



ALDERGROVE REGIONAL PARK

management plan

July 2013



metrovancouver



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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

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Greater Vancouver Regional District • Greater Vancouver Water District • Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District • Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation

September 5, 2013

Dear Park Supporter:

Re: Aldergrove Regional Park Management Plan

On behalf of Metro Vancouver I am pleased to provide you the Aldergrove Regional Park Management Plan, adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors on July 26, 2013.

The management plan establishes a long-range vision for public use and management of Aldergrove Regional Park over the next two decades. It outlines a program for recreational, ecological, agricultural and cultural features and activities.

As in any worthwhile endeavour, none of this could have happened without the involvement of those members of the public who took an interest and made a commitment to participate in the park planning process. On behalf of the Metro Vancouver Environment and Parks Committee, I thank all those who participated in this effort and encourage you to stay engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the plan. We trust that this will be a successful plan that enhances the park as a gathering place providing many recreational and educational opportunities in a regional park setting that respects its natural values.

Metro Vancouver currently provides 22 regional parks and five greenways open to the public, four reserves and two ecological conservancies, for the benefit of all residents. I hope you have an opportunity to enjoy all of the programs, services and facilities offered within Metro Vancouver's regional parks system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Deal".

Cllr. Heather Deal

Chair, Metro Vancouver Environment and Parks Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aldergrove Regional Park includes 280 ha of second growth forest, wetlands, meadows and fields straddling the Township of Langley and the City of Abbotsford boundary. The park, operated since 1969, provides a range of recreational opportunities including overnight events, preserves significant cultural resources, protects riparian and wetland habitat along the Pepin Brook corridor, and supports research and conservation projects for threatened and endangered species attracting 342,000 annual visitors. The park's current program and facilities have evolved over time in response to public demand for basic access, influences such as gravel extraction, pre-existing amenities and community initiatives. A management plan process began in the spring 2011 to clarify the park program, services, and conservation and development priorities for the next 20 years.

The management planning process included extensive research, analysis and engagement with the public, agencies, municipalities and First Nations over the past two years. Key issues include balancing the recreational demands among user groups, providing recreational opportunities to replace a much loved swimming facility, which closed in 2011, and moving forward with a sustainable long-term agricultural program that enriches the visitor experience. Research, analysis and input led to the development of a vision of Aldergrove Regional Park as a communal gathering place providing a range of natural, recreational and educational activities.

The plan outlines a vision consistent with a Multiple-use Regional Park, which balances significant recreational opportunities with important natural conservation goals. The plan's program includes ecological, recreational and cultural goals and objectives intended to protect, create and enhance habitat; provide a range of recreation amenities; and preserve and interpret the park's cultural heritage. The park concept describes a robust trail system providing a variety of trail experiences for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists, promotes the two major park nodes as the focus for recreational events and gatherings and proposes secondary staging areas to accommodate access. New facilities will support public programming and interpretation; and opportunities for future partnerships and community engagement are identified. Priority improvements are outlined in this plan and will be implemented in stages as resources become available.



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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

While Aldergrove Regional Park has been operated by Metro Vancouver since 1969, its current program and facilities have evolved over time in response to pre-existing conditions, community initiatives and demand for basic access. The purpose of this Management Plan is to clarify the program, services, and development and conservation priorities for the park over a 20-year horizon. The plan expresses a long-term vision and provides management strategies for enhancements of the park's natural, recreational and cultural assets. Over the life of the plan, proposed enhancements will be implemented through Metro Vancouver capital funding, grant programs, partnerships and volunteer initiatives.

1.1 Planning Process

The ARP management planning process was initiated in the spring 2011 and included three key steps along with public, municipal, agencies and First Nation engagement. Engagement included discussion and surveys both in-person and online.

Key steps in the planning process were:

1. **Inventory and Analysis** including biophysical, cultural heritage, agricultural assessment, overall site assessment and a public open house to share this information in June 2011.
2. **Concept Development** informed through discussions, surveys, workshop, and an 'in the park' event, which highlighted issues and helped to determine needs and priorities. A draft vision, framework and concept responsive to input were developed and tested online and at a second public open house, held September 2012. Municipal, agencies and First Nations input was also sought.
3. **Concept Refinement** including detailed review with Matsqui First Nation, Township of Langley, City of Abbotsford, and agencies. Minor revisions of the framework and concept were completed and the final plan prepared, including an implementation strategy and high level costing.

Public Open Houses



2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Metro Vancouver Context

Metro Vancouver is a federation of 22 municipalities, one electoral area and one treaty First Nation, with the City of Abbotsford a member of Metro Vancouver for the provision of regional park services only. Metro Vancouver delivers essential utility services (drinking water, sewage treatment, recycling and garbage disposal) economically and effectively on a regional basis; and enhances the quality of life in our region by planning for development, protecting air quality, and providing and managing regional parks and conservancy areas.

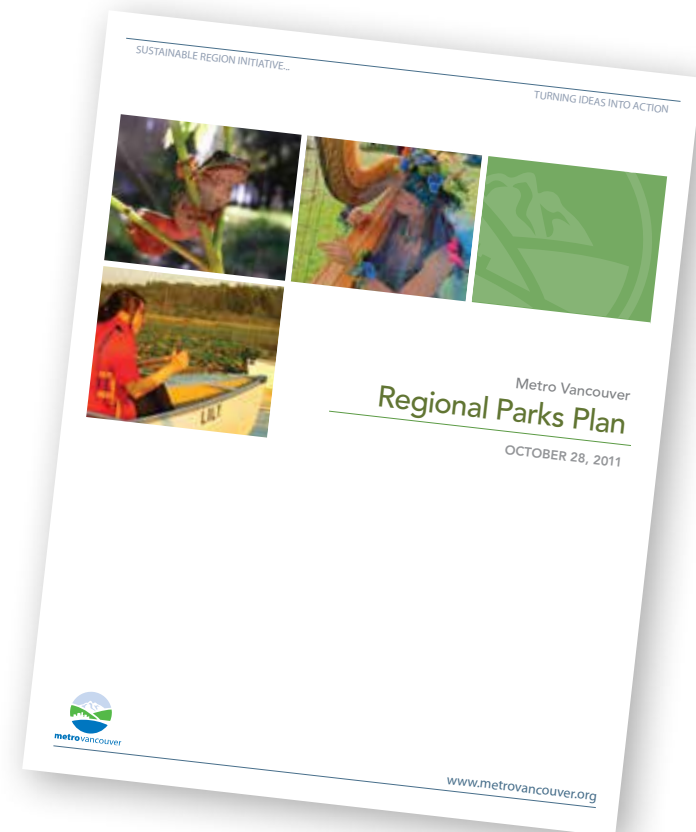
Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Framework, Ecological Health Action Plan and the Regional Food Systems Strategy provide a comprehensive guide and foundation for sustainable decision making reflected within the Regional Parks Plan (RPP).

REGIONAL PARKS PLAN

The 2011 Regional Parks Plan (RPP) provides direction for Regional Parks, focusing on strategies to protect the natural environment, maintain a healthy park system, and act as stewards of a valuable resource while promoting the health and well-being of residents by providing access to a wide range of outdoor recreation services and amenities close to home.

The RPP establishes the following core goals, all of which apply to ARP:

- Protect ecological health;
- Promote outdoor recreation for human health and wellness;
- Support community stewardship education and partnerships; and
- Promote philanthropy and economic opportunities.



2.2 Municipal Context

TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY

The Township of Langley is a rapidly growing municipality on the eastern edge of the Metro Vancouver region. The municipality was incorporated in 1873 and is known as the 'Birthplace of BC' and informally as the 'Horse Capital of British Columbia'. Langley is largely a suburban community, with an increasingly urban centre surrounded by rural lands. Farms, agri-businesses and homes on acreages can be found in the rural area. The municipality has a young, diverse population of 104 177 (2011) residents and like much of the Fraser Valley, has grown quickly in recent years.

The Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (2011), Township of Langley's Official Community Plan (1979) and the Park, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2002) recognize ARP as an important part of the regional park and green space network.

CITY OF ABBOTSFORD

The City of Abbotsford is the largest city in the Fraser Valley and has experienced rapid growth in recent years, with the population more than doubling to 133 497 (2011) residents since 1981. Abbotsford, known as the 'City in the Country' and informally as the 'Berry Capital of Canada', is characterized by a young, diverse population concentrated in an urban core surrounded by rural communities and some of the most productive agricultural land in Canada. Abbotsford has a robust agricultural economy and maintains manufacturing and aerospace sectors and a range of cultural and educational institutions.

Abbotsford is a member of the Fraser Valley Regional District (except for park services, for which the City is a member of Metro Vancouver). The Fraser Valley Regional Growth Strategy (2003), City of Abbotsford Official Community Plan (2005) and Abbotsford's Park, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2005) recognize ARP as an important part of the regional park and green space network.



2.3 First Nation Context

While the present day park area is located within the traditional territory of the Stó:lō First Nation, ARP is perhaps unique within the region as only the Matsqui First Nation (MFN), a member band of the Stó:lō Nation, includes it within their traditional territory. Metro Vancouver staff worked with MFN throughout the planning process soliciting input and clarifying traditional land use in and around the park. Matsqui Indian Reserve #4 lies adjacent to the southwest boundary of the park and includes 'Pioneer Park', a mobile home park, within the reserve.

