

# CVRD PARKS and TRAILS DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT 2013



Wake Lake Nature Reserve in Electoral Area E

Community Parks & Trails  
and  
Regional Parks & Trails



Cowichan Valley Regional District

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## ELECTORAL AREA PARKS COMMISSIONS

Each of the Cowichan Valley Regional District's nine electoral areas has a Volunteer Parks Commission appointed by the CVRD Board. The role of these parks commissions is to provide input on the direction for community parks and trails in the electoral area including park development plans, long range community parks and trails master plans and park concept plans. Parks Commissions also review and provide feedback on referrals involving potential park land dedication or acquisition through land use development proposals, land donation, or property purchase opportunities to establish new local parks or pathways.

Parks commissions foster volunteer involvement in park stewardship, park development opportunities, contribute to the annual community parks and trail budget planning process, and provide input to the Regional Board and committees of the Board on parks, trails and outdoor recreation issues.

## VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION OF PARKS COMMISSIONS

Local parks commissions often volunteer their time and labour to ensure projects are completed with community involvement. The CVRD Board and Parks and Trails Division staff are appreciative of the effort the community makes on these volunteer days throughout the year.



# Community Parks and Trails Program 2013

## BACKGROUND

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) covers an area of approximately 8,995 square kilometres and has a population of 79,800. The District includes nine electoral areas, the four member municipalities (Town of Ladysmith, Municipality of North Cowichan, Town of Lake Cowichan and City of Duncan) and ten First Nations.

Community Parks and Trails are administered through the CVRD's community parks program which includes involvement of non-elected volunteer Parks Commissions appointed by the Regional Board. Community parks are funded and developed separately within each of the nine electoral areas and provide a range of amenities, including trail systems, playgrounds, boat launches, beach and picnic areas, habitat and ecological protection and athletic fields.

At the end of 2013 there were 197 community parks across the nine electoral areas covering over 1,060 hectares of land. Of these, 56 parks (214 hectares) are active parks while the remainder are for passive park use or natural green space areas. Community parks continue to be acquired and developed each year as these electoral area communities grow in population and local demand for increased parks and greenspace.

The following lists the number of community parks in each electoral area as of December 31, 2013.

Electoral Area A – Mill Bay/Malahat.....	34 parks
Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake.....	53 parks
Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill.....	21 parks
Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay.....	24 parks
Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora.....	19 parks
Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls.....	11 parks
Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands.....	10 parks
Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond.....	8 parks
Electoral Area I – Youbou/Meade Creek.....	17 parks



2013 Opening of the Quarry Nature Park washroom



Electoral Area B – Worthington Road Trail



Electoral Area B – Elsie Miles Park



Electoral Area D – Chaster Roadside Trail



Electoral Area I – Marble Bay Park

## COMMUNITY PARKLAND ACQUISITION

Community Parks can be established in different ways: from land donations or gifts, through subdivision under section 941 of the *Local Government Act* or purchasing through dedicated funds such as cash in lieu. If the CVRD does not have specific interests in a park land contribution a 5% parkland cash in lieu contribution from developments goes toward parkland purchase in more desirable locations in the electoral area.

In 2013 there were 11 new parcels of community parkland acquired either through subdivision development, lease or as land purchase for a total of 22.5 hectares. These are noted below by Electoral Area.

Electoral Area	Name of Park	Size (ha)	Acquisition type
B	Thain Road Park	0.32	Subdivision
B	Worthington Road Park	0.18	Subdivision
B	Elsie Miles Park	1.56	Purchase
D	Lanes Road Park	2.10	Subdivision
D	Chaster Road Trail	0.06	MoT Permit
E	Hanks Road Park	13.3	Purchase
F	Hawkhill Park	2.56	Subdivision
G	Stocking Creek Park	1.43	Purchase
H	Raise Road beach access	0.01	MoT Permit
I	Marble Bay Roadside Trail	0.04	MoT Permit
I	Marble Bay Park	0.90	Subdivision

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The CVRD Parks and Trails Program can accept all forms of donations such as land, cash, labour, services, materials, equipment, real estate, park amenities and park furniture. In the majority of cases a tax donation receipt may be issued to the donor. In 2013 three memorial benches and one memorial tree were donated to the CVRD and placed in various community parks.

## COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLANNING

A community parks and trails master planning document is intended to set direction and priorities for the next 10 to 20 years for community parks and public trail corridors in and around an Electoral Area.

In 2013 the Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan was adopted by the Regional Board. Work is underway for the completion of the Electoral Area A - Mill Bay/Malahat Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. Community Parks and Trails Master Plans are also in placed for Electoral Area B- Shawnigan Lake and Electoral Area C- Cobble Hill.



## REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLANNING

In 2007 the Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan was adopted by the Regional Board to provide direction for the Regional Parks Program for the next 20 years.

The Master Plan outlines a regional implementation strategy for land acquisition and management inclusive of funding through the approved regional parkland acquisition fund.

## REGIONAL PARKLAND ACQUISITION

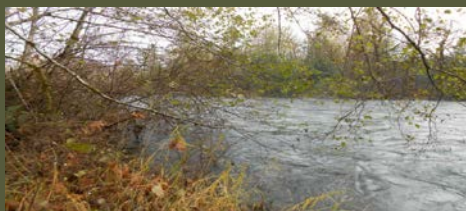
The Regional Board approved a Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund in 2008 following a region-wide referendum that endorsed taxing for the fund specifically to assist with funding the acquisition of regional park sites as outlined in the Plan. The fund generates approximately \$750,000 annually for the acquisition of regional park sites.

In 2013 an additional 15.4 hectares of land was acquired through partnership with the District of North Cowichan as an addition to Stoney Hill Regional Park.



Stoney Hill Regional Park

Also in 2013 a 2.02 hectare parcel of land was acquired as an addition to Sandy Pool Regional Park and is located to the east of the existing park.



Sandy Pool Regional Park



Stoney Hill Regional Park

## Regional Parks and Trails Program 2013

### BACKGROUND

Regional parks and trails are established by the Cowichan Valley Regional District for the benefit of the entire Cowichan Region. Regional parks and trails are administered and funded separately from community parks and trails, and are managed and funded through taxation of all nine electoral areas and the four member municipalities.

The Regional Parks function was established in 1972, and in 1979 Osborne Bay Regional Park was the first park acquired under the program.

There are six Regional Parks currently managed under the Regional Parks Program for a total of 497 hectares. In addition, the CVRD manages outdoor recreation within the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area which covers approximately 406 hectares of forest lands under a licence agreement with the Ministry of Forests. These forest lands also include two active Provincial community woodlots. The Regional Parks and Trails program continues to focus on the completion of the Cowichan Valley Trail, a 120 km trail route initiative linking the entire Region and neighbouring Regional Districts.

All lands managed under the Regional Parks and Trails Program are listed below:

1. Spectacle Lake Park
2. Chemainus River Park
3. Sandy Pool Regional Park
4. Osborne Bay Regional Park
5. Stocking/Heart Lake Regional Park
6. Stoney Hill Regional Park
7. Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area
8. Cowichan Valley Trail/Kinsol Trestle

## PARK BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

The CVRD Parks and Trails Program has the support of two full time bylaw enforcement officers that work with Parks and Trails staff to provide bylaw compliance and enforcement in Community and Regional Parks and Trails throughout the District. Monitoring of the Cowichan Valley Trail is the largest component of the program.

Regular visits are also made to parks and trails across the region to assist with compliance issues so as to ensure local parks remain accessible and enjoyable to all park visitors.



Vandalism on a local trail



Compliance issue – Unauthorized use of a Park



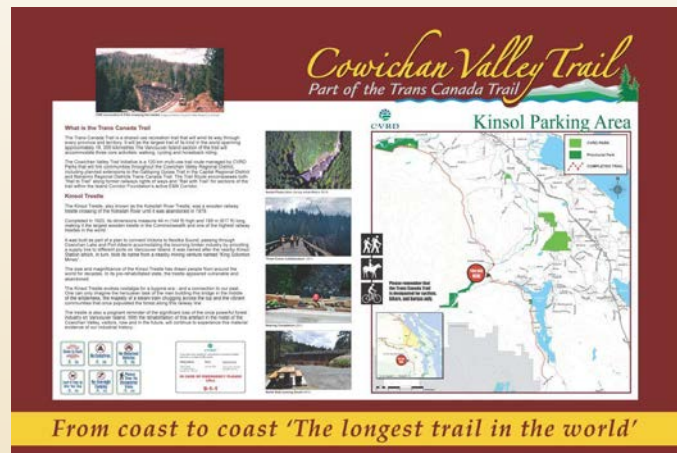
Standard regulatory signage in Community and Regional Parks

## COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL

The Cowichan Valley Trail is a spectacular multi-use trail that is an integral part of the Trans-Canada Trail route on Southern Vancouver Island. From the south end of Shawnigan Lake to the Town of Lake Cowichan, the trail follows the gentle grade of the former turn of the century CN railway line and the recently rehabilitated Kinsol Trestle that served pioneer logging and settlement communities. In 2010 portions of the trail through the Municipality of North Cowichan were completed, as well as new sections linking Saltair to the Nanaimo Regional District. In 2011 sections of trail were completed from the Town of Lake Cowichan to Sherman Road following the former E&N rail grade as well as sections between Chemainus and Ladysmith.

In 2013 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Malahat First Nation to collaborate on the planning and construction of the trail connection south to the Galloping Goose Trail in the Capital Regional District. Also, a section of the Cowichan Valley Trail in Chemainus was completed from Elm Street to Old Victoria Road.

In 2013 signage was installed along the Cowichan Valley Trail route in various locations. Two examples are below.



From coast to coast 'The longest trail in the world'



From coast to coast "The longest trail in the world"



## Parks and Trails Initiatives

### INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

In 2013 the Parks and Trails Division, with support from the Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake Parks Commission, entered the second year of its invasive plant strategy to combat noxious weeds in community parks throughout Shawnigan Lake. In 2012 an invasive plant inventory was conducted through the Coastal Invasive Species Committee (CISC) for all community parks in Electoral Area B - Shawnigan Lake. A priority action plan was developed according to plant priority, land area, access and funding. 2013, the first year of action, resulted in 50 cubic metres or 5 full sized dump trucks of invasive material being removed from 10 community parks.

The Parks and Trails Division is continuing with the program by monitoring and removing invasive plants within community parks in Shawnigan Lake and is looking to expand the program into the eight other electoral areas. The initial plant removal project was the first step in controlling invasive plants in these parks. On site review will be conducted at the treated locations in 2014 before the program moves forward to include other parks. The targeted invasive plants in 2013 included Scotch thistle, bull thistle, Canada thistle, Daphne, yellow archangel, English holly, English ivy, tansy ragwort, Himalayan blackberry, and Scotch broom.



Scotch broom



Canadian Thistle



Spurge Laurel (Daphne)



English Ivy



**The Giant Hogweed plant is a very invasive and noxious species that should only be removed by trained professionals.**



## SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

The CVRD Parks and Trails Program hires a 6 person *summer student crew* from May – August each year. The summer crew spends a set amount of time in each electoral area. This work is incorporated into the annual maintenance budget under the direction of each electoral area parks commission.



Summer Student crew in 2013



Summer Student Work crew



## VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS

Numerous volunteer projects take place each year in community parks throughout the Regional District. The Parks and Trails Division works with various community groups such as Scouts Canada, Rotary clubs, school groups and community volunteers. In 2013 there were approximately 4,500 hours of volunteer labour provided in our local parks. Projects included: trail construction, tree planting, garbage removal, invasive species removal, and general park cleanup.



Broom pulling in Currie Park



Volunteer work at Cobble Hill Common



Broom pulling in Central Park by volunteers in Honeymoon Bay

## SPORTING EVENTS

Various groups regularly ask to use some of our regional and community parks for various outdoor recreation and sport events which help to bring tourism and economic development into our communities. The Subaru Ironman Triathlon and the Ceevac half-marathon are held each year in the community of Shawnigan Lake in West Shawnigan Lake Park and on the Cowichan Valley Trail/Kinsol Trestle.

The annual Cobble Hill Classic Mountain Bike race takes place in the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area, and the MS RONA Grape Escape bike tour also takes place annually in a different park each year.



Ceevac 1/2 marathon on Kinsol Trestle



## PARTNERSHIPS

The CVRD Parks and Trails Division has informal and formal partnerships with businesses, other local governments and community groups. Community partnerships are important for donations of labour and materials.

In 2013 the CVRD's Shawnigan Lake Parks Commission and the Shawnigan Lake Recreation Commission worked together to support the District's purchase of the Elsie Miles school site. Also, the Busy Place Creek trail and viewing platform project was done in partnership with the Busy Place Creek Streamkeepers for Alexander School group, the Cowichan Valley Naturalists and Cowichan Tribes.

Partnerships are also created with various groups in the valley and in 2013 a partnership between the CVRD and the Chemainus Rotary was developed to remove litter along a section of the Cowichan Valley Trail in Chemainus.

The Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited Ltd. are other examples of partnerships with the CVRD in land management.

## PARK VISITATION PROGRAM AND VEHICLE /TRAIL COUNTERS

The Parks and Trails Division install vehicle and trail counters at various parks in the District to determine the number of park visitors and to collect park usage data which helps with planning for development of new park amenities and the upgrading of existing facilities. In 2013, the following highlights featured CVRD sites:

- Kinsol Trestle South side parking lot – 70,000 visitors
- Bright Angel Park (May – December) – 56,175 users (5% increase from 2012)
- Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area - 46,000 users (an increase of more than 6% since 2012)

## BOOKINGS IN PARKS

2013 was the second year that the Parks and Trails Division worked under the new parks booking system which has been integrated with the four CVRD Recreation Centres in order to improve the coordination of in-park activity programming and special events. Currently there are 14 parks that can be booked for various events such as weddings, group picnics/reunions/BBQs, ball tournaments, birthday parties, and group camping. Not all 14 parks are used for all activities as it depends on the park. In addition to park bookings, recreational programs are also offered in various parks throughout the year that are organized through the CVRD's recreation centres.

In 2013 there were 32 park bookings for events and sporting activities in our community and Regional Parks, plus 66 bookings at Bright Angel Park (9 field rentals, 28 lower shelter rentals and 29 upper shelter rentals including group camping) for a total of 98 bookings under the Regional and Community Parks Programs.

## PARK SUSTAINABILITY

With the adoption of the updated CVRD Corporate Strategic Plan in November 2013 the CVRD Parks and Trails Program has continued to move towards a more sustainable park system that integrates the natural environment, economics and climate change. Key changes that took place in our community and regional parks in 2013 are the incorporation of native plantings in Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park and the Kinsol Trestle parking lot. As well, in some of the new parks, areas are left un-mowed in a natural grass state as a low impact play area for park users.

Rainwater management within CVRD parks, recreation centres and community halls is important to reduce water runoff and create water infiltration back into the natural aquifer. The use of bio-swales, rain gardens, as well as dry and wet ponds is becoming more common as the Parks and Trails Division and the CVRD Engineering Department work together to integrate rainwater management and the natural environment within CVRD managed property. An example of this in 2013 was the reduction of rainwater run-off around the Honeymoon Bay Hall in Central Park in Electoral Area F by installing bio swales and re-grading the parking lot.

The Parks and Trails Division has responded to the public demand for more natural elements in playgrounds by creating a "nature-scape" style of playground incorporating willow tunnels, grassy mounds and boulders for climbing on, in addition to some more traditional playground equipment. Currie Park, in Electoral Area E is an example of a recent park that features a nature scape playground that was completed in 2013.

## COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS AND BUDGETS

Maintenance of community and regional parks and trails is currently achieved through contracts with parks and landscaping maintenance companies. Capital projects and parks operations activities (i.e. hazard trees) are managed through Parks and Trails Division staff engaging contactors and businesses to undertake the works. These projects are budgeted annually through consultation with individual electoral area parks commissions and committees of the CVRD Board.

- In 2013 the Community Parks and Trails capital program budget was \$1.2 million and 24 capital projects were completed.
- The annual 2013 community parks operating budget was \$2.27 million.
- In 2013 the Regional Parks capital projects budget was \$595,000 and 9 capital projects were completed.
- The annual 2013 Regional Parks operating budget was \$951,000 plus \$575,000 in grant funding received by the CVRD.



Busy Place Creek Salmonid platform

## CVRD PARKS AND TRAILS DIVISION STAFF

The CVRD's Community and Regional Parks and Trails programs are administered through a core staff team within the Parks and Trails Division. The responsibilities in administration of these programs include parkland acquisition, planning, parks design, managing contracted parks operations and maintenance, park facility and trail construction and park volunteer coordination. The Parks & Trails Division team is comprised of ten staff members, supplemented by a six member summer student parks work crew from May-August each year.



Brian Farquhar:  
Parks and Trails  
Manager

### Parks and Trails Manager

Brian Farquhar oversees the annual work program for the Parks & Trails Division under the direction of the CVRD Board in the delivery of the Community and Regional Parks Program, inclusive of working with the appointed volunteer parks commissions, NGO's and other agencies.



Ryan Dias:  
Park Operations  
Superintendent

### Park Operations Superintendent

Ryan Dias oversees the operations and maintenance of 197 Community Parks, 7 Regional Parks and the Cowichan Valley Trail as well as the parks capital development program. Key responsibilities: oversees the day to day operations, preparation of Tender and RFP Packages, and operational budgets.





Tanya Soroka:  
Parks and Trails  
Planner

**Parks and Trails Planner**

Tanya Soroka’s primary role as a Parks and Trails Planner is the preparation of Electoral Area Community Parks and Trails Master Plans, subdivision and rezoning application referrals for park dedication, parkland acquisition and park communications (annual reports, brochures, and website).



Graham Gidden:  
Parks and Trails  
Planner

**Parks and Trails Planner**

Graham Gidden’s primary role as a Parks and Trails Planner is to prepare park landscape concept designs, park management planning, park donations and bookings, and development of interpretive signage.



Dan Brown:  
Parks and  
Trails Planning  
Technician

**Parks and Trails Planning Technician**

Dan Brown’s role as the Parks and Trails Planning Technician is to manage the planning and trail design for Regional Parks with specific emphasis on the Cowichan Valley Trail and the Cobble Hill Regional Recreation Area.



Brent Wilson:  
Parks Maintenance  
Coordinator

**Parks Maintenance Coordinator**

Brent Wilson’s role as the Parks Maintenance Coordinator is to direct park maintenance contractors in Electoral Areas A – I community parks and regional parks as well as coordinating the two parks carpentry staff who build trail structures and install park amenities. Brent also looks after the summer student program comprised of a six person field crew for 4 months.



Brock Tingey:  
Park Operations  
Technician

**Park Operations Technician**

Brock Tingey’s role is to supply parks operational and maintenance technical research and delivery support to the Parks & Trails Division. He assists with public inquiries, provides daily operations support including addressing parks maintenance issues, hazard assessments, conditional assessments and park inspections.



Michael Miller:  
Parks Capital  
Projects  
Specialist

**Capital Project Specialist**

Michael Miller’s primary role as the Capital Projects Specialist is to manage and oversee the construction of capital projects within Community and Regional Parks. These projects range from overseeing contractors on the construction of washroom buildings, playgrounds and playfields to the upgrade of smaller park amenities.



Brian Brown:  
Parks  
Carpenter

**Parks Carpenter and Assistant Carpenter**

The parks carpentry positions provide construction of trail structures (stairs, boardwalks, ramps, railings) as well as the installation of park amenities (benches, picnic tables, signage, kiosks, porta-potty enclosures.)



Derrick Kloosterman:  
Parks Carpenter  
Assistant

## 2013 PARKS AND TRAILS CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPLETED

### **Electoral Area A**

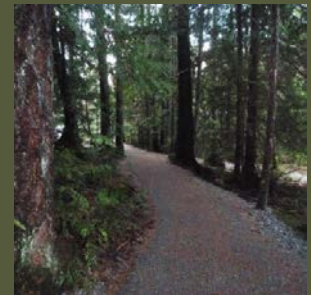
- Mill Springs Trail: Built a walking trail around the wetland area from Deloume Road to Boompond Road within the existing park trail corridor.
- Deloume Park: Construction of a picnic shelter adjacent to the playground and sport court as well as site furnishings and entrance sign.
- Huckleberry Park: New split rail fencing, landscaping, new park entrance sign.



Deloume Park Picnic Shelter

### **Electoral Area B**

- Worthington Road beach access: Construction of a trail from Cullin Road to the new Worthington Park located on Shawnigan Lake.
- Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park: Construction of the fitness trail around the sportsfield and through the forest down to Meadowview Road.



Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park

### **Electoral Area C**

- Cobble Hill Common: Landscaping around the perimeter of the area and around the new sign that was installed.
- Quarry Nature Park: Construction of a washroom building, picnic area, outdoor bike-wash area, trail construction and parking reconfiguration.



Quarry Nature Park washroom building

### **Electoral Area E**

- Currie Park: Construction of a new playground with elements of a natural playground (willow tunnels, mounds), large slide, picnic areas, paved pathway, and parking lot.
- Busy Place Creek: Construction of trail and viewing platform over Busy Place Creek to watch spawning fish.
- Wake Lake Nature Reserve: Construction of a kiosk and installation of an interpretive sign on the ecology of the wetland pond.
- Granite Road Park: Installation of fencing around perimeter of the park and new signage.



Currie Park playground and amenities

### **Electoral Area F**

- Memory Lane Trail: Trail improvements and invasive species removal.
- Central Park and Community Hall: Parking lot improvements and rainwater management collection and infiltration system.
- Bear Lake: Ramp and walkway removal.



Wake Lake Nature Reserve amenities



## 2013 PARKS AND TRAILS CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPLETED

### *Electoral Area G*

- Stocking Creek Park: Trail construction from Finch Place into the north end of the park.
- Saltair Centennial Park: Landscaping of the Mountain View Drive parking lot. The parking lot was re-graded, the staircase and ramp were made more accessible and landscaping improvements were completed.

### *Electoral Area H*

- Raise Road: This road end was cleared and a trail was built to the top of bank and a staircase was constructed leading to the beach.

### *Sub-Regional Parks*

- Bright Angel Park: Riparian area restoration with construction of split rail fencing along the top of bank leading to the Koksilah River.
- Mill Bay Historic Church: Finished the exterior siding on the church building and installation of the new washroom.

### *Regional Parks*

- Cowichan Valley Trail: Extension from Elm Street to Old Victoria Road.
- Cowichan Valley Trail: Glenora section bridge repairs
- Cowichan Valley Trail: Signage upgrades.
- Cowichan Valley Trail: Access control at various locations.
- Cowichan Valley Trail: McGee Trestle assessment for future repairs.
- Cowichan Valley Trail: Kinsol Trestle Parking lot completed.
- Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area: General trail upgrades.



Saltair Centennial Park  
landscaping



Raise Road Beach Access



Bright Angel Park riparian  
area restoration



Mill Bay Historic Church washroom

## COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

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2013 Parks and Trails Annual Report