

CVRD PARKS and TRAILS DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT 2012



View from Cobble Hill Mountain Regional
Recreation Area

Community Parks and Trails
and
Regional Parks and 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.

The parks commissions foster volunteer involvement in park stewardship and community development opportunities, help with the annual community parks and trails budget planning process, and provide input to the Regional Board or committees of the Board on parks, trails and outdoor recreation issues in their electoral area.

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION OF PARKS COMMISSIONS

Local parks commissions often volunteer their time and labour to ensure projects get 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.

Community Parks and Trails Program 2012

BACKGROUND

The Cowichan Valley Regional District 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, North Cowichan, Town of Lake Cowichan and City of Duncan) and 10 first nations.

Community Parks and Trails are managed through the CVRD's community parks program which includes involvement of non-elected 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, tot lots, boat launches, beach and picnic areas and athletic fields.

There are 191 community parks across the nine electoral areas covering over 1040 hectares of land. Of these, 53 parks (212 hectares) are active parks while the remainder are for passive park use or natural green space areas. More community parks are being acquired and developed every year as these communities grow in population.

The following lists the number of community parks in each electoral area as of December 31, 2012.

Electoral Area A – Mill Bay/Malahat.....	33 parks
Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake.....	49 parks
Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill.....	21 parks
Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay.....	22 parks
Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora.....	18 parks
Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls.....	10 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



Opening of the Hammond Way Trail



Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay Gateway



Electoral Area E - Currie Park



Electoral Area E – Johns Road River Access



Electoral Area H – Raise Road Beach Access

COMMUNITY PARKS ACQUISITION

Community Parks can be created in different ways: from land dedications or gifts, at the time of subdivision under section 941 of *the Local Government Act*, where the Official Community Plan has planned definite land parcels for parkland, or from dedicated funds such as cash in lieu. If the CVRD does not have specific interests in a park land contribution, 5% cash in lieu from the developer goes toward parkland purchase in more desirable locations in the electoral area.

In 2012 there were 12 new parcels of community parkland acquired either through subdivision or as land purchase for a total of 10.5 hectares.

- Electoral Area A - Trail extension Sentinel Ridge (0.03 ha) -Subdivision
- Electoral Area A – Hidden Estates Park (2.28 ha) - Subdivision
- Electoral Area B – Three road ends of 0.31 ha in total – BC MoT permit
- Electoral Area B – Sylvester Trail (0.03 ha) - Subdivision
- Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay Gateway (0.61 ha) – lease
- Electoral Area E - Two beach access points (Johns and Granite Rd (0.28 ha total) – BC MoT permits
- Electoral Area E – Caromar Park (5.76 ha) - Subdivision
- Electoral Area E – Currie Park (1.21 ha) – Land purchase
- Electoral Area H – Raise Road beach access (0.01 ha) – BC MoT permit

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 2012 four memorial benches 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 the Electoral Area.

Community Parks and Trails Master Plans were both adopted in 2012 for Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake and Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill. Work is underway for the completion of the Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay and Electoral Area A - Mill Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plans.

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. Eleven candidate sites were identified across the Region as having regional significance for outdoor recreation and/or environmental values.

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

REGIONAL PARKS 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 acquisition of regional park sites as outlined in the Plan. The Fund generates approximately \$750,000 annually for regional parkland acquisition.

In 2011 the 51.8 hectare Sansum Point Property was acquired through partnerships with the Land Conservancy of BC and the Cowichan Community Land Trust as the first acquisition towards the creation of Stoney Hill Regional Park.



Newly rehabilitated Kinsol Trestle (2011)

Regional Parks and Trails Program 2012

BACKGROUND

Regional parks and trails are secured and administered 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 Park was the first Regional Park to be acquired under the program. As well, Spectacle Lake Park and Chemainus River Park are managed under a lease with the Province (BC Parks) for the CVRD to operate these parks under the Regional Parks Program.

There are total of six Regional Parks managed under the Regional Parks Program for a total of 495 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. Over the past few years, the Regional Parks and Trails program has also focused on the planning, land acquisition and development of the Kinsol Trestle and 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 (Sansum Point)
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 Parks 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.



CVT - Waterline Route

COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL INITIATIVE

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 newly rehabilitated (2011) 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 Chemainus 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. Plans are under way to connect south to the Galloping Goose Trail, which is the Capital Regional Districts section of the Trans Canada Trail.

The growth of the Cowichan Valley Trail has been substantial over the past 4 years with significant funding secured in 2011 and 2012 for the Cowichan Valley Trail through Provincial and Federal Grant funding programs, including funding from the Trans Canada Trail (\$400,000), the Island Coastal Economic Trust (\$743,891), Federal Gas Tax program (\$400,000) and the Federal Western Economic Development program (\$650,000). This significant project could not have been completed without the financial contributions of these funding partners and the dedicated time and work that so many people put into this project.