The land surrounding the reserve, including the present Gordon's Brook area of the park, was the site of large aboriginal gatherings prior to European settlement. Pepin Brook, which traverses the park, is known as 'Leqetsel' and a travel route ran adjacent to this waterway linking traditional hunting, fishing and gathering areas. A Transformer rock called 'Meqsel' (meaning nose) is located within the eastern park boundary and illustrates the depth and longevity of human ties to the natural world. MFN has expressed an interest in an ongoing partnership to preserve and present their culture and heritage within the park program.

2.4 Landscape Context

Aldergrove Regional Park is characterized by its rural setting, with much of the surrounding landscape dominated with working farms interspersed with industrial, residential and recreational land uses. Livestock operations, mushroom barns, berry crops, annual crops, vineyards and pasture are prevalent on the landscape. Industry located nearby includes gravel extraction operations, soil medium operation, former landfill and a waste transfer site. The fertile agricultural landscape within the watersheds of Bertrand, Pepin and Fishtrap Creeks gives way to urban and suburban areas of the Township of Langley and the City of Abbotsford. Pepin Brook, a significant feature within the park, loses its prominence on the landscape outside of the park's boundary where it has been ditched south of the Canadian border and impacted by land uses in the upper reaches.

The visual connections from the upper plateau to the mountain backdrop of the north Coast Mountains and the southern Cascade Mountains including Mt. Baker, define the sense of place within the broader landscape. Sweeping views from the southern slopes to the Nooksack prairie accentuate the boundary between the forested uplands and the farmed lowlands, while making apparent the reason for Aldergrove community's renown as 'The Place Between'.

3.0 PARK OVERVIEW

ARP features a representative rolling central Fraser Valley landscape composed of second-growth forest, streams, wetland, meadows and fields and a remediated gravel extraction area. The park provides habitat for over 200 species of birds, mammals and amphibians. Pepin Brook traverses the park and provides spawning and rearing habitat for fish including salmonids, threatened Nooksack dace and endangered Salish sucker.

Visitation to ARP has steadily increased over the past decade with the park host to 342 000 visitors in 2012. The Main Day-use Area and Aldergrove Bowl are the most heavily used park areas, with each site hosting many events annually. The most popular activities are focused on trail use and include walking, jogging, dog exercising, horseback riding and nature viewing. Picnicking and group gatherings are also popular while Camp Elkgrove provides a year-round children's residential camp experience.

3.1 Park Classification

Aldergrove Regional Park is classified as a Multiple-use Regional Park in which the main focus is to balance significant recreational opportunities with important natural conservation goals. ARP provides popular recreational and cultural amenities and protects important aquatic, riparian, wetland and upland forest habitat in a significantly altered and ecologically diverse landscape.

The purposes of Aldergrove Regional Park are:

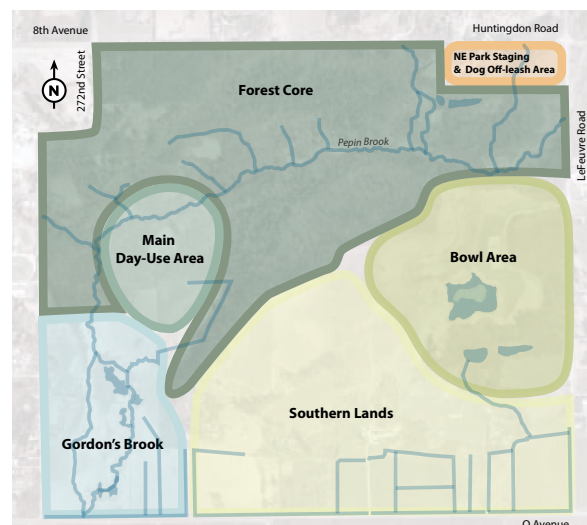
- To support active outdoor recreation for pleasure and exercise compatible with the parks natural values;
- To accommodate organized events and programs;
- To support regional biodiversity by conserving and enhancing sensitive ecosystems which include critical aquatic, riparian and wetland habitat, old-fields and at risk plant communities;
- To preserve and interpret significant natural, cultural and geological features; and
- To provide a hands-on agricultural experience through a sustainable farm program.



FIGURE 2: PARK BOUNDARY



FIGURE 3: PARK UNITS



3.2 Land Tenure

ARP encompasses 280 ha, all held in fee simple land, including the decommissioned road allowance (6th Avenue) that was acquired from the Township of Langley. As one of three founding parks within the regional park system, the park unit was acquired incrementally between 1967 and 1978. The park is a contiguous whole, being a square mile, and there is no requirement for future acquisitions and no surplus lands for disposal.

3.3 Existing Facilities and Park Use

Six park units have been identified based on a combination of distinctive use patterns, visual character and biophysical resources. A brief description of the existing facilities and use for each park unit follows.



MAIN DAY-USE AND BLACKTAIL PICNIC AREA

This node is the primary park destination, providing a venue for family and group picnicking, gatherings and events along with main access to the trail system for both pedestrians and cyclists. This area is a historic destination within the park, formerly the site of the 'Lake' which was decommissioned in 2011 and is now a grass and sand play area. A short loop trail encircles the former lake site and two bridges over Pepin Brook provide connections to the Blacktail picnic area. The Blacktail picnic shelter, washroom building and large capacity parking are key facilities located here.

ALDERGROVE BOWL

Aldergrove Bowl, a reclaimed gravel extraction site, features wide open spaces, looping trails, picnic area and the Marsh pond. This node provides access to the Bowl trails and the larger trail system including Rock'n Horse trail which loops around the perimeter of the Bowl. The 'Big Rock', a glacier erratic and First Nations Transformer rock, is located in the forested area adjacent to Lefeuve Road. The expansive views and dark nights make Aldergrove Bowl a valued place for stargazing and several overnight Astronomy events and activities are hosted here. Superb terrain and the ability to create varied courses make the Bowl a favourite site for cross-country running events with both high school and all-ages provincial championships held here recently. The Bowl also hosts several events annually for up to 3,000 participants including a few overnight events. Pit toilets and large capacity parking support these activities.

FOREST CORE

The northern forested section of the park has been developed primarily with walking, cycling and horseback riding trails. Pepin Brook Trail is a popular walking and jogging loop providing intimate forest experiences along the creek corridor. Rock'n Horse trail, much-loved by equestrians for its rolling terrain and variety of experience, traverses the forest core linking the Bowl with the Equestrian staging area. Cyclists also use this multi-use trail, although trail constraints (steepness, site lines) in a few sections require slow speeds or dismounting. The main park entrance off 8th Avenue, connecting to the Main Day-use area, traverses the forest core. A small staging area off the main park access road, adjacent to the former astronomy field, provides access to Pepin Brook trail. Equestrian staging is provided off 6th Avenue.



NORTH EAST PARK STAGING & DOG OFF-LEASH AREA

The north east area of the park includes a large sloping field area, site of a former rental house, Tanaka Creek, a tributary of Pepin Brook and a Dog Off-leash area. The Dog Off-leash area attracts visitors throughout the year. This large field site has been enhanced with perimeter fencing, small dog area, tables, kiosk, portable toilet and a dog waste in-ground disposal tank. Direct access to the trail system adds to the area's use. Parking is frequently at capacity several times a day during the shoulder and summer season, with roadside parking accommodating significant overflow. Tanaka Creek has been impacted by dogs drinking and cooling off in the creek water. Habitat sensitivity education is ongoing and restoration work has been undertaken.

GORDON'S BROOK AREA

Gordon's Brook, a phased riparian and wetland habitat restoration project undertaken through 2000-2010, complements the adjacent Pepin Brook riparian corridor. This area provides excellent habitat for several species-at-risk and has become a focus for habitat restoration, enhancement and research. A rental house and an agricultural license encompassing the former Pepindale Dairy barn, nursery production and forage land are located here. Public access is not currently provided.

SOUTHERN LANDS

The majority of the park's southern land base is land banked and agriculturally licensed for land management purposes. These southern lands encompass the berry-farmed upper plateau and the hay and grazing lowlands. Agricultural resources include over 60 ha of quality land (a variety of drained, irrigated, and/or fenced parcels), barns, wells and power. Camp Elkgrove, a partnership with the Elks Recreational Children's Camp Society of B.C., resides here and operates throughout the year providing accessible opportunities for disadvantaged children to enjoy a farm-themed camp experience in a natural setting. Two heritage resources are located in the Southern Lands, the William Loucks Residence (Loucks Heritage House) and the Shortreed Cabin. The Loucks Heritage House, designated as a heritage building by the Township of Langley in 1999, is the only officially recognized heritage resource within the park and is a popular location for filming. The house stands as one of the grandest remaining farm houses, typical of the Edwardian era, within the region. The two adjacent barns, that were rebuilt in the 1950's after a fire destroyed the original barn, provide important site context. There are two other barns in the park, one at the former Milward farm site and one at the former Pepindale farm site. The Shortreed Cabin, built by Thomas Shortreed in Aldergrove in 1887 was donated to the Aldergrove Heritage Society, who in turn, gifted it to Metro Vancouver (formerly GVRD). The cabin, an excellent example of a pioneer log cabin, was relocated from its original location in Aldergrove to the Camp Elkgrove site and stabilized in 1993. Public access to the southern lands is not currently provided.

