

CVRD COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARKS and TRAILS ANNUAL REPORT 2015



Hecate Park in Electoral Area D

**Community and Regional
Parks & Trails**



Cowichan Valley Regional District

ELECTORAL AREA PARKS COMMISSIONS

The Cowichan Valley Regional District's nine electoral area Volunteer Parks Commissions appointed by the CVRD Board help foster volunteer involvement in park stewardship, park development opportunities, organizing community events, and contribute to the annual community parks and trails budget planning process.

Community events hosted by parks commissions in 2015 were:

- Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park annual mother's day event,
- Currie Park Easter Egg Hunt,
- Glenora Trails Head Park community appreciation day,
- Saltair Halloween event,
- Saltair Easter egg hunt.



Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park Mother's Day event

Community Parks and Trails Program 2015

BACKGROUND

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) covers 8,995 square kilometres with a population of 79,800 (2011 census). The Regional District includes nine electoral areas, 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 volunteer Parks Commissions appointed by the Regional Board. Community parks are funded through 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.

By end of 2015 there were 206 community parks across the nine electoral areas covering over 1,131 hectares of land. As well, there were 47 km of managed community trails in the electoral areas.

COMMUNITY PARKLAND ACQUISITION

In 2015 10 new parcels (127.2 hectares) of community parkland were acquired through development, registration of a statutory right of way (SRW), by donation, or as a land purchase.

These are summarized below by Electoral Area.

Electoral Area	Community Park	Hectares	Acquisition
A	Deloume Trail	0.033	Subdivision
A	North Good Hope Trail	2.08	Subdivision
B	Old Baldy Mountain Pk.	102.6	Purchase
D	Sutherland Park Trail	0.197	Subdivision
D	Cannery Trail	0.032	Subdivision
E	Creighton Road Park	2.341	Purchase
E	Inwood Creek Park	19.0	Subdivision
G	Solmie Road Trail	0.67	Subdivision

PARK BYLAW COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

CVRD Parks and Trails have the support of two full time bylaw enforcement officers who provide bylaw compliance and enforcement in Community and Regional Parks and Trails throughout the CVRD. Monitoring of the Cowichan Valley Trail is a major component of the program.

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

The most common infractions that are dealt within the parks system are:

- Issues with dogs,
- Boats tied up at public docks,
- Illegal ATV/motorbike use on public trails,
- Private property encroachment into parkland,
- Illegal Dumping.



Sandy Pool Regional Park

Regional Parks and Trails Program 2015

Regional parks and trails are for the benefit of the entire Cowichan Region and are funded through taxation of all nine electoral areas and the four member municipalities.

The regional parks program currently manages:

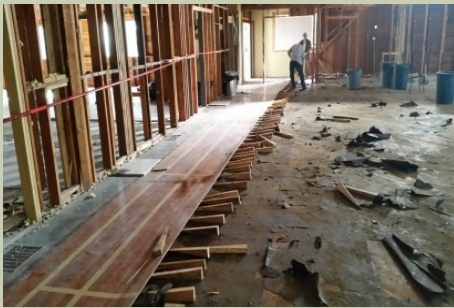
- Six regional park sites (388 ha including 4.4 km of trails),
- Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area (406 ha and 26 km of trails),
- Friendship Trail (2.6 km), and
- Cowichan Valley Trail (72 km of off-road trail)

At the end of 2015 there were a total of 794.14 ha of managed lands and 105 km of constructed trail managed under the regional parks program. In addition, 20 km of the CVT is managed by BC Parks and 28 km of the CVT route is designated roadway that requires no management. This program continues to focus on the completion of the Cowichan Valley Trail, which is part of the Trans Canada Trail route across Vancouver Island.

In 2015 planning took place for the Cowichan Valley Trail connection between Stebbings Road, south of Shawnigan Lake, to the Capital Regional District boundary which is the last connection required to complete the full route from the south end of the CVRD, north to the Nanaimo Regional District. Also in 2015 approximately 1.5 km of the Cowichan Valley Trail was resurfaced from Hawthorn Road north.



Cowichan Valley Trail upgrades



Dance floor being removed and recycled for reuse



Bags of insulation for recycling and reuse



Bricks reclaimed for recycling and reuse



Ornate vent cover donated to museum



Reclaimed wood for recycling and reuse

Parks and Trails Initiatives

SHAWNIGAN LAKE HALL GREEN DEMOLITION

The services of Bowerman Excavating Limited were secured to complete a Green Demolition of the former Shawnigan Lake Community Hall building in Elsie Miles Park (Electoral Area B). The old building was determined to have no further serviceable use to the community and was slated for a Green Demolition. By definition, a Green Demolition dictates the reuse or recycling of not less than 75% of all building materials, excluding hazardous materials. It is estimated that this project achieved a threshold of 95% reuse and recycling of non-hazardous building materials. The high reuse component of this project resulted in a 32% reduction on the bulk demolition cost.

