

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

**REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SELECT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, February 5, 2013
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

3-4 Minutes of the Regular Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held December 4, 2012.

Motion to approve Minutes.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

5-6 **W. Marshall, RDN to P. Hills** RE: Fence Construction at Moorcroft Regional Park

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REPORTS

7-13 **Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects
November/December 2012**

14-39 **Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan Terms of Reference**

Motion to receive Reports.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM DELEGATIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn.

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.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday April 16, 2013

12:00pm – RDN Committee Room

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

**MINUTES OF THE
REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2012 AT 12:00PM
IN THE RDN COMMITTEE ROOM**

Attendance: Director Diane Brennan, Chair, City of Nanaimo
Director Maureen Young, Electoral Area 'C',
Alternate Director Leanne Salter, Electoral Area 'F'
Director Brian Dempsey, District of Lantzville
Director Howard Houle, Electoral Area 'B'
Director Marc Lefebvre, City of Parksville

Staff: Tom Osborne, General Manager of Recreation and Parks
Paul Thorkelsson, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Wendy Marshall, Manager of Park Services
Margaret Paridaen, Regional Parks Planner
Ann-Marie Harvey, Recording Secretary

Regrets: Director Joe Stanhope, Electoral Area 'G'
Director Julian Fell, Electoral Area 'F'
Director Dave Willie, Town of Qualicum Beach

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brennan called the meeting to order at 12:05pm.

MINUTES

MOVED Director Houle, SECONDED Director Dempsey that, the minutes of the Regular Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee meeting held October 2, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

MOVED Director Houle, SECONDED Director Young, that the following correspondence be received:

J. Stanhope, RDN to **D. & C. Ross, M. & T. Hoffman, A. & N. Clark**, RE: Horn Lake Regional Campground – Concerns and Recommendations.

CARRIED

REPORTS

Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects September 2012

Monthly Update of Community and Regional Parks and Trails Projects October 2012

Ms. Marshall gave a summary of the September and October Regional Parks and Trails Projects.

MOVED Director Houle, SECONDED Director Lefebvre that the engineering costs required for detailing the boardwalk plan for Ministry of Environment approval be deferred to the 2013 budget.

CARRIED

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Houle that the Monthly Update reports be received.

CARRIED

Little Qualicum River Regional Park Management Plan

Ms. Marshall gave a summary presentation of the Little Qualicum River Regional Park Management Plan.

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Houle that the Little Qualicum River Regional Park Management Plan be approved.

CARRIED

Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan

Ms. Marshall gave a summary presentation of the Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan.

MOVED Director Lefebvre, SECONDED Director Salter that the Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan be approved.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED Director Houle, that the meeting be adjourned at 1:25pm to allow for an In Camera meeting.

CARRIED

IN CAMERA

MOVED Director Houle, SECONDED Director Lefebvre, 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.

CARRIED

Chair

January 10, 2013

Peter N. Hills
2070 Radford Place
Nanoose Bay, BC V9P 9H4

Dear Mr. Hills,

RE: Fencing Construction at Moorecroft Regional Park

Thank you for your letter regarding fencing construction at Moorecroft Regional Park. The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) appreciates the concern and support you have for this special place over these past years.

Prior to RDN purchase of the land from the United Church of Canada in 2011, a Conservation Covenant was established in order to preserve and enhance the ecological values of the park. Under this covenant held by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, 93% (32.04 hectares) of the park is to be managed under a Conservation Zone and 7% (2.09 hectares) is in a Development or Intensive Recreation Use Zone.

The primary management intent of the Conservation Zone is to protect in perpetuity, the park's biodiversity and ecosystems as well as to facilitate visitors' appreciation of the park's natural values through low impact recreation and nature interpretation opportunities. The management intent of the Intensive Recreation Use/Development Zone is to provide infrastructure that supports outdoor recreation and learning opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles and connection with nature and culture.

The Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan details specific actions over the next ten years that accomplish the requirements of the covenant. Over time visitors will find a modified, yet predominantly natural landscape with a range of safe, accessible and sustainable infrastructure and amenities that provide a quality visitor experience within a healthy natural environment.

Over the short term RDN Parks staff are implementing high priority management plan actions to prevent further deterioration of ecological values and to restore native species. These include:

- Protection and rehabilitation of the Garry Oak ecosystem on Vesper Point. This area is rich in biodiversity and is populated by numerous at-risk species of plants, mammals, reptiles, birds, butterflies and other insects. Garry Oak ecosystems in BC occupy only 1 to 5% of their former area. Actions to protect this Garry Oak ecosystem include split rail fencing installation to define visitor spaces such as the picnic area and viewpoint. This serves to prevent further disturbance and promotes rehabilitation of the Garry Oak ecosystem;
- In order to protect designated wildlife trees, and species at risk, some trails on Vesper Point and in the Park will also be decommissioned and rehabilitated, along

with a program of invasive plant identification and removal. Remaining trails will be improved and boardwalks have been installed at key locations and along sensitive areas;

- Another important action for protecting the natural environment and the visitor experience is the requirement for dogs to stay on leash in the park. Information signs have been installed to remind visitors of this new park rule.

While we understand that long time visitors to the area may be alarmed at seeing familiar amenities removed and may consider new infrastructure such as fencing as a disturbance of the landscape, the RDN must take actions to comply with the terms of the Conservation Covenant. Over time visitors will enjoy a largely natural landscape with few amenities, infrastructure and services, and infrastructure will be limited to that required for active management of visitor impacts.

We trust that you will understand and respect the changes required to implement the terms of the Conservation Covenant, and that you and your family will continue to visit and enjoy this special place. We invite you to review the Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan for 2013-22 on the RDN website.

Sincerely,

Wendy Marshall
Manager of Parks
RDN Recreation and Parks

mp/ah

c.c. T.Osborne, General Manager, Recreation and Parks
G. Holme, Director, Electoral Area 'E'
Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee

Parks Functions Report

TO: Tom Osborne
General Manager of Recreation and Parks

DATE: January 16, 2013

FROM: Wendy Marshall
Manager of Parks Services

FILE:

SUBJECT: Monthly Update of Community Parks and Regional Parks and Trails Projects

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

Electoral Area Community Parks

Area A

Weeding, pruning and trail brushing was completed at both Woodridge Community Park and the Morden Colliery Trail entrance.