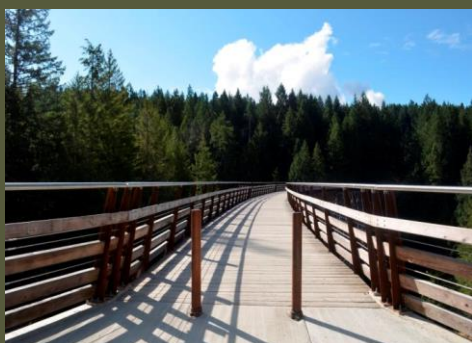
New section of Trail. CVT - Chemainus to Ladysmith



Opening event on the Kinsol (July 28, 2011)



Ribbon cutting ceremony at opening event



Kinsol Trestle deck from North side



Kinsol Trestle before rehabilitation

HISTORIC KINSOL TRESTLE REHABILITATION

The Historic Kinsol Trestle, one of the few accessible and visible reminders of early mining and logging industries, brings history to life in such a powerful way. Designed by engineers but built by local farmers and loggers, the Kinsol Trestle is one of the tallest free-standing and most spectacular timber rail trestle structures in the world at 187 metres (614 feet) in length and standing 44 metres (145 feet) above the salmon bearing Koksilah River.

The rehabilitation of the Historic Kinsol Trestle was a joint project of the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Government of Canada, and the Province of British Columbia. Major project sponsors included the Island Coastal Economic Trust (\$1,000,000), Federal Stimulus funding (\$3.77 million), Local Motion Grant (\$1.611 million), the Trans Canada Trail (\$250,000), the Cowichan Foundation, and numerous local businesses, community groups and citizen.

In addition to the financial contributions for the rehabilitation, a BC Heritage Grant was received in the amount of \$5000 for the creation of interpretive signage at the Kinsol site to be installed in 2013.

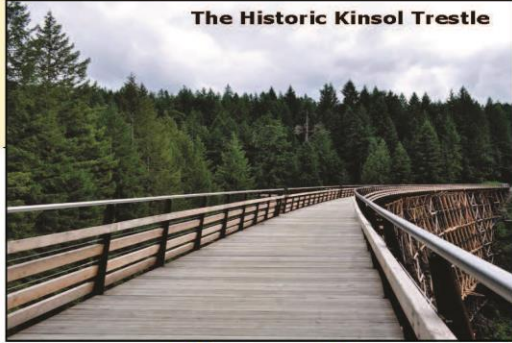
One of the many supporters was the South Cowichan Rotary that held a contest for the opportunity to drive the “last spike” at the Trestle and be the first to cross. The rotary also volunteered their time and funds to construct a trail under the trestle to the Koksilah River.

The rehabilitation of the trestle was completed in the summer of 2011 with the official opening taking place on July 28, 2011 with over 800 people joining in the celebration including project funding partners, local disciplinarians and additional project supporters.



Kinsol Trestle Completed

COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL MAP



Cowichan Valley Trail
Part of the Trans Canada Trail

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.

A summer *park planning student* is often hired to assist with park planning projects throughout the District. In 2012 a graphic design student was hired to design and create many of the community and regional parks brochures that have been requested by the public. These brochures will be printed and distributed to the public as well as added to the CVRD website.



Summer student
Work crew



General Parks and Trails

VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS

Numerous volunteer projects take place each year in community parks throughout the District. The Parks and Trails Division work with various community groups such as Scouts Canada, Rotary clubs, school groups and general community volunteers. In 2012 there were approximately 1500 hours of volunteer labour provided in our local parks, and projects included trail construction, tree planting, garbage cleanup, invasive species removal, and general park cleanup.



Planting in Cobble Hill
Common (2012)



Mountain bike trail construction
Cleasby Bike Park (2011)

SPORTING EVENTS

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

The Cobble Hill Mountain Bike race takes place annually in the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area, and the MS RONA Grape Escape bike tour took place in Hecate Park and West Shawnigan Lake Park.



Ceevac ½ marathon on Kinsol Trestle



PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout 2012 the CVRD worked with the Malahat First Nation to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Cowichan Valley Trail across Crown property within their traditional territory. The MOU was signed in early 2013.

Community partnerships are also important for donations of time and materials. The CVRD Parks and Trails Program has many partnerships with businesses and community groups. The Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited Ltd. are examples of partnerships with the CVRD in land management.

PARK USAGE AND VEHICLE /TRAIL COUNTERS

The Parks and Trails Division have installed vehicle and trail counters that are rotated between various parks in the District to determine the number of park visitors and park use.

Bright Angel Park has some of the highest visitor usage in the Regional District (May-December 2012 was 53,500 users) and Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area (May-December 2012 was 43,190 users). Quarry Nature Park is the gateway to Cobble Hill Mountain and has itself approximately 100,000 visitors annually with many of those continuing on to use trails on Cobble Hill Mountain. This data helps with planning for development of new park amenities and the upgrading of existing facilities.

