metrovancouver | REGIONAL PARKS

Regional Parks Annual Report

2023



Minnekhada Regional Park

About Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is a diverse organization that plans for and delivers regional utility services, including water, sewers and wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. It also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, provides affordable housing, and serves as a regional federation. The organization is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation located in the region of the same name. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each member jurisdiction.

Territorial Acknowledgment

Metro Vancouver acknowledges that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: q́ić́əý (Katzie), q́ʷɑ:ńƛ̓əń (Kwantlen), kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), máthxwi (Matsqui), xʷməθkʷəýəm (Musqueam), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), se'mya'me (Semiahmoo), Sḵwxw̱ ú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), scəẃaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh).

Metro Vancouver respects the diverse and distinct histories, languages and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, which collectively enrich our lives and the region.

Regional Parks Committee Members 2023

John McEwen (Chair) – Village of Anmore

Rebecca Bligh (Vice Chair) – City of Vancouver

Chak Au – City of Richmond

Pietro Calendino – City of Burnaby

Diana Dilworth – City of Port Moody

Tracy Elke – City of Pitt Meadows

Craig Hodge – City of Coquitlam

Patrick Johnstone – City of New Westminster

Dylan Kruger – City of Delta

Andrew Leonard – Bowen Island Municipality

Barb Martens – Township of Langley

Lisa Muri – District of North Vancouver

Nadine Nakagawa – City of New Westminster

Darrell Penner – City of Port Coquitlam

Jamie Ross – Village of Belcarra

Rob Stutt – City of Surrey

Jenny Tan – City of Maple Ridge

Sharon Thompson – District of West Vancouver



A Message from the Regional Parks Committee Chair

For over 55 years, Metro Vancouver has protected regionally important natural areas in its system of regional parks, and connected people to them. Over the past year, this commitment continued. The 2023 Regional Parks Annual Report highlights Metro Vancouver's achievements in support of the *Board Strategic Plan 2022-2026* priority actions as well as the *Regional Parks Plan* that steers our work.

Total visitation to regional parks returned to new normal levels following the boom that was experienced during then pandemic with an average 3.4 percent annual average growth in visits from 2003 to 2023. In 2023, there were an estimated 14.5 million visits to regional parks.

In 2023, relationships with Indigenous peoples were strengthened as we make the journey together along the pathway of truth and reconciliation. With kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem First Nation), Colony Farm Regional Park was renamed to ƛ̓éxətəm (tla-hut-um) Regional Park.

Metro Vancouver's population growth is projected to continue, adding another one million people by the year 2050. Guided by the *Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050* strategy, Metro Vancouver added 99 hectares of land to the regional parks system in 2023. To help ensure that the growing region remains livable for future generations, the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors approved a new Development Cost Charge to fund future growth-driven regional parkland acquisition.

Inspired by Metro Vancouver's *Regional Greenways 2050* plan, Regional Parks hosted a Regional Greenway Network Implementation Forum to advance the completion of the regional greenways network to support sustainable transportation and access to regional parks.

During the year, 49,828 people took part in 578 programs, events and outreach activities while 4,747 volunteers contributed 18,022 hours to stewardship, education, and interpretive programs. Community involvement is recognized as an important aspect of the work we do.

This annual report provides the opportunity to look back and recognize the impact that regional parks make on the lives of those in our growing region.



John McEwen, Committee Chair

2023 in Review

In 2023, we continued to protect natural areas and connect people to nature, progressing towards the vision of a resilient network of regional parks and greenways that continues to provide important climate, health, and other benefits to park visitors and the wider region.

The *Regional Parks Plan* drives our work. Key accomplishments in 2023 helped support the identified priority areas of work within five goals:

1. **The region's important natural areas are protected in perpetuity**
   - Acquired 99 hectares of land
   - Restored areas impacted by the 2022 wildfire in Minnekhada Regional Park
2. **Everyone has the opportunity to benefit from exceptional experiences in nature**
   - Planning and design of major projects moved forward across the regional parks system including at the proposed park at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island, Iona Beach Regional Park, Campbell Valley Regional Park, and at Crippen Regional Park
   - Delivered 455 field trips and workshops and 123 public programs
3. **Regional parks are sustainably managed and well-maintained for the safety of visitors and integrity of ecosystems**
   - Maintained, inspected, repaired, and replaced park assets across the system, keeping parks safe and accessible
   - Transformed a mowed lawn to a pollinator meadow in Pacific Spirit Regional Park
4. **First Nations have an active role in the planning and stewardship of regional parks**
   - Colony Farm Regional Park renamed to ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park. kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem First Nation) and their members selected the name ƛ̓éxətəm (pronounced tla-hut-um) which means "to be invited" in hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓
5. **Regional parks adapt to change and contribute to regional resilience**
   - Began restoration of an area in Lynn Headwaters Regional Park that was damaged by western hemlock looper moth
   - Created and maintained 37.8 hectares of ecological restoration areas



Our Role

Protecting Metro Vancouver's important natural areas and connecting people with them.

Vision

Regional parks are protected and resilient, connecting people to nature, with benefits for all.

Widgeon Marsh Regional Park

Guiding Principles

Nature-focused

Nature has inherent value and its protection for future generations is the foundation of what we do.

Interconnected

Our work nurtures the essential connection between people and nature, recognizing the vital role nature plays in human health and well-being.

Inclusive

Equity is integral to what we do, as we create an inclusive environment for all.

Reconciliation-focused

Relationships with Indigenous peoples are strengthened as we make the journey together along the pathway of truth and reconciliation.

Collaborative

By working with others, we collectively care for the land to improve the region's livability and ecological health.

Knowledge-based

Decision-making is informed by data and science, and incorporates Indigenous Knowledge. We learn from others and share our knowledge generously.

Adaptive

We sustain a culture of adaptive management, through learning, innovation, and evaluation.



ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park renaming event

Working Collaboratively with First Nations

Recognizing that advancing truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a process that starts with listening and learning together, Metro Vancouver is committed to strengthening relationships with First Nations based on trust and working collaboratively towards shared goals.

spotlight

Colony Farm Regional Park Renamed to ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park

On July 1, 2023, Colony Farm Regional Park was re-named at a ceremony held by kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem First Nation) and Metro Vancouver. This beautiful park is now known as ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park (pronounced tla-hut-um). Changing the name from one associated with colonialism to one that reflects and honours the kʷikʷəƛ̓əm history, culture, and ties to these lands is a positive step forward in building a new relationship based on the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

kʷikʷəƛ̓əm and their members selected the name ƛ̓éxətəm, which means "to be invited" in hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓. The name reflects their welcome to visitors to ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park, which is located on their traditional and ancestral territory and adjacent to their ancestral village of slakəyánc.