3.4 Opportunities and Challenges

The Existing Facility Matrix explores in more detail the existing program for each park unit along with the associated opportunities and challenges.

TABLE 1: EXISTING FACILITY MATRIX

EXISTING FACILITY MATRIX				
Park Site	Existing Program	Ecological Features	Challenges	Opportunities
Main Day-use & Blacktail Picnic Area	• Key park node • Event and gathering area • Pedestrian and cyclist trailheads • Short loop trail • Reservable picnic shelter • Picnic area (6 tables) • Lawn areas • Sand play area • 180 stall parking • Washrooms • Potable water standpipes	• Highly disturbed • Several wildlife trees • Pepin Brook riparian corridor	• Providing a new amenity to replace the decommissioned swimming facility (the 'Lake') • Parking surveillance • Multiple trailheads and confusing circulation • Duplicate trails • Lawn area by picnic wet • Pepin Brook divides site • Recreation amenities in close proximity to riparian areas	• Create a family-focused activity node • Developable site with existing support facilities • Increase group picnicking and gathering facilities • Create a cohesive area trail network • Provide universally accessible expanded trail loop • Provide desired off-road trail linkages • Improve site circulation • Improve Pepin Brook viewing opportunities • Explore nature play & learning including water learning (non-fish bearing ditch conversion) • Enhance riparian habitat • Maximize use of existing parking and improve surveillance
Bowl Area	• Key park node • Multi-use event space • Multi-use trails • Universal accessible loop trail around Marsh Pond • Lawn areas • 'Big Rock' • Key viewpoints • Pit toilets • 200+ main parking • Small parking at entry	• Highly disturbed, remediated gravel pit • Marsh Pond habitat creation • Bird habitat	• Large unprogrammed area • Parking surveillance • Multiple trailheads and confusing circulation • Trail too close to 'Big Rock' • Potential archaeological site in area of 'Big Rock' • Steep slopes, blind corners, and trail maintenance issues • Unsanctioned dog off-leash use	• Improve aesthetic s (entry & main parking) • Increase viewing of Marsh Pond • Support and enhance astronomy activities • Increase group picnicking • Enhance event facilities to accommodate up to 10 000 participants • Improve circulation and trail system connection • Highlight 'Big Rock' cultural and geologic feature • Add recreational amenities focused on children and youth including nature and adventure play • Enhance habitat and biofiltration • Preserve land base for future program

EXISTING FACILITY MATRIX				
Park Site	Existing Program	Ecological Features	Challenges	Opportunities
Forest Core Area	• Pedestrian and multi-use trails • Small equestrian staging and pit toilet • Astronomer's field & small staging area • Neighbourhood access at 272nd & 8th Avenue • Service yard • Rental houses (2)	• Pepin Brook, small tributaries riparian area • Vernal ponds • Aquatic habitat for species-at-risk • Second-growth forest • Wildlife trees • Bird and small mammal habitat	• Maintaining trail experience and safety with heavy use • Beaver activity • Unsanctioned off-leash dog trail use • Limited equestrian parking • Mass wasting at Pepin tributary from previous flood event	• Accommodate multi-use trail connection to 272nd Street & 8th Avenue • Accommodate east-west multi-use connector route through the park along the Rock'n Horse Trail • Upgrade multi-use trail and improve sightlines • Enhance riparian habitat • Naturalize unused mown grass areas • Improve entry treatment at equestrian staging • Enhance equestrian staging area & facilities • Increase slope stabilization at mass wasting area
Northeast Staging & Dog Off-leash Area	• Pepin Brook trailhead • Fenced small & large dog off-leash areas with shared dog waste station • Picnic tables • Portable toilet • Small parking area	• 'Tanaka' Creek • Borders on Pepin Brook riparian corridor • Aquatic and riparian habitat • Old-field habitat	• Insufficient parking • Dog impact to stream and riparian area • Desire for additional enhanced dog-related facilities • Erosion and slope stability	• Improve edge aesthetic and entry treatment • Improve park and trail access • Explore new park entry and staging area to include direct trail access and picnic opportunities as well as improved dog owner access to off-leash expansion area • Expand dog off-leash area to provide confined off-leash trail opportunity • Partner to provide desired enhanced dog facilities • Protect and enhance riparian area • Accommodate multi-use trail alignment for future connectivity

EXISTING FACILITY MATRIX				
Park Site	Existing Program	Ecological Features	Challenges	Opportunities
Gordon's Brook Wetland Area	- No public access - Ongoing aquatic research - Rental house & agricultural license (nursery operation) - Barn (licensed barn) - Cattle forage	- Highly valued aquatic habitat for species at risk - Meadow, hedgerows - Old-field habitat	- Invasive species - Seasonal flooding of fields - Dilapidated outbuildings - Barn requires extensive repair & maintenance - Balance public access with research sensitivities	- Accommodate a research and education node and continue to support research and learning activities - Accommodate major wetland creation & habitat enhancement (potential to support species at risk) - Provide public access along a nature appreciation loop trail experience - Manage public access to protect sensitive areas and research - Increase park access with new staging area to accommodate area research and visitor use - Increase interpretive and educational opportunities - Accommodate potential multi-use trail alignment - Provide neighbourhood access to park trail system - Manage invasive plants - Limit dog access to area

EXISTING FACILITY MATRIX				
Park Site	Existing Program	Ecological Features	Challenges	Opportunities
Southern Lands	- Limited public access - Camp Elkgrove partnership - Shortreed Cabin (circa 1885) and Loucks Heritage House (1912) - Large land base (over 80 ha) - Interim agricultural licenses for land management - Milward barn - Haying as land management	- Old-field habitat - Barn owl habitat - Ditches (fish habitat)	- Aging, underused barns - Land capability declining in lowlands - Ditch and drainage maintenance - Lowland areas converting to swamp	- Preserve Loucks Heritage House (LHH) and grounds as key heritage node - Long-term partnership and repurposing of Loucks Heritage House - South park staging in combination with trail development or LHH site repurposing - License available land for interim agricultural use as land management tool and optimize license terms to promote land stewardship and generate revenue - Explore innovative agricultural programs in partnership with academic, community and agency groups - Develop agricultural programming centered on either the Loucks Heritage House site or the Milward farm site - Maintain agricultural 'zone of influence' around Camp Elkgrove to support program - Improve trail connections and park access for Camp Elkgrove (accessibility and experience) - Preserve flexible area for wetland creation or agricultural programming - Provide pedestrian/cycling trail along slopes - Preserve long term pedestrian/equestrian trail alignment connection - Increase pollinator habitat - Increase habitat value of watercourses - Increase hedgerow habitat - Evaluate importance of barn-owl habitat



A number of potential recreation and conservation initiatives or programs would be suitable within the park's mandate. A quick overview of several initiatives has been provided in the above Existing Facilities Matrix while the following section highlights significant program potential.

TRAIL SYSTEM EXPANSION

The northern half of the park has been developed with trails and recreational facilities while the southern portion is currently land banked. The southern lands provide abundant opportunities for trail development with unique and captivating trail experiences through the Gordon's Brook area and along the south slopes. Trail expansion was the most highly desired amenity during the public engagement process. A south park trail could provide additional pedestrian and cycling opportunities while a wetland trail could provide new nature appreciation and interpretation opportunities. Both would be significant expansions to the existing trail system. A longer term trail alignment for pedestrians and equestrians could be explored along the plateau.

EVENT DESTINATION

Aldergrove Bowl has accommodated several organized events with up to 3 000 visitors, including overnight events. The Bowl area, a reclaimed gravel pit, has basic facilities, topography and site conditions that are suitable for active recreation events, such as cyclo-cross and cross country running that have been hosted here, as well as other traditional group events and gatherings. The Bowl's

role as an event venue could be enhanced to attract additional events and to accommodate events for up to 10 000 participants. Access, transit infrastructure and seasonal ground conditions are limiting factors.

MAJOR HABITAT RESTORATION

The Gordon's Brook area of the park has been envisioned as a wetland habitat restoration area expressed through the incremental park development plans. This area, containing south Pepin and Gordon's Brooks and associated wetland, has become a focus for species-at-risk research. The surrounding previously ditched and drained lowland area is slowly converting back to wetland and there is large potential to create additional wetland and expand research and education opportunities.

ADVENTURE AND NATURE PLAY

With the loss of the swimming facility in 2011, a new focus is desired for the Main Day-use Area. The provision of a regionally significant outdoor recreation amenity that appeals to families will be considered. Nature play and adventure play elements were tested through the engagement process, appealing to participants, and could, in combination with expansion of the existing group facilities, add to the Main Day-use Area visitorship. Expansion of the trail network to provide an accessible loop trail that links picnic, viewing and play areas will be explored.

DOG OFF-LEASH DESTINATION

The popularity of the existing Dog Off-leash Area and the demand for off-leash facilities was clearly expressed through engagement. The creation of a sub-regional dog off-leash destination which provides a nature experience while minimizing the impacts on the larger park area could be accommodated. There is potential to expand the existing off-leash area and provide a confined off-leash trail walking opportunity. Partnerships in the provision of additional dog amenities could also be considered in this area.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

The southern lands provide a unique opportunity to explore a sustainable, innovative agricultural program that enriches the visitor experience. Public access is not currently provided to this land banked area of the park and the land is licensed for interim agricultural production as a land management tool. This area of the park has the land base, land capability and basic infrastructure to support a sustainable agricultural program and partnerships with academic, community and agency groups will be investigated. Agricultural programming could be developed centered on either the Loucks Heritage House site or the Milward farm site adding additional program enrichment while aiding the preservation of cultural assets.





