an existing trail through Woodlot W0012.



*Small side trail that intersects with the north-south route.*

Beyond these major routes, several minor trail routes cross or link to trails within the park. These routes are typically used by the mountain biking community as part of their larger Doumont trail network. While these routes are not as popular amongst BCFRP users, they can confuse users if they are not familiar with the area.

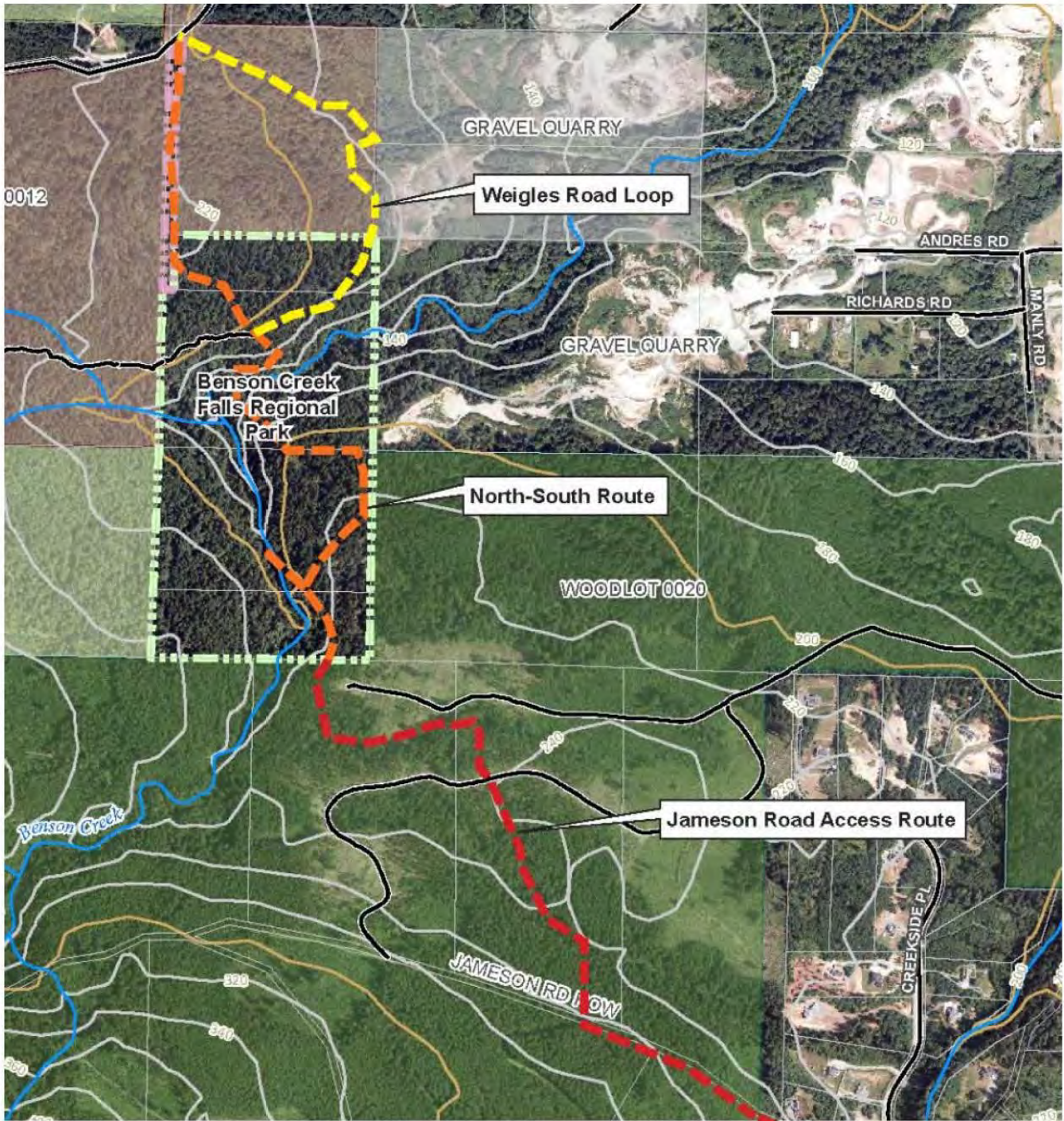


Figure 4: Priority Trail Routes



**Policy 4:**

**Improve and maintain trail access on the three priority trail routes identified in this plan.**

**North-South Route**

The trail route between the Weigles Road parking lot and south boundary of the park has potential to provide access to Ammonite Falls; however, two notable gaps exist:

- At Benson Creek Ravine, steep-sided banks (approx. 50 m deep) require switchback trails and the creek crossing is a fallen log that is used for crossing the creek. These barriers are a challenge and safety issue for many park users. Due to these issues this route is not currently identified as a route for accessing the falls – it is signed as an “unmaintained trail”. On the north side of the creek, bank erosion is especially present, largely due to informal “short-cut” trails that have been created to shorten the switchbacks down the slope.
- A portion of trail route, approximately 250m in length, on the south side of Benson Creek Ravine previously crossed private land and has been decommissioned by the private land owner. An alternate route has been flagged, but has not yet been cleared or constructed.



*Unmaintained Trail sign at the top of Benson Creek Ravine.*



*Flagged, but undeveloped alternate route.*

**Action 5:**

*Undertake trail improvements or relocation of the ravine descent to Benson Creek in conjunction with a new bridge crossing over the ravine (See Section 6.5: Park Infrastructure). Consult with MFLNRO for review and selection of the preferred crossing location.*

As a first step in the process, it is recommended that the ravine area be reviewed to determine if an alternate route exists that has better grades and safety. MFLNRO should be consulted during the crossing location review process for input on potential alternative routes. If a new route can be identified, the existing route should be closed and remediated.

If the existing route is determined to be the preferred route, trail improvements should include enhanced delineation of the switchbacks and closing and rehabilitation of short-cut routes using techniques such as staked small-diameter logs and native shrub planting and signage – especially on the north side of the creek<sup>10</sup>.



*Improvements to the Benson Creek ravine trail should include closing and rehabilitation of short-cut routes.*

<sup>10</sup> Per Ursus Environmental Overview of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park.



**Action 6:**

*Clear and develop the flagged trail route to reconnect the Weigles Park Access to Ammonite Falls. Trail construction should be routed to avoid larger standing trees and their drip-lines<sup>11</sup>.*

**Jameson Road Access Route**

Action #3 of this plan recommends securing formal public access from Jameson Road. The most commonly-used route from Jameson Road has a steep section of trail, approximately 250 m in length. It is recommended that the formalized public access follow an existing trail about 600 m west of the woodlot gate (see Map 5), as this route has easier grades. A small bridge over an intermittent creek may be required as part of the trail development.

**Action 7:**

*Once a formalized agreement with MFLNRO has been obtained (See Action #4), develop and sign the Jameson Road access route as an entrance to BCFRP.*

**Weigles Road Loop**

Many users entering BCFRP from Weigles Road are using a 1.3 km trail loop that starts and finishes at the parking lot. Approximately 500 m of this loop is on Woodlot W0012, outside the park boundary. Trail users are not generally aware that a portion of the loop is outside the park.

Public input suggested that this loop route is very popular and efforts should be made to support its continued availability for public use. Recognizing that it is on privately-leased Woodlot land, the RDN should work closely with the woodlot owner to maintain trail access in the event of logging activities.