At Nelson Road staff removed storm debris from the ramps while at Pylades Road staff inspected the park for tree issues and cleared the trail. A damaged picnic table was repaired at Thelma Griffiths Community Park.

Staff prepared and distributed the November 21st PRC Commission meeting agenda package and attended the meeting. Staff prepared an Area A Parks work book and provided a parks tour to most of the Community Parks to Commission members at the November 4th PRC Planning Session.

Area B

Major works were completed for the replacement of an irrigation pond liner, and renovation of the interior of the pump house at Rollo McClay Community Park. Additional plumbing and fencing work is required to complete the project. A large, in-ground garbage can was also installed by the concession, and tree pruning along the hydro line was completed.

Staff prepared a webpage and online survey regarding Water Accesses on Mudge Island. A notification of the survey was mailed to all island residents. Residents were able to participate in the survey until December 10th and then extended until January 7th, 2013. Staff answered questions and took comments on the survey. Approximately ten survey responses were mailed in and inputted by staff.

Beach access stair replacement work was begun at South Road Community Park. Completion of this project is expected in mid-January.

The volunteer-constructed entrance sign at Huxley Community Park was removed and refinished. Installation will be carried out this winter.

Several large hazard trees were removed along a section of the Whalebone area trails.

Staff assisted the RDN Emergency Coordinator with park and trail mapping requests from the Gabriola Emergency Preparedness team.

Area C - Extension

Staff attended a site meeting with the applicant and their agent for a subdivision application on Myles Lake.

Area C – East Wellington

Site clearing and removal of fences and out-buildings was begun at Anders and Dorrit's Community Park. Hydro service was also reinstated at the house. Creek crossing and additional clearing work will continue into January.

Staff prepared and distributed the November 26th EW/PV POSAC meeting agenda package and attended the meeting.

Area E

Staff prepared a webpage and online survey regarding the Blueback Community Park public consultation process. Residents of Electoral Area 'E' were able to participate in the survey until December 10th. Staff organized; coordinated advertising for; and attended an Open House at the park on Saturday, November 24th. Approximately 25-30 people attended. Staff continued to answer questions and take comments on the Blueback Community Park online survey throughout December. The deadline for the online survey was extended until January 7th, 2013.

At Nanoose Road Community Park staff removed tree blow down and debris from trail. BC Hydro line clearing work was also carried out, to be completed in January. This involved the removal of two large arbutus trees along the road frontage.

Stair replacement work was completed at Jack Bagley Community Park. Staff installed additional parking signage at Nanoose Place and at Ainsley Road staff cleared the trail and stairs and repaired the approach.

Staff prepared and distributed the November 5th Area 'E' POSAC meeting agenda package and attended the meeting.

Staff attended a Fairwinds rezoning meeting with Planning Staff and the applicant's agent.

Area F

Results from the final Open House in October and online survey were summarized and were included in the final report. The Phase 1 design plan is being finalized with a target date of early 2013 for construction tender and park construction in the summer. Staff are also working with community volunteers to source labour and materials that could be used towards completion of Phase 1 construction.

Staff met with board members from the Errington Hall Society to discuss the operation agreement for Errington Community Park.

Trail maintenance and clearing work was carried out along the Arrowsmith Community Trail.

Staff prepared and distributed the November 19th Area 'F' POSAC meeting agenda package and attended the meeting.

Area G

At Dashwood Community Park downspout and eaves trough maintenance and repair work was completed.

At Miller Road Community Park staff repaired stairs impacted by erosion and staff conducted trail maintenance work along the Stanhope Trail.

A community built sign was refinished and remounted on new posts at the entrance of Maple Lane Community Park following damage to one of the posts.

Staff reported to the board on the state of several large Cottonwood trees at Boulton Community Park in response to a park neighbour complaint. A hazard tree report was investigated at Riley Road Community Park.

Staff prepared and distributed the December 10th Area 'G' POSAC meeting agenda package and attended the meeting.

Staff attended a meeting with Planning staff, the developer and their agent regarding the rezoning application for 691 Wembley Rd (Yellowbrick).

The works at Miller Road are complete. Monitoring the structures after rain events has confirmed their integrity. Final report is expected in December.

Area H

Public tender for the construction of the park closed on November 30th and the proposals were evaluated in December and the RDN has begun negotiating a final contract with IWC Excavating. The bid was over budget so the scope of work is being reduced to fall in line with the budget. Building and Development Permits have been received. The Hydro poles have now been moved out of the Park. Request for Quotations for the design/build of the pump track component were received November 5th and Jay Hoots was the successful candidate. Sports and playground equipment was ordered for the park.

At Sunnybeach Road staff removed storm debris. At Crane road staff removed storm debris and reported to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans following the discovery of a dead sea lion. At Thompson Clarke Trail the ditch and trail was cleared of debris.

Staff prepared and distributed the November 28th Area 'H' POSAC meeting agenda package and attended the meeting.

Community Parks and Greenways Strategy

Staff continue to work on Phase 1 research. Staff has created and posted a dedicated web page on the RDN website. Work continues on the draft plans and preparations for the first Advisory Committee meeting in January.

Regional Parks and Trails

Beachcomber Regional Park

Park staff inspected and maintained the trail and upgraded signs in the park and conducted trail maintenance.

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park

Park staff cleared winter storm debris off trails.

Coats Marsh Regional Park

Park staff assisted with the old barn demolition. Staff also cleaned the pond leveler for the winter months and removed some old barbed wire in the park.

Descanso Bay Regional Park

Park operator removed old barriers in the day use area and installed split rail fencing. Fencing was also installed along the cliffs on the points.

Englishman River Regional Park

Park Staff carried out routine inspections of Englishman River Regional Park and Top Bridge Park. Staff responded to maintenance issues identified by the Volunteer Park Warden including; garbage issues, ATV trespass, vandalism, graffiti and suspect hazardous trees. High river signage was installed and winter storm debris cleared from trails. A sign inventory was also conducted.

Trail construction signs were posted to inform the public about what is happening over the next 6 months. The Community Fisheries Development Centre work crew built a new bridge at the beaver pond and pedestrian only signs were posted. The Community Fisheries Development Centre work crew are also developing a new trail.

