

## Executive Summary

In the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, the Regional Parks System plays an important role in providing opportunities for the public to access and enjoy scenic and historically significant locations for a range of outdoor recreational activities, thereby enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents of the region.

Building from preceding Plans, the purpose of this updated Regional Parks Plan is to establish a framework for acquisition, development and operation of Regional Parks and trails, and to set policies and priorities to guide the Regional District in developing a Regional Parks System that reflects the character and values of the Fraser-Fort George residents over the next 10 years.

In this Plan, the “Regional Parks System” refers to the parks and trails that are secured and administered by the RDFFG. Regional Parks are just one part of a larger system of parks, trails and outdoor recreation areas managed by federal, provincial and local governments as well as nongovernment organizations and commercial enterprises (see Section 3.4). It is the intention of the RDFFG to complement and coordinate with this overall network of parks and trails in the region, but not duplicate the services of other agencies in fulfilling its Regional Parks mandate.

In this context, the RDFFG has two primary roles to play in supporting parks and trails:

- To identify, acquire, establish, develop, operate and maintain Regional Parks under the Regional Parks Bylaw; and
- To coordinate with and support the efforts of other levels of government and community organizations in establishing, developing and maintaining other types of parks, recreational areas and open spaces that address goals and objectives similar to the Regional Parks System.

### The Plan Review Process

The review and revision of the Regional Parks Plan took approximately a year to complete and was conducted in four phases:

1. Analysis of the Current System;
2. Outreach – Gauging the Demand;
3. Draft Plan Developing and Review; and
4. Finalizing the Plan.

The review process included four key consultative components:

- the Regional Parks Advisory Committee;
- two rounds of public surveys and public information sessions;
- direct consultation, by email, phone and in person, with key stakeholder interests; and

- information sharing on the RDFFG's website.

### **Vision and Goals**

Building from the 1986 Regional Parks Plan and public input, the vision for the RDFFG's Regional Parks for the next 10 years is a system that:

- Secures, protects and stewards lands and water features of recreational, environmental and historic value to the Region and its communities;
- Provides day-use facilities for rewarding outdoor recreational opportunities;
- Preserves the environmental and heritage values represented in the parks;
- Moves toward an interlinked system of public trails and open spaces in coordination with other park and trail systems in the Region;
- Fosters understanding and appreciation of the Region's natural values; and
- Enhances the way of life of current and future residents of the Region.

The main goals of the RDFFG are:

1. To provide residents of (and visitors to) the region with a range of outdoor recreation opportunities within developed park areas which are designed primarily for day use, and which are representative of the region's natural environment, recreation and heritage resources; and
2. To create and/or complete trail-based linkages among regional, provincial and municipal park and trail systems.

### **Management Policies**

The Plan (section 4.4) sets out management policies to accomplish these goals that relate to the following topics:

- The role of Regional Parks within an overall outdoor recreation system.
- Defining the need for Regional Parks in the context of the population growth and changing needs in the region.
- The types of uses permitted within Regional Parks.
- Planning for individual parks as well as the system as a whole.
- Park operations, management and standards, including Mountain Pine Beetle management.
- Park facilities and improvements.
- Supporting barrier-free access in Regional Parks.
- Public information and education about Regional Parks.
- Acquisition and disposition of regional park properties.
- Donations and memorials.
- Partnerships and volunteers.
- Financing Regional Parks and trails.

### Priorities for Existing Regional Parks

Chapter 5 summarizes the status and features of the 11 Regional Parks currently in the Regional Park System, and prioritizes the improvements and projects to be completed in each park over the next 10 years. These are summarized in the following table.

#### Project Summary for Existing Regional Parks in Fraser-Fort George

Park	Project Summary	Priority:		
		High	Medium	Low
Berman Lake	ATV parking and staging area including appropriate consultation and signage		●	
Cedarside	Fencing around pine beetle managed area and a reforestation plan Install barrier and signs, restore steep bank to lakeshore Install highway signs Research Cranberry Lake water quality improvements	● ●	●	●
George Hicks	Add interpretive signage Trail connection between park and visitor's centre Install second viewing area		● ● ●	
Giscome Portage (Huble Homestead Historic Site)	Invasive plant removal Install highway signs Prepare a park management plan - address power supply	● ●	●	
Harold Mann (Eaglet Lake)	Install a picnic shelter Install road signs Mitigate the seepage in lawn Development of north side of park	● ●	●	●
John Dahl	Install designated parking area Install a second pit toilet Install road signs Improve viewpoints Consider handover to District of Mackenzie	● ●	● ●	●
Koeneman	Riparian restoration Install highway signs Investigate boat launch Complete renovations, examine use of	● ●	● ●	

Park	Project Summary	Priority:		
		High	Medium	Low
	Koeneman House with community			
Kristian Winther	Riparian restoration Invasive plant removal Install highway signs	● ● ●		
McMillan Creek	Trail improvements to mitigate erosion Trail development in north portion of park.		●	●
Ness Lake	Mitigate lakeshore erosion	●		
Wilkins	Install highway signs	●		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>

### Proposed Regional Parks

Chapter 6 proposes a set of criteria for guiding the acquisition of future Regional Parks, and then discusses 10 areas that were raised during the course of the public review as sites for potential future Regional Parks. Of these, Tabor Lake, one of two possible sites in the Hixon area, Horseshoe Lake and McKirdy Road (Cranberry Marsh) are identified as sites to pursue as future Regional Parks. Other actions on the part of the RDFFG are recommended with respect to the Ancient Forest, Willow River, Fort George Canyon, Vivian-Verdant Lakes, Wilkins/McMillan Creek/Cranberry connections, and Summit Lake recreation areas.

### Implementation

Chapter 7 indicates broad estimates for operational and capital budgets for Regional Parks over the next 10 years, and discusses possible sources of additional funds for the Regional Parks Reserve Fund.