ƛ̓éxətəm (tla-hut-um) Pronunciation
Listen to Nancy Joe of the kʷikʷəƛ̓əm demonstrate how to pronounce ƛ̓éxətəm.
metrovancouver.org (search "tla-hut-um")

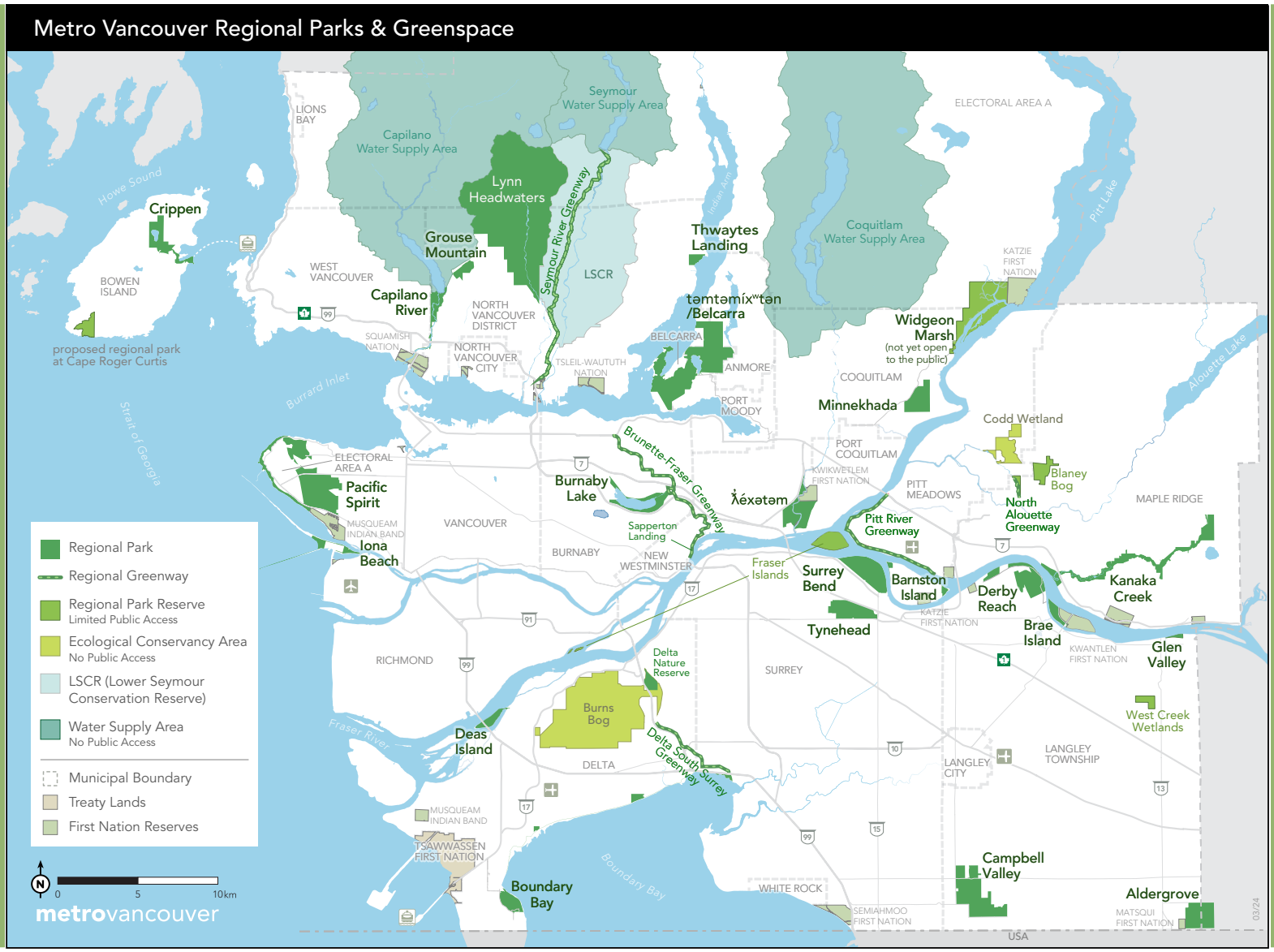


səlilwətaɬ Community Visioning Event for təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park

səlilwətaɬ Community Engagement at təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park

spotlight

In 2023, Metro Vancouver and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) initiated a community engagement process to hear from səlilwətaɬ members about how their cultural values, teachings, and perspectives can help inform future planning and management of təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park. səlilwətaɬ members came together to discuss what reclaiming Indigenous identity on ancestral lands means to them. Cultural visibility, stewardship of the land, and access to the park emerged as priorities. The installation of the səlilwətaɬ Welcome Pole, completed in November 2023, was one such priority project that stands as a tangible symbol of the shared commitment to cultural preservation and celebration. Metro Vancouver will continue to work with səlilwətaɬ to implement other priority projects on an ongoing basis.



Growing the System

Regional Parks plays a crucial role in making Metro Vancouver a resilient region. ***Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050**** is a key strategy for contributing to regional livability by protecting regionally important natural areas. Metro Vancouver advances delivery of the strategy each year in collaboration with member jurisdictions, senior levels of government, and others.

* Adopted by the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board in 2018



Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund increased from $19.6 million in 2022 to $23.6 million in 2023

99 hectares of regional parkland were acquired in 2023

Totalling $42.2 million in value

Kanaka Creek Regional Park

Community Involvement

Strong community partnerships are critical in engaging diverse communities in the regional parks system. Throughout the history of the parks system, many citizens have demonstrated that they want sustained involvement beyond just being park visitors using facilities and trails. We continued our work with the community in 2023 to improve consistency across the system, to grow the Park Partner Network, and to grow the internal capacity of the system.

Park Associations

The following non-profit groups received contribution funding from Metro Vancouver and partnered with Regional Parks on projects and activities ranging from habitat restoration to nature education.

1. Burnaby Lake Park Association
2. Colony Farm Park Association
3. Derby Reach/Brae Island Parks Association
4. Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society
5. Minnekhada Park Association
6. Pacific Spirit Park Society

CTS Youth Society

Connect | Teach | Sustain

Metro Vancouver continued its funding support of the CTS Youth Society, a non-profit organization that aims to connect every youth in Metro Vancouver with their natural environment, their community, and with each other through the life-changing outdoor experience of summer camp.

To find out more about the CTS Youth Society, go to **ctsyouthsociety.com.**

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation (formerly known as Pacific Parklands Foundation) is the only charity dedicated to raising funds for Metro Vancouver Regional Parks.

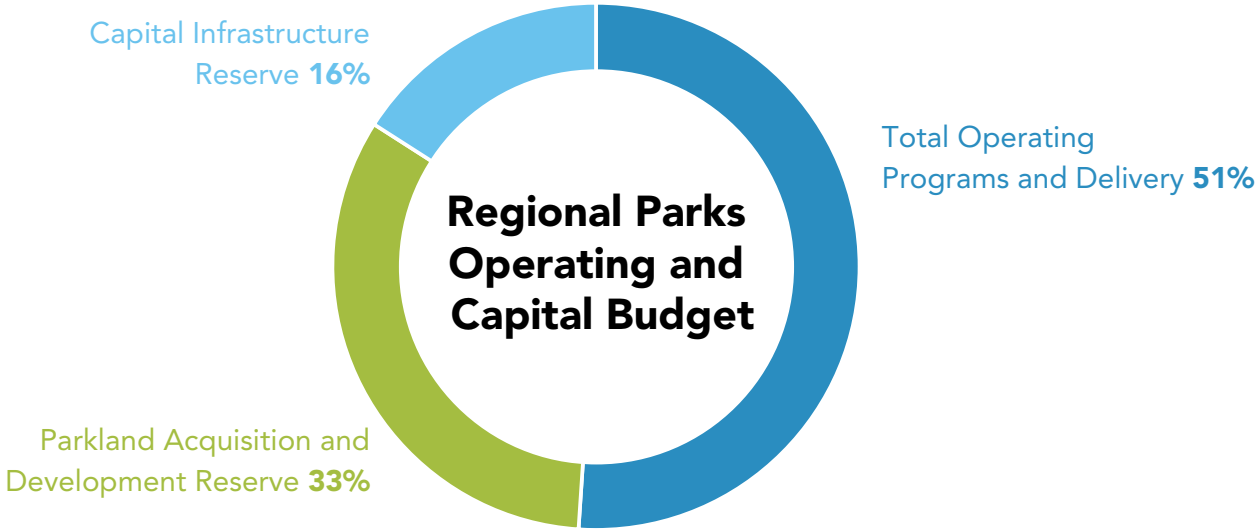
The Foundation funds projects that restore the health and beauty of these special places, improve the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and support volunteer environmental stewardship events in regional parks. By filling in the gaps of public funding and helping more people visit regional parks, the Foundation promotes the mental and physical health of people and community resilience, while ensuring regional parks remain spectacular.