**Action 8:**

*Work with MFLNRO and the Woodlot owner to secure an agreement for the Loop Route at the Weigles Road Entrance as a recreational trail and maintain its use during woodlot activities. Sign the trail to inform users when they are outside the park boundary.*

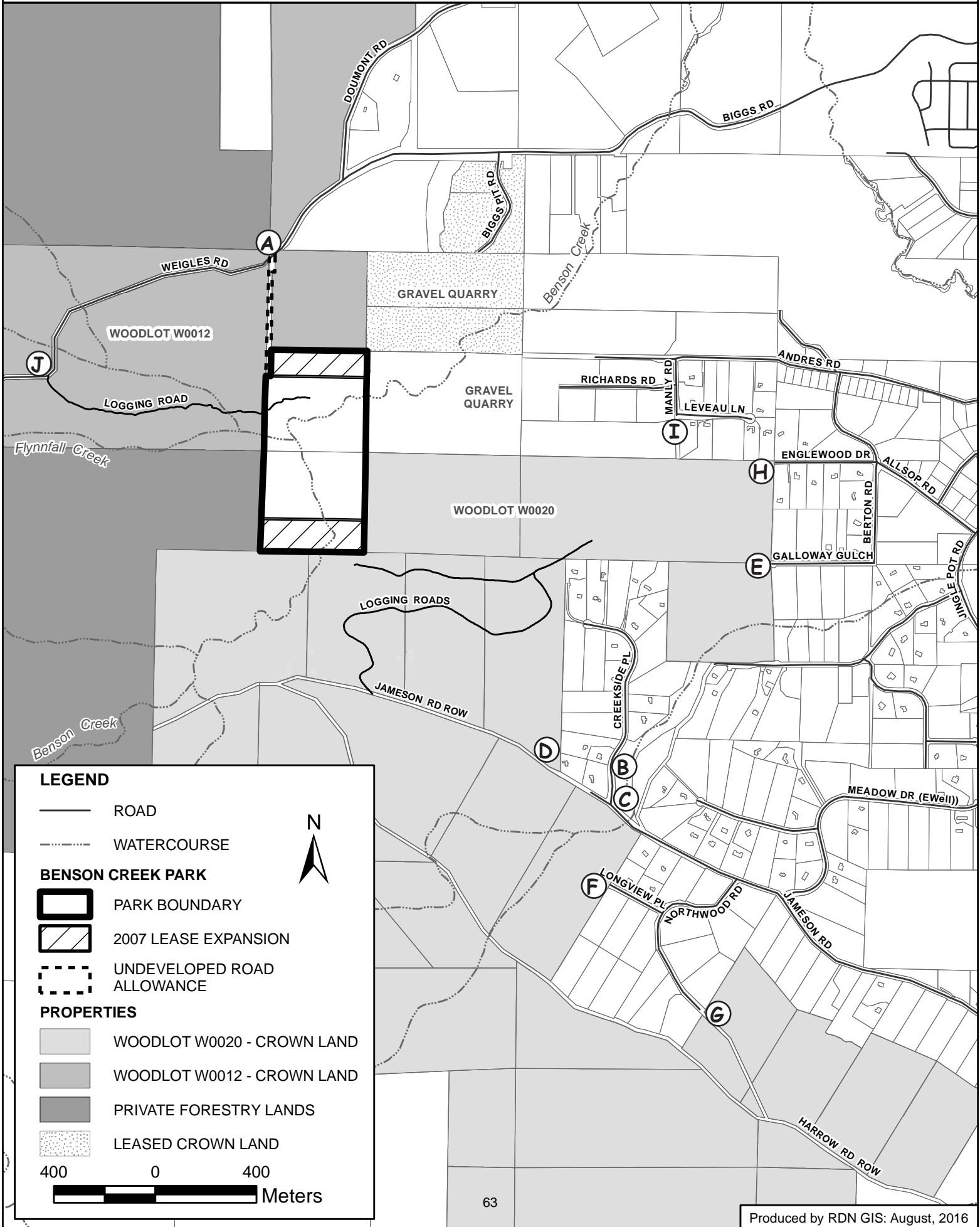


*The Weigles Road Loop traverses a small stream at the northeast corner of the park before crossing onto Woodlot W0012.*

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<sup>11</sup> Per Ursus Environmental Overview of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, p.17.

# APPENDIX B: Map of Lands Surrounding Benson Creek Falls Regional Park





### 3.2 Outreach



*A key component of Phase 1 was outreach to let people know about the planning process and how to participate. As part of the outreach process, signs were posted at BCFRP to inform park users.*

A key component of the planning process was to undertake outreach to solicit input from nearby residents, park users and others with an interest in the park. Outreach for the process occurred at the following key milestones in the project, these were:

- 1) Introduction and notification of the planning process initiation
- 2) Advertisement for public events
- 3) Notification of the draft plan and opportunity to provide comment
- 4) Notification of the final plan and approval

Messaging was provided through the following means:

- Project webpage hosted on the RDN Parks website, with regular updates and postings
- Signage within BCFRP, including a QR code link to take people to the project webpage
- Email communications to stakeholder groups and phone/meeting follow-up with key stakeholder groups
- Email communications to park user groups and other community group email/list-serves
- Door to door notification for nearby residents
- Flyer/post card drops at community parks/facilities
- Newspapers, community publications, social media ads and local radio ads to notify people about public events
- Posters on local area bulletin boards and postal boxes

### 3.3 Summary of Consultations

Several engagement strategies were used to solicit input about the plan update:

- Project Webpage & Social Media
- Park User Survey
- Public Open Houses
- Stakeholder Consultations
- Staff Working Group & Advisory Committee

Each consultation strategy is summarized below and further details about the events and outcomes are available in **Appendix B: Summary of Public and Stakeholder Consultation**.





**Project Webpage & Social Media:**

The RDN website hosted a BCFRP Management Plan Update page which hosted background information about the park, information about the planning process, the online survey and summaries of input and events. Throughout the process the page was updated to maintain current information.

In addition to the project webpage, regular updates and notification of events were posted to the RDN’s Facebook Page and on Twitter.

**Park User Survey:**

A survey was launched at the onset of the project to opportunities for community members to record their ideas about park use, current issues, opportunities and updates to the vision statement. This early feedback, combined with input from the first open house, was used to identify key management plan issues and recommend directions for the plan update.

**Survey Summary:**

<b>Dates:</b>	Open from May 27 <sup>th</sup> through June 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
<b>Locations:</b>	Available online and in hard copy at the first public open house and the RDN offices.
<b>Responses:</b>	106 completed surveys
<b>Key Feedback:</b>	<p><b>Vision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1999 Vision remains applicable today</li> <li>▪ Expanded recreation uses such as mountain biking and trail running could be considered</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Navigation &amp; park signage</li> <li>▪ Park access</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> <li>▪ Trail improvements</li> </ul>



*The project website hosted information about the project, process and events over the course of the project.*



**Public Open Houses:**

Over the course of the project, two public open houses events were completed.

**Open House #1**



Open House #1

A public open house was early in the process to obtain input on issues, opportunities, vision and program development and provide the public with an opportunity to record and discuss their ideas with RDN staff, the consulting team and each other.

**Open House #1 Summary:**

<b>Date:</b>	Saturday, June 22, 2013 10:00am – 1:00pm
<b>Locations:</b>	Main Venue – Creekside Place Community Park Satellite Venues – Weigles Road Park Entry and Jameson Road Access
<b>Participants:</b>	Approximately 75 contacts
<b>Key Feedback:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve accessibility to Ammonite Falls. Suggestions primarily focused on addition of stairs and a safer viewing platform.</li> <li>▪ Improve signage throughout the park. Suggestions indicated directional signage as a top priority, but also included park boundary information and park maps.</li> <li>▪ Improve parking and access into park. Ideas included improvements at the Weigles Road entry (with an improved route to Ammonite Falls), parking/access from Galloway Gulch, formalized parking/access at Jameson Road or potential access through the adjacent gravel quarry.</li> <li>▪ Add/improve connections to adjacent public lands (e.g. Creekside Place Community Park and Mount Benson Regional Park).</li> <li>▪ Address parking issues and garbage at Jameson Rd. access. Many residents adjacent to the park indicated the Jameson access was problematic due to roadside parking restricting vehicle passage, nuisance and garbage.</li> <li>▪ Protect and acknowledge geological history. Several residents told stories about fossils found in the park.</li> </ul>



**Open House #2**

A second public open house was held after the Draft Plan development to obtain input and confirmation on proposed vision and directions. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the plan through a series of interactive boards, as well as through a feedback form.