Horne Lake Regional Park

Park staff removed the old life preserver stands on the beach and replaced them with no lifeguard on duty signs. Staff built stairs for the fuel tank. Park staff continue to monitor and trouble shoot the water and power system.

Parking lot improvements were carried out and the South road was graded.

Park staff photo inventoried the park (data collected includes signs, facilities and fire pits).

Staff prepared and issued an RFP for park operator 2013-2018. The mandatory site visit was held with participation by RDN Utilities and Regional Parks Operations Coordinator. Four companies participated in the site visit and three submissions were received by the RFP deadline. The successful proponent was RLC Parks Services, the same firm that operates most BC Parks on Vancouver Island. The five-year operator agreement with RLC was developed and it included clarification of standards, processes and expectations. Staff organized the first meeting between RDN Parks and RLC. Staff worked with outgoing park operator on picnic table inventory and registration history.

Lighthouse Country Regional Trail

Construction of the accessible parking area and installation of two portable toilets, surrounds and signage and parking lot improvements are completed.

Terms of Reference were developed for an interpretive sign program for Lighthouse Country Regional Trail Pilot. Preliminary design concepts were received from the consultant.

Park staff emptied the deep bin garbage cans and maintained the trail.

Little Qualicum River Estuary Regional Conservation Area

Staff worked with BC Conservation Foundation on terms of reference for a vegetation plan at the spit to be cost shared. The plan will include specific directions regarding invasive removal that can be carried out by volunteer assistants QB Streamkeepers.

Little Qualicum River Regional Park

The Little Qualicum River Regional Park Management Planning process is now in its final phase. Results from the October 13th Open House and online survey were summarized as part of the final submission to the RPTSC December 4th meeting for their consideration. The Management Plan will be before the Board for final approval at their January 22nd meeting.

Moorecroft Regional Park

The Draft Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan was reviewed at the December 4th RPTSC meeting and will go before the Board at their January 22nd meeting. Signage about park improvements and changes was posted in the park in conjunction with construction of split rail fencing at Vesper Point (for protection of Garry Oak habitat). Staff met with the Moorecrofters in December to discuss volunteer possibilities in the park.

Park Staff carried out the following works at Moorecroft Regional Park:

- Staff installed two double bear proof garbage cans (One at Vesper Point and one in the parking lot)
- Ballenas Secondary School class is installing a split rail fence at Vesper Point to protect the sensitive rare Gary Oak ecosystem
- Staff delivered split rail fencing material for the students
- Staff installed expanded metal on the new boardwalk for traction
- Staff removed garbage from the barn
- Staff conducted trail maintenance
- Staff checked all of the cabins stairs to determine if they were a safety concern. Stairs on cabins 3B and 9 were removed.
- Parking lot loop road was repaired

Morden Colliery Regional Trail

Park staff inspected and maintained the trail.

Mount Benson Regional Park

The trailhead kiosk was completed as well as parking lot improvements. The trailhead sign board is being designed and will be installed in the spring. An emergency access bollard with signs is being fabricated and will be installed by the spring.

Park staff finished GPSing the Mount Benson trails. The City of Nanaimo located their boundary at the Witchcraft parking lot and removed a couple of trees where the new kiosk will be installed in December.

Staff participated in a meeting with the NALT Covenant Committee to provide feedback on their draft covenant. It was agreed to work together to produce a simpler document.

Nanaimo River Regional Park

Park staff conducted trail maintenance and emptied the deep bin garbage can on Frey road

Top Bridge Regional Trail

Park staff conducted trail maintenance.

Trans Canada Trail

Damaged signs for Extension Ridge Trail were removed and one sign replaced as requested by Island Timberlands.

Parksville - Qualicum Links

Staff worked with Parksville, Qualicum Beach and MoTI to conclude on a way-marking scheme for the Links Route. All signage to be installed during the last two weeks of March 2013 in advance of Bike to Work Week with MoTI paying for the RDN's share of road signage.

Miscellaneous

Staff attended a district Joint Health and Safety Meeting.

Numerous park inspection visits and maintenance projects were conducted throughout the district including garbage removal, brushing and trail maintenance, new sign layouts and installations, and sign maintenance, and numerous information requests were received from the public. A lift gate was ordered for one of the fleet vehicles.

Staff attended an International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Care workshop held in Nanaimo. This was a great refresher course on trail layout and building techniques.

Park staff designed and produced fire and emergency signs for Parks that fall under the MoF Fire control cost sharing agreement.

Staff received MoTI's engineering study of the Hwy 19A bridge over French Creek and cost projections to fix the inadequate side-passage shared by pedestrians, medi-scooters and cyclists. Staff liaised with the Oceanside Cycling Coalition on the review process.

Staff attended the BC Hydro Distribution Line Services workshop on vegetation practices.

Park Use Permits and Events

Staff liaised with the Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club regarding pursuit of permit for mountain bike trail along the Harrow undeveloped road allowance. MoTI supports the plan given RDN holding a permit for the works. The Club will initiate exploration of the route including GPS, with a view to the RDN pursuing permit from MoTI in 2013.

Assisted North Island Film Commission with land information and contacts regarding TV filming at the base of the Saddle Route up Mount Arrowsmith.

Recommendation

That the Parks Update Report for November and December 2012 be received as information.

Original copy signed by W. Marshall

Manager of Parks Services

Original copy signed by T. Osborne

General Manager Concurrence



CAO APPROVAL		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
EAP		
COV		
JAN 25 2013		
RHD		
BOARD		
RPTSC		

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tom Osborne
General Manager, Recreation and Parks Services

DATE: January 25, 2013

FROM: Wendy Marshall
Manager of Parks Services

FILE:

SUBJECT: Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

To obtain approval of the Terms of Reference for undertaking a Management Plan for the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park 2014-2024.

BACKGROUND

The Benson Creek Falls Regional Park (BCFRP) is a 31.3 hectare (78 acres) regional park located at the confluence of Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek in Electoral Area 'C'. The RDN park was established in August 1, 1991 through a lease with the Province of British Columbia for a period of 30 years, to August 2021.