4.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE OVERVIEW

ARP is located in an area rich with natural history, First Nation culture and pioneer and settlement heritage. A comprehensive cultural heritage overview was completed as part of the management planning process and a short overview of the area's history, typical of the Fraser Valley, is provided below.

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

During the last ice age, 15 000 years ago, the area was covered with ice a mile deep (1.6 km), part of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet that blanketed western North America from Puget Sound north and from the Rocky Mountains west to the Pacific Coast. The 'Big Rock', or Aldergrove Erratic, travelled with the movement of ice from the Hope/Manning Park area and dropped through the ice to its present position sometime during the process of deglaciation. Prior to European settlement the area was used by First Nations as a gathering place, stopover site, and for hunting, gathering, and cultural activities. The glacier erratic, known as 'Meqsel' by local First Nations, is a Transformer stone with cultural and spiritual significance. When Fort Langley was established in 1827, new economies and new relationships with First Nations people were created as the trade of the world intermingled with the trade of the region. Because Fort Langley was a long way from the present day park area, and because the fort's focus remained on the Fraser River, it would be more than thirty years before the effects of settlement would be felt. However, the beginning of enduring contact between the people of the Fraser Valley and the rest of the world was established.

THE PUSH FOR SETTLEMENT

In the "settlement period" of the mid-1800s when the new Crown Colony encouraged Euro-American settlement, Indian Reserves in the Fraser Valley were surveyed and created as it became clear that some provision had to be made for the First Nations people who had lived on and with the land for thousands of years. Matsqui Indian Reserve #2 ("Matsqui Main") was established beginning in 1864 encompassing virtually the whole Matsqui Prairie and Matsqui Indian Reserve #4 was established in 1868 in its present location. Reserves were substantially reduced in the 1870s to free up land for the influx of settlers with agricultural aspirations and continued to be in flux well into the twentieth century.

GOLD RUSH AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The British Boundary Commission and the American Boundary Commission were created after the Oregon Boundary Treaty of 1846 established the 49th parallel as the international boundary. For more than a decade little was done to survey and mark the 49th parallel on the ground until gold was discovered. Commissions were appointed and deployed very quickly: by mid-July of 1858 both the British and American Boundary Commissions were on the ground and ready to go. Royal Engineers established a camp on Semiahmoo Bay (in present day White Rock) and began to work eastward along the boundary to create the Boundary Commission Trail along the 49th parallel to Sumas.



SETTLING IN TO AGRICULTURAL

Langley was created in 1873 as a ten-mile square township with its northern border on the Fraser River. A 2.5 mile strip of orphaned territory – including the future parkland – extended between the Township and the international border. The possibility of farming and logging drew settlers who created their own community and ties with Patricia, Peardonville, Lynden and Aldergrove, and capitalized on transportation patterns that moved east and west across the Fraser Valley as well as north to the Fraser river and south to Washington State. European farmers homesteaded in the area but the big push for settlement occurred in 1899 when families from Norway and Sweden arrived, followed by settlers from the UK, Japan and India, among other places. The newcomers grew vegetables and fruit trees, raised livestock, hunted game and fished to supplement what they could grow. The First Nations people of Matsqui were active participants in the new agricultural economy with the Fraser River providing age-old links for trade and communication.

In 1908, the Loucks family settled on a property operating a mixed farm and selling the produce at New Westminster and Vancouver. In 1912, William Marley Loucks built the elegant Edwardian home that still stands in the park today. In 1929, Thomas Pepin and his wife Lucy Annand moved from the Campbell Valley area to a farm which they farmed with their son, Alexander, and later their grandson, Fred Pepin. Although it had a substantial 1880s era home, this growing family built a new home and barn in the 1930's, and expanded the dairy operation in the 1950s under the name Pepindale Dairy. The barn still stands in the park today. Farm families had logged for years to build homes, barns, fences, and to cut firewood for heating their homes. Later, loggers cut railroad ties and by the 1930's, two

portable mills worked within the present day park boundaries, increasingly aided by heavy equipment rather than horsepower. The Tanaka Family bought a property in 1938 to expand their soft fruit and vegetable farming operation. In 1942, Japanese families in British Columbia were declared enemy aliens and forcibly moved from coastal areas. The Tanaka family was sent to Tachme, an internment camp near Hope and their farm and assets were seized by the government.

SHIFT TOWARDS RECREATION / NEW USES FOR THE LAND

By the mid twentieth century, population growth in the region and the development of a modern transportation infrastructure made agricultural specialization a possibility. In the following decades, residents found new uses for the land. The Foster family mined gravel off 8th Avenue and remnant haul roads now form part of Pepin Brook Trail. In 1959, the Keillor family bought a parcel of land and dreamed of creating a lake and a camping and recreation area. They hired Bert Hays and Fred Pepin to construct the lake's base in 1962 and creek water was impounded to fill the lake. After difficulties in getting the lake to hold water, the beach was fully opened in 1963 for vacationing – swimming, picnicking, camping and fishing were promoted through brochures and ads for 'Aldergrove Beach'. Public recreation had been introduced and Aldergrove Beach's popularity grew. In 1967, the GVRD (now Metro Vancouver) began to assemble land parcels to create a park. Under GVRD operation since 1969, Aldergrove Lake continued to be popular swimming destination until its closure due to lifespan issues in early 2011. Today, the park is part of a cultural landscape that continues to evolve.

5.0 ECOSYSTEM AND HABITAT OVERVIEW

A variety of terrain, soil and vegetation types exist within the park's undulating topography formed by glacial deposition, a deep meltwater channel and outwash plain over 12 000 years ago. Pepin Brook traverses the park following the glacier-aged meltwater channel; steeply sided as it flows through the park and flattening out it before leaving. A large, farmed plateau bounded by a forested ridge, the Bowl and the southern slopes is centered within the park. At the base of the southern slopes lie former wet areas, now drained, and the beginning of the Nooksack prairie lowlands.

ARP is located within the Coastal Western Hemlock Very Dry Maritime biogeoclimatic subzone, which is characterized by warm dry summers and moist mild winters. In combination with the local climate and site characteristics, a variety of plant and animal ecosystems are encompassed within the park, some fragile and sensitive to disturbance. The sensitive ecosystems within ARP include riparian areas, wetlands, forests and old-fields. They provide habitat for a variety of species, including many threatened and endangered plants and animals.

Riparian areas within the park occur in bands along Pepin Brook and its tributaries, providing a link between land and water where distinct plant communities are supported by high soil moisture and light conditions. Species rely on the shelter, shade and foraging opportunities that the riparian vegetation here provides although invasive reed canary grass has taken over much of the open riparian areas reducing its habitat value. The Pepin Brook riparian area also functions as an important wildlife corridor.

Wetlands, including swamps, marshes, and seasonal ponds, occur in the lowland areas of the park, in various locations along the forested slopes and in the Bowl where the Marsh pond was constructed. All are very sensitive habitats providing food, cover, shelter and breeding habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. The seasonal ponds provide breeding habitats for Pacific chorus frogs, western toads and other amphibians and the wetlands in the southern park area support several species at risk.

Remaining forests within the park are found in the north park along the Pepin Creek corridor, along Panorama Ridge and in patches along the southern slopes. These forests form a relatively large patch of second-growth forest centered on Pepin Brook and consist primarily of red alder, big leaf maple and some cottonwood in wetter areas. Conifers (Douglas fir, western red cedar) occasionally form small groves and are widely mixed within the deciduous forest.

Agriculture has created valuable **old-field habitat** within the park providing food and shelter for small animals such as Townsend's voles as well as the numerous birds that prey on them. Birds of prey include short-eared owls, northern harriers, rough-legged hawks, red-tailed hawks, and even great blue herons. These fields are primarily found in the southern park area and are similar to the open prairies that traditionally occurred throughout the Fraser Valley, kept from succession by First Nation burning regimes and seasonal flooding in low-lying areas. Shrubby field edges and **hedgerows** provide added value for passerines and raptors.





5.1 Terrestrial Ecology

ARP is a significant landscape feature within the region, particularly with respect to its riparian and upland forest wildlife habitat. The park represents a rare, relatively large tract of protected forest habitat, which supports wildlife species by contributing to wildlife movement corridors, stopover habitat for migrating birds and refuge for species in general and also for some species at risk. Wildlife species occurring in the park are characteristic for the region. The relatively large size of the park in the local landscape enables it to be a reservoir for some species such as pileated woodpeckers and deer that range out into the surrounding area. Several species at risk such as the Pacific water shrew, Trowbridge's shrew, Oregon forestsnail, western toad, red-legged frog, Barn Owl, Green- and Great Blue Herons, Band-tailed Pigeon and Olive-sided Flycatcher have been observed within the park. More than 200 species of vertebrates use the park at some time during the year. Beavers, a keystone species having a larger and greater impact on ecosystems than would normally be expected from their numbers, are extremely active in the park. Dams, which impact both terrestrial and aquatic ecology, maintain high water levels and side pools throughout Pepin Brook's middle reaches.