To find out more about Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation, its projects, and how you can give back to regional parks, go to **mvrpfoundation.ca**.

To discover more about the impact the Foundation made in 2023, refer to their **2023 Annual Report**.

Regional Parks Provide Significant Value

Regional Parks is primarily funded through the annual Metro Vancouver Regional District tax requisition. This core revenue source is supplemented by modest income from user fees, capital reserves, and occasionally sustainability reserve funds and external revenues such as federal or provincial grants. Recognizing the importance of protecting regionally important natural areas, the Metro Vancouver Board approved increases to the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund annually from 2019 to 2023.





Iona Beach Regional Park

Planning for Parks Today and Into the Future

We support the long-term development and management of regional parks and greenways by conducting original research and preparing plans and policies. Regional Parks policies support day-to-day decision making while system and park level plans describe a long-term vision for the regional parks system and guide resource management, development, operations, and programming.

Regional Parks Plan

The ***Regional Parks Plan*** is Metro Vancouver's management plan for the regional parks system. The plan guides Metro Vancouver's work to protect natural areas and connect people to nature. The plan establishes strategic vision of a resilient network of regional parks and greenways that provides important climate, health, and other benefits to visitors and regional residents.

2023 Accomplishments

- With Regional Planning staff, completed the *Nature and Ecosystems Climate 2050 Roadmap*, part of the series of *Climate 2050* roadmaps that will guide our region's policies and collective actions to transition to a carbon-neutral, resilient region by 2050
- Undertook in-person surveying and market research on ways to support sustainable transportation access to regional parks
- The Metro Vancouver Board approved a new Development Cost Charge for regional parkland acquisition, to help ensure that the growing region can remain livable for the next generation
- With Regional Planning staff, updated the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory, a detailed database that tracks forests, wetlands, riparian areas, and other ecologically-important areas in the region

spotlight

Regional Greenways Implementation Forum

In November 2023, Metro Vancouver hosted a Regional Greenway Network Implementation Forum to facilitate the implementation of the *Regional Greenways 2050* plan. This plan is the region's shared vision for a network of recreational multi-use paths for cycling and walking that connects residents to large parks, protected natural areas, and communities to support regional livability. Sixty representatives from First Nations, municipal jurisdictions, other government agencies, and partners along with Metro Vancouver staff participated in the forum. Participants identified high priority greenway segments for completion, ranked them in importance, described the challenges to expansion of the greenway network, and shared their ideas on ways to improve the development of the Regional Greenway Network.

[I] and the rest of the TransLink team found it to be incredibly worthwhile, especially in terms of knowledge sharing and networking with agency staff across the region. Your team did a fabulous job organizing!

Erin O'Melinn, Senior Manager,
Transportation & Land Use Planning, TransLink



ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park

Building and Maintaining Park Assets

Each year, we manage a growing number of built assets including:

ROADS
43 km



TRAILS
295 km



BRIDGES & BOARDWALKS
589



BUILDINGS
346



PARKING LOTS
3,890 parking stalls



RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
13



PARK FIXTURES
1,521



STRUCTURES
96



SIGNS
65 entry signs
78 information kiosks



LAND PROTECTION
64 km linear assets
1,426 features



BARRIERS
70 km fencing
1,596 gates & bollards



UTILITIES
93 km utility lines
2,430 utility point features





Derby Reach Regional Park

2023 Accomplishments

- Completed and opened a new full service washroom building at Edgewater Bar in Derby Reach Regional Park
- Began a revitalization project in Davies Orchard and trail development to Dorman Point in Crippen Regional Park
- Developed a pop-up park at Metro Vancouver's PNE Showcase in Vancouver
- Undertook major trail improvements to the Grouse Grind and BCMC Trail and began development of a new trailhead at Grouse Mountain Regional Park

spotlight

And the Award Goes to … Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant and adjacent Iona Beach Regional Park are being upgraded to ensure continued protection of public health and the environment in a growing region. In 2023, the innovative conceptual plan for the upgrade, led by space2place design inc., was recognized with a Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Award of Excellence and an American Society of Landscape Architects Honour Award, both in Planning and Analysis. An integrated island-wide concept plan was developed to guide federally mandated upgrades to the plant and adjacent regional park. The resulting projects will restore estuary processes and natural systems, increase climate resilience for xʷəyeyət (Iona Island), and improve Iona Beach Regional Park with expanded recreational and educational opportunities for the region.



Conceptual plan, Iona Beach Regional Park

Campbell Valley Regional Park Perimeter Trail Extension

spotlight

In 2023, 3.3 kilometres of hiking and cycling trail was constructed and opened for public use in Campbell Valley Regional Park. This trail opens new areas of the park to public access, improves regional greenway connections and provides new opportunities for stewardship, education, and interpretation. Adjacent trail connections and a dog off-leash area were improved and a new pond was completed. The pond will provide habitat for frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts.



Campbell Valley Regional Park

Protecting Important Natural Areas



Pollinator meadow, Pacific Spirit Regional Park

In 2023, Regional Parks protected:

