

***Cherry Creek Regional Park
Management Plan***

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Cherry Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan is to establish objectives and strategies for the long-term management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years. It is intended to provide strategic direction and guidance for the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK), community associations and stewards of the park.

The primary function of the park is to ensure continued public access to Cherry Creek falls. Limited day use facilities are provided at the park.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Park Overview

Cherry Creek Falls Regional Park was created in response to the Meadowbrook community's desire to preserve the falls and associated recreational values. The RDEK worked closely with the Meadowbrook Community Association to secure the land and establish the park.

The park is located approximately 9 kilometers east of the City of Kimberley. The park is accessed via Clarricoates Road and is located on the Ta Ta Creek Lost Dog Forest Service Road. The park is approximately 14 hectares (35 acres) in size. The park is divided by a 75 m wide strip of Crown land that follows Ta Ta Creek Lost Dog Forest Service Road. A parking area and amenities are located to the east of the road. Cherry Creek, also known as Mather Creek, runs through the park from west to east.



FIGURE 1: LOCATION PLAN

1.2 Establishment of Regional Parks

1.2.1 Background

The provincial government granted the RDEK authority to establish a regional park function by Supplementary Letters Patent in 1966. The RDEK now operates regional parks and trails under the authority of the *Local Government Act*.

In the 1970's, the RDEK began development of its regional parks system after having acquired crown lands at Wycliffe and Tie Lake for park facilities. In 1975, a major study of potential regional park sites was undertaken by the RDEK but no formal park plan was adopted. In 1980, the Elk Valley Regional Park was included in the regional parks system.

In 1990, Extended Service (Regional Parks) Area Establishment Bylaw No. 933 was adopted. This bylaw converted the regional parks function to an extended service to enable the RDEK to recover annual operating and servicing costs of parks from taxes levied on properties within the Regional District.

In 2002, the RDEK added the Old Coach Greenway (Columbia Valley Regional Trail) to its services in order to address the absence of a regional park in the Columbia Valley subregion. In 2004, the RDEK adopted Electoral Area Regional Parks and Trails Service Area Establishment Bylaws and the Regional Park Plan to simplify the financing of parks and trails and to administer the expanding parks system.

Electoral Area E Regional Parks and Trails Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1751, 2004 established a service to provide regional parks and trails within Electoral Area E. The capital and operating costs of parks and trails are recovered by monies collected by property tax levied on property within the Electoral Area.

With the regulatory tools in place to administer an expanding park system, a Regional Parks Plan followed. The focus of the Regional Parks Plan is to provide policies to guide the expansion, administration and financing of the regional parks system.

In 2019, the Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw No. 2833 was adopted and outlines regulations and fees related to the use and management of all parks within the RDEK.

1.2.2 Cherry Creek Falls Regional Park Planning Process

The RDEK operates regional parks and trails under the authority of the *Local Government Act*.

As per the RDEK Regional Parks Plan, separate management plans may be prepared for regional parks on an as required basis. Management plans should address topics such as land acquisition, site planning, facility development, recreation, user groups, access management, public safety, maintenance, control of invasive plants, threat from wildfire and funding and partnership agreements.

Each management plan will be approved by the Environmental Services Manager and adopted by Board resolution.

The Park Management Plan was developed in consideration of the current improvements, usage and management of the park.

1.3 Existing Infrastructure & Current Uses

1.3.1 Existing Infrastructure

Existing infrastructure and amenities at the park include:

- Gravel parking area
- Information kiosk
- Concrete picnic tables
- Benches
- Waterfall safety fencing
- Staircase to access the falls
- Fire ring