The building was taken down by hand, piece by piece, in almost the reverse order in which it was erected. The project began on September 29, 2015 and was completed in mid-December 2015 (55 working days). Prior to work starting, the Shawnigan Lake Historical Museum toured the building and earmarked a few items for their collection. These included: hand-made window shutters, original interior doors and hardware, as well as ornate vent covers. These items are now in the museum's possession.

Photos to the left highlight the careful removal of the gym floor for re-use, insulation bagged for resale, old bricks piled for resale, and an ornate vent cover now with the Shawnigan Lake Museum. Wood beams, timbers and other usable items were available for sale to the community through the project contractor and have now all been sold to businesses that specialize in reclaimed building materials.



Siding being removed

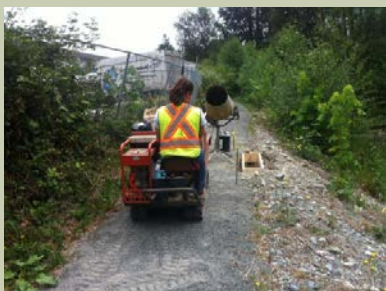


SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

CVRD Parks and Trails hire a 6 person **summer student work crew** from May – August each year. The summer crew spends time in several electoral areas working on planned parks projects. The summer student work is incorporated into the annual maintenance budget with support from electoral area parks commissions.

Some 2015 highlights were:

- Busy Place Creek; sign installation
- Farnsworth Park; painting picnic shelter and access improvements
- Gibsons Park; improvements (split rail, trail work, bollards)
- Deloume Park; landscaping



Busy Place Creek Sign installation



Gibsons Park entrance improvements



Deloume Park landscaping and brushing the Friendship trail

VOLUNTEERING

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, Cowichan Community Land Trust, and school groups. Many community volunteers also contribute time through local parks commissions.

In 2015 there were approximately 3,000 hours of volunteer time provided in local community parks, which included events hosted by local parks commissions as well as community groups doing things such as: trail construction, invasive species removal, vegetation planting and general park cleanup. Volunteer events include:

- Mill Bay Nature Park - Brentwood College School (18 volunteers) for invasive species removal,
- Busy Place Creek Park - Stream keepers (18 volunteers) for riparian vegetation planting,
- Bright Angel Park - Queen Margaret's School (18 volunteers) for planting,
- Polo Park - Community volunteers (10 volunteers) for Invasive species removal.



Busy Place Creek Stream keeper's riparian planting day



Mill Bay Nature Park Invasive species removal with Brentwood College



Polo Park invasive species removal with local volunteers



Bright Angel Park planting with students from Queen Margaret's School

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT and HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAM

In 2015 the program expanded to three Electoral Areas (A, B and E).

- The program entered year four of plant removal and habitat restoration for parks in Shawnigan Lake.
- 2015 was the first year in Electoral Areas A and E, with an initial inventory to identify high priority parks that require invasive species treatment as well as habitat restoration.
- These high priority parks were subsequently treated in 2015.

GROUP BOOKINGS

There are currently only two parks that have bookable facilities:

- Bright Angel Park
- Glenora Trails Head Park.

Group bookings in these two parks are done through the Island Savings Centre. The following summarizes those booking in 2015:

- 96 bookings at Bright Angel Park (seven field rentals, 42 lower shelter rentals and 47 upper shelter rentals including group camping)
- 41 bookings in Glenora Trails Head Park.

Other community and regional parks in the CVRD may be booked for various group events such as weddings, picnics, family reunions, BBQs, ball tournaments, and birthday parties.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Community groups regularly apply to use regional and community parks for outdoor recreation and community events. Special events are broken into two categories; reoccurring annual events and one-off events. There were a total of 44 special events in 2015, of which 25 were reoccurring annual events.