*Open House #2 Summary:*

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, October 23, 2013 5:00pm – 8:00pm
<b>Location:</b>	Mountain View Elementary School
<b>Participants:</b>	Approximately 45 attendees
<b>Key Feedback:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for the proposed vision and goals for the park.</li> <li>▪ General support for actions and priorities.</li> <li>▪ Caution should be exercised when increasing public access to BCFRP. If access becomes too easy there is risk of overuse and damage.</li> <li>▪ The RDN should consider opportunities to obtain more land to expand the park.</li> <li>▪ Signage improvements should include distance markers, trail maps and information about level of difficulty.</li> <li>▪ If use increases, issues between motorized and non-motorized use may occur. While conflicts weren't identified as an existing major concern within the park, the trails accessing the park may have more potential conflicts.</li> <li>▪ Parking options:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Even support for Option 1 (Creekside Place Community Park) and Option 2 (Corner of Creekside Pl. and Jameson Road)</li> <li>○ Little support for Option 3 (within woodlot)</li> <li>○ Alternate suggestions included having access only from Weigles Road or moving the north access to Galloway Gulch or Longview Road</li> <li>○ Concern that improved parking will attract more traffic to the area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Priority Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing stair access and viewing platform to Ammonite Falls</li> <li>○ Designing and Implementing a comprehensive park sign system</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Priorities for amenities at trailheads included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jameson Road: Trail maps, signage, restrooms</li> <li>○ Weigles Road: Signage, bench</li> <li>○ Mixed support</li> <li>○ Concerns there could be trail user conflicts</li> <li>○ Some current users like the challenge of the steeper slope and that it takes some effort to access the park</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Feedback on the proposed new Jameson Road Access Route (to avoid steep slopes):</li> <li>▪ Alternate routes suggested</li> </ul>
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***Stakeholder Consultations:***

Adjacent land owners, first nations and a variety of organizations, agencies and individuals were contacted to inform them about the process and seek their input about Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. See **Appendix C: Stakeholder Consultation List** for a list of stakeholders contacted during the planning process. The purpose of stakeholder engagement was to gain input on issues and opportunities relevant to the stakeholders and obtain feedback on draft plan directions.

Initial contact with all stakeholders was established through email to inform stakeholders about the management plan process and invite participation in the online survey and initial public open house. Subsequent contacts and meetings were undertaken during the draft plan development to meet with key stakeholders and review emerging draft plan directions.

First Nations with traditional territories in the vicinity of the park were contacted to invite their engagement in discussing any interests and concerns for the park. Letters of invitation signed by Joe Stanhope were sent in May 2013 to the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, Stz-uminus First Nations and the Te'Mexw Treaty Association and were followed up by email and phone calls. The First Nations were also directly invited by email letters and by phone in October 2013 to review and relay any concerns about the



Draft Management Plan. No direct concerns or issues were received during the project term.

### *Staff Working Group & Advisory Committee:*

Two committees were involved with the development of the plan update:

- **Staff Working Group:** This group was comprised of RDN parks staff and members of the consulting team. The working group met regularly over the course of the project to review ongoing project developments and directions.
- **BCFRP Advisory Committee:** This group was comprised of members of the Staff Working Group, along with representatives of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Parks & Trails Select Committee. Three meetings were held with this group at key project milestones to gain initial input on issues and opportunities and review outreach and engagement materials, review the draft plan and review the final plan.



APPENDIX D

**Shift Summary - Ammonite Falls  
Feb. 21-22, 2015**

Feb. 21, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
10:00	0	0	0
11:00	8	0	8
12:00	7	4	11
13:00	16	3	24
14:00	5	14	15

Feb. 22, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
10:00	2	0	2
11:00	6	0	8
12:00	12	2	18
13:00	9	6	21
14:00	11	10	22

**Summary:**

Our static guard made the above notations regarding cars parking in the designated parking area as request. Further to this information, the Guard also noted for Saturday Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> that he talked to all drivers arriving on site and did not have any problems. Everyone was compliant with the parking regulations and No one was towed on either day.



## Shift Summary - Ammonite Falls Feb. 28 – Mar. 1, 2015

### Feb. 28, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	4
12:00	4	3	7
13:00	6	2	11
14:00	10	4	17
15:00	9	6	20

**Roadside Parking:** None

**RCMP Contact:** None

**Number of Cars Towed:** None

**General Comments:** One off-road vehicle with two male occupants drove by and went around the gate – would not stop when told to.

### Mar. 1, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	5
12:00	9	4	10
13:00	10	3	17
14:00	10	7	20
15:00	1	12	9

**Roadside Parking:** 1 truck (BC# [REDACTED]) was parked in the “no parking” zone. Mid Island Towing and RCMP contacted. The owner arrived shortly before the tow truck and departed.

**RCMP Contact:** Once (see above)

**Number of Cars Towed:** None (see above – vehicle not actually towed)

**General Comments:** Two quads went around the gate and onto the site.



## Shift Summary - Ammonite Falls April 4 – April 5, 2015

### April 4, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	7
12:00	7	2	9
13:00	0	1	8
14:00	0	2	6
15:00	-	-	-

**Roadside Parking:** None  
**RCMP Contact:** None  
**Number of Cars Towed:** None

**General Comments:** Guard did not experience anything out of the ordinary

### April 5, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	9
12:00	9	1	17
13:00	25	7	35
14:00	2	22	15
15:00	4	7	12

**Roadside Parking:** 5  
**RCMP Contact:** 1  
**Number of Cars Towed:** None – one car ticketed

**General Comments:** When arriving on site at 1100, SG noted one car parked in the No Parking zone. Guard then called RCMP non-emergency, and RCMP dispatched car. M1 mobile attended site at 1130, RCMP arrived at 1140 - RCMP ticketed car and did not tow. Static guard did not report license plate number or take picture.

Also of note, at 1300 when there were 31 cars in the parking lot, 4 cars were parked along the Creekside Place due to the parking lot being full (hence the 4 extra cars that were tallied into the "roadside parking" section above).





## Shift Summary - Ammonite Falls May 16 – May 17, 2015

### April 4, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	7
12:00	8	5	10
13:00	7	8	9
14:00	9	4	14
15:00	8	8	14

**Roadside Parking:** None

**RCMP Contact:** Drive by between 1100-1200

**Number of Cars Towed:** None

**General Comments:** Guard did not experience anything out of the ordinary

### May 17, 2015

Time	Vehicles Arriving in Lot	Vehicles Leaving Lot	Total Number of Vehicles
11:00	--	--	8
12:00	11	8	11
13:00	4	8	7
14:00	5	6	6
15:00	5	4	7

**Roadside Parking:** None

**RCMP Contact:** 0

**Number of Cars Towed:** None

**General Comments:** Orange and Black Motorcycle parked in lot for ½ hour. Guard talked to him, he left at 1320. Guard cleaned up some garbage at the intersection of Creekside and Jamieson.

## Shift Summary- Ammonite Falls

**March 19th, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	3
1200	6
1300	15
1400	18
1500	18

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**March 20th, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	4
1200	4
1300	7
1400	6
1500	8

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**March 26th, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	9
1200	10
1300	10
1400	7
1500	12

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**March 27th, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	12
1200	16
1300	22
1400	18
1500	16

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Guard Comments:** The guards reported that there were no issues. They received no push back from anyone, and everyone parked in the parking lot and not on the road.

## Shift Summary- Ammonite Falls

**April 23rd, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	6
1200	20 arrived, 12 left
1300	7 arrived, 9 left
1400	9 arrived, 11 left
1500	8 arrived, 6 left

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**April 24th, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	6 in lot
1200	6 left, 4 arrived
1300	4 arrived, 8 out
1400	6 arrived, 3 out
1500	7 arrived, 1 out

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Guard Comments:** The guards reported that there were no issues. They received no push back from anyone, and everyone parked in the parking lot and not on the road.

## Shift Summary- Ammonite Falls

**May 21, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	10 in lot
1200	13 in lot
1300	12 in lot
1400	8 in lot
1500	11 in lot

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**May 22, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	9 in lot
1200	11 in lot
1300	14 in lot
1400	17 in lot
1500	14 in lot

**Roadside Parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Guard Comments:** The guards reported that there were no issues. They received no push back from anyone, and everyone parked in the parking lot and not on the road.