13,938 hectares – including 86% sensitive and important modified ecosystems*

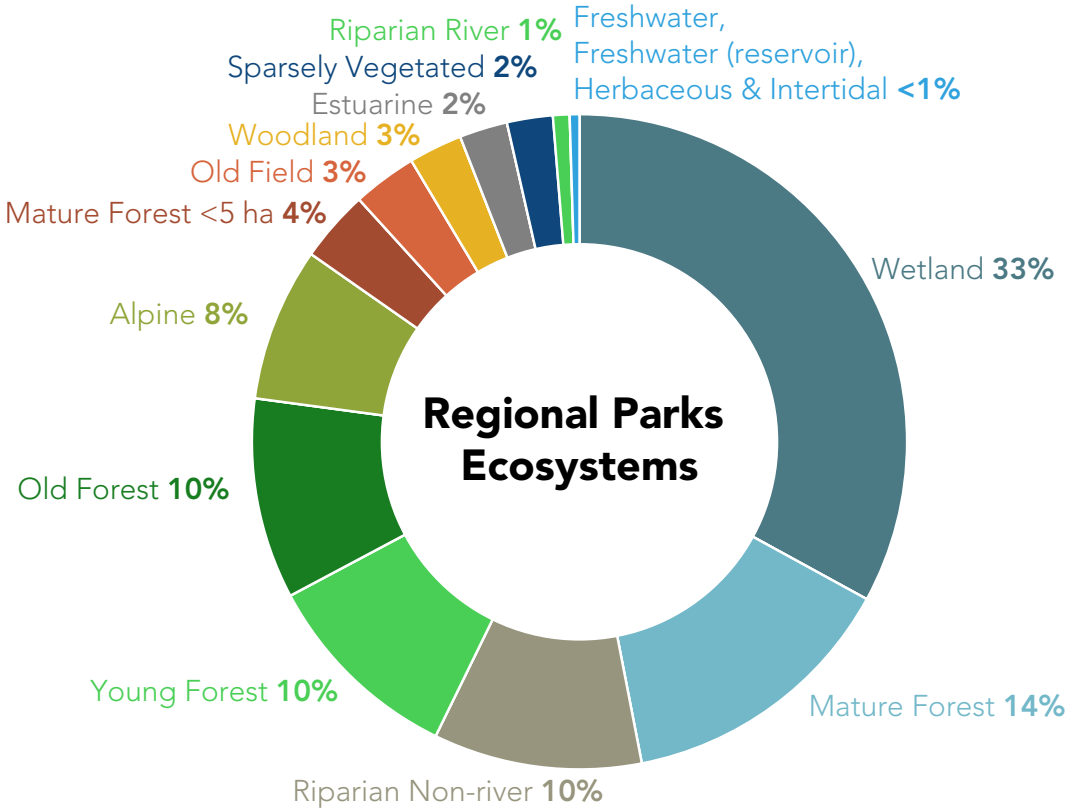
23 regional parks

2 regional park reserves

5 regional greenways

2 ecological conservancy areas

* Sensitive ecosystems are ecologically fragile, rare, or at-risk and include wetlands, older forests and woodlands. Important modified ecosystems are younger and more human modified but still have ecological value and importance to biodiversity, such as young forests (under 80 years old).



Natural Resource Management

We work throughout the year to protect and conserve ecosystem health.

Goals of the Natural Resource Management Framework:

1. Ensure ecosystem health and long-term resiliency to conserve diverse biological communities and their associated habitats

2. Provide opportunities for public to connect with natural areas while conserving the integrity and resilience of ecosystems

3. Provide opportunities for public involvement in natural resource management through partnerships and stewardship activities

2023 Accomplishments

- Created or maintained 37.8 hectares of ecological restoration areas
- Updated the Regional Parks *Integrated Pest Management Plan* and conducted invasive plant treatments in most regional parks
- Completed 32 restoration projects in 17 regional parks including:
  - Planting 3,500 trees at Pacific Spirit and Lynn Headwaters regional parks
  - Restoration of areas impacted by the 2022 wildfire at Minnekhada Regional Park
  - 18 hectares of seedling removal from wildfire site at Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area
  - Enhanced the riparian area at Derby Reach Regional Park
  - 10 projects supported by the Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation



Tree planting at Lynn Headwaters Regional Park

Watch these videos showing natural resource managment in action.

Minnekhada Regional Park Fire Restoration
(vimeo.com/835991893)

Following a wildfire that broke out at Minnekhada Regional Park in October 2022, nature is starting to regenerate the affected area and staff are assisting through restorative efforts.

Lynn Headwaters Regional Park Forest Health
(vimeo.com/819679427)

Human stewardship plays an important part of forest health, that's why we are restoring an area of trees that were damaged by Western hemlock looper moth near the Lynn Headwaters Regional Park entrance.

Salmon Tracking in ƛéxətəm Regional Park
(vimeo.com/797846071)

Innovative new technology is behind a ƛéxətəm (tla-hut-um) Regional Park research project that could improve salmon populations in the Coquitlam River, and possibly other areas in the region.



Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area

spotlight

Promoting Bog Recovery in Areas Affected by Wildfire

Following a wildfire that swept through part of Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area in 2016, a dense stand of lodgepole pine seedling has developed in the area. The development of tree cover can result in increased wildfire risk and other potential impacts such as the decline of open bog plant species.

In 2021, we initiated a project to promote recovery of bog plant communities and maintain bog function. Over the last three years, Regional Parks staff, consultants and volunteers removed as many as 250,000 seedlings/saplings from 18 hectares in the burn zone. Seedling removal, monitoring, and research projects will continue to track the progress of bog recovery.

Parks Operations and Maintenance

Keeping regional parks and park assets at the standard of care expected by visitors each year takes an incredible amount of effort. Even in the most challenging environmental conditions, we ensure regional parks are maintained for safe public enjoyment 365 days of the year.

2023 Accomplishments

- Continued preparation for wildfire response: provided higher-level training for staff and outfitted them with new flame- and high-temperature resistant uniforms
- Conducted numerous park patrols during fire season to ensure the public were following provincial fire ban and restrictions imposed by Regional Parks and local authorities
- Aligned rules and regulations from the *Regional Parks Regulation Bylaw* with permit conditions to better support Regional Parks regulations and compliance staff
- Facilitated training for 31 park patrollers on fair and consistent application of the Regional Parks Regulation Bylaw
- Hosted Go Electric Parks, a showcase event that brought together over 225 staff from across the region, highlighting innovation in alternative-powered operations and maintenance equipment

Watch this video about **Go Electric Parks!** (vimeo.com/834885261)



Regional Parks patrollers in training



Campbell Valley Regional Park

Photography Permit

spotlight

Campbell Valley Regional Park is a popular spot for photographers. In recent years, we have noticed an increasing number of concerns including photographers going off trail, blocking trails, and disturbing wildlife. Some photographers brought large groups in buses, causing parking and alcohol-related problems.

To address these issues, we implemented a pilot project in 2023. Commercial photographers now require a commercial use permit when conducting business at Campbell Valley Regional Park. This pilot program ensures bylaw compliance as commercial activity in a regional park requires a commercial use permit.

Since the start of the pilot, staff have noted a reduction in the number of related issues and increased bylaw compliance.

Safe Regional Parks and Park Visitors

We work to fairly and consistently educate members of the public on park rules and behaviour expectations as Metro Vancouver protects natural assets and provides safe and enjoyable visitor experiences.

Using good park design, education, and as a last resort, enforcement, we keep visitors safe by:

- Providing a uniformed presence in regional parks
- Educating park visitors on safe use of regional parks
- Investigating and responding to public safety concerns
- Coordinating patrols and response from emergency teams