At-risk ecological plant communities are rare on the landscape, yet one of these occurs within the park – a red listed “Western hemlock – Douglas fir / Oregon beaked moss” community with mature forest characteristics located northwest of the Bowl. Panorama Ridge is forested with many large trees surrounded by fields and has a general westward aspect which makes it highly attractive to wildlife. It provides consistent denning sites for coyotes and

smaller mammals like striped skunks and raccoons; shelter and escape terrain for deer as well as perches for bald eagles and red-tailed hawks. It is the only place where western tanagers have been recorded nesting within the park. The Marsh Pond is providing excellent habitat for waterfowl and riparian birds including nesting habitat for marsh wrens and red-wing blackbirds.

5.2 Aquatic Ecology

PEPIN BROOK

The park is critical to the health of Pepin Brook, its tributaries and associated wetlands, as it contains the largest area of intact riparian forest, most of the spawning riffles and most of the aquatic habitat not subjected to severe hypoxia (low oxygen) in summer. The protection the park affords to Pepin Brook creates a refuge for fish within the watershed. The importance of this refuge is magnified by the isolation from downstream natural areas due to habitat degradation in the U.S., where Pepin Brook is known as the ‘Double Ditch’.

Pepin Brook provides valuable habitat for salmonids, endangered Nooksack dace, threatened Salish suckers, stickleback and cutthroat trout and other aquatic species. The lower third of Pepin Brook is dominated by invasive reed canary grass, which outcompetes native plants reducing habitat values. Invasive plants were removed from a portion of this reach along with habitat reconstruction.



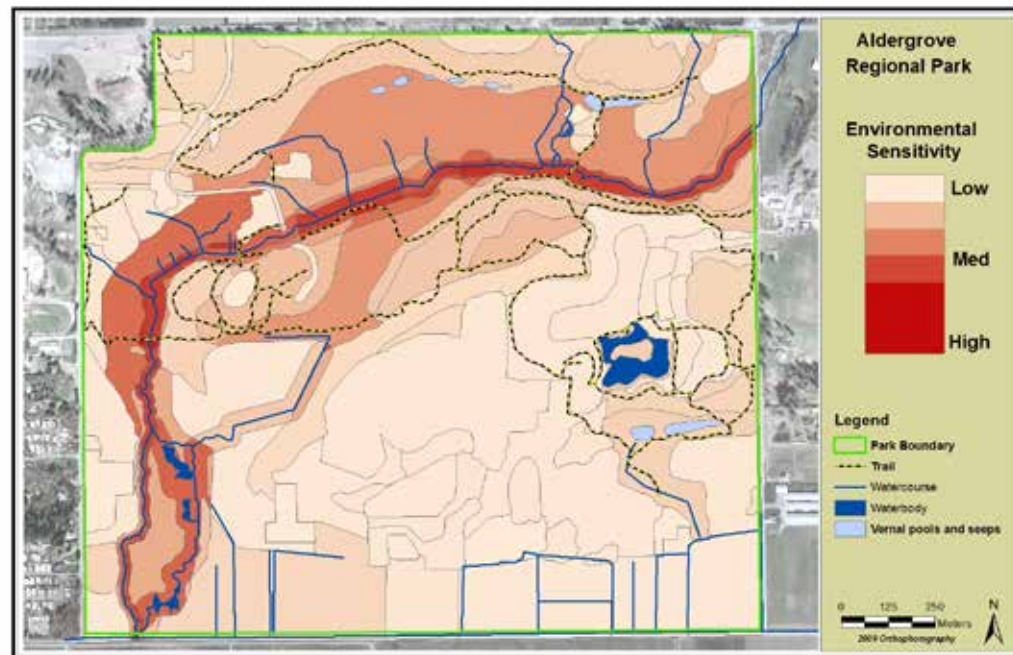
GORDON'S BROOK

In 2000, with the aid of a provincial grant, the Pepin Brook Streamkeepers (PBS) in cooperation with Metro Vancouver undertook a habitat restoration project. An agricultural ditch was converted into 750 m of new stream channel that includes wetlands, seven ponds and eight riffles. Source water is supplied from a ditch running along the base of Panorama Ridge along with an offshoot channel from Pepin Brook. Gordon's Brook rejoins Pepin Brook immediately north of 0 Avenue before leaving the park. This new wetland area provides over 1.4 ha of high quality aquatic habitat named after Gordon Smith, co-founder of PBS and an environmental steward. The Gordon's Brook ponds have become an important 'hotspot' for Salish suckers within the Pepin Brook watershed.

5.3 Habitat Sensitivity Analysis

The park's sensitive ecosystems provide habitat for many species, including plants and animals at risk. Ecological sensitivities include susceptibility to hydrological changes, soil erosion, spread of alien plants and sensitivity to human disturbance. The sensitivity analysis (map below) highlights at-risk, fragile, or ecologically important ecosystems, incorporating species at risk information, evaluating context and condition. A large portion of the Pepin Brook riparian corridor has not been overly impacted by agriculture or settlement and is the most sensitive area within the park. The Gordon's Brook wetland area, adjacent to Pepin Brook's lower reach, is also highly sensitive.

FIGURE 4: HABITAT SENSITIVITY MAP



6.0 FRAMEWORK (PARK VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

The framework synthesizes information presented in the previous sections to establish clear direction for park management, conservation, development and operation. The framework includes a high level vision statement, goals to establish direction on key priorities and objectives, which outline means to achieve the goals.

6.1 Park Vision

"Aldergrove Regional Park is a gathering place with deep community roots where you can be part of a fun family, school or community event; travel slowly through natural and working landscapes; play, learn and contribute to the health of an environment shaped by glaciers and people."

6.2 Goals and Objectives

RECREATION

The park's existing program has developed over the years in response to pre-existing amenities, gravel remediation needs and expressed public demand. The program is well-supported by park visitors and as park use increases there is significant opportunity for program development within the land-banked Southern Lands as well as at the Bowl. Further recreational programming of the Bowl and the land banked Southern Lands will be explored in the future as park use increases and need is expressed.

GOAL:

Provide a diversity of high quality, accessible recreational opportunities for individuals and groups, facilitating recreation and strengthening connection with the natural environment.

OBJECTIVES:

Trail System:

- Expand and optimize the trail system for walking, cycling and equestrian use providing a variety of trail experiences.
- Provide accessible trail loops at both major park nodes that feature a destination experience.
- Provide connections to municipal trail corridors.
- Provide neighbourhood access to trail system.
- Improve connectivity and integration with Camp Elkgrove.
- Incorporate interpretive trail design standards in key locations within the park.
- Link destination areas throughout the park with an engaging trail system.

Park Nodes:

- Enhance Aldergrove Bowl as a major park node providing a range of youth, family and group event facilities.
- Repurpose the Main Day-use Area focusing on group use and nature play, adventure and learning opportunities.





- Provide new staging areas that connect park users to Gordon's Brook, the Southern Lands, and the north east park area.
- Provide an expanded dog off-leash experience including off-leash walking opportunities.
- Enhance existing staging areas, including the equestrian staging area, to provide additional parking and facilities.

Visitor Experience:

- The park's role as a gathering place will be enhanced by facility and program support for family and group events.
- Support events including overnight events at the Aldergrove Bowl park node.
- Work with the Royal Astronomical Society to designate the park an 'Urban Sky' park and continue to provide educational programming.
- Seek to provide additional family recreation compatible with the natural values within the park.

- Consider enhanced services identified through the regional parks master planning process and evaluate opportunities for fit within the park program.
- Explore interactive and educational agricultural programming.

Visitor Park Interpretation and Education

- Create venues, viewpoints and facilities that enable park interpretation, tours and site-seeing.
- Provide opportunities for self-guided interpretation.
- Foster community building and education through park interpretation visitor experience.
- Enhance community appreciation of the natural resources.



ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

GOAL:

Create conditions for ecological diversity and resilience over the long-term by protecting and enhancing regionally significant upland forest and riparian areas, recognizing the potential of the park to provide valuable ecological services and habitat for species at risk.

OBJECTIVES:

- Protect critical fish and wildlife habitat for several endangered and vulnerable species within the park.
- Support the endangered Salish sucker and Nooksack dace populations through the preservation, enhancement and creation of riparian and wetland habitat along the Pepin Brook corridor and Gordon's Brook area.
- Enhance regionally significant upland forest and riparian areas.
- Protect and enhance the forested Panorama Ridge, the at-risk plant community north of the Bowl and the park's vernal wetlands.
- Support ecological diversity throughout the park through invasive species control, enhancing native species and enhancing wetlands.
- Maintain some old-field habitat.
- Restore unprogrammed mown grass areas at the Main day-use Area to a natural condition.
- Enable hands-on stewardship activities.
- Work with community and research organizations to support habitat enhancement, protection, public education and interpretation.

- Explore low impact bioengineering options to limit erosion and watercourse sedimentation and increase biofiltration within the park.
- Maintain beaver control measures to reduce impacts on Pepin Brook.

HERITAGE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The park is rich with cultural and heritage resources including natural history, First Nations and early pioneer and settlement resources.