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date: Saturday June 25, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	9 cars @ 12:22
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Cloudy, showers off and on**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 12:22**

**Date: Sunday June 26, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	15 cars @ 14:28
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny and Clear**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 14:28**

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date: Saturday July 2, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	2 cars in lot @ 12:21
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny Day**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 12:21**

**Date: Sunday July 3, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	18 cars in lot @ 12:30
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny Day**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 12:30**

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date: Saturday July 9, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	7 cars in lot @12:30
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Rainy**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 12:30**

**Date: Sunday July 10, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	9 cars in lot @ 1321
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 13:21**



## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date: Saturday July 16, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	9 cars in lot @ 14:05
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 2**

**RCMP Contact:**

**Number of Cars Towed: 2**

**Grey Infinity** [REDACTED]

**Silver Mazda Protégé 5** [REDACTED]

**Weather: Cloudy**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 14:00**

**Date: Sunday July 17, 2016**

Time	Vehicles on Lot
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	15 cars @ 12:34
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny, partly cloudy**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 12:34**

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date: Saturday July 23, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	4 cars in lot @ 14:05
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 2**

**RCMP Contact:**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Sunny 28 Degrees**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 14:00**

**Date: Sunday July 24, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	6 Cars in lot @ 12:11
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: n/a**

**Number of Cars Towed: n/a**

**Weather: Sunny**

**Guard Comments: Picture taken at 14:05**

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	5 Vehicles @ 12:32
1300	
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Sunny 24 degrees**

**Guard Comments:**

**Date July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	
1300	7 Vehicles @ 13:28
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Overcast 21 degrees**

**Guard Comments:**

**Date August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	9 Vehicles @ 14:07
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Cloudy**

**Guard Comments:**

## Shift Summary- Benson Creek Falls

**Date August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	
1300	12 Vehicles @ 12:54
1400	
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Cloudy**

**Guard Comments:**

**Date Aug 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicles on Lot</b>
1100	
1200	
1300	
1400	6 Vehicles @ 14:51
1500	

**Jameson roadside parking: 0**

**RCMP Contact: 0**

**Number of Cars Towed: 0**

**Weather: Sun, cloud/rain mix**

**Guard Comments:**



Saturday June 25, 2016



Saturday July 2, 2016



Sunday July 3, 2016



Saturday July 9, 2016



Sunday July 10, 2016



Sunday July 24, 2016





Saturday July 30, 2016



Sunday July 31, 2016



Saturday August 6, 2016



Sunday August 7, 2016

# APPENDIX E

## Ammonite Falls

### Parking Concerns of Creekside Place/Jameson Road Property Owners

#### Key Issues

- -Continual parking in “No Parking” areas
- -Safety concerns caused by cars blocking Emergency Vehicle access to both the trails and the homes in the area
- -Cars blocking driveway accesses
- -Inadequate and confusing signage
- -Road construction design is narrow and the hill drops away. Lots of swing room is needed and one side of the roadway pavement is already eroding. Cars blocking intersection make it difficult for neighbours to get their trailers, boats and large work trucks around the corner.
- -Growing problems as the park is gaining in popularity
- -Parking lot is often now full on the weekends and park users are parking on Creekside as well
- -No garbage cans in the parking lot
- -Neighbours having to clean up the garbage from the parking lot
- -Worry that garbage will attract our local bears
- -Increased traffic down Creekside Road due to park users not knowing it is a dead end
- -Park users trespassing on private property (in spite of clear signage) at the end of Creekside Road to access trails and occasionally parking in the cul-de-sac
- -Footprints Security effective when they are present but people immediately parking illegally when they leave
- -Waste of taxpayers money to employ Footprints when other solutions are available
- -Drug deals on occasion occurring in the evenings in the parking lot
- -Vagrants sleeping in their vehicles in the parking lot on occasion
- -Waste of RCMP resources having to spend time on parking issues

#### Communication Concerns

- -Lack of communication between the RDN and neighbours
- -Neighbours getting the “run around” from RDN staff. Having concerns dismissed by RDN staff and rudeness by RDN staff to three neighbours

- -Being told it is not an RDN issue, to phone RCMP or Ministry of Transportation and Highways (who then refer back to RDN) rather than being directed to RDN officials who are willing to listen to concerns and work collaboratively on solutions with the RCMP and neighbours
- -Many RDN decisions have not only created more problems but have shifted the responsibility onto neighbours for acting as parking regulators and for garbage maintenance
- -Former residents Constable Jen Allen and Assistant Fire Chief Mary Drakely were very helpful to neighbours. Since they both moved, we have noticed an increase in problems

### Possible Solutions

- -Willingness of RDN to work collaboratively with neighbours and communicate with neighbours on a regular basis
- -Larger, clearer signage
- -Regular towing of parking offenders
- -A clearly defined process for neighbours to report offenders and have immediate action taken (perhaps two neighbours who will have the authority for calling the towing company)
- -"No post" barrier on the high side of Jameson Road
- -Enlarge capacity of the parking lot on the south side (towards Jameson Road) that will also increase the site lines and visibility of the parking lot from the intersection
- -Well sealed garbage cans in the parking lot with regular garbage removal
- -Notice of "Bears active in the area" signs
- -Brainstorming session of other possible improvements

## Creekside/Jameson Roads Community Issues

Problem Synopsis: The Creekside/Jameson Road neighbourhood area has been experiencing an increasing influx of vehicle and pedestrian traffic, as an access point for Benson Creek Regional Park (Ammonite Falls). Cars parking on the roads block driveways and impede usage of the intersection frequently creating frustrating and unsafe situations. Increased traffic has also brought people trespassing on private lands, garbage strewn about which attracts bears, use of trails and the community park as an outdoor bathroom, use of the community park for illegal activities and overnight camping, and speeders and people doing "brake stands" on our roads. And, inadequate RDN signage adds to peoples' confusion. Those are only some of our neighbourhood concerns. Neighbours have been unfairly left with the policing of inappropriate behaviour due to inability of the RDN and MOTI to either ticket or tow cars, and the RCMP ranking our concerns as a low priority, due to staff shortages.

In an attempt to ease the parking situation, the RDN chose to use our Community Park to create a parking lot for people using the Benson Falls Regional Park, rather than develop a parking lot off of Weigles Road, which already has a dedicated road into the park for that purpose. (Please see attached plan.) The result was a rapid increase of traffic to our neighbourhood, with social media promoting of Jameson Road/Creekside as now being the main access for Ammonite Falls.

Our problems have increased. This was not what our community wanted!

### Creekside Road/Jameson Road Residents Requests

1. We want our Community Park restored to its original purpose.
  - Create a new parking lot off of Weigles Road as the main access to Benson Falls Regional Park;
  - Permanently close the parking lot in our community park and restore it back to being a green area with the intended trail through to the Meadow Drive area
  - Place signage notifying park users that the Creekside lot will be closing and parking will be transferred to the Weigles Road lot, to begin 'retraining' parkers users
  - Advertise locally and notify all current hiking websites when that change is nearing
2. Until the new parking lot is created...

- Improve signage; for example larger "No Parking/ Towing in effect" signs along Jameson and Creekside Roads, more and larger signs directing people to the parking lot, bear/cougar warning signs
- Please do not put a toilet into the parking lot, as most residents believe it will only increase illegal camping in the lot, and further establish the lot as "the" parking lot for Ammonite Falls. Providing fewer services will likely deter parking lot users, and we will have to continue to put up with toilet paper and feces on the trails until then.
- Most residents do not want a path created from the lot to Jameson Road, again, as this further legitimizes the parking lot
- Most residents do not want a kiosk for the above reason
- Most residents do not want the parking lot increased in any way
- Ask MOTI to move the small "Dead End" sign from the left hand side of the road under the stop sign, to the right hand side of the turn onto Creekside Road, where it can be seen by drivers
- Ask the RCMP for more regular checks of parking violators on weekends
- Continue usage of "Footprints Security" personnel on long weekends

3. RDN to contact the Editors of the websites such as those below, and have them remove directions to park in our community park or park on the side of Jameson Road

- [www.trailpeak.com](http://www.trailpeak.com)
- - "Continue straight on Jameson onto the gravel. You can park a few hundred feet up the gravel, near the yellow gate."
- [www.getonthebeatenpath.blogspot.ca](http://www.getonthebeatenpath.blogspot.ca)
- - "At the end of Jameson there is a paved sideroad to the right but keep going straight on Jameson and park near the yellow gate."
- [www.nanaimoinformation.com](http://www.nanaimoinformation.com)
- - " the approach from Jameson Rd (east) is more straightforward" "take the first right onto Jameson Rd. Stay right and look for the Creekside Place Community Park parking lot."
- [www.lornecollicutt.com](http://www.lornecollicutt.com)
- - repeats nanaimo information directions
- [www.tourismnanaimo.com](http://www.tourismnanaimo.com)
- - Repeats Trailpeak instruction to park on the side of the road near the yellow gate!
- [www.inclinemage.ca](http://www.inclinemage.ca)