Connecting People with Nature

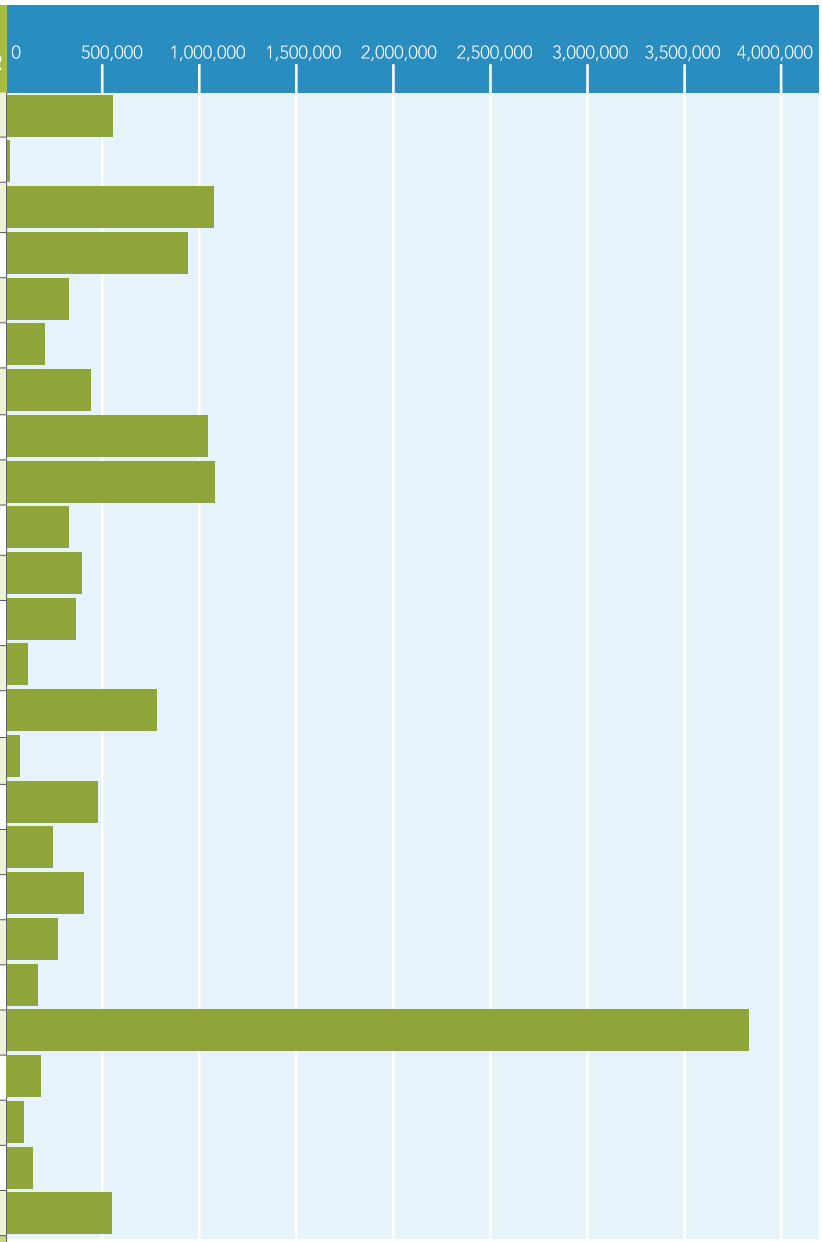
Capilano River Regional Park

Visits

14.5 million estimated park visits in 2023
(3.4% average annual increase from 2003 to 2023)

2 regional parks & 2 regional greenways received record number of visits

LOCATION	2023 VISITS	CHANGE FROM 2022
Aldergrove Regional Park	540,400	3%
Barnston Island Regional Park	11,100	0%
təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park	1,028,000	0%
Boundary Bay Regional Park	966,200	-9%
Brae Island Regional Park	272,400	-41%
Brunette-Fraser Regional Greenway	209,300	-22%
Burnaby Lake Regional Park	401,200	-6%
Campbell Valley Regional Park	1,026,700	12%
Capilano River Regional Park	1,124,900	13%
ƛ̓éxətəm (tla-hut-um) Regional Park*	440,600	13%
Crippen Regional Park	379,600	7% ★
Deas Island Regional Park	363,200	-4%
Delta South-Surrey Regional Greenway	103,000	7% ★
Derby Reach Regional Park	774,400	-15%
Glen Valley Regional Park	62,600	19%
Grouse Mountain Regional Park	493,600	12% ★
Iona Beach Regional Park	245,300	-15%
Kanaka Creek Regional Park	650,800	7%
Lynn Headwaters Regional Park	307,400	-15%
Minnekhada Regional Park	169,900	11%
Pacific Spirit Regional Park	3,960,800	9%
Pitt River Regional Greenway	195,700	-21%
Seymour River Regional Greenway	51,300	18% ★
Surrey Bend Regional Park	151,400	2%
Tynehead Regional Park	537,400	1%
TOTAL USE	**14,467,000**	**1%**

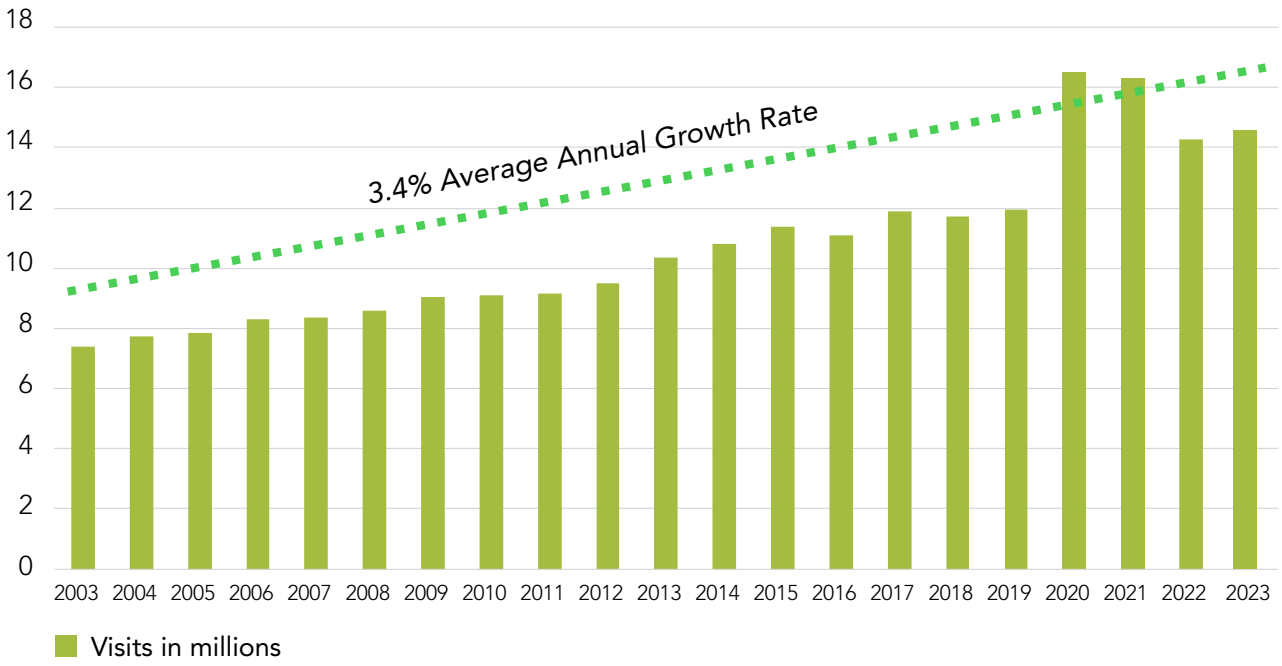


★ Record annual visitation

* Formerly known as Colony Farm Regional Park

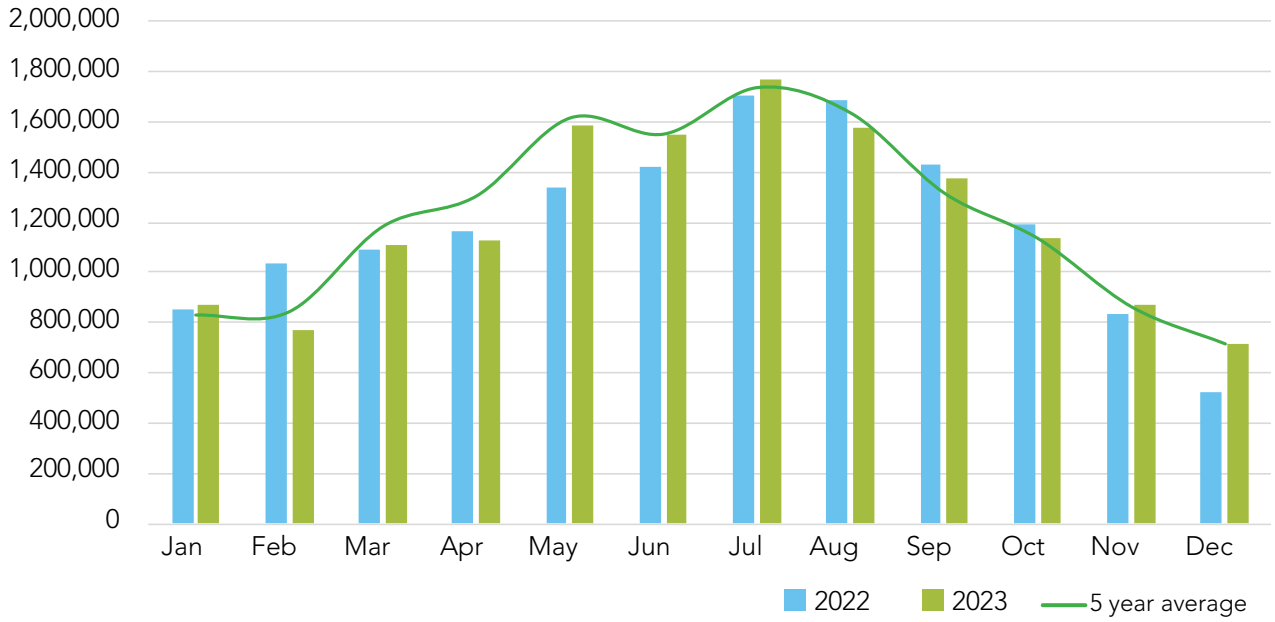
Note: Visitation estimates are rounded to the nearest hundred in this figure.
Data counters installed at park entrances (roads and trails) are used to produce annual and monthly visitation estimates for each park.

