

MINUTES

Area E - Parks and Trails Community Meeting and Area E Parks and Rec Commission AGM

**March 30, 2015 7 pm
Eagles Hall, Boys Road**

Welcome

Director Alison Nicholson opened the meeting at 7pm by welcoming approximately 50 residents and introducing Frank McCorkell, Past Chair of the Area E Parks and Rec Commission, Hilary Stead Alternate Director for Area E, and Brian Farquhar Manager CVRD Parks and Trails.

Meeting Purpose

Community members met to share what they love about Area E's parks and trails, to learn more about our greenspaces and to elect an Area E Parks and Rec Commission for 2015.

Overview of Area E Parks and Trails

Brian Farquhar presented a virtual tour of the community parks in Area E. They include:

Cowichan Station Area

- Jack Fleetwood Memorial Park (located on the Koksilah River upstream of the bridge)
- Fairbridge Park (large open field next to Fairbridge residential area)

Eagle Heights/Koksilah Area

- Eagle Heights Park (small greenspace with community pathway)
- Maplewood Park (neighbourhood park with playground)
- Keating Park (small park with playground on Langtry Road)
- Busy Place Creek (pathway and sign next to creek)
- Miller Road Rest Stop (picnic and landscaped area)
- Boys Road Pullout (landscaped entry to Koksilah industrial area)

Glenora Area

- Glenora Trailhead Community Park (playground, picnic shelter, washroom, CVT access)
- Glenora Riverside Park (river access park on the south side of the Cowichan River)
- Granite Road Overlook (small site above Cowichan River)

Sahtlam

- Sunrise Park (river access park on the north side of the Cowichan River)
- Currie Park (neighborhood park with playground)
- Wake Lake Nature Reserve (small viewing area , parking)

- Sahtlam Greenway / Inwood Creek Conservation Park (undeveloped greenspace)
- Dons Park (undeveloped greenspace at end of Dons Road)

In addition Area E has:

- Sandy Pool a (regional park on the Cowichan in Sahtlam)
- Bright Angel Park (a sub-regional park on the Koksilah River in Cowichan Station)
- Cowichan River Provincial Park
- Cowichan Valley Trail (2 sections Sahtlam and Glenora)

Discussion

We talked about the importance of investing in parks and trails because they are a key ingredient to an enjoyable, livable community supporting:

- personal wellbeing – e.g., by enabling fun, relaxation, and enjoyment of life through physical exercise, connecting with nature, social gatherings, children to play and develop motor and social skills, outdoor education etc.
- the local economy– e.g., by attracting tourists and outdoor recreational businesses, increasing property values, decreasing healthcare costs etc.
- environmental integrity – e.g., by helping protect wildlife habitats and sensitive ecosystems, providing valuable ecological services like water storage and filtration, dampening of storm events, runoff/erosion, encouraging bike travel which reduces greenhouse gas emissions etc.

Some of the best things about our parks that community members identified were:

- the lovely cedar log pool (Cowichan River Provincial Park)
- Glenora Trailhead park – the play area, washrooms, and trails and Holt Creek Trestle
- Bright Angel Park – fawn lilies, dippers

What we need to do better:

- Connectivity:
 - Road side pathways to provide safe opportunities to walk, bike and horse ride in the community– e.g., along Koksilah Road!
 - Providing safe ways to get to parks and trails without a vehicle;
 - Pedestrian bridge linking Sahtlam and Glenora
- Protect water quality in the Koksilah River - better manure management
- Playground accessibility for children in wheelchairs
- Judicious use of gravel on trails (softer footing is preferred where practical), and more of a “let it be” natural philosophy
- Better signage identifying appropriate bike and horse trails and more control of ATVs on Cowichan Valley Trail.
- Control invasive species – how about “Trail” Day – encourage volunteers to gather and remove invasive plants etc.

Brian Farquhar reported that it was priority to develop a Parks and Trails Master Plan for Area E. Issues like connectivity, neighbourhood needs, environmental protection etc. can be addressed more holistically through that planning process. It is anticipated that this planning process will be undertaken jointly with the OCP process.

Nominations for Area E Parks and Rec Commission

The CVRD Board has established by bylaw Parks and Rec Commissions for each electoral area to delegate administrative powers related to acquiring, contracting, operating and maintaining certain community parks and rec facilities. The Area E Parks and Rec Commission includes the area director and 9 members who serve for a one year term: 5 are elected and 4 are appointed. The following people were elected to the Commission: Howard Heyd, Patty John, Mike Lees, Frank McCorkell, and Paul Slade.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.