With its close proximity to Nanaimo, Benson Creek Falls Regional Park is a popular destination for viewing of the waterfalls on Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek. The park is well known for its ammonite fossils, hiking, birding and swimming. Mountain bikers and equestrians also use some of the existing trails in and around the park. The site's steep topography, diverse and fragile habitats, combined with growing recreation pressures and safety concerns indicate the need for a comprehensive management plan that protects the conservation values and manages positive visitor experiences into the future.

The Management Plan will guide the operations, development, and stewardship of the property based on a comprehensive analysis of the property's natural values and public consultation process. The plan will confirm the long-term vision, principles, goals and objectives for BCFRP and will identify shorter term management policies and actions for the period 2014-2024. The plan is to be reviewed after five years (2019) and updated formally at ten-year intervals. This will be the Regional Park's second management plan. The first management plan for the park was completed in 1999 by a consultant, however, it was a 'management plan brief' without a full public consultation process.

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference describes the parameters for the development of the management plan including a number of project objectives and resulting deliverables. It is proposed that a consultant be hired to undertake the development of the Management Plan for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, drawing on sub-consultant professional services as needed during the process. The Terms of Reference also describes the establishment of a staff Working Group consisting of parks staff to coordinate the project and to review draft material with the aim to anticipate issues or implications related to implementation.

An Advisory Committee will also be established to provide advice and direction on materials produced prior to public review including: vision statement, principles, goals and objectives, issues, summaries from public input, management policies, and concept plans. The Advisory Committee will also review changes to the draft plan prior to presentation to the Regional Board.

The proposed composition of the Advisory Committee is: two representatives from the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee (RPTSC), and an invitation for representation from the local Snuneymuxw First Nation and Stz'uminus First Nation.

TIMEFRAME FOR PLAN COMPLETION

Staff anticipate the project can be completed by December 2013 with the following phases:

PHASE 1: Project Initiation - March to June, 2013

- Request for proposals
- Selection of consultant
- Project Start-up Meeting
- Research; park inventory & analysis
- Base mapping
- Preliminary issues, program and vision development
- Preparation of open house materials (survey, panels, maps, website info);
- Advisory Committee Review
- Open House (#1); stakeholders interviews
- Analysis and review of public feedback with RDN staff

PHASE 2: Draft Management Plan Development - July to August, 2013

- Consultant writes draft Management Plan: vision, principles, goals, objectives, policies, implementation strategy, and supporting maps
- Preparation of preliminary park master plan concept
- Advisory Committee review of draft Management Plan and Concept

PHASE 3: Final Plan Completion - September to December, 2013

- Preparation of Open House #2 materials (survey, information panels, maps, website info)
- Open House (#2) and presentation of draft Management Plan

- Analysis and review of public feedback with RDN staff
- Complete final Management Plan, Park Master Plan Concept, Implementation Strategy and supporting maps
- Advisory Committee Review of Final Management Plan
- Draft of final Management Plan on RDN website and for public comment
- RPTSC review of final Management Plan
- Submit final Management Plan for Board approval

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Terms of Reference for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan be approved and two members of the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee be assigned to the project's Advisory Committee.
2. That the Terms of Reference for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan not be approved and provide alternative direction to staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The management planning process will take approximately 1 year and will span the 2013 budget. The 2013 budget allocation is \$35,000 excluding taxes.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park is unique in the regional park system with steep-sided ravines, and waterfalls on Flynnfall and Benson Creeks. The site's steep topography and related environmental sensitivities means that the park activities and amenities need to be carefully planned, executed and maintained to minimize detrimental impacts. Conservation and enhancement of the forested and aquatic ecosystems within the Benson Creek Falls watershed will be an important aspect of an environmentally sustainable and resilient region.

As part of the RDN's pursuit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the concept of carbon-banking has been discussed in relation to Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. While no plans are in place, there is potential to further this discussion within the context of the park management plan.

CONCLUSIONS

A Terms of Reference has been prepared to guide the preparation of the 2014-2024 Management Plan for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. The Terms of Reference proposes a consultation process that will allow for residents, organizations and government agencies to be involved in the Plan's preparation. The Management Plan will be coordinated by a staff Working Group and guided by an Advisory Committee to ensure an agreeable and successful outcome. The total project budget is \$35,000 (excluding taxes) allocated in the 2013 Regional Parks Capital Budget.

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park has seen very little in the way of development and upgrades over the past decade, however the park has seen a substantial amount of pressure from use, primarily caused by residents and tourists wishing to access and view waterfalls on Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek.

It is good practice for the Regional District to undertake management plans as they provide comprehensive baseline research and information to help manage the conservation, recreation and operational components of a park; they provide meaningful avenue for public consultation on the future of park and recreation opportunities; they are useful for prioritizing operational projects and budget; and, they provide updated communication tools to help promote park values. Therefore, staff recommend approval of the Terms of Reference attached as *Appendix I*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Terms of Reference for the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan be approved.
2. That staff be directed to issue a Request for Proposals for a Project Consultant for the development of the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan 2014-2024.
3. That two members of the Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee be appointed to participate as members of the Advisory Committee for the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan.



Report Writer



General Manager Concurrence



CAO Concurrence

Appendix I

**Benson Creek Falls Regional Park
Management Plan**

Terms of Reference

Regional District of Nanaimo

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan 2014-2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE

February, 2013



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Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan

Terms of Reference

ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is seeking proposals from qualified consultants interested in preparing a management plan for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. This will be the Regional Park's second management plan. The first Management Plan was prepared in 1999 by Archadia Landscape Architecture Ltd. An updated Management Plan will continue to guide the operations, development, and stewardship of the property based on a comprehensive analysis of property values and public and stakeholder consultation. The plan will confirm the long-term vision and goals for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park and identify shorter term management policies and actions for the period 2014-2024. The plan is to be reviewed after five years (2019) and updated formally at ten-year intervals.

The 2014-2024 Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan will build upon previous studies to investigate current conditions and priorities for the park that will help guide future recreational management, environmental stewardship and development actions for the park (see reference documents and reports).

Regional Context

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) manages about 2,026 hectares of regional park, trail and conservation lands in the mid-Vancouver Island area along with another 584 hectares of neighbourhood or Community Park and trail. A Regional Parks and Trails Plan, completed in 2005, sets out the goals of the RDN in respect to land management, stewardship and recreational use of regionally significant properties. The RDN seeks to protect and steward the lands while at the same time, provide rewarding and educational outdoor recreational experiences. A primary management goal for these lands will always be to strike a sustainable balance between environmental protection and human use.

Park Location

Benson Creek Falls Regional Park is a 31.3 hectare park located at the confluence of Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek in Electoral Area C of the Regional District of Nanaimo. Steep-sided ravines, 20 to 50 metres deep, surround Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek through the Park. Flynnfall Falls, located at the confluence of these two creeks is approximately 10 metres high. The 15-20 metre high Benson Creek Falls, also known as Ammonite Falls, is located on Benson Creek near the south boundary of the Park. Several other tributaries, which are dry in summer,

also flow into Benson Creek within the Park. Hoskins Creek flows eastward through the Park near the north boundary.

Park History

By the early 1960's the recreational and educational attributes of the area were well known to local residents, hikers, and fossil enthusiasts. Around that time, a key event leading to the establishment of the Park occurred. A 16" diameter ammonite fossil located near the main falls on Benson Creek was destroyed by vandals. This event provided the impetus for a group of local supporters to seek protection for the remaining fossil features, dramatic creek canyons and waterfall area as Provincial Park. For almost 40 years, the RDN attempted to achieve protection of the area through ongoing negotiations with senior government.

The Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources (formerly Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks) issued Lease #103987 to the RDN commencing August 1, 1991 with a lease area of 31.33 ha for regional park purposes for a period of 30 years to August 2021. The lease has a special proviso requiring that the RDN shall not fill, build or remove vegetation within 7.5 metres of the top of the stream banks without prior written consent of the Province.

Park Description and Current Uses

The area is well known locally with websites promoting Ammonite Falls as a tourist destination, as well as many online maps promoting mountain biking in the area. Cyclists typically stage from the Jamieson Road area and ride the south ridge lines on Crown and private forestry lands. The park itself is used mainly by hikers, birders, as well as swimmers destined for Benson and Flynnfall Creeks.

While web maps and information involve trespass over private lands to get into the park, the Weigles Road trailhead is the formal signed entrance for people arriving at the park in vehicles (off Doumont or Biggs Rds). Roadside parking is located about 400 metres from the Biggs-Doumont intersection via Biggs Road, and is relatively central to the City of Nanaimo's 84,000 population. Users also informally access the park from the east off the 'McGarrigle' logging road, and from the south off the undeveloped Jameson Road right-of-way. There is a need to work with adjacent landowners to manage trespass over private lands to access the park.

The park is surrounded by large tracts of relatively undeveloped resource lands, used mainly for forestry or gravel extraction. Since logging operations have ceased in the park, the main roadbeds have been left intact. Development of the park by the RDN has been limited and most trail development has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis by volunteers. Though the steep switchback trail is closed, (and posted with signs), park visitors continue to use the trail leading to Benson Creek. Strong enthusiasm exists in the community to use the park for hiking, biking, nature appreciation and access to the creeks for swimming. Mountain bikers and equestrians also use some of the existing trails in and around the park. Strategies are needed to encourage responsible and safe recreation activities in the Park.

Conservation Values

The most valuable, diverse and ecologically sensitive habitats within the Park are the deep, steep-sided ravines and associated Benson Creek and Flynnfall Creek stream beds. The greatest threats to these areas are the potential negative environmental impacts of unmanaged activities, unsanctioned stream crossings, and illegal, dangerous trails along steep slopes. The site's steep topography and related environmental sensitivities mean that recreational improvements related to park use need to be carefully planned, executed and maintained to minimize detrimental impacts. Any planned park development must comply with the Crown lease that states the RDN shall not fill, build or remove vegetation within 7.5 metres of the top of the stream bank without prior written consent of the Province.

Previous Studies on Benson Creek Falls Regional Park

Basic field survey information within the Park was gathered in 1999 by Coastal Resource Mapping Ltd. Survey information included identification of top of and bottom of bank location and elevations for Flynnfall Creek and Benson Creek, and locations of existing trails, to a level of accuracy adequate for planning purposes.

A current Environmental Overview of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park report is being completed in 2013 and will be available for use in the management plan. The last environmental assessment was completed in 1999 by J.C. Lee and Associates Ltd., biological consultants. The overview included assessments of environmental sensitivity, enhancement requirements, constraints to development, and opportunity to support outdoor recreation uses such as trail development and nature interpretation. Results of the Lee report were incorporated into the 1999 BCMP.

The 1999 Management Plan indicates that there are no simple, straightforward solutions to providing improved recreational trail access across either Benson Creek or Flynnfall Creek within or near the park boundaries. Since the 1999 report, there has been little development in the park, except for the installation of regulatory and directional signage, trail bridges, trail maintenance and hazard tree management.

Reference Documents and Data

- Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan Brief, Archadia Landscape Architecture Ltd., 1999
- Current Environmental Overview of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, 2013.
- Preliminary Environmental Overview of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park, J.C. Lee and Associates Ltd., May 1999.
 - RDN GIS base mapping: The Regional District of Nanaimo GIS Department uses ArcGIS 10. Data will be provided in either Shapefile or FileGeodatabase format projected to UTM Zone10 NAD83 Metres. For the purposes of the project the data provided may include: legal parcels, road centreline, regional park, Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory data, any park features captured by GPS and TRIM data: 20m contours and watercourses. Orthorectified imagery is also available with the most recent capture dates being April 2011 and summer 2012. These layers and others can be examined in the RDN interactive webmap – RDNMap.

- Project data deliverables are preferred to be in the form of Shapefile or FileGeodatabase compatible with ESRI ArcGIS10.”
- RDN Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005 – 2015
- East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1055, 1997.



TWO: MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan (BCMP) is a strategic plan that will define the future direction, policies, priorities, and actions for the Regional District of Nanaimo in the short and long term with a 10 year focus (2014-2024). The Plan's implementation will guide the operations, development and stewardship of the park.

The BCMP will include the following objectives: gather and analyze baseline information, establish direction, and develop implementation strategies.