GOAL:

Connect visitors to the park's rich heritage.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide interpretation and programming focused on the themes of natural history, pioneer heritage, gravel extraction, and First Nation culture along with current land stewardship.
- Work with Matsqui First Nation to present their culture and historic use within the park program.
- Preserve heritage structures within the park.
- Include an interpretive experience connecting visitors to the 'Big Rock' and with the area's history as a First Nations gathering place.
- Highlight the 'Big Rock' (Transformer stone) and develop appropriate site landscape treatment and interpretation program.
- Preserve the Loucks Heritage House as a major heritage feature and park node and seek repurposing opportunities and partnerships.
- Ensure Shortreed Cabin is preserved.

7.0 KEY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A number of key issues were identified during the management planning process. The additional research, engagement and resultant strategy needed to address these issues are presented here.

7.1 Trail-use Conflicts

ARP is a popular destination for trail-based activities. Walking, jogging and dog exercising, as well as horseback riding have a well established visitor base. As visitation increases, the park has seen an increase in conflicts between user groups, especially in relation to off-leash dogs roaming through on-leash areas and trails. Through the engagement process, dog owners expressed their desire for off-leash trail use. Concerns from trail users regarding trail etiquette and the need to educate all trail users were also identified through the engagement process as was concerns over horse manure on trails. Also expressed through the engagement process was the desire to have trails where dogs are not allowed, citing both fear of dogs (even on-leash), impacts of dogs on natural values and visitor experience.

STRATEGY:

- develop current trail sharing etiquette and education program
- continue to enforce on-leash dog walking in on-leash park areas
- provide opportunity for off-leash walking in a designated, confined area
- prohibit dogs (even on-leash) in Gordon's Brook area
- improve trail standards along multi-use trail sections as needed

- evaluate need for an increased trail standard for existing multi-use trails and,
- expand the park trail system.

7.2 Marsh Pond

The Marsh Pond, constructed as part of the Bowl's gravel extraction reclamation, is intended to provide bird habitat and viewing opportunities. The pond includes a large center island and riparian area planted with native trees and shrubs. An overlook on the west side of the pond was created to provide viewing but views are now hindered by the rapid and dense growth of young alder trees, which are also impacting the clay liner. Desire for increased access to the pond and improved viewing opportunities have been expressed.

The pond is isolated from other surface waters and well-water is pumped to maintain water levels in the summer. Summer water temperatures are very high and as a result the pond provides very limited habitat for native amphibians, while supporting introduced largemouth bass and invasive bullfrogs. Water temperatures may be moderated as the trees grow to provide additional shade, which along with in-stream cover and vegetation could improve the habitat value. Efforts to eradicate alien species are unlikely to be successful. An endangered western painted turtle was observed here in 2011. The idea for a recreational stocked fishery is under exploration and needs to have the feasibility, impacts and demand further investigated.

STRATEGY:

- evaluate the potential and impacts of a stocked (put & take) recreational fishery
- enable nature interpretation and enjoyment compatible with habitat values
- maintain tree density and locations to preserve viewing opportunities
- provide nature viewing opportunities in appropriate locations, and
- enable monitoring of the western painted turtle.

7.3 Gordon's Brook Wetland Area

The Gordon's Brook area provides important wetland habitat and has significant potential for additional wetland creation, which was the most supported park program element through the public engagement process. Phased wetland expansion needs to be carefully planned to optimize habitat creation and interpretive trail opportunities. This area of the park has also become an important research hub for continuing study of the endangered Nooksack dace and threatened Salish suckers. Recently, research focused on shallow wetland habitat creation to support amphibians is underway in partnership with the Vancouver Aquarium. This research might support the reintroduction of species at risk, including Oregon spotted frog, into the park and area in the future. Hand in hand with habitat creation, corresponding opportunities for educational, interpretive and stewardship activities could be supported.

STRATEGY:

- work with partners to evaluate habitat complex and determine direction for future restoration projects
- support ongoing research and education
- ensure protection of research areas and facilities and provide opportunity for support needs
- provide limited public access along confined trail corridor (boardwalks/trails)
- provide staging area for research, educational tours, and appropriate public access, and
- consider reintroduction of species at risk, including Oregon spotted frog.

7.4 Agriculture

Significant portions of the present day park were cleared and farmed since the early 1900s and the park in its entirety is included in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), implemented in 1973. A portion of the south park area (Southern Lands) continues under agricultural production today. This land-banked area has been licensed for farming as a complementary land management tool. There are four barns which are no longer used for agricultural purposes.

The agricultural assessment (Upland 2011) identified opportunities to support neighbouring agriculture by including honey bee colonies, pollination plantings and polyhouse seedling/nursery production. Manure spreading was not supported due to the sensitivity of the underlying aquifer.



The assessment also explored alternative sustainable farming approaches and agriculture programs, but further investigation is needed to provide educational and interactive agricultural programming to enrich the park visitor experience in conjunction with sustainable agriculture.

Interim agricultural licensing, for land management and revenue generation, should continue until the Southern Lands are fully integrated into the park's recreation and conservation system through either an educational and interactive sustainable farm or alternate program. MV should support land stewardship and best management practices in the interim and evaluate existing farm infrastructure for retention feasibility.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue agricultural licensing of parkland not required for immediate program development.
- Explore partnerships with community, academic and agricultural agencies to provide innovative and self-sufficient sustainable farming that allows for public interaction and learning opportunities to enrich the visitor experience.

- Implement a long-term sustainable agricultural program(s) centered on the Loucks Heritage House and/ or Milward farm and potentially involving entire agricultural license area within the Southern Lands.
- Explore opportunities to reuse heritage farm buildings as active infrastructure in the agricultural program.
- Educate park users on agriculture activities and history.
- Support pollination through complementary plantings and evaluate impacts of honeybee colonies on native bee populations.
- Continue basic barn and outbuilding maintenance for licensed structures as an interim strategy for asset protection.
- Prior to any additional maintenance or repairs, prepare business case for the Milward, large Loucks and Pepindale barns and explore options for retention, repurposing or removal.
- Support retention of small barn at the Loucks Heritage House site for historical context.
- Consider alternate land management strategies should a long-term sustainable farm program not move forward.





7.5 Climate Change

Climate change is anticipated to increase winter precipitation and summer dryness within the lower mainland. Increased winter and early spring precipitation may lead to increased frequency and severity of flood and slide events in the park impacting fisheries and riparian values. The severity of storm events is also anticipated to increase, which could result in increased storm water detention requirements and the need for resilient riparian planting along the Pepin Brook corridor. Summer droughts caused by an increase in air temperature will also put stress on domestic and agricultural water supplies, lowering stream flows in the late summer months and impacting fish and amphibian species. Drier summer conditions can also lead to an increase in frequency and severity of wild fire in the region and the potential for insect or other pathogens to become widespread in forest ecosystems. Contiguous corridors of habitat will be of high importance to allow for both plant and animal species to travel or shift as a result of increases in temperature. In addition, riparian vegetation and cover will become increasingly important to assist in temperature regulation in streams.

STRATEGY:

- support environmental corridors within the park and strengthen habitat connectivity to the surrounding land
- consider enhancing the upland forest by restoring the forested ecosystem on Panorama Ridge and plateau
- enhance riparian habitat in the short term to allow for needed growing time to provide cover
- increase storm-water detention capability and utilize bioengineering to enhance slope stability, and
- expand wetlands in the lowland areas within the park.

8.0 PROGRAM AND CONCEPT

The park program and concept plan provides a long-range vision for the park consistent with the park classification, guided by the values established in the framework, and informed by public input and identified opportunities. The park program and concept envisions a multiple-use regional park which provides a range of recreational opportunities including overnight events, preserves and interprets significant cultural resources, and protects, enhances and creates habitat along the Pepin Brook corridor. The program supports nature interpretation, education, and research initiatives. The park program and concept plan are highlighted on the following pages.



8.1 Program

The program is illustrated in a matrix which identifies the park unit, site objectives and program.

TABLE 2: PARK PROGRAM MATRIX

PARK PROGRAM MATRIX			
Park Unit	Overview	Site Objectives	Program
Main Day-use Area	This node is the primary park destination and main access point for the trail system. Key facilities for hosting events, picnic, and small gatherings are located here. As site of the former swimming facility now decommissioned, new amenities are needed to attract park visitors and support facility investment in existing infrastructure.	• Create a family-focused recreational activity node with improved trail connectivity • Create a cohesive area trail network • Increase accessibility • Provide recreation opportunity for all ages • Improve and create opportunities to view and experience Pepin Brook • Enhance Blacktail Picnic Area and improve integration with the larger area • Create additional group event and picnic opportunities • Provide cycling trailhead • Soften large parking area and improve site circulation • Enhance riparian habitat	• Expanded accessible trail loop with activity stations along route (reroute Rock'n Horse Trail as necessary) • Nature play, adventure and learning areas • Circulation improvements • Decommission surplus trails • Pepin Brook trail linkage separate and clearly delineated from access road • Pepin Brook view areas • Additional picnic shelters and tables • Relocate cycling trailhead and cycling trail access • Interpretation staging • Parking treatment improvements