BOOKINGS IN PARKS

2011 was the first year that the Parks and Trails Division started working towards formalizing the parks booking system and to integrate it with the four CVRD Recreation Centres in order to improve the coordination of in-park activity programming and park 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 camping. Not all 14 parks are used for all activities as it depends on the park. In addition to parks events, recreational programs are also offered in various parks throughout the year.

In 2012 there were 14 park bookings for events and sporting activities in our community and Regional Parks plus 50 bookings at Bright Angel Park (5 field rentals, 20 lower shelter rentals, 25 upper shelter rentals and includes camping) for a total of 64 bookings under our Regional and Community Parks Programs.

PARK SUSTAINABILITY

With the adoption of the CVRD Corporate Strategic Plan in September 2010 the CVRD Parks and Trails Program has been moving towards a more sustainable park system that integrates the natural environment, economics and climate change. Key changes taking place in our community and regional parks is the incorporation of more native planting and less manicured grass in our parks where landscaping is required as native plants and grasses are generally more drought tolerant requiring less water and irrigation. This in turn reduces the amount of mowing required in our parks and reduces maintenance costs.

Storm water management within our parks is important to reduce water runoff and create water infiltration back into the park. The use of bio-swales, rain gardens, and dry and wet ponds are becoming more common as the Parks and Trails Division and the CVRD Engineering Department work together to integrate storm water management and the natural environment within new developments.

The community and regional parks system provides exceptional outdoor recreation for residents of the Cowichan Valley. Corporately the Parks and Trails Division is moving towards the purchase of "greener" vehicles. To date the Division has purchased one biodiesel truck and one hybrid car.

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS AND BUDGETS

Maintenance of community and regional parks and trails within the electoral areas are looked after through contracts with landscaping maintenance companies. Capital projects and operational planning projects 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.

In 2012 the Community Parks and Trails capital program budget was \$1.5 million and 26 projects were completed. The 2012 annual community parks operational budget was a total of \$2.2 million.

The annual 2012 operating budget for Regional Parks was \$940,000 plus \$538,000 in Grant Funding, while the 2012 capital projects budget for Regional Parks was \$500,000.

CVRD PARKS AND TRAILS DIVISION STAFF

Under Ron Austen, General Manager of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department is the CVRD Parks and Trails Division which is comprised of seven (7) staff members that work out of the Ingram Street Building and two (2) carpenters that work out of the Bings Creek Transfer Station location. Previously the carpentry shop was located at Bright Angel Park but the summer student parks crew are now situated in that location.



Brian Farquhar:
Parks and Trails
Manager

Parks and Trails Manager

The Parks and Trails Manager oversees all parks and trails staff as well as the activities of the Parks and Trails Division which consists of the Community Parks Program, the Regional Parks Program as well as land acquisitions.



Ryan Dias:
Park Operations
Superintendent

Park Operations Superintendent

Ryan Dias oversees the operations and maintenance of over 190 Community Parks, seven Regional Parks and the Cowichan Valley Trail. 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.



Michael Miller:
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 and playgrounds down to the upgrades of smaller park amenities.



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 carpenters 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.



Dan Brown:
Parks Trails
Technician

Parks Trails Technician

Dan Brown’s role as the Parks Trails 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. Development of the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area Management Plan, trail design and overseeing of the construction and renovation of community park trails are also key roles.



Brian Brown:
Parks
Carpenter

Parks Carpenter and Assistant Carpenter

The parks carpenter positions are to provide carpentry services in the 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

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2012 PARKS AND TRAILS CAPITAL PROJECTS

Electoral Area A

- Deloume Park: Phase 2 which includes installation of the playground equipment, trails, picnic shelter, park furniture and planting of shrubs.
- Mill Bay Historic Church Rehabilitation: Lifted the church building and built a proper foundation, inclusive of interior upgrades.

Electoral Area B

- Old Mill Park: Re-surfacing of the trail system in the park.
- Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park: Washroom construction, irrigation, playground installation, and landscaping.
- Memory Island: Installation of new pit toilets in the park on the island.

Electoral Area C

- Cobble Hill Common: Berm planting, trail construction and landscaping.
- Watson Trail: Trail construction and surfacing of the trail to link Watson Road to Twin Cedars subdivision.

Electoral Area D

- Cowichan Bay Gateway site: Landscaping, construction of shelter, kayak dock, picnic area, trails, natural play space and parking area. Completion of a “green shores” project along the foreshore beach area between the Gateway site and Hecate Park.
- Hecate Park: Construction of the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre and the wildlife viewing platform, both funded through the Cowichan Community Land Trust. The parking lot for the boat launch was also repainted and reconfigured.

Electoral Area E

- Caromar Trails: Roadside trails developed as part of a new residential development.

Electoral Area G

- Stocking Creek Park: Trail upgrades on the existing network of trails alongside the creek.

Regional Parks

- Cowichan Valley Trail: New sections of trail within the E&N Rail right of way were constructed through Chemainus.



Deloume Park



Cowichan Bay Gateway



Old Mill Park



Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park



Stocking Creek Park

2012 Parks and Trails Annual Report

COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

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