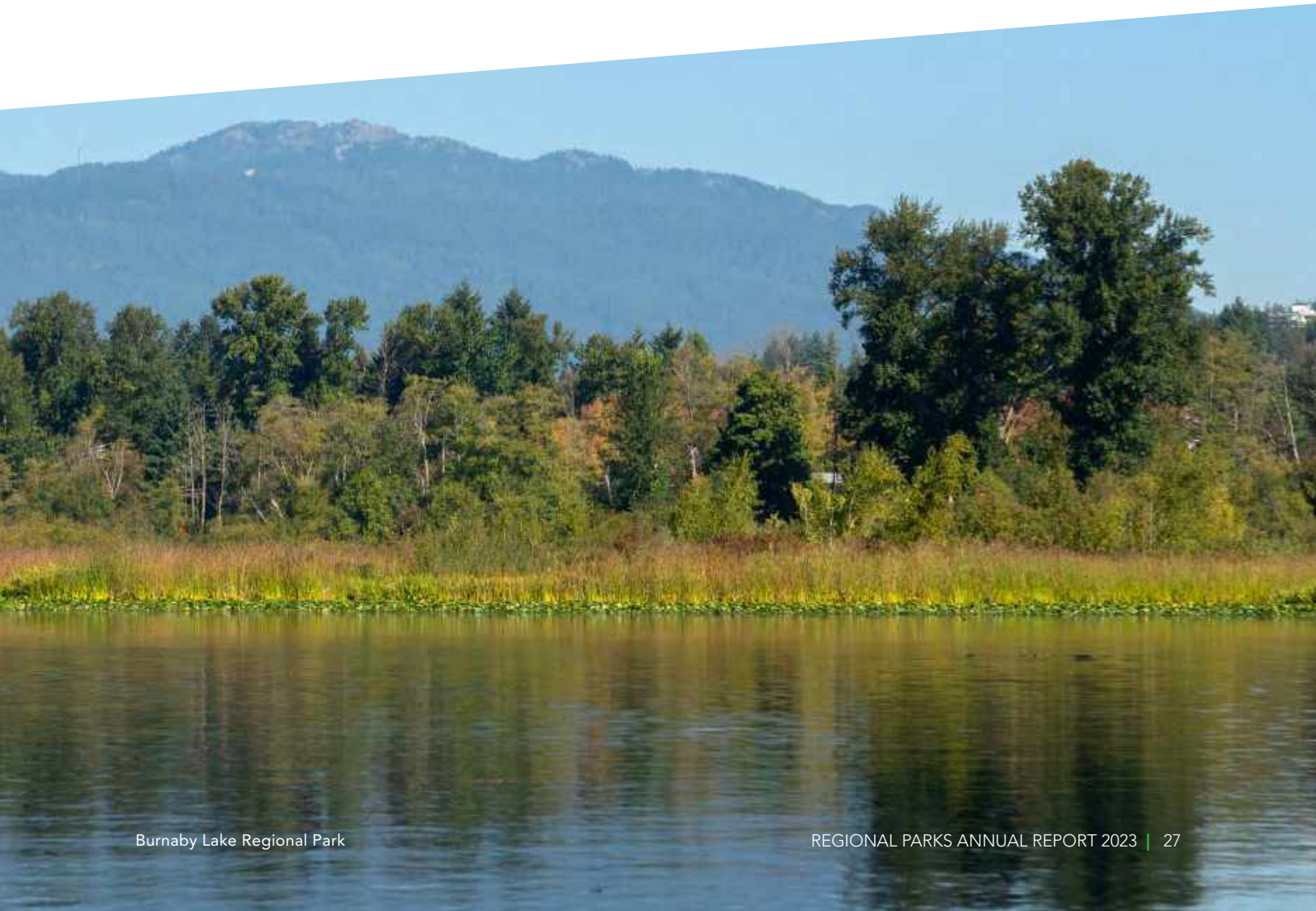
Annual Visits





Visits by Month





Burnaby Lake Regional Park

Public Programs and Events

49,828 total participants

11,066 group program participants
33,649 public program participants

578 total programs, events, and outreach activities

455 field trips & workshops
123 programs

Most Metro Vancouver residents live in an urban environment with less access to natural areas than previous generations. This growing urban population has increased visitation in existing parks and is placing greater pressure on local greenspaces.

Public programming in regional parks responds to these challenges by deepening audience understanding, appreciation, and protection of the natural environment. Experienced-based programs and events are designed to inspire appreciation and understanding of the environment.

2023 Accomplishments

- Developed and delivered new programs to English language learners, including outreach presentations, in-park guided walks, and how-to-lead-hikes workshops
- Collaborated with q̓ʷɑ:n̓ƛ̓ən̓ (Kwantlen First Nation) elder who delivered seven programs at various regional parks
- Grade-school students from səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) siʔáḿθɘt School participated in an interpretive program in təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park, their ancestral winter village site
- Youth from the Fraser Health Adolescent Day Treatment program participated in the highly successful Youth Wellness Walks
- Record numbers of visitors attended Meteor Shower Watch in Aldergrove Regional Park to learn about the beauty and connection to the night sky, and Flashlight Mysteries in Deas Island Regional Park, an escape room-inspired event
- Collaborated with libraries across the region to increase programming and outreach to new audiences
- Celebrated a new interpretive art mural located in Kanaka Creek Regional Park at the fish fence site, where broodstock is collected for the nearby Bell-Irving Hatchery

Watch this video about **Kanaka Creek Interpretive Mural Celebration** (vimeo.com/838412155)

What Regional Parks Participants Say

This event blew me out of the water. I had a fantastically magical time. It was well organized, fun-filled, and very thoughtful. The trail was beautifully set up with lights and educational entertainment. It was awesome and we will definitely join again!

Night Quest participant (Pacific Spirit Regional Park)

All our volunteers are very engaged with ecology and conservation and love conserving their local natural spaces. I believe this workshop has helped to give them the tools and inspiration to use their passion and knowledge as a way to teach and inspire others to learn more about and care for their local natural areas.

Melanie Apps, Invasive Species Council of BC - Youth Volunteer Coordinator, Interpretation Skills Workshop participant

The kids were buzzing with all they learned about today and were sharing it with everyone they saw when we returned. Trips to the beach will not be the same from here on out for my crew!