PARK PROGRAM MATRIX			
Park Unit	Overview	Site Objectives	Program
Bowl Area	This node is the recreation and special event destination within the park and a main access point for the trail system. The Marsh Pond, picnicking, lawn areas and an attractive trail loop with viewing areas add to the site's appeal. The Bowl's terrain is suitable for a wide variety of group events. As a disturbed site with large unprogrammed space, its role as an event area will be enhanced and a range of recreational activities will be accommodated.	• Enhance Aldergrove Bowl as a major park node providing a range of youth, family and group event facilities • Enhance the Bowl as an event venue and seek to accommodate large events, for up to 10 000 participants, that utilize the Bowl's topography • Marsh Pond to continue to be a focus for nature viewing and interpretation • Provide accessible trail loop around Marsh Pond • Highlight 'Big Rock' • Provide additional picnicking opportunities • Support Astronomy activities • Enhance entry staging area • Community connections • Preserve land base for additional future recreation program	• Circulation improvements • Additional family recreation amenities • Nature play and adventure features • Picnic shelter • 'Big Rock' interpretation and site treatment • Marsh Pond vegetation management for viewing • Marsh Pond view deck and blind • Orientation node by entry staging (porta-potty, kiosk) • Seek 'Urban Sky Park' designation • Interpretation staging • Minor improvements to entry treatment and parking • Parking area drainage and biofiltration improvements • Habitat enhancement

PARK PROGRAM MATRIX			
Park Unit	Overview	Site Objectives	Program
Forest Core Area	This forested section of the park has been developed primarily with walking, cycling and equestrian trails including Pepin Brook trail and a large section of the Rock'n Horse trail. The equestrian staging area is located off 272nd Street and a smaller node is accommodated off the main park access road.	• Community connections to South Langley Trail • Support public transit access • Provide multi-use trail connections to the park's trail system • Expand equestrian/pedestrian parking and improve circulation • Enhance riparian and upland forest habitat • Limit erosion and increase stabilization in mass wasting area	• Circulation improvements • Multi-use trail connection (272nd Street trailhead to Equestrian staging) • Improve entry treatment • Astronomy field/Pepin Brook trail orientation node (kiosk, waste receptacle) • Equestrian orientation node (kiosk, waste receptacles, pit toilet improvements) • Equestrian parking (15+ spaces) • Partnership potential for warm-up / riding rings • Park operations service yard • Explore future multi-use trail alignment to provide enhanced trail experience and connection to future southern slopes trail (including additional crossing of Pepin Brook -north of Gordon's Brook); consider option to decommission Hunt bridge • Bioengineering techniques in mass wasting area • Enhance riparian and upland forest habitat

PARK PROGRAM MATRIX			
Park Unit	Overview	Site Objectives	Program
Northeast Staging & Dog Off-leash Area	This area of the park includes a large sloping field, Tanaka Creek and the existing Dog Off-leash area which is well-used throughout the year.	• Provide expanded dog off-leash experience including a confined off-leash walking opportunity • Expand parking/staging opportunities • Provide trail system access separated from Dog Off-leash Area	• Confined off-leash trail loop • Explore staging area off Huntingdon (30+ parking spaces) • Partner for provision of enhanced facilities (shelter, agility area) • Picnicking, viewing and Pepin Brook trail access
Gordon's Brook Wetland Area	This area encompasses south Pepin Brook, Gordon's Brook habitat restoration area and the surrounding lowlands.	• Create a nature interpretation, education and research node • Provide a nature inspired wetland experience • Create major wetland features and enhance habitat • Provide education and interpretation • Partner with educational institutions for research support • Provide suitable public access along confined trail corridor with rest and view areas • Provide neighbourhood access to park trail system • Provide accessible experience • Prohibit dogs within Gordon's Brook area	• Wetland creation and habitat enhancement • Interpretive loop trail separate from park trail system (accessible component) • Staging area with parking (20+ spaces) and bus drop off/turnaround • Entry treatment (park sign, fencing, planting) • Orientation node (pit toilets, kiosk, waste receptacles) • Provide area overlook/viewpoint • Shade trees, small grass area • Viewpoint to south Pepin Brook area • Interpretation staging and signage • Neighbourhood trail access from staging area to park trail system (separate from interpretation trail) • Consider Oregon spotted frog introduction should wetland habitat prove suitable

PARK PROGRAM MATRIX			
Park Unit	Overview	Site Objectives	Program
Southern Lands	This area encompasses the upper plateau, south slopes and lower fields and includes agriculturally licensed lands. Camp Elkgrove, the Shortreed Cabin and the Loucks Heritage House are located here.	• Expand trail system and provide appropriate public access • Include a sustainable agricultural program that enriches the visitor experience and compliments park management objectives • Preserve the Loucks Heritage House as a potential major heritage node • Enhance forested area on plateau • Consider lowland areas as flexible program area for consideration as wetland restoration or agricultural programming • Support agriculture programming and interim land use (continued licensing) • Preserve open space for future program options	• Southern slopes pedestrian/cycling trail with rest and view nodes • Consider staging area (20 parking spaces) in conjunction with southern slopes trail development • Accessible trail connection to Camp Elkgrove • Continue to preserve the Loucks Heritage House and enhance grounds • Continued agricultural licensing of land not required for immediate program development • Pollination plantings in appropriate locations • Wetland, riparian and old-field habitat enhancement • Reserve long term pedestrian/equestrian trail alignment along upper plateau



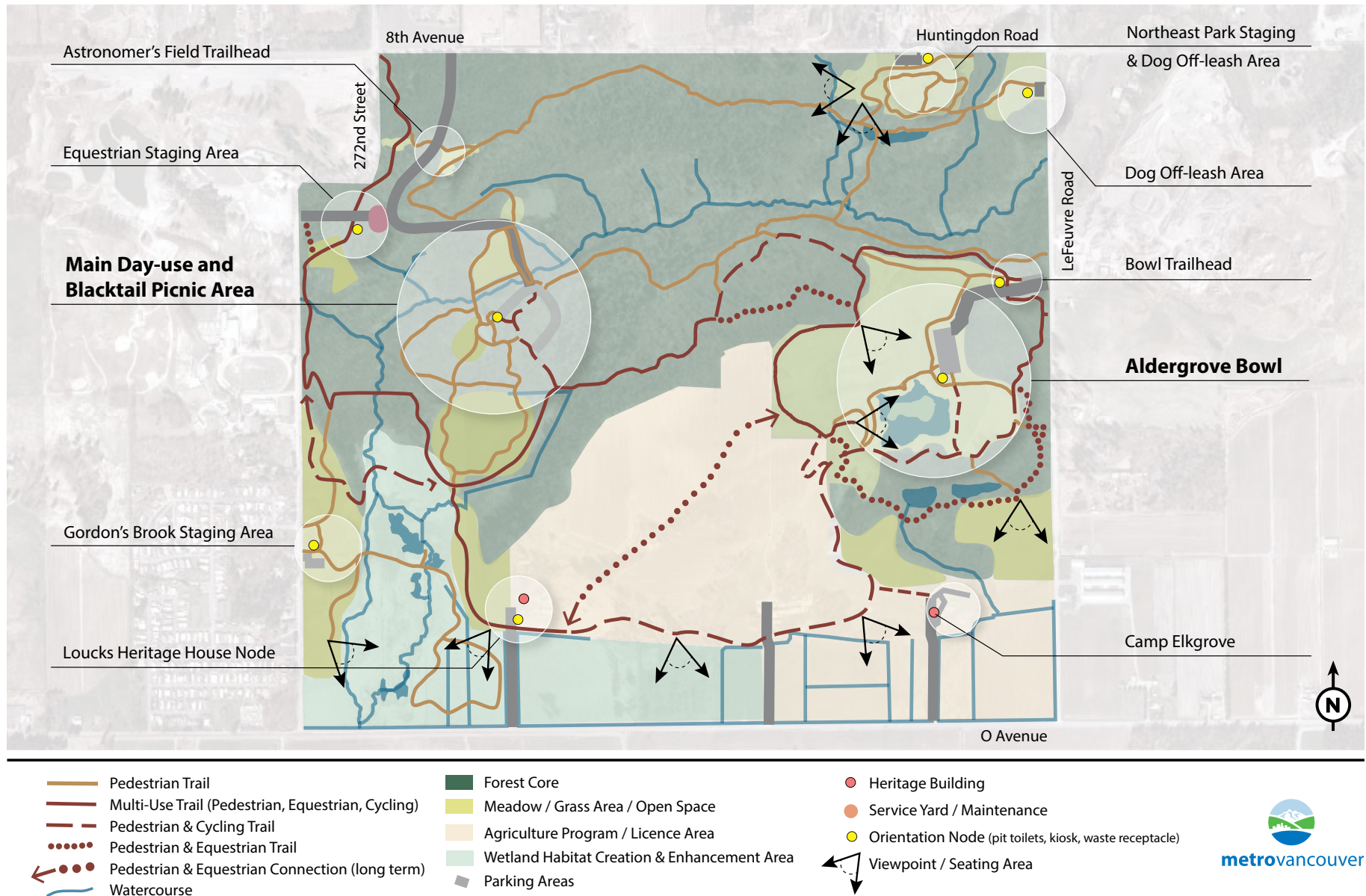
8.2 Concept

The concept plan proposes to enhance the two existing main park nodes as the recreational hubs, providing groups event and gathering venues within the park, along with strengthening existing staging areas and creating new staging areas, each with a specific visitor focus. The concept features a robust trail system providing a variety of trail experiences for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists. The plan proposes to create and enhance habitat and continue to include agriculture as a land management tool, while moving towards a sustainable and interactive program. New facilities will support public programming and interpretation.