Reoccurring Annual Special Events

- Mother's Day picnic (Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park)
- Subaru Ironman Triathlon (West Shawnigan Lake Park, CVT)
- Shawnigan Regatta (West Shawnigan Lake Park)
- Shawnigan Adventure (West Shawnigan Lake Park, CVT, Shawnigan Wharf Park)
- Cobble Hill Classic Mt. Bike Race (Cobble Hill Mt.)
- Cobble Hill Fair (Cobble Hill Commons)
- Remembrance Day Ceremony (Memorial Park)
- Easter Egg Hunt with Volunteer Fire Dept. (Coverdale Watson)
- Polar Bear swim (Cowichan Bay Boat Launch)
- Low Tide Day (Hecate Park)
- Easter Egg hunt (Currie Park)
- Community Appreciation Day (Glenora Trails Head Park)
- Ride Don't Hide (Glenora Trails Head Park)
- Horse Carriage Event (Glenora Trails Head)
- SD 79 Cross Country run (Glenora Trails Head Park)
- Metis Cultural Event (Bright Angel Park)
- Starfinders (Bright Angel Park)
- Waldorf Lantern Walk (Bright Angel Park)
- Mt. Prevost Elementary School Adventure Day (Bright Angel Park)
- Queen Margaret's School picnic day (Bright Angel Park)
- Mesachie Lake Softball Tournament (Mesachie Lake Park)
- Halloween Party (Saltair Centennial Park)
- Youbou Regatta (Arbutus Park)
- MS RONA Grape Escape bike tour (Various parks)
- CEEVAC Marathon (CVT)

In addition to group bookings and special events, recreational programs are also offered in parks through the CVRD's four recreation centres.

In total, **181 special events and group bookings** took place in 2015 (137 group bookings and 44 special events); an increase of 38% from 2014.

PARK SUSTAINABILITY

The CVRD Parks and Trails Program continues to move towards a more sustainable park system that integrates the natural environment, economics and climate change. Some initiatives in 2015 include:

- Native Plant and habitat restoration.
- Invasive Plant Management.
- Removal of creosote pilings from 3 waterfront park swim areas in Electoral Area F (Bear Lake Park, Lily Beach Park and Central Park).
- Expansion of the reclaimed water in Quarry Nature Park for irrigation.
- Green demolition of the old Shawnigan Lake Community Hall.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Arbutus Park

- A community survey was distributed to the residents of Youbou to determine what the community would like to see changed in Arbutus Park as part of a planning process for revitalizing the park in 2017.
- 52 responses were received or 13% of the total mailed out.

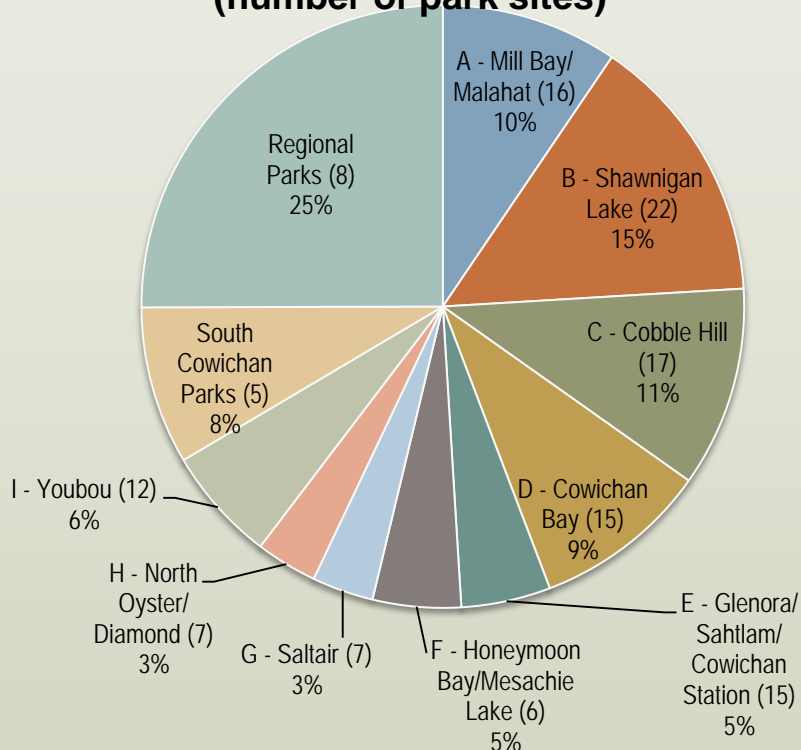
Mill Bay/Malahat Community Parks and Trails Master Plan

- The Master Plan provides guidance for community parks and pathway acquisition and development over the next 10-15 years.
- One final public open house was held at the Kerry Park ball fields in June 2015.
- The Plan was adopted in November 2015.

