

Emergency Management Overview

Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis, Bowen Island

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis, Bowen Island

Background

On March 27, 2023, the Bowen Island Municipality (BIM) Emergency Program Executive Committee provided summary comments on Metro Vancouver's rezoning and Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment application for the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis. The Committee identified a number of questions related to evacuation, fire risk management and response, emergency services and other considerations.

This memo outlines Metro Vancouver's approach to emergency management in regional parks and its application to the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis. The principles, approaches and resources outlined herein reflect Metro Vancouver's experience in emergency preparedness and commitment to safety, collaboration and readiness.

Regional Parks and Emergency Response

Metro Vancouver works closely with local emergency service providers and municipalities to manage risk and respond to emergencies as they arise.

The proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis will be staffed with dedicated, trained, full time and seasonal staff and equipped with vehicles and equipment that staff use in park operations, including emergency management. These staff and resources will be in addition to the existing complement of full time and seasonal staff, vehicles and equipment already allocated to operate Crippen Regional Park on Bowen Island.

Regional Parks operations staff are qualified in bylaw enforcement, first aid, emergency management, resource management and wildfire response. Regional Park staff co-ordinate, train and share information with local municipalities to manage risks and advance emergency preparedness at a community level.

In addition to dedicated on-island staff and resources, Metro Vancouver has a dedicated Emergency Management Division, extensive wildfire response resources from its Watershed Protection Division, and communications, engineering, resource management, regulation and compliance and other system resources that are available, that can be mobilized in short order to support emergency management requirements at local levels.

Metro Vancouver maintains strong relationships with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and has a proven record of coordinated successful emergency response, across the region.

Every regional park has a site-specific emergency plan, dedicated equipment and infrastructure on

hand to respond to emergency situations, including wildfire. Following completion of the municipal rezoning and OCP amendment application, a site-specific emergency management plan will be developed as part of the detailed park design process, including additional technical studies, collaboration with Bowen Island Municipality and local emergency service providers.

Interim Park Operation

On May 9, 2023, Metro Vancouver finalized the purchase of the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis.

At this time, the land is not open to the public for day or overnight use. Regional Park staff are taking steps to secure and maintain the property while the park planning, municipal rezoning and OCP amendment processes proceed. To protect the site's ecology and ensure public access, Metro Vancouver is implementing the following:

- site monitoring, oversight and bylaw compliance;
- a Wildfire Preparedness and Response Plan;
- continued public access to existing municipal trails and roads;
- restriction of unauthorized vehicle access to parkland.

Public access, capital improvements and ecological enhancements will follow successful completion of the park planning, municipal rezoning and OCP amendment processes.

Jurisdiction

Regional parks fall within the jurisdiction of local first responders for police, ambulance and fire service. Because regional parks are staffed with highly trained, uniformed staff, and facilities and programming are designed to minimize risk, regional parks generate low volumes of emergency calls.

A significant proportion of visitors to the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis are expected to be local residents. Emergency calls to the park have a high likelihood of being in response to a local resident experiencing an emergency while enjoying the park.

Regional Park staff are responsible for enforcement of the Regional Park Bylaw.

Metro Vancouver Wildfire Risk Management and Response

Metro Vancouver has a comprehensive fire management system that includes nine fire weather stations around the region. Regional Parks' fire response protocols follow the Provincial wildfire response model and staff work closely with the Province in its planning and suppression efforts.

Led by the Metro Vancouver Emergency Management Division, a regional scale Fire Conditions Task Group meets regularly during the wildfire season to guide Metro Vancouver's preparedness and response. Staff from multiple departments come together using available data and fire danger ratings to advise upon expected staff and public behaviors across the region during the fire season.

Each regional park has a Wildfire Preparedness and Response Plan that includes a description of access for fire vehicles, possible staging areas for fire trucks and command stations, location of fire hydrants, water standpipes and other water sources, and special circumstance areas. A Wildfire Preparedness and Response Plan will be developed for the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis.

Each park also has wildfire suppression equipment, supplemented by an equipped systems fire trailer that can be transported to any park site quickly, and staff with S-100 Fire Suppression and Safety training. In the case of the proposed park at Cape Roger Curtis, dedicated pumps, water storage and other fire suppression equipment will be acquired and stored on site.