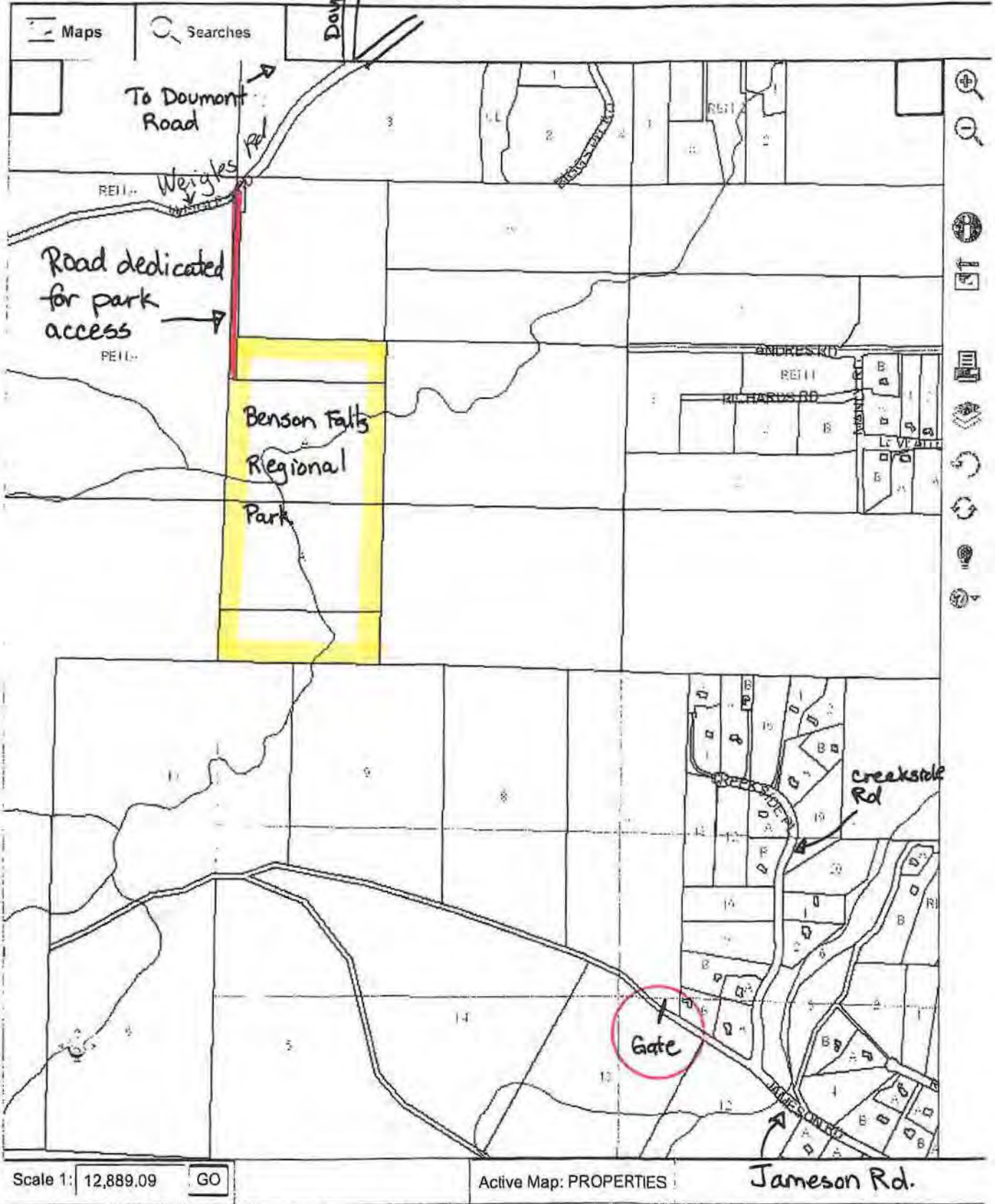
- - "drive down Jameson Road and park in the Creekside Place Community Park parking lot"
- [www.fototripper.com](http://www.fototripper.com)
- - Take a right on Jameson and drive until the road ends at a logging road complete with a yellow gate. There is about enough space for one car right next to the gate so I prefer to parking further down the paved road so as not to block access to any of the private residences that are on that logging road"
- [www.girlwithadogandgoodshoes.wordpress.com](http://www.girlwithadogandgoodshoes.wordpress.com)
- - "Drive to the end of Jameson Road until it ends at Creekside Road. Park here along the side of the road."

These are just a sampling of hiking websites. Websites geared towards people who mountain bike, and ATV will also need to be checked.

4. RDN to liaise with Tourism Nanaimo and other groups promoting Nanaimo to clarify how to promote Ammonite Falls, in a manner that is respectful to our community

We recognize that there will be no easy fix for the woes we have been experiencing for several years now. We also recognize that they have increased dramatically since the parking lot was installed in our Community Park. We ask that the RDN continue to work collaboratively with our neighbourhood, in hopes of restoring some of the peace we used to have in our community.

Thank you very much.





**SURVEY PLAN of BLOCK A of SECTIONS 17, 18 & 19, RANGE 1, MOUNTAIN DISTRICT.**

167895

BCGS 92F.020

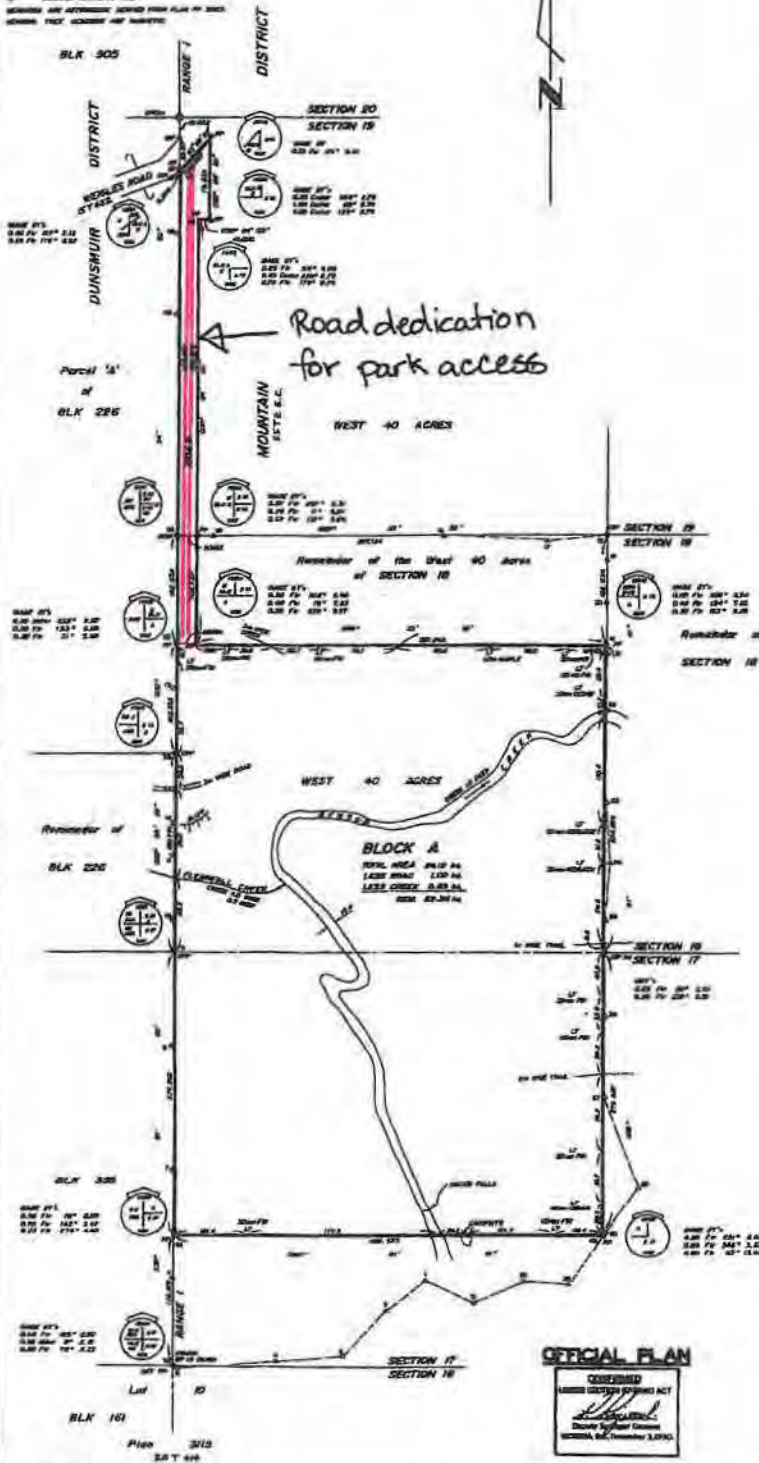
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SCALE 1:2000



**LEGEND**

- OPEN WORKED AND CONCRETE MONUMENT FOUND
- OPEN WORKED OLD IRON PILE FOUND
- OPEN WORKED OLD IRON PIPE FOUND
- OPEN WORKED OLD CAPPED IRON PILE FOUND
- OPEN WORKED OLD PILE NOT SET
- OPEN WORKED BURNED PILE
- OPEN WORKED AND TRIP MARK
- OPEN WORKED OLD BRASS TREE MARK
- OPEN WORKED CONCRETE MARK
- MARKING AND MEASUREMENT TAKEN FROM PLAN OF 1892.
- MARKING ONLY MEASUREMENT NOT TAKEN.