Other concept plan highlights include:

- Park event and group gathering spaces are enhanced, strengthening the parks role as a gathering place including story sharing and interpretation.
- Nature play, learning and adventure opportunities for children and youth provide a new focus for the Main Day-use Area that will, in combination with ongoing habitat enhancement and interpretation, connect visitors to the park's natural features and ecology.
- The Dog Off-leash Area will be expanded to include an off-leash trail walking loop experience and other amenities.
- The farming history is strengthened by an innovative agricultural program, allowing the public to experience sustainable farming in a park setting.

FIGURE 5: PARK CONCEPT



8.3 Trail Network

ARP includes several distinct trail experiences: Pepin Brook trail which provides a pedestrian loop along the Pepin Brook corridor through second growth forest; the Rock'n Horse multi-use trail which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and provides a diversity of terrain and experience; and the pedestrian focused trails at the Main Day-use area which provide easy walking and an accessible loop experience. The proposed trail network envisions a system that provides enhanced experience for each trail user group, connectivity and accessibility improvements as well as appropriate community and neighbourhood access points and trailheads.

ALDERGROVE REGIONAL PARK TRAIL SYSTEM

TABLE 3: ALDERGROVE REGIONAL PARK TRAIL SYSTEM MATRIX

Existing Trails	Standard	Upgrades
Pepin Brook trail	2 m gravel trail (pedestrian)	Trail connection through Main Day-use area to be separate from access road
Main Day-use trail loop	2 m gravel or hard surfaced trail (accessible pedestrian)	- Upgrade for accessibility and expand length; consider hard surfacing - Rationalize circulation; decommission duplicate trails
Rock'n Horse trail	3 m gravel trail (pedestrian/cycling/equestrian)	- Improve site lines and slope/corner approaches - Increase trail width to standard as level of use necessitates
Bowl trail & Marsh Pond loop	2 m gravel trail (accessible pedestrian) 2.5 m gravel trail (pedestrian/cycling)	- Maintain and enhance loop accessibility including viewpoint access - Increased width along south pond alignment to accommodate future cycling connection
Footpath trail connections	1.0 -1.5 m native material trail (pedestrian)	Maintain nature –focused trail experience with minimum maintenance
Proposed Trails	Standard	Features
Gordon's Brook interpretive trail loop	2 m gravel & boardwalk trail (pedestrian)	Boardwalk sections, rest and view areas and interpretation
Rock'n Horse multi-use trail extension (272nd Street – Equestrian Staging)	3 m gravel trail (pedestrian/cycling/equestrian)	Community connection to South Langley Trail
Dog Off-leash trail experience	1.5m gravel trail	Confined trail providing 20 minute walking loop option
Neighbourhood connection trail	1.5 m gravel trail (pedestrian)	Desired connection to Pioneer Park
Southern Slopes trail	2.5 m gravel trail (pedestrian/cycling)	- Expand pedestrian/cycling trail opportunities - Rest and view areas along slopes
Plateau trail alignment (long term)	2.5 m gravel trail (pedestrian/equestrian)	Expand pedestrian/equestrian trail opportunities

8.4 Cost Estimate and Phasing

A planning level cost projection is provided below, broken down by park units and reflecting a built out concept based on existing information. Park projects are often advanced in partnership with volunteers, agencies, institutions and through grant programs.

COST ESTIMATE

Main Day-use Area – Major Node	\$ 750,000
Aldergrove Bowl – Major Node	\$ 750,000
Forest Core & Equestrian Staging Area	\$ 250,000
Northeast Staging & Dog Off-leash Area	\$ 400,000
Gordon’s Brook Wetland Area	\$ 750,000
Southern Lands	\$ 1,100,000
Total	\$ 4,000,000

Park improvements will be implemented in phases over the life of the plan. Park improvement priorities are not tied to a specific timeline as the availability of capital funding will vary based on Metro Vancouver priorities, partnership and grant opportunities.

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

Priority improvements focus on redevelopment of the Main Day-use Area, recognizing the potential to respond to public demand for a family-focused amenity at this site. Wetland restoration and related trail development in the Gordon’s Brook area of the park, are prioritized to realize a partnership opportunity and to provide an expanded trail opportunity with a nature and wetland interpretation and educational experience. Expansion of the Dog Off-leash Area and related improvements are also included in the first phase to accommodate public demand and minimize conflicts in the larger park area. Also included in the first phase are key trail connections within the park.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Second and third phase improvements focus on the development of secondary staging areas in the north east corner of the park and in the Gordon’s Brook area; minor improvements to the equestrian staging area; and major expansion of trails and supportive amenities in several areas of the park. Continued wetland restoration partnerships, educational and interpretive programs and additional group event and gathering facilities at both major nodes are anticipated in the long term. Agricultural program research is suggested to provide guidance in the potential provision of a sustainable farm program and adaptive program development priorities.

TABLE 4: PLANNING LEVEL COSTING MATRIX

8.4 Economic Development, Philanthropy and Partnership Opportunities

Historically, the park has been developed through a number of community partnerships. These relationships will be fostered to further opportunities within the park. Conservation, recreation and heritage groups that have completed park habitat, heritage building restoration and trail building projects within the park in the past were active in the management planning process. Also through the planning process, new partnership opportunities emerged with the trail-based recreational users expressing interest in providing monitoring and etiquette and strong interest was expressed in ongoing collaboration especially for children and family activities, trail projects, nature viewing and habitat enhancements. The local Aldergrove community was particularly engaged, advocating for youth activities and a facility to replace the former 'swimming lake'. This is an important relationship to nurture, given the historic ties to the park.

Continued and emerging partnerships with the Elks, the Royal Astronomy Society of Canada (RASC), Langley Environmental Protection Society (LEPS), Pepin Brook Streamkeepers (PBS), Langley Field Naturalists (LFN), Back Country Horsemen, service clubs, and other community and conservation groups will be supported. Philanthropy through the Pacific Parklands Foundation will also be sought to continue the pattern of gifting toward park amenities. Partnerships may be sought for habitat creation, wetland restoration and a research hub; a potential recreational fishery in the Marsh Pond; enhanced dog off-leash facilities; nature play features; and cultural restoration and programming.

Mastqui First Nation was consulted in the management planning process and there is need for ongoing cooperation to ensure engagement on park improvement projects. There is potential to explore partnership opportunities to deliver programming and interpret culture and heritage.

STRATEGY:

- Engage local conservation and service clubs and the Pacific Parklands Foundation (PPF) fundraising organization for regional parks
- Explore partnership opportunities with Matsqui First Nation
- Continue to support the Camp Elkgrove partnership
- Engage the agricultural community to explore partnership opportunities on farm-related projects in the park
- Seek designation of the Bowl area as an 'Urban Night Sky' park to support ongoing partnership with the Royal Astronomy Society of Canada
- Actively seek continued citizen engagement for ARP and establish a community-based Park Association or other Park Partners.



9.0 OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

As a Multiple-use Regional Park, Aldergrove Regional Park's focus is on balancing significant recreational opportunities with important natural conservation goals. With this in mind, service levels will continue to target maintaining recreational facilities to current levels and design standards while preserving and restoring critical habitat. Operational priorities include:

- Continue to provide park operations from the existing service yard within the park
- Maintain recreational facilities to current levels
- Continue to provide a range of interpretive programs
- Continue to facilitate events
- Facilitate stewardship projects and citizen engagement in natural resource management
- Manage land banked agricultural areas to maintain land capability
- Additional operational needs will be assessed as park development unfolds.



10.0 PRIORITY ACTIONS

The following priority actions have been identified as critical next steps in addressing key issues, realizing the park framework and concept, improving park ecological health and visitor experience:

MAIN DAY-USE NODE & BLACKTAIL PICNIC AREA

- Initiate detailed design for the node at Main Day-use area to include accessible loop trail
- Explore nature and adventure play opportunities within the park with particular emphasis on enhancing the Main Day-use area.

FOREST CORE & EQUESTRIAN STAGING AREA

- Accommodate needed trail connections
- Explore immediate interim parking expansion opportunities.

ALDERGROVE BOWL

- Explore short-term parking improvements to reduce maintenance and improve aesthetics
- Provide an accessible trail loop and needed trail connection in the Bowl area
- Explore nature play opportunities
- Support event programming including overnight events.

NORTH EAST PARK NODE & DOG OFF-LEASH AREA

- Expand Off-leash Area to include a contained trail experience
- Partner to provide additional desired amenities.

GORDON'S BROOK WETLAND AREA

- Within the south Pepin and Gordon's Brook wetland complex area, develop a comprehensive site plan to guide future habitat restoration and enhancement projects as well as research, education and public interpretation components
- Manage the area to support research
- Advance the Vancouver Aquarium's shallow wetland restoration partnership project
- Initiate detailed design for staging area and wetland trail loop
- Explore partnership opportunities for habitat restoration and enhancement.

SOUTHERN LANDS

- Examine options for interim agricultural program including long-term potential for a sustainable, innovative farm program
- Maintain flexibility of land resources and assets in the medium-term to facilitate an adaptable, sustainable farm program
- Explore feasibility of retaining four aging barns for farm utility; consider adaptation, donation or demolition
- Consider maintaining one barn on the Loucks Heritage House grounds as a supportive element
- Restore and enhance upland forest habitat.

11.0 APPENDICES

11.1 Companion Documents

11.2 Bibliography

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