Teacher from Smiling Creek Elementary, Seashore Sleuths field trip participant (Boundary Bay Regional Park)



Flashlight Mysteries, Deas Island Regional Park

Facility Reservations

Regional parks have rentable facilities suitable to group picnicking and camping, weddings, special events, meetings, filming, and workshops. In 2023, more people than ever took advantage of our reserveable day-use facilities.



137,608 visits* at camping facilities in six regional parks

123,432 visits at individual camping facilities in Derby Reach and Brae Island regional parks

194 unique groups had 14,176 visits at outdoor and indoor camping facilities in four regional parks



827 groups had 127,885 visits at reservable day-use buildings and facilities

545 unique groups with 28,488 guests visited picnic shelters in eight regional parks

282 unique groups had 99,397 visits at buildings and other day-use booking opportunities in regional parks

* "Visits" are counted as "person days" (so one person staying for two days counts as two "visits")

We spend as much time as possible camping. We're going to be here camping here until April. We moved here in the middle of October. This is probably our seventh time here. It's lovely in the winter. I like the rather large camp spaces. Being very close to Fort Langley is excellent because it's just a 10 minute walk. I enjoy hearing the trains at night. There's a little owl that hoots and there's a lot of other nature here, which is great. There's birds and there's even deer.

Mary Roy



Brae Island Regional Park

I'm an independent contractor working as the caretaker of Minnekhada Lodge. My main job is to oversee events. Mostly weddings, parties, and other corporate events, plus security and day-to-day upkeep. There's no such thing as a typical day at the lodge. We used to visit here from England because we had family who lived about 15 minutes away. Then we moved here back in 2006. Being from Europe, we miss seeing old buildings! One of our daughters got married here a couple of years ago, and then our son's getting married here next year. I feel incredibly lucky to be up here. It just keeps me on my toes.

Simon Murtagh, Caretaker for Minnekhada Lodge



Minnekhada Regional Park

2023 Accomplishments

- Replaced furniture at Camp Capilano, Cammidge House, Minnekhada Lodge, and Inverholme Schoolhouse
- Streamlined information sharing and collection of indoor facility rental agreements and registration forms to enhance customer experience and ease of booking
- Refreshed reservable facility web pages with new photographs, updated information, and current fees to enhance customers' experiences
- 213 groups submitted group visit notification forms, allowing staff to understand group needs and provide groups with key information and educational points to help address management issues

New Booking System for Designated Nature Spaces in Pacific Spirit Regional Park

spotlight

Pacific Spirit Regional Park has three designated nature spaces — Salish, Lily, and Heron. These sites are one of the few places in regional parks where groups can gather off trail. Metro Vancouver's park interpreters, elementary schools, wilderness first aid companies, outdoor nature schools, and the general public use these designated nature spaces. The original first-come, first-served model for these popular spaces became a challenge for the multiple user groups.

Starting January 1, 2023, staff implemented a booking system for the designated nature spaces. The system allows commercial use and school groups to book these sites exclusively at a low cost. If not booked, they remain available at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis. In 2023, 350 groups booked these sites with 9,073 users.



Designated nature space, Pacific Spirit Regional Park

Volunteering

18,022 total volunteer hours

4,747 total volunteer instances

A volunteer instance is when one person volunteers once at an event or program.

Regional parks protect critical wildlife habitat and provide ecosystem services such as cleaning the air and helping to control temperatures. Each year, staff, partners, and volunteers invest time and effort to restore the health and beauty of these special places. Volunteers contribute to the delivery of a range of programs and activities in regional parks including community science, educational activities, and other events in regional parks. In 2023, individuals and groups volunteered over 18,000 hours, surpassing participation levels from the last three years.

spotlight

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event Returns

In May 2023, in recognition of the valuable contributions made by our partners and volunteers, we hosted an inspirational evening of learning and networking. Approximately 150 volunteers and partners attended the Regional Parks Volunteer Appreciation evening — the first such event that we hosted in over three years.





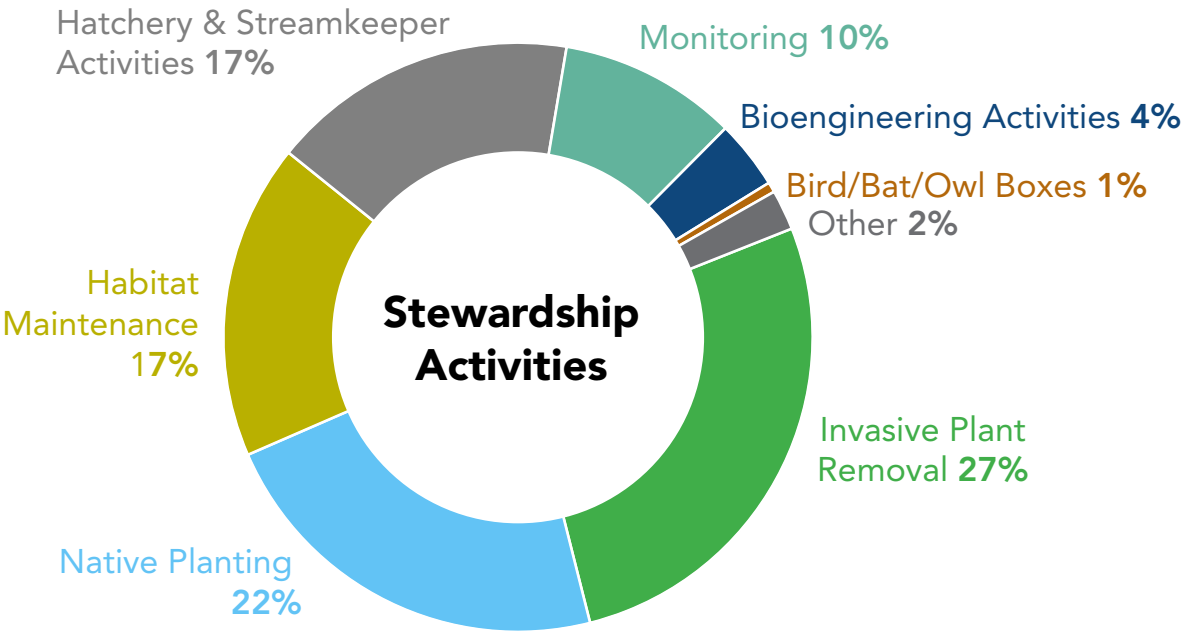
2023 Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

5,586 kg of invasive species removed

10,734 native plants added to regional parks

Environmental Stewardship

In 2023, 3,924 volunteer instances supported 370 environmental stewardship work parties in regional parks, which resulted in the contribution of 10,681 volunteer hours.



Park Partners and Public Programs

Volunteers support the delivery of community science, educational activities, and other events in regional parks. In addition, volunteers contribute hours to strategic and program planning, coordination, display development, fundraising, and board governance. In 2023, 823 volunteer instances resulted in the contribution of over 7,341 volunteer hours.

Watch this video about **Langley Bog Clean Up in Derby Reach Regional Park** (vimeo.com/864204519)

In September 2023, volunteers from Derby Reach/Brae Island Parks Association removed abandoned plastic, tires, and other debris from Langley Bog — a restricted area of Derby Reach Regional Park.

Their efforts are helping prevent greenhouse gases from being emitted into the atmosphere.

The project was funded in part by Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation.