From	To	Bearing	Distance
1-2	202° 46' 20"	46.725	
2-3	201° 46' 20"	46.725	
3-4	142° 30' 30"	51.732	
4-5	46° 14' 18"	54.884	
5-20	207° 02' 00"	5.000	
2-8	248° 15' 00"	52.950	
8-9	100° 04' 30"	48.738	
9-7	320° 41' 30"	47.920	
7-6	000° 00' 00"	117.176	
6-8	320° 42' 00"	48.648	
8-10	320° 22' 00"	48.600	
10-12	000° 22' 00"	48.600	
12-11	320° 02' 00"	48.600	
11-13	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
13-14	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
14-15	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
15-16	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
16-17	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
17-18	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
18-19	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
19-20	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
20-21	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
21-22	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
22-23	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
23-24	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
24-25	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
25-26	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
26-27	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
27-28	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
28-29	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
29-30	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
30-31	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
31-32	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
32-33	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
33-34	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
34-35	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
35-36	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
36-37	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
37-38	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
38-39	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
39-40	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
40-41	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
41-42	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
42-43	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
43-44	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
44-45	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
45-46	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
46-47	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
47-48	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
48-49	000° 02' 00"	48.600	
49-50	000° 02' 00"	48.600	

Road dedication for park access

**OFFICIAL PLAN**

COVERED

LANDS SURVEY ACT

*[Signature]*

Survey Officer

BRITISH COLUMBIA

I, JOHN E. HALLAM, a British Columbia Land Surveyor, in the City of Vancouver, at British Columbia, certify that the accuracy of the foregoing has been personally ascertained by me and that I am duly qualified to practice the Survey Act of British Columbia.

4 T 1485

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**TO:** Dennis Trudeau  
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** September 8, 2016

**FROM:** Tom Osborne  
General Manager of Recreation & Parks

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 20, 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT: Regional Parks Parcel Tax Review**

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund continue to be collected by way of a parcel tax.

**PURPOSE**

To review taxation approaches for the Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund.

**BACKGROUND**

As part of the 2016 Annual Budget and Five Year Financial Plan approval process, the Regional Board was considering annual parcel tax increases to the Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund. Through this process the Regional Board increased the parcel tax from \$13.00 to \$14.00 for 2016. During these deliberations by the Board, additional information was requested on other forms of taxation that the Board could use as an alternative to the parcel tax approach for this service area.

At the April 26, 2016 Regional Board Meeting the following resolution #16-250 was approved:

*“That Bylaw No. 1231 be referred to staff for alternatives for the 2017 - 2022 parcel tax rate increases.”*

**History of Regional Parks Function and Parcel Tax**

In 1995 the Regional Parks Function was established with the Electoral Areas only as participants.

In 1999 a Regional Services Review was initiated and in December 2000 the Regional District and its member municipalities entered into a Regional Parks Services Agreement. The agreement provided for a municipal contribution to the operations and maintenance of Regional Parks allocated on a per capita basis.

The Regional Services Review also resulted in new sports field and recreation facilities cost sharing agreements to include Electoral Area funding for certain municipally provided services. It is important to note that the agreements for Regional Parks and the cost sharing of recreation facilities and sports fields were approved as a package in 2000. *Appendix I* provides a summary of the contributions provided

through these agreements from the Electoral Areas and Lantzville to the Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum Beach since 2001.

Consideration of the establishment of Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund along with full participation by all municipalities and Electoral Areas as participants in the Regional Parks Function and related bylaw took place in 2005.

Through this process Board members discussed potential funding approaches. Various forms of taxation were discussed with Board members and respective administrative staff within each municipality. Forms of taxation under consideration at that time included assessment based, population based, parcel tax based or a combination of the three forms of taxation. Through further dialogue with the Regional Board the following four options were formally considered:

1. Amend the service to add the three remaining municipalities of Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum Beach and apportion costs using the existing 50/50 assessment – population formula for acquisitions and per capita for operations.
2. Amend the service to add the three remaining municipalities of Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Change the acquisitions funding approach from property taxes to a \$10.00 parcel / folio tax. Operations and maintenance cost sharing would be unchanged at a per capita basis and would continue to be collected as a property tax.
3. Amend the service as outlined in Alternative 2 above to include Nanaimo at a \$10.00 parcel / folio tax for capital acquisitions (as Nanaimo was looking to advance the purchase of Mount Benson at this time) and allow for a four year phase in of the parcel / folio tax for the municipalities of Lantzville, Parksville and Qualicum Beach starting in 2007.

Operations and maintenance cost sharing would be unchanged at a per capita basis and would continue to be collected as a property tax.

The Regional Board approved moving forward with Option 3 above and on October 25, 2005 the related bylaw was approved.

As part of the options noted above, amendments were recommended and subsequently approved to adjust contributions from Electoral Areas and Lantzville (former Electoral Area D) by \$200,000 over a five year period to recognize land purchases commitments that were made prior to participation by the three remaining municipalities.

Further Amendments to the parcel tax were undertaken in subsequent year as follows: \$11 - 2011 / \$12 - 2012 / \$13 – 2013 / \$14 – 2016.

Tables in *Appendix I* provide a summary of the contributions provided to the Regional Parks Acquisition Capital Fund from all participants since 2001.

For reference, the list below shows the Regional Parks that have been secured since 1988. *Appendix II* provides additional details where the acquisition and capital funds collected were expended since 2001.

1. Beachcomber R.P. – donation (1988) (1 ha)
2. Benson Creek Falls R.P – Crown Licence (1991) (31 ha)
3. Little Qualicum River R.P. – secured through rezoning (1999) (44 ha)
4. Nanaimo River R.P. - shared purchase with other land trusts (2000) (56 ha)
5. Horne Lake R.P – secured through rezoning (2002) (109 ha)
6. Descanso Bay R.P.– purchase (2002) (16 ha)
7. Little Qualicum River RCA – purchase with land trust (2003) (5 ha)
8. Englishman River – shared purchase with other land trusts (2005) (207 ha)

9. Mount Benson – purchase with land trust (2006) (212 ha)
10. Coats Marsh – purchase with land trust (2008) (46 ha)
11. Mount Arrowsmith Massif R.P. – Crown Licence (2008) (1300 ha)
11. Moorcroft R.P. – purchase with funding assistance from land trusts (2011) (34 ha)

## ALTERNATIVES

1. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund continue to be collected by way of a parcel tax.
2. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a property assessment tax and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
3. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a tax based on per capita (population) and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
4. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a tax based 50% Assessment and 50% per capita (population) and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
5. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of land improvements and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
6. That the Regional Board provide alternative direction on taxation for the Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Using the 2016 approved budget for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund as a reference, the table below details how the allocation of taxation amongst all participants would change depending on the method of taxation. Figures are based on 2016 revised roll assessment values and 2011 census data.

Participant	Parcel Tax @ \$14	Property (Land & Improvements) Assessment Tax	100% Population Based Tax	50% Assessment/ 50% Population	Improvements Only Assessment Tax
City of Nanaimo	\$474,152	\$505,288	\$540,937	\$523,112	\$543,233
District of Lantzville	\$20,818	\$23,818	\$23,242	\$23,530	\$20,128
City of Parksville	\$93,212	\$80,212	\$77,303	\$78,758	\$74,904
Town of Qualicum Beach	\$67,788	\$64,219	\$56,069	\$60,143	\$59,858
Electoral Area 'A'	\$40,642	\$35,695	\$46,439	\$41,066	\$35,740
Electoral Area 'B'	\$52,822	\$33,919	\$26,108	\$30,014	\$29,591
Electoral Area 'C'	\$19,922	\$29,735	\$20,725	\$25,229	\$17,571
Electoral Area 'E'	\$47,572	\$55,843	\$37,939	\$46,891	\$53,232
Electoral Area 'F'	\$41,860	\$38,072	\$47,904	\$42,988	\$41,003
Electoral Area 'G'	\$51,996	\$49,174	\$46,200	\$47,687	\$46,530
Electoral Area 'H'	\$35,252	\$30,061	\$23,170	\$26,618	\$24,246
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$946,036</b>	<b>\$946,036</b>	<b>\$946,036</b>	<b>\$946,036</b>	<b>\$946,036</b>

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Reviewing the ways of securing Regional Parks and Acquisition and Capital development Fund align with the Board's Strategic Plan in protecting and enhancing the environment. The Board also desires to ensure appropriate service levels are available to residents, and the costs for these services are shared as fairly as possible among those who benefit.

