

News Release - October 4, 2017

RDN to Improve Parking for Mount Benson Regional Park

At the Regional District of Nanaimo Board Meeting held October 3, 2017 the Board agreed to acquire lands in order to improve parking and trailhead amenities that serve Mount Benson Regional Park.

Mount Benson Regional Park and Witchcraft Lake Regional Trail is currently served by a roadside 24 car parking area on Benson View Road. The parking area regularly overflows and is not able to sustain the increasing number of visitors who recreate on the slopes of Mount Benson.

"Mount Benson Regional Park and Witchcraft Regional Trail is one the RDN's most popular day use parks with over 8000 users accessing the trail this year alone between June and August," shared RDN Chair Bill Veenhof. "In addition to the rapid amount of users accessing Mount Benson Regional Park from Benson View Road, outdoor recreation use also occurs beyond the boundaries of the RDN's regional park on area Crown Lands and private forest lands."

Engineers have estimated that the site being acquired at 2761 Benson View Road will have the capacity to hold between 92 and 126 parking stalls. The number of stalls will depend on configurations and use of an undeveloped Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure road corridor located on the backside of Witchcraft Lake. Residents of Benson View Road have expressed concern with the existing trailhead and parking lot location. The RDN will be consulting the local residents for their input prior to working on detailed designs for the new parking area.

"I would like to thank the local neighbourhood for their input and discussions that have taken place so far," Electoral Area C Director Maureen Young said. "With the land use agreement now in place, I look forward to ensuring the final design not only meets the needs of users of the recreational lands in the area, but also ensures an improved quality of life to those that live in the area."

The land acquisition costs of \$580,000 will be funded through the RDN Regional Parks and Trails service area. Final construction costs will be determined once community consultation and detailed design is completed. This additional parking amenity supports the RDN's strategic priority of recognizing community mobility and recreational amenities as core services.

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