I had experienced Minnekhada as a child from 1960 to 1970 when my grandmother worked here. There was a working farm here and my grandmother was the domestic manager of the farm house. Now I chair the Minnekhada Park Association. I really wanted to come back (to Minnekhada) and also help other people connect with it because I know how powerful nature is. We do a lot of stewardship, everything from bat monitoring to western toad monitoring. We do nature tents and we just launched an art program. And also the wildfire recovery project with two monitoring stations up near the High Knoll. People can participate by taking photos of the wildfire area. And what we want to do with that is create a time lapse that will show the forest recovery. We'll also be replanting in the wildfire area starting in the fall. We're volunteer based, so if you want to join, contact us at **coordinator@minnekhada.ca**.

Celia DeLuca, Chair, Minnekhada Park Association





Aldergrove Regional Park

What Our Volunteers Say

We are now in our 10th year of collaborative partnerships between ENVR 400 students at UBC and Metro Vancouver Regional Parks. This partnership provides a tremendous benefit to our students, who get to contribute to authentic park management projects while learning to collaboratively design and implement meaningful research from start to finish. They gain valuable field experience and grapple with real-world problems. One additional aspect I appreciate as an instructor is when new teams can build on previous research from past ENVR 400 students, now that this partnership has been running for a decade.

Sara Harris, Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences, University of British Columbia

Getting the Word Out

Regional Parks Newsletter

This monthly e-newsletter highlights behind-the-scenes stories as well as the latest Regional Parks news and events.

6,093 subscribers

(up 6% from 2022)

Check out archived issues online **metrovancouver.org** (search "Regional Parks newsletter")

Nature Program Guide

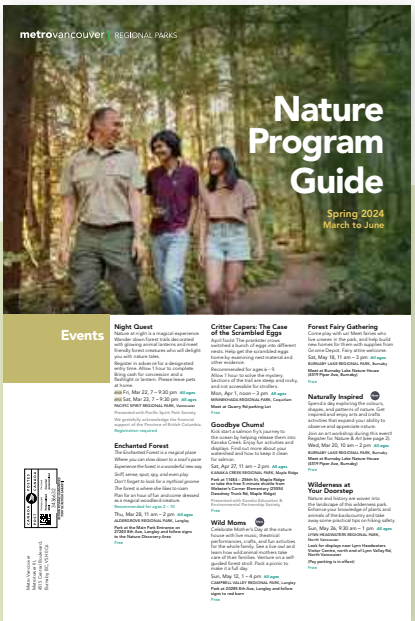
Published in the spring, summer, and fall/winter.

Promotes events and activities for all ages to learn about, connect with, and enjoy nature in regional parks.

Distribution includes household mailouts, park kiosks, community centres, libraries, and city halls.

Over 6,000 people received each seasonal nature program guide by email.

20,500 hard copies of the nature program guide were distributed per edition, on average.



Social Media and Video

Regional Parks connects with people through social media, sharing information ranging from nature activities and volunteer opportunities to safety and land acquisition announcements. Social media is also a way for people to reach out to and engage with Regional Parks.







9 Regional Parks videos produced in 2023

- Eight videos shared on social media/websites, one internal/presentation video
- 156,733 people reached through videos on Facebook (Metro Vancouver and Regional Parks)
- 27,783 Facebook engagements (includes reactions, comments, shares, and clicks)
- 35,299 video views (Metro Vancouver and Regional Parks Facebook, YouTube, and Vimeo)

3 Humans of Regional Parks productions

- Deas Island Regional Park
- Minnekhada Regional Park
- Brae Island Regional Park

A series to give a glimpse of Metro Vancouver's regional parks through the eyes of visitors. Sharing stories as diverse as our park users as they answer the question, "what makes regional parks special to you?"

metrovancouver.org (search "humans regional parks")

MetroVancouverRegionalParks

44,634 Facebook engagements (includes reactions, comments, shares)

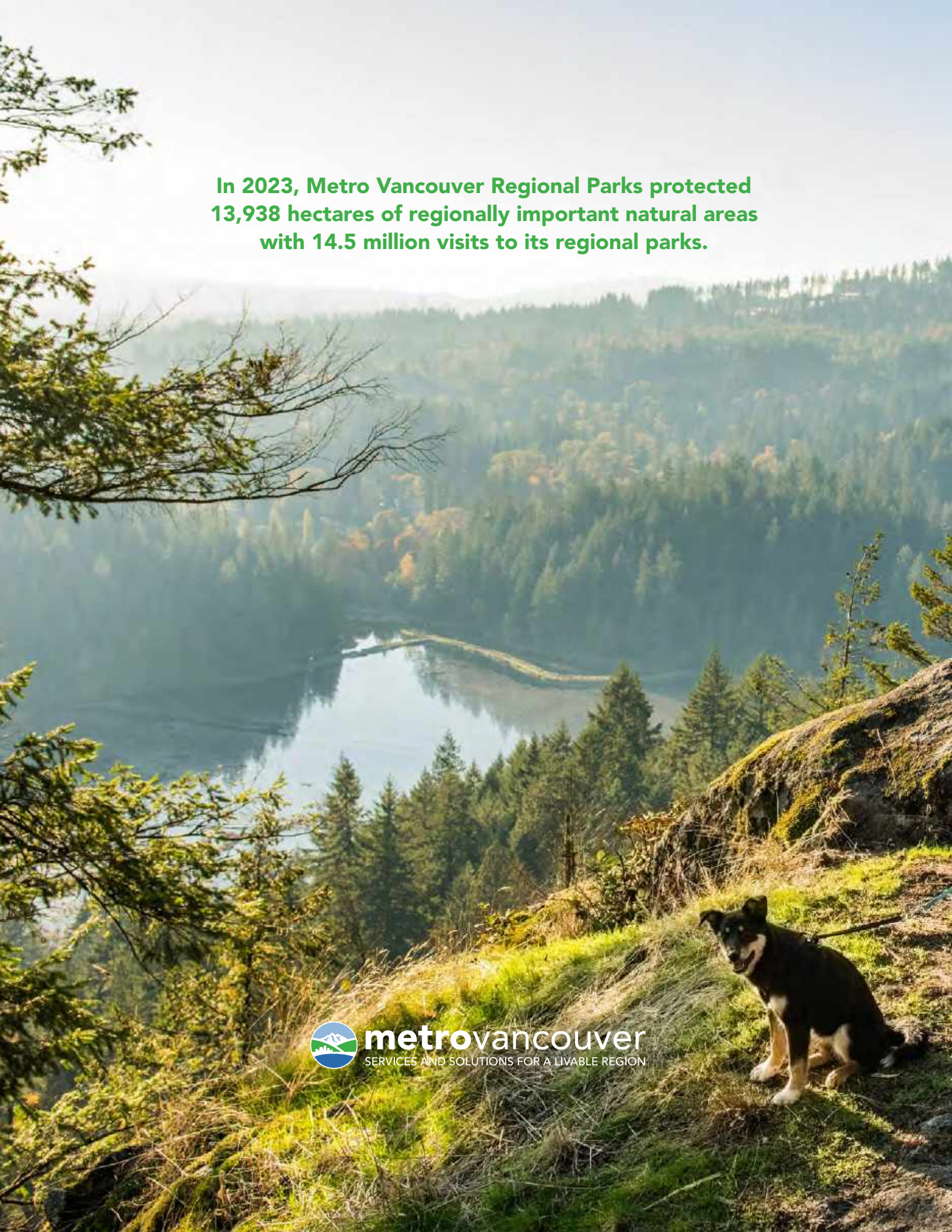
@MetroVancouver

57,058 X (formerly Twitter) impressions

@metrovancouverbc

Total reach of **43,770** viewers*

* Regional Parks content



In 2023, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks protected 13,938 hectares of regionally important natural areas with 14.5 million visits to its regional parks.

metrovancouver
SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION