



## **PARKS & TRAILS TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Applicability: Parks & Trails

Effective Date: May 13, 2020

### **PURPOSE:**

To support the effective retention, removal, pruning and planting of trees within lands owned and/or managed as a Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Park.

### **DEFINITION:**

#### **Arborist**

A person who is a professional in the practice of arboriculture.

#### **Boundary Tree**

A tree that has part of the trunk or part of the visible (above ground) root flare crossing the property boundary between a CVRD Park and adjoining land.

#### **Certified Tree Risk Assessor**

A person who has, consistent with WorkSafe BC, completed the *Wildlife Danger Tree Assessor's Course*, administered by the Wildlife Tree Committee or Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ), administered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

#### **CVRD Park**

Areas designated or administered as parkland, natural area, trail corridor and/or areas managed under a form of tenure including, but not limited to lease or license agreement, statutory right-of-way or easement as approved by the Board.

#### **Tree Removal**

To fall, cut, drop or otherwise take down in whole or in part a standing tree.

#### **Prune**

The selective removal of tree branches or roots.

#### **Hazard Tree**

A tree that has a structural defect that makes it likely to fail in whole or in part.

#### **Natural Areas**

Relatively undisturbed and continuous areas within a CVRD Park that are natural or near natural in character and contain a high percentage of native plant species, provide for wildlife habitat and support natural processes.

**Occupant or Resident**

The person or persons ordinarily residing within the CVRD, or persons who own property used for business purposes in the CVRD.

**Roadway**

Any corridor used for vehicle traffic including public highways, private driveways, forest service roads and park access roads.

**Target**

Any person or property that could potentially be damaged or injured should a tree failure occur.

**Topping**

The drastic reduction of a tree's apical growth by cutting major portions of the tree crown to stubs or to the trunk, and includes re-topping of previously topped trees.

**Tree(s)**

Long lived perennial plant(s) that are woody and have a self-supporting trunk with root system. May be deciduous or evergreen and includes all living parts.

**Utility Services**

All overhead and underground services including hydro, telephone, cable, water, sewer and natural gas lines.

**Wildlife Tree**

A standing dead or live tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife.

**POLICY:**

1. The CVRD will apply the Parks & Trails Tree Management Policy as follows:
  - a. Identify and mitigate hazard trees presenting a risk to persons or property within or adjacent to a CVRD Park;
  - b. Take a conservationist approach to tree management, whereby efforts are made to retain or replace identified trees for ecological or other community benefit; and
  - c. The Parks & Trails Division, or designated representative, will respond to tree concerns that are received by way of notification or complaint within 5 business days.

*Parks & Trails Tree Management Policy*

## Protection of CVRD Parks and Trails Trees

2. The management of a tree in a CVRD Park is the responsibility of the CVRD Parks & Trails Division.
3. Only CVRD staff or designated representatives may prune or remove trees within a CVRD Park.
4. A tree is considered to be joint property when any part of the tree trunk crosses a property line between a CVRD Park and adjoining land.
5. A tree will not be thinned, pruned or removed from a CVRD Park for the purpose of establishing, maintaining or enhancing private view corridors.
6. A tree will not be thinned, pruned or removed from a CVRD Park because of shade effects on adjacent properties.
7. A tree will not be thinned, pruned or removed from a CVRD Park because of the natural shedding of branches, leaves, flowers, seeds, sap, or other debris and/or the natural activity of insects.
8. Tree management in riparian areas will comply with federal and provincial legislation including but not limited to the *Federal Fisheries Act*, the *BC Fish Protection Act*, the *BC Wildlife Act*, the *BC Riparian Areas Protection Act*, and the *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation*, as may be amended from time to time.

## Tree Removal Criteria

9. A tree will be considered for removal from a CVRD Park only when one or more of the following criteria have been met:
  - a. A Certified Tree Risk Assessor has determined the tree is a Hazard Tree, and the risk of failure cannot be mitigated by pruning or other practical means;
  - b. An Arborist has determined the tree is endangering the health or stability of other more desirable trees;
  - c. An Arborist has determined the tree is interfering with or inhibiting the normal development of more desirable trees;
  - d. The tree is encroaching into a roadway in such a way that visibility and pedestrian or vehicle clearance is reduced, thereby creating a safety or obstruction issue;
  - e. An arborist has recommended the replacement of the tree with higher value tree(s) or vegetation;
  - f. The tree's removal has been approved as part of a park plan;
  - g. The tree is impeding the development of approved park amenities and infrastructure, including the construction of trails;

- h. The tree is impeding the maintenance of existing park amenities or infrastructure; or
  - i. The tree is affecting utility services where pruning is not considered practical or would otherwise contribute to a significant decline in tree health.
- 10. Whenever possible, occupants and residents of properties within a 60-metre radius of a tree identified for removal will be notified by a sign posted on the tree for a period of seven days, or through verbal or written communication, prior to the work being commenced.
- 11. Tree removal or pruning for emergency or public safety purposes may be completed without notification.
- 12. When removal of a tree is taking place within a CVRD Park, a “no net loss” approach will be taken to replace the tree with an appropriate species in a suitable location within the same park. The replacement species and location(s) for planting will be at the discretion of the CVRD Parks & Trails Division, with the advice of an Arborist as appropriate.
- 13. Where the CVRD has determined removal of a boundary tree is required in accordance with the Tree Removal Criteria, the adjacent land owner will be contacted to seek resolve on a mutually agreeable approach for removal of the tree. Removal of a boundary tree that is determined to be located predominately within a CVRD Park, or is assessed as a Hazard Tree with identified targets in a CVRD Park, will be at the CVRD’s expense.

#### **Hazard Tree**

- 14. During assessment of a Hazard Tree, mitigation efforts including modifications to or pruning of the tree, where practical, are preferred options over complete removal and will be undertaken based on the assessment of an Arborist.
- 15. A tree located in a CVRD Park that has been assessed by a Certified Tree Risk Assessor to be a “Hazard Tree” will be removed at the CVRD’s expense.

#### **Tree Planting**

- 16. All trees planted in a CVRD Park must meet the standards outlined in the Canadian Landscape Standard or BC Landscape Standard Association (BCLSA), or American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 transplanting standard.
- 17. Prior to undertaking tree plantings in a CVRD Park, planting sites will be evaluated by the CVRD Parks & Trails Division or a designated representative to assess limitations imposed by utility services and sight lines for both traffic and pedestrian visibility and existing or planned park infrastructure.

## **Maintenance**

- 18.** CVRD Park trees will be maintained as outlined below to promote general good health and to mitigate against hazards or conditions that interfere or conflict with the safe public use of an area.
  - a.** A tree previously identified as a Hazard Tree by a Certified Tree Risk Assessor will be inspected and assessed on an annual basis until the tree is removed or a Certified Tree Risk Assessor has confirmed that the tree is no longer a Hazard Tree.
  - b.** In lieu of performing proactive inspections, the CVRD will respond to reports of potential Tree hazards by arranging a hazard assessment by a Certified Tree Risk Assessor.
  - c.** All pruning of CVRD Park trees will be completed under the direction of the CVRD Parks & Trails Division or a designated representative.
- 19.** A tree will only be considered for topping in the following circumstances:
  - a.** Where statutory clearance from overhead utility services is required and no other practical options are available;
  - b.** Where the decision has been made to remove a tree from a natural area, a tree may be pruned and/or topped instead of complete removal in order to create habitat as a Wildlife Tree; or
  - c.** Where a tree has been previously topped and requires re-topping to mitigate safety concerns.
- 20.** Management of insects and disease on CVRD Park trees will be conducted through an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. A tree may be removed as a preventative measure to protect against the threat of insect or disease occurrences and to protect the integrity of an existing stand of trees, as determined by an Arborist.
- 21.** Trees in “natural areas” will be managed within the principles of natural ecological processes and minimal intervention. Selective tree management work may be undertaken to address the following issues:
  - a.** Tree Health – A tree that is causing interference with the health of other trees growing in the immediate area may be pruned or removed;
  - b.** Management Plans – Tree(s) may be removed, pruned or planted to achieve specific objectives as part of a park plan;
  - c.** Risk to Target – A tree may be removed if it poses a demonstrated risk to a target in a CVRD Park or adjoining private property; or
  - d.** Worker and Public Safety – A tree may be pruned or removed to address Work Safe BC regulations or to reduce public risk and protect CVRD Park infrastructure.

- e. Habitat Value – Where feasible, all resulting woody debris and branches from the removal of a tree will be left in the CVRD Park as wildlife habitat and organic matter for natural decomposition.

Approved by: Board  
Approval date: May 13, 2020