## SUMMARY

As part of the 2016 Annual Budget and Five Year Financial Plan approval process, the Regional Board was considering annual parcel tax increases to the Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund. Through this process the Regional Board increased the parcel tax from \$13.00 to \$14.00 for 2016.

During these deliberations by the Board, additional information was requested on April 26, 2016 for staff to bring forward a report on other forms of taxation that could be considered as an alternative to the parcel tax approach for this service area.

The alternatives as provided in this report are as follows:

1. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund continue to be collected by way of a parcel tax.
2. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a property assessment tax and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
3. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a tax based on per capita (population) and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
4. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of a tax based 50% Assessment and 50% per capita (population) and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.
5. That taxation for Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development Fund be collected by way of land improvements and Bylaw 1231 be amended to reflect this change.

As outlined in the report, contributions from each jurisdiction will vary depending on the form of taxation. With this information provided as requested, the Regional Board can now consider the most appropriate form of taxation to use for collecting funds for the Regional Parks Acquisition and Capital Development fund.



Report Writer



C.A.O. Concurrence

**Appendix I - Recreation Facilities & Sports Fields Funding and Regional Parks Acquisition Capital Fund**

<b>D68 RECREATION SERVICES CONTRIBUTIONS</b>				<b>D69 RECREATION SERVICES</b>	
<b>2001 - 2016 TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>				<b>CONTRIBUTIONS 2001 - 2016</b>	
	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Sportsfield</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>SPORTS FIELDS</b>
Lantzville	\$ 2,883,587	\$ 1,190,001	\$ 4,073,588		<b>Total</b>
Area A	\$ 3,957,082	\$ 1,061,536	\$ 5,018,618	Area E	\$ 812,685
Area B	\$ 1,376,688	\$ 93,279	\$ 1,469,967	Area F	\$ 1,037,688
Area C	\$ 1,687,643	\$ 633,538	\$ 2,321,181	Area G	\$ 1,380,533
Area D	\$ 752,892	\$ 213,051	\$ 965,943	Area H	\$ 326,747
	<b>\$10,657,892</b>	<b>\$ 3,191,405</b>	<b>\$ 13,849,297</b>		<b>\$ 3,557,653</b>
	<b>PAYMENTS</b>				<b>PAYMENTS</b>
<b>To City of Nanaimo</b>	\$10,619,925	\$ 2,619,015	\$ 13,238,940	<b>To Parksville</b>	\$ 1,908,039
<b>Held for RDN facilities</b>	\$ 37,967	\$ 572,390	\$ 610,357	<b>To Qualicum Beach</b>	\$ 1,644,574
				Sports fields only, as RDN owns facilities	

<b>REGIONAL PARKS</b>	
<b>ACQUISITIONS REQUISITION</b>	
<b>TOTAL COLLECTED 2001-2016</b>	
City of Nanaimo	\$ 4,177,718
Parksville	\$ 659,246
Qualicum Beach	\$ 479,882
Lantzville	\$ 198,355
Area A	\$ 528,411
Area B	\$ 595,666
Area C	\$ 245,692
Area D (pre-Lantzville)	\$ 63,277
Area E	\$ 581,162
Area F	\$ 526,728
Area G	\$ 632,511
Area H	\$ 408,996
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,097,643</b>
Parcel tax effective 2006	
Prior to 2006 = EA's only assessment based	

**Appendix II - Regional Parks Acquisition Capital Fund Expenditures**

Spending since 2001, includes \$437,000 carried forward from pre 2001 requisitions

Amounts spent from tax requisition only, does not include purchases funded by grants and donations

Cumulative Amount held in Reserve @ Aug 31, 2016									\$ 2,407,400
Cumulative in Reserve for municipal rail trail @ Aug 31, 2016									450,000
2016 Legal for Mt Benson, Donation agreements, E&N Rail Trail									9,188
E&N Rail Trail Project									28,526
Moorecroft post purchase capital upgrades									261,527
Moorecroft debt servicing for borrowed portion of purchase									595,528
Moorecroft purchase downpayments include legal + surveys + initial repairs									2,689,434
Horne Lake Capital projects (campsite development/toilet replace, trails, water system)									205,356
Coats Marsh Berm & post purchase capital upgrades									45,500
Coats Marsh Purchase 2008 to 2012									307,610
Englishman River Estuary Boardwalk									8,265
Englishman River Purchase Agreement 2004									320,152
Little Qualicum Estuary - Purchase share from Ducks Unlimited includes legal etc 2003 to 2007									106,488
Little Qualicum Estuary Env Review									2,564
Descanso Bay Purchase 2002 to 2007									502,921
Descanso Bay Capital Upgrades includes house demo									14,996
Mt. Benson upgrades (Witchcraft Lake Parking)									70,172
Mt. Benson land purchase includes legal, debt issuing, interim financing net of NALT contribution									584,595
Nanaimo River RP Land Conservancy Lease Payment Agreement									150,000
Lighthouse Country Regional Trail including Nash/Ridgewell Bridge net of grant funding									150,657
Top Bridge Construction portion funded by parcel tax net of grants									185,686
Haslam Creek Bridge net of grants									74,559
Management Plans (Moorecroft, Mt. Benson, Arrowsmith, Coats Marsh, Little Qualicum)									129,730
Miscellaneous Legal from 2001-2010 - includes Coats, Mt Benson or other									36,131
DCC bylaw review 2011-2012									41,876
Regional Parks Acquisition Criteria Review 2008									15,666
Regional Parks 2006 taxation review - municipal inclusion, parcel tax, Regional Perspectives mailout postage									32,923
<b>Total expense</b>									<b>\$ 9,427,451</b>

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**TO:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Parks Services

**DATE:** August 29, 2016

**FROM:** Joan Michel  
Parks and Trails Coordinator

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 20, 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT:** Salish Sea Marine Trail Proposal from BC Marine Trails Network Association

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**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Board direct staff to continue to show support for the concept of marine trails and recognize paddlers as a stakeholder group when undertaking park planning.
2. That the Board direct staff to work with the BC Marine Trails Network Association on developing for Board approval a partnership agreement that establishes Descanso Bay Regional Park as a Salish Sea Marine Trail camping site, and the Nelson Road Boat Launch (Area A) and Blueback Community Park (Area E) as Salish Sea Marine Trail access points, and provides for continuing site assessment and potential expansion of RDN park and water access sites to be included in BC marine trails.

**PURPOSE**

To review the BC Marine Trails Network Association’s proposed Salish Sea Marine Trail and partnership proposal.

**BACKGROUND**

The BC Marine Trails Network Association (BCMTNA) is a registered non-profit society comprised of ten paddling clubs and numerous individuals and businesses located on Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the lower Mainland. The BCMTNA launched its first network of trails for paddlers, the Gulf Island Marine Trail, in 2011. At that time, the trail involved 27 existing waterfront parks, campgrounds and access sites from Island View Beach Regional Park (CRD) in the south to Newcastle Island (BC Parks) and Descanso Bay Regional Park on Gabriola (RDN).

In the following years, the BCMTNA’s web page map revealed additional sites stretching up and around Vancouver Island. Additional sites within the Regional District ranged from private waterfront lands like Nanoose’s Schooner Cove Marina and the Qualicum First Nation’s Big Qualicum River Campground to MoTI water accesses such as the Nelson Road Boat Launch (Area A community park facility at the water access) and Buccaneer Beach (Area H). One RDN community park, Blueback (Area E), is shown on the BCMTNA map.

Participation in the Gulf Island Marine Trail and inclusion of other sites like the Nelson Road Boat Launch and Blueback on the BCMTNA map have not involved extra work on the part of the RDN. Descanso Bay Regional Park and the Nelson Road Boat Launch already serve the paddling community. Blueback is currently being improved as a paddler’s access point.



Aside from the BCMTNA web site, there has until recently been no obvious promotion of the Gulf Island Marine Trail or the Marine Trail concept, at least in the mid-Island area. The Descanso Bay Regional Park brochure includes a note about the Marine Trail and provides a web address. No dedicated signage was ever developed by the Association to mark marine trail sites, and the RDN was not contacted again by the BCMTNA until the spring of 2016.

The BCMTNA is now rejuvenating and looking to develop an association with the Trans Canada Trail in order to help build recognition of existing marine trail networks and advance the overall concept. Since the TCT is focused on one linear cross-country connection, the BCMTNA has conceived the Salish Sea Marine Trail – termed a ‘blueway’ as opposed to a network – to complement the land-based Victoria to Nanaimo to Vancouver stretch of the TCT. At the June 26, 2016 Regional Board meeting, BCMTNA Acting Project Manager John Kimantas briefed members on marine trails and requested that the RDN partner in the Salish Sea Marine Trail initiative. Subsequently, Staff obtained further information from the Association on its status, goals and Salish Sea Marine Trail partnership proposal in particular.

At this time, the BCMTNA is actively identifying camping and access sites for the Salish Sea Marine Trail which involves Electoral Areas A, B and E. While Association members are still out scouting, no RDN regional or community sites other than existing BCMTNA identified access points Nelson Road Boat Launch and Blueback Community Park and camping site Descanso Bay Regional Park are considered suitable for inclusion in the proposed Salish Sea Marine Trail. Moorecroft Regional Park was examined but found wanting as an access point at low tide. Similarly, Beachcomber Regional Park is not particularly suitable as an access for paddlers. It is too early to determine the status of Electoral Area E’s new Oak Leaf Drive Community Park. There are no additional RDN park possibilities along the Cedar waterfront at this time, and none required on Gabriola Island for the Salish Sea Marine Trail.

The current BCMTNA organization is intent on creating formal partnership agreements with those who own or manage the access and camping sites shown on its public maps. They have no agreement template developed as yet and continue to work out what might be required. The Association is also concerned with ensuring that paddlers’ interests be taken into consideration by local government in general park planning. They are proposing establishment of a marine trail advisory panel. It has been made clear to the Association that inclusion of a site in a BCMTNA marine trail requires agreement by the relevant landowner or manager.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board direct staff to recognize paddlers as stakeholders in park planning, and work with the BC Marine Trail Network Association on formalizing the inclusion of select RDN owned or managed parks and water accesses in marine trails and, specifically, in the Salish Sea Marine Trail.
2. That the Board direct staff not to formalize any participation in the BC marine trail network and alternate direction be provided.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The BCMTNA has been encouraged to produce some signage at their cost, similar to what the Trans Canada Trail organization provides for participating trail organizations. At present, there are no costs associated with pursuing the proposed marine trail initiative aside from staff time. To the extent that the Salish Sea Marine Trail is incorporated into the Trans Canada Trail, some minor event-related costs may arise during 2017 in order for the RDN to participate in the Canada-wide celebrations.

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Salish Sea represents a significant recreational playground for the Regional District. Kayaking is a growth sport and leisure past-time that features highly now in eco-tourism development. Formally extending trail planning work at the RDN to include marine as well as land-based trails will help the RDN maximize its tourism potential as well as clarify ocean frontage resources and development for residents.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

The BC Marine Trail Network Association wishes to engage with the Regional District in the formal planning and establishment of marine trail access and camping sites. Specifically, the Association wishes to conclude a Salish Sea Marine Trail in association with the Trans Canada Trail and in time for the national trail's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Three long-standing waterfront RDN park sites, the Nelson Road Boat Launch (Area A), Descanso Bay Regional Park (Area B) and Blueback Community Park (Area E), are well situated to be formally recognized as part of a marine trail network. No additional work is required to perform as a marine trail site, though installation of Association-produced signage is recommended. Staff have provided initial feedback to the Association on a draft partnership agreement but more work will be required to achieve a useful document.



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Report Writer



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Manager Concurrence



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GM Concurrence



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A/C.A.O. Concurrence

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**TO:** Wendy Marshall  
Manager of Parks Services

**DATE:** August 29, 2016

**FROM:** Joan Michel  
Parks and Trails Coordinator

**MEETING:** RPTSC – September 6, 2016

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT:** Trans Canada Trail - Island Timberlands Private Lands Licence Renewal

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### RECOMMENDATION

That the Board accept Island Timberland's offer to renew the Region's non-exclusive licence permitting approximately 16 km of Trans Canada Trail.

### PURPOSE

To review the tenure status of the Trans Canada Trail and obtain approval to renew for two years the regional trail licence involving Island Timberlands property.

### BACKGROUND

In 1999, Island Timberlands (then Weyerhaeuser) granted the RDN a five-year renewable non-exclusive licence for access to private forest lands for the purpose of securing volunteer initiated Trans Canada Trail (TCT). The Island Timberlands licence was renewed under similar terms in 2004 and 2009. In 2014 a two-year renewal was offered and accepted, and this term has now expired. Island Timberlands subsequent two-year licence renewal offer for 2016-2018 is attached as *Appendix I*.

For the short stretch of TCT situated on TimberWest private lands, the RDN was granted a five-year non-exclusive licence by that company first in 2002 and then in 2007. The 2007 agreement contains three automatic five-year roll-overs which leaves it active until 2026. Both TimberWest and Island Timberlands private land TCT licenses concern trail in addition to the Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge.

The TCT is one of seven developed long trails within the RDN. Located within Electoral Area C, the TCT begins at the border with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (the Bush Creek Trail) and ends at the City of Nanaimo's Colliery Dam Trail. A gap exists where the RDN's TCT route is proposed to cross the Nanaimo River.

The RDN's TCT is enjoyed by hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. The Extension Ridge section south of the City is most popular with mountain bikers while the White Pine section off the end of Spruston Road is a favourite of the mid-Island equestrian community. Many people enjoy just a short trip off the end of Timberlands Road by the airport to take in the Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board accept Island Timberlands' offer of a two-year licence renewal for Trans Canada Trail.
2. That the Board not to accept Island Timberlands' licence renewal and alternate direction be provided.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of Island Timberlands's 2016-2018 licence renewal is \$525 plus GST. This will be covered by the 2016 Regional Parks budget. Trail maintenance will continue to be covered by the same budget.

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Renewal of Island Timberlands' licence to use their private forest lands for public trail reaffirms the value placed by the Regional Board on the provision of recreational amenities for residents and the development of tourism opportunities for visitors. Participation in the national trail enhances the Region's position as an eco-tourism destination. It is noted that 2017 will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TCT (as well as Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday) and celebrations that spotlight the national trail can be expected.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

The 2014-2016 Trans Canada Trail licence from Island Timberlands has expired and the RDN has been offered another two-year renewal. The cost of renewal is \$525 plus GST. Maintained by RDN Parks staff in collaboration with user groups, the Trans Canada Trail provides much valued authorized access to the private forestlands south of the City of Nanaimo.



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Report Writer



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Manager Concurrence



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G.M. Concurrence



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A/C.A.O. Concurrence



Island Timberlands LP  
65 Front Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5H9

Tel (250) 755-3552  
Fax (250) 755-3540  
Email dsakai@islandtimberlands.com

Our File: G-4413

August 16, 2016

RDN Recreation and Parks, Oceanside Place  
830 W. Island Highway  
Parksville, B.C  
V9P 2X4

**Attention: Joan Michel**

Dear Joan:

**Re: Renewal of Non-Exclusive Licence – Parts of Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 16, Range 2. Parts of Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, Range 1, All Within Cranberry District. Section 4, Range 1, Nanaimo District. Parts of Block 87, Bright, Douglas and Cranberry Districts. Block 714, Bright District Containing approximately 15.99 Kilometers of Trail.**

Island Timberlands Limited Partnership (ITLP), hereby offers to renew your Licence dated August 1, 1999, and any subsequent amendments and renewals, on the following terms and conditions:

1. The term of this renewal shall be for two years commencing August 1, 2016 and expiring July 31, 2018.
2. The fee for this renewal shall be \$525.00 for the term plus GST, payable on receipt of invoice.

All other terms and conditions of the Licence dated August 1, 1999 and any subsequent amendments and renewals will remain in effect during the term. Please sign where indicated in the space below to indicate your acceptance of these terms and conditions, and return the “original” agreement to the address shown above. The “copy” is for your records. Island Timberlands Limited Partnership’s G.S.T. Registration Number is R860211499 RT0001.

Yours truly,  
**Island Timberlands Limited Partnership,**  
by its general partner Island Timberlands GP Ltd.  
Real Estate Group

Denise Sakai,  
Real Estate Co-ordinator

Agreed to and accepted by:  
**Authorized signatory of**  
RDN Recreation and Parks

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

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