Baseline Information

Baseline data collection should include the following information which should be presented using charts, maps and photos:

Property and Land Status

- Size and location (extents)
- Legal encumbrances
- Applicable zoning, official community plan and land and park use regulations
- History of land use to acquisition and since acquisition
- Neighbouring land uses
- Applicable fire protection services
- Detailed property description – trails, road networks, vegetation, views, access (supported with GPS or survey data)

Ecological Values

- Existing sensitive ecosystems
- Presentation of environmental features of the park based on the environmental overviews and management implications for environmental protection
- Impact of outside park boundary resource extraction and recreational use on natural values

Recreation Values

- Present BCFRP as part of the Regional Parks and Trail System
- Identify who is using the property (provide detail on use by user type - individuals through to large groups i.e. hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, winter sports enthusiasts, unauthorized motorized vehicles, and special event holders)
- Identify why the property is being used (what attracts people to the property?)
- Identify how the property is being used i.e. access points
- Inventory and map all existing and proposed trail routes and show related improvements
- Identify when the property is being used
- Examine the value of BCFRP for regional tourism
- Present statistical evidence of demand for trails and outdoor nature and park experiences on Vancouver Island and in the Nanaimo area.

Cultural Values

- Identify historical values of the site, including traditional use by First Nations
- Identify any registered archaeological sites or sites of heritage interest
- Assess the extent to which the property is a known 'place' within the Regional District, particularly the Nanaimo area, and characterize the nature of human attachment to it.

Resource Values

- Indicate impacts of resource extraction in surrounding lands, e.g. forestry, gravel extraction
- Make reference to protection of paleontological features in the park.

Educational Values

- Review how BCFRP has been used for educational purposes by external agencies, e.g., Vancouver Island University's forestry program, and other community groups
- Identify past and continuing research activities, carried out at BCFRP
- Investigate opportunities for formal integration of the site into area school and university-college curriculum for either education or research purposes (provide examples from elsewhere).

Establish Direction

Seek out Issues, Opportunities, Constraints and Ideas

- Identify the main issues facing the managers of BCFRP
- Organize the issues and ideas by subject or theme
- Consult with the public and stakeholders on issues, ideas

Confirm Vision, Principles and Goals

- Develop a simple overarching vision statement
- Identify a short list of management principles coming out of the vision;
- Establish a set of goals with more detailed objectives
- Flowing from the objectives should be proposed policies and specific actions that will be undertaken over the next ten years of BCMP
- Create a Park Master Plan Concept that expresses vision, amenities and actions
- Seek public input on the vision, principles, goals, actions, concept

Develop Implementation Plan

Develop broad-based management policies for achieving Goals and meeting Vision and Principles, addressing the following areas of general management concern and suggest others as needed:

- Use
- Public accessibility
- Trail plans and development
- Public safety and security

- Partnerships
- Environment
- Stewardship
- Recreation, education and culture
- Resource management
- Development

Develop targets and actions

- Outline actions to be accomplished within the ten year management plan period
- Identify what parties are accountable for each action
- Identify when actions are to be completed by
- Provide cost estimates for each action item
- Use tables and time line charts to convey material

Public Consultation Program

The Regional District of Nanaimo's Public Consultation/Communication Framework Policy No.A1.23 measures a successful project as one that provides for meaningful and on-going public involvement. The success of the public process component of the Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan will be achieved through meeting the following goals:

- Anyone likely to be affected by a decision shall have opportunities for input into that decision;
- The consultation process shall allow for a meaningful level of involvement;
- All positions and input received will be considered; not all input can and will be accommodated;
- The process shall recognize and take into account the different characteristics and abilities of the community;
- The process shall recognize interdepartmental issues and concerns, and shall involve and coordinate internal staff resources as necessary or appropriate.
- The integrity of broad public involvement must be paramount to the process and must not be superseded by any individual or interest group;
- The RDN shall provide feedback, in a timely manner, about how public input has been utilized in Board decisions, and how the public will be affected;
- An evaluation component shall be built in to the process to allow those involved to learn from past experiences and to ensure the proper use of resources.

A key role of the Consultant in compiling the BCFRMP is to develop, lead and interpret a region-wide community input process that contributes to the project's objectives.

The public input process must use a varied approach to obtaining input in order to maximize participation and must include but is not limited to:

- ongoing consultation with the RDN Staff Working Group and BCMP Advisory Committee;

- interviews with community organizations, and other government and corporate organizations;
- online public surveys on the RDN website as well as project updates and resources on the RDN website; and
- a minimum of two regionally advertised Open Houses to solicit views, comments and opinions on the BCFRP and to present the draft BCFRPMP and receive comments prior to the preparation of the final document.

Preliminary List of Stakeholders

Local Recreation Clubs – hiking, snowshoeing, running, mountain biking: Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club, Arrowsmith Mountain Bike Club, field naturalists.

Provincial & Other Government Agencies – City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources

First Nations - Snuneymuxw First Nation, Stz'uminus First Nation

Neighbouring Private Corporations (trail use agreements) – Vancouver Island University Woodlot, TimberWest, Island Timberlands, Crown woodlot licence holders.

Services and Organizations - East Wellington Volunteer Fire Dept.; BC Forest Service, Mid Island Fire Zone, RDN East Wellington / Pleasant Valley Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, School District 68, Vancouver Island University.

Community/Stewardship Groups - Nanaimo and Area Land Trust, Arrowsmith Naturalist, WiTS (wildlife and tree stewardship – BC Nature), Qualicum Beach Museum.



THREE: CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The development of the Management Plan will be coordinated by a Staff Working Group and guided by an Advisory Committee.

The proposed composition of the Staff Working Group is: Regional Parks Planner, Manager of Parks Services. In addition, other RDN staff resources including Planning, Mapping and Parks Operations staff will be brought into the project as specific information or feedback is needed. The Staff Working Group will meet to discuss and review project timeline, progress, and next steps. The Staff Working Group will also review draft material with the aim to anticipate issues or implications related to implementation.

The proposed composition of the Advisory Committee is: two representatives from the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee (RPTSC), invitation for representation from the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Stz'uminus First Nation. This committee will provide advice and direction on materials produced prior to public review including: principles, vision statement, goals and objectives, issues, summaries from public input, management policies, and concept plans. The Advisory Committee will also review changes to the draft plan prior to presentation to the Regional Board.

The Advisory Committee will:

- Review project plan
- Confirm vision statement and goals
- Review research, and all public consultation materials
- Review issues, trends, and public feedback from the open houses
- Review and discuss management plan strategies (i.e. vision, principles, actions, implementation plan)
- Review draft plans before they go to public review
- Review issues & feedback from public input of draft plan
- Review changes to the draft plan and final plan.

Project schedule and phases

PHASE 1: Project Initiation: April- June, 2013

- Research and Data review
- Inventory/Analysis & Issue Identification
- Base mapping
- Preliminary issues, program and vision development
- Development of public engagement strategy and materials
- Advisory Committee Review of public engagement strategy and materials (survey, maps, input topics)
- Open House #1 (website, survey); interviews with key stakeholders
- Analysis and review of public feedback with RDN staff

PHASE 2: Draft Management Plan Development: July –August, 2013

- Consultant writes draft Management Plan: vision, principles, goals, actions
- Preliminary master plan concept development
- Advisory Committee Review of draft Management Plan

PHASE 3: Final Management Plan Completion: September-December, 2013

- Circulate Draft Management Plan (email and website, survey) and hold Open House #2
- Analysis of public feedback; consultant makes revisions to Final plan and concept
- Advisory Committee review of final Management Plan; circulate final Management Plan for public comment (email, RDN website, survey)
- Final revisions of Management Plan
- Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee review of Management Plan
- Revisions to final Management Plan for Board approval



Level of Effort and Budget

The budget of \$35,000 (excluding taxes) is expected to cover all fees, expenses, sub-contractor services, consultation and applicable taxes. Expenditure of the budget should reflect the following priorities:

Phase #1: Project Initiation.....30%

Deliverables:

- Base maps
- Identification of preliminary issues, program and vision development
- Public engagement strategy and materials
- Meeting with Parks staff to review materials; meeting with Advisory Committee
- Conduct Open House #1; review and analysis of public feedback

Phase #2: Draft Management Plan Development.....30%

Deliverables:

- Completion of draft Management Plan including vision, principles, goals, objectives, policies, implementation strategy, supporting maps
- Park master plan concept
- Meeting with Parks staff to review materials; meeting with Advisory Committee

Phase #3: Final Management Plan Completion.....40%

Deliverables:

- Materials preparation and conduct Open House #2
- Analysis and review of public feedback
- Completion of final Management Plan with supporting maps and implementation strategy
- Park master plan concept
- Delivery of final documents and digital files

100%

Given the level of effort expected and the proposed project schedule, the RDN schedule of payments will be as follows:

- a) Upon satisfactory completion and delivery of Phase #1 deliverables: 30% payment June, 2013
- b) Upon satisfactory completion and delivery of Phase #2 deliverables: 30% payment August 2013
- c) Upon satisfactory completion and delivery of Phase #3 deliverables: 40% payment December 2013

Deliverable Notes

A clear and succinct writing style should be used. The use of tables, matrices, charts, maps and photographs should support written content where applicable. The main section of the plan should be no more than 50 to 60 pages, including maps, photos and charts. Detailed

background information should be contained in appendixes if directly relevant to the understanding of the main document and otherwise placed in separate annexes.

All material presented by the contractor must be submitted in triplicate hard copy as well as in RDN approved digital formats. At least some photographs should be of presentation quality and useful in the promotion of BCMP; videos may be used to document the current state of the property.

All studies, reports, maps, photos and related resources developed in this project shall become the property of the RDN.



FOUR: CONSULTANT PROPOSAL

Proposal Requirements

Proposed Methodology and Table of Contents

A proposed methodology and table of contents for the Benson Creek Falls Management Plan; a work program detailing stages, deliverables and timing (This work program will detail all phases, including research, public involvement and plan development).

Proposed Public Engagement Process

An outline of a proposed comprehensive consultation process that:

- Will not direct or control the scope of the project.
- Will facilitate a broad range of input through a continuum of questioning from very general matters to very detailed issues.
- Will account for different stakeholder knowledge levels in regards to Regional Park policies and goals.
- Will utilize a varied approach to obtain input from a wide range of Regional District residents (i.e. online surveys; open house with interactive maps, information panels; public presentation, website information; interviews of key stakeholders)
- Will obtain detailed and accurate input that will yield data that can be analyzed.

Qualifications

Information on the qualifications, ability and past experience of the company with similar projects, including references of other Park Plan projects that the consultant has completed, preferably in a Regional District setting;

Personnel

A list of the personnel who will work on the project, their individual experience specifically related to Park Planning and what their role will be;

List of Sub-consultants

A list of sub-consultants, including their company and staff experience specifically related to their role; and,

Project Schedule and Budget

A schedule that includes the fee structure and the upper limits of the project cost. This fee structure must include an outline of fees for at least the following:

- Sub-consultants
- Plan development; mapping, graphics, word processing, park concept design
- All disbursements
- Hourly rate schedule of personnel assigned to the project and hour requirements for each personnel

- Harmonized Services Tax
- All other fees associated with the project

Consultant Selection Process

Proposal Deadline

Deadline to receive proposals is **16:30:00, on April 2, 2013** by email, mail or in person to the RDN office at Parksville. Proposals received by the specified due date will be reviewed and evaluated by the Advisory Committee according to the criteria chart below. Both this request for proposals and the winning proposal will form part of the project contract. The lowest bid price will not necessarily be selected.

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Max. Score	Criteria
2	Credentials and references are strong;
2	Experience and project history is relevant and extensive;
2	Draft work program presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects the objectives detailed in section 3 of the Terms of Reference;
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an appropriate mix of team members and sub-consultants and has the necessary resources to complete the contract;
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves a clear plan to compile, review and analyze baseline information and develop the management plan, master plan concept and actions;
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a comprehensive public consultation strategy based on the RDN's Public Consultation/Communication Framework Policy No. A1-23;
2	Fee breakdown supports the work program presented & the total fee provides good value.
14	Total

Selection of Consultant

Potential candidates may be contacted for an interview with RDN staff on **Monday, April 8th, 2013**. The successful proponent will be notified no later than **Wednesday, April 10th, 2013**. All applicants will be subsequently notified of selection results by email and post.