During HIGH and EXTREME wildfire conditions, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks dramatically increases its staff patrols and monitoring of all parks, greenways and conservation areas. Increased signage informing members of the public about fire danger is also posted. Website advisories are managed for each regional park indicating fire danger ratings restrictions and closures.

In the case of an emergency, trained park staff are often first to respond and immediately notify the local fire departments who have authority over fire incidents, unless the Province assumes command. Metro Vancouver has a specialized Watershed Fire Protection Program with highly trained staff that are on-call 24 hours a day during fire season. Initial attack crews are available all season to respond to fires in parks.

The Province also stands ready to support local response. Metro Vancouver has a resource sharing agreement in place with BC Wildfire Service – Metro Vancouver and Provincial fire response teams are deployed together every year.

During the fire season, all residents and parks visitors are urged to use caution in outdoor spaces, to be aware of all spark sources and immediately report all fires to 911. Park visitors are asked to obey posted signs and fire danger guidelines. Under EXTREME fire risk, briquette barbecues are prohibited everywhere. There will be no open fires in the proposed regional park.

The municipal Fire Chief is the local authority and Metro Vancouver will always follow any site specific restrictions imposed by the Fire Chief.

The Regional Parks Regulation Bylaw includes prohibitions for starting fires, smoking, and unauthorized cooking devices. Fines for each offence are \$500 to \$1000.

Evacuation, Emergency Response and Planning

In the case of an emergency situation requiring the need for planned or tactical evacuation or shelter in place, Metro Vancouver would work closely with local authorities to manage the response in the proposed regional park.

Should an evacuation, or shelter-in-place order be installed by local authorities, the needs of overnight campers at the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis would be managed as follows:

- Metro Vancouver would activate an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or Department Operations Centre (DOC). Park staff would provide information to park visitors on evacuation or shelter-in-place requirements, working closely with local RCMP and emergency management officials
- For park visitors without personal vehicles, Metro Vancouver would provide transportation to evacuation points via the park shuttle or contracted helicopter services, if necessary
- In a worst-case scenario of local roads, ferry and emergency evacuation options being unsafe or overcapacity – additional staff, equipment and supplies would be delivered to the site via contracted boat or helicopter service
- Metro Vancouver will maintain stores of emergency supplies on site including first aid, fire suppressions equipment, backup generator, fuel, food and other emergency supplies
- The dedicated park shuttle will be on hand to support evacuation efforts.
- Through the camping reservation system, overnight park visitors will be advised to come prepared with basic emergency supplies and some additional food in case of emergency

Bowen Island Municipality Emergency Preparedness and Plans

Metro Vancouver works closely with municipalities across the region to ensure public safety, and to plan and train for emergency response.

For the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis, Metro Vancouver will work with Bowen Island Municipality to update emergency response and evacuation plans. Metro Vancouver will contribute to costs associated with updating municipal emergency plans related to the proposed regional park.

Summary

- Metro Vancouver is actively monitoring the site and managing risks as the park planning and municipal rezoning and OCP amendment process proceeds.
- The park will be staffed with highly trained, uniformed staff in addition to existing on-island staff in place to operate Crippen Regional Park. In the case of an emergency, these staff will support the response.
- Metro Vancouver Regional Parks staff actively manage parks to minimize risk; these parks generate a very low volume of emergency calls.
- Metro Vancouver has extensive resources dedicated to wildfire risk management and response including initial attack and wildfire suppression crews.
- Dedicated emergency management supplies and fire response equipment will be procured and stored on site.
- Following completion of the municipal rezoning and OCP amendment application, a site-specific emergency management plan will be developed as part of the detailed park design process, including additional technical studies, collaboration with Bowen Island Municipality and local emergency service providers.

- Metro Vancouver will work collaboratively with Bowen Island Municipality to update municipal emergency response and evacuation plans. Metro Vancouver will cover any cost incurred to update those plans directly related to the park.
- Metro Vancouver will work with Bowen Island Municipality to co-ordinate with emergency service providers annually, and seek opportunities for collaborative training and emergency planning exercises.