PARK USER VISITATION PROGRAM

Annual visits for unmonitored parks and trails were assessed based on data collected from monitored sites of similar park type. Visitation values were then increased or decreased based on park capacity, proximity to population centers, and field observations. Results are shown in the chart below.

**Park User Visitation
by Electoral Area and Regional Parks
(number of park sites)**



Vehicle and trail counters collect park visitation data which assists with planning new park amenities and upgrading of existing facilities. Thirty park sites are actively monitored. The following identifies the top 7 sites visited in 2015.

Park	# visitors
Cowichan Valley Trail (excludes Kinsol Trestle)	276,420
Hecate Park/Cowichan Bay Boat launch (Area D)	152,830
Kinsol Trestle	130,000
Cobble Hill Mountain	80,000
Bright Angel Park (Area E)	55,570
Mill Bay Boat Launch (Area A)	50,000
Mason's Beach Park (Area B)	40,000

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARK OPERATIONS

Maintenance of CVRD's community and regional parks and trails is currently achieved through a contract with Easy Living Landscaping Ltd. Capital projects and park operations activities are managed through Parks and Trails Division staff engaging contactors to undertake the works. All capital projects are planned and budgeted annually through consultation with individual electoral area parks commissions and committees of the CVRD Board.

INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

In 2013, the CVRD established an Infrastructure Replacement Program for community park facilities and amenities within the nine electoral areas. This program establishes a timeframe for replacement of park amenities which allows for projecting such costs into a yearly budget.

In 2015 the following capital replacement projects took place:

- Replacement of three playgrounds (Coverdale Watson Park, Farnsworth Park, Gibsons Park).
- Removal of Keating Park Playground.
- Removal of pilings (Central Park, Bear Lake Park and Lily Beach Park).
- Upgrades to the swim dock in Arbutus Park.
- Repaving Cowichan Bay Boat Launch.
- Replacement of safety rails - McGee Creek Trestle.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

In 2015 the community of Shawnigan Lake worked on a fundraising program to raise money for the purchase of Old Baldy Mountain as a CVRD community park. A total of \$75,000 was raised in donations.

Also, a financial donation towards the Kinsol Trestle was bequeathed and is being used towards further rehabilitation work.



Old Baldy Mountain acquisition

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. Administration responsibilities include:

- parkland acquisition,
- park planning,
- park design,
- park facility and trail construction,
- managing contracted parks operations and maintenance, and
- park volunteer coordination.

The Parks and Trails Division team is comprised of nine full time staff members, supplemented by 6 summer students from May - August each year.

2015 PARKS AND TRAILS PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Electoral Area A

Deloume Park: Upgraded the gravel pathways to a paved sidewalk that is accessible and reduces maintenance costs.

Electoral Area B

Gibsons Park: The playground was replaced and site improvements were completed.

Electoral Area C

Hatchpoint Trail: Eliminated all accessibility barriers such as stairs and boardwalks, as well as realigning the trail to reduce grades to less than 10%. The trail surface was raised and culverts installed in sections to eliminate annual flooding. The overall trail was widened and a compacted surface was installed to support wheelchairs and strollers.

Electoral Area D

Coverdale Watson Park: The playground was replaced and site improvements were completed.

Electoral Area E

Glenora Trails Head Park: A 30 metre long zip-line was installed along with a sand play area and digger. Improvements were also made to the landscaping in the park.

Electoral Area F

Central Park/Bear Lake Park/Lily Beach Park: Boom sticks and pilings were removed and replaced with marker buoys and swim floats.

Electoral Area G

Saltair Centennial Park: The interior of the public washroom had numerous upgrades made.

Electoral Area I

Arbutus Park: The main swim dock was re-decked.

South Cowichan Parks

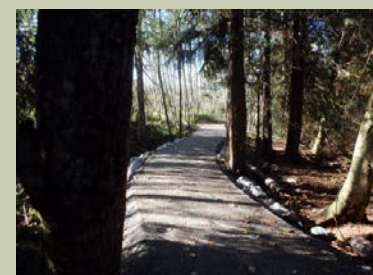
Cowichan Bay Boat Launch: The parking lot and access to the boat launch ramp was repaved.

Regional Parks

Kinsol Pavilion: Began construction of the pavilion located on the north side as well as two viewing platforms located on the north and south side of the Kinsol Trestle.



Deloume Park – new sidewalks



Hatchpoint Trail upgrades



Coverdale Watson Park playground



Glenora Trails Head Park zip line



New floats in Electoral Area F parks



Arbutus Park dock re-decking

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