Upon acceptance of the project, the consultant will enter into a contractual agreement with the RDN. Both this Request for Proposals and the chosen consultant's proposal will form part of the project contract.

Project Commencement

The first meeting with the selected consultant will be held on **Monday, April 15, 2013 at 10 a.m. at the RDN Recreation and Parks office in Parksville**. A site tour of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park with Consultant and RDN staff will be arranged for a later date.

Project Schedule and Phases

Phase 1: Project Initiation – March to June, 2013

Consultant Selection: March-April

- Issue request for proposals by **Friday, March 8, 2013**
- Proposals due by **Tuesday, April 2, 2013, at 16:30:00 hours**
- Optional interview with candidate(s) on **Monday, April 8, 2013**
- Successful proponent contacted by **Wednesday, April 10, 2013**
- First meeting between Consultant and RDN Park staff on **Monday, April 15, 2013**

Project Start Up: April-June

- Research and Data review
- Park Inventory and Analysis; Issue Identification
- Base mapping
- Preliminary issues, program and vision development
- Preparation of open house materials (survey, panels, maps, website info); stakeholders interviews
- Advisory Committee review of public engagement strategy and materials
- Open House #1; interviews with key stakeholders
- Review and analysis of public feedback with RDN staff

(Payment #1: 30%)

Phase 2: Draft Management Plan Development – July to August, 2013

- Consultant writes draft Management Plan: vision, principles, goals, objectives, implementation strategy
- Preliminary park master plan concept development
- Advisory Committee Review of draft Management Plan and park master plan concept

(Payment #2: 30%)

Phase 3: Final Management Plan Completion – September to December, 2013

- Preparation of Open House #2 materials (survey, information panels, maps, website info)
- Circulate Draft Plan (email and website, survey) and hold Open House #2
- Analysis and review of public feedback with RDN staff; revision and complete final Management Plan
- Advisory Committee review of final Management Plan
- Circulate final Management Plan for public comment (email, RDN website)
- Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee review of final Management Plan (possible consultant presentation)
- Submit final Management Plan for Board approval

(Payment #3: 40%)

RDN Contact

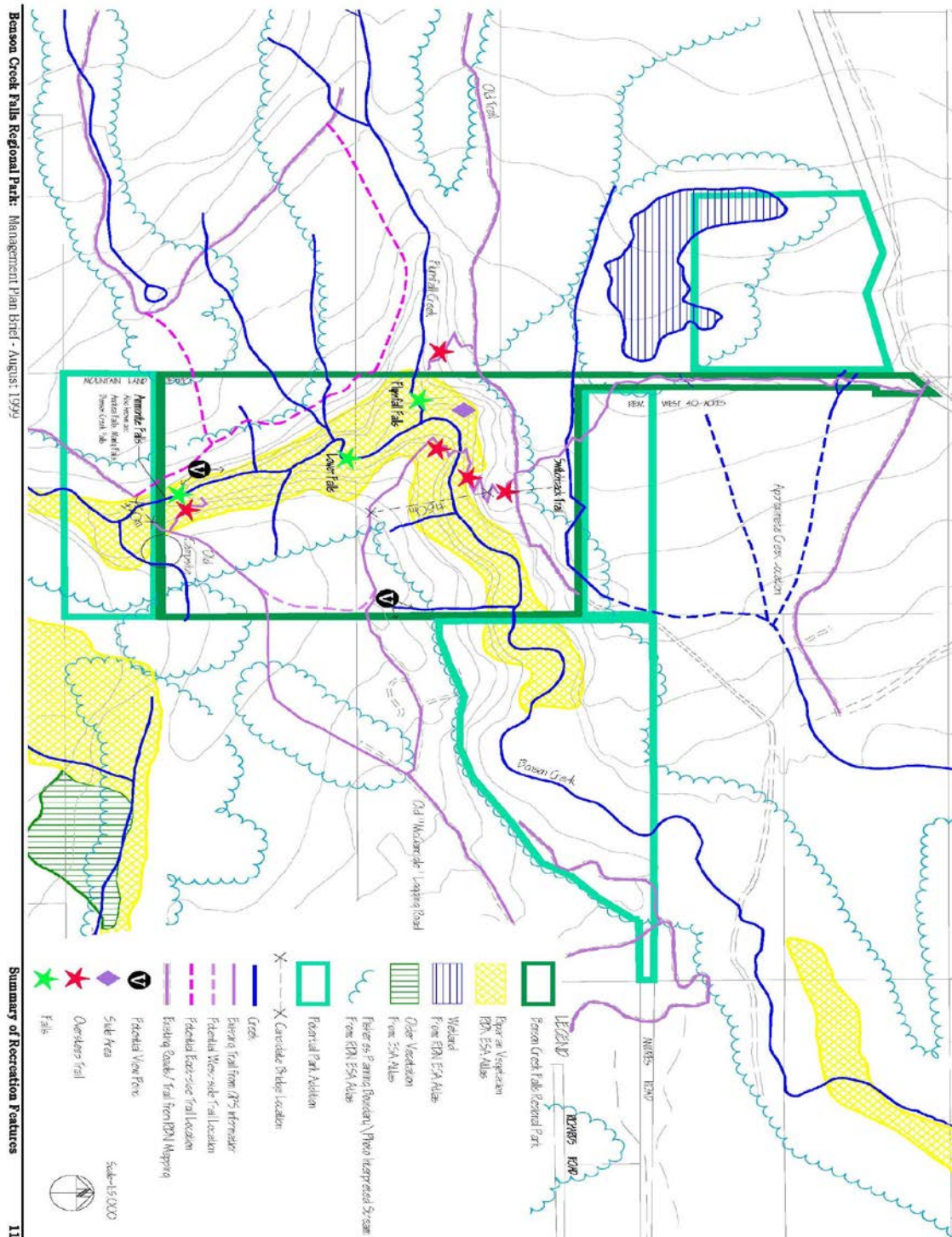
For all information about this request for consultant services, contact Margaret Paridaen, RDN Regional Parks Planner, 250-248-3252 or 1-888-828-2069 or mparidaen@rdn.bc.ca.



Benson Creek Falls Regional Park: Regional Context Maps



Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Concept (from 1999 Management Plan)



Images of Benson Creek Falls Regional Park