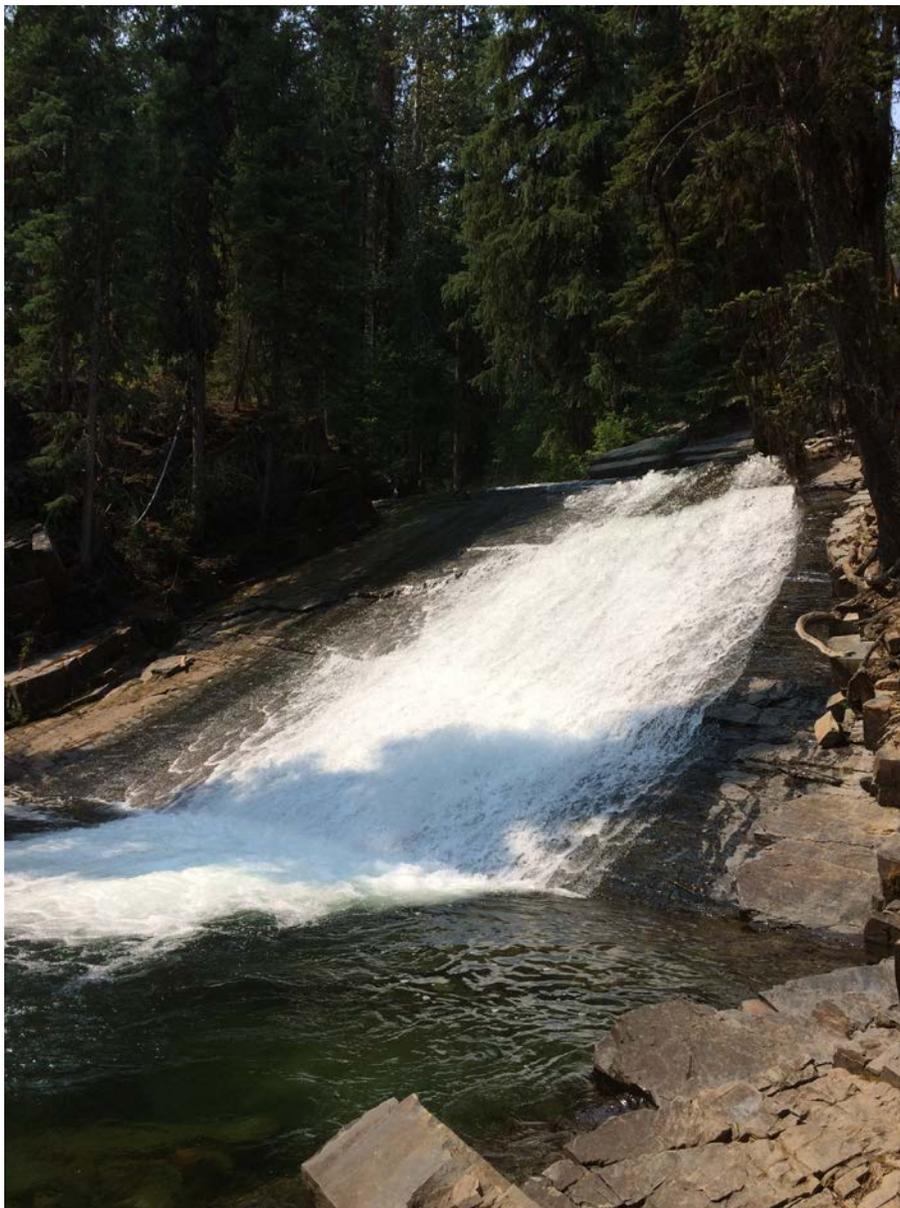
1.3.2 Current Uses

The park is a day use area meant to provide public access to the falls. The park also includes a short walking trail to the falls and trails that extend beyond the boundary of the park. The park is utilized for a range of recreational uses that includes hiking, cross-country skiing and picnicking.

2 CULTURAL HERITAGE OVERVIEW

The Ktunaxa have inhabited the general area for over 10,000 years. The natural landscape provided food, medicine, shelter and clothing for the first inhabitants as they followed seasonal vegetation and animal cycles throughout their territories.

The Park is located to the north of the rural community of Meadowbrook. The establishment of the North Star and Sullivan mines brought many settlers to the area. The name Meadowbrook came from a Mrs. Clarence Conover, one of the first settlers to the area who named the Conover homestead "Meadowbrook Ranch" in 1914. Meadowbrook became and continues to be a favourable place to live those who wish to live a rural lifestyle.



3 RELATIONSHIP TO RDEK GUIDING DOCUMENTS

3.1 Regional Sustainability Strategy

The Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) provides the RDEK with a wide ranging, long term planning tool. It equips the region with a sustainability lens to guide and evaluate operations and decision-making. The RSS was adopted by the Board on October 3, 2014.

During the RSS public consultation process, it was evident that the environment is a primary concern for the region’s residents. The protection of the natural environment is consistently ranked as one of the most important considerations when decisions are made about development and economic activities. The natural environment is also integral to both the quality of life of individuals for recreational purposes and the provision of economic opportunities for many businesses.

3.2 Regional Parks Plan

The purpose of the Regional Parks Plan is to determine the goals and objectives of the RDEK’s regional park and trails system, to set criteria for additions to the regional parks and trail system, to establish policy for the RDEK’s administration of park land or cash-in-lieu from a developer at time of subdivision, to initiate standards for the regulation, administration and operation of park and trail facilities and to identify existing park and trail services and their funding mechanism.

3.3 Kimberley Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw

The Kimberley Rural OCP was adopted in June 2017.

The park is located in the Meadowbrook subarea of the plan and is designated Open Space, Recreation and Trails (OSRT), which supports the use of this land as a park. Continued operation of the park for recreational purposes and the implementation of this plan are supported by policies in the Kimberley Rural OCP.

3.4 Electoral Area E Zoning & Floodplain Management Bylaw

The Electoral Area E Zoning and Floodplain Management Bylaw is the regulatory tool used by the RDEK to establish development provisions for individual parcels of land. The zoning bylaw establishes permitted uses, development density and parcel size, and other development controls such as building setbacks, building height and parking.

The park is zoned Parks and Open Space, P-2 zone, which supports the land being used as a park.

3.5 Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw

Adopted in 2019, the Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw outlines regulations and fees related to the use and management of all parks within the RDEK and acts as an enforcement tool if required.



4 ECOSYSTEM & HABITAT

4.1 Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are typically non-native plants that have been introduced to British Columbia without the insect predators and plant pathogens that help keep them in check in their native habitats. For this reason and because of their aggressive growth, these alien plants can be highly destructive, competitive and difficult to control.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development administers the *BC Weed Control Act*. As stated in the *Weed Control Act*, all land owners and occupiers in the Province of BC have a legal responsibility to control provincially and regionally listed invasive plants. The *Weed Control Act* is enforced within the East Kootenay through RDEK Bylaw No. 2711.

The RDEK will coordinate the management of invasive plants within the park.

4.2 Wildlife

The Park contains limited infrastructure and alteration of the natural environment. The retention of natural values means that the park has high potential for wildlife habitat. Portions of the park are designated as Class 2 winter ungulate range. The park is also known grizzly and black bear habitat. Cherry Creek is a fish bearing stream that provides fish habitat for a range of species.

4.3 Natural Hazards

4.3.1 Steep Slopes

The park includes varied topography and portions of the park have been identified as containing steep slopes in the 15 to 30% range. Two smaller areas have also been identified as having slopes in excess of 30%. The stairway constructed on the north side of the falls to provide access to the base of the falls is in a steep slope area. Current infrastructure also includes fencing above the falls to delineate a viewpoint area for the falls above the steep bank on the north side of Cherry Creek.

4.3.2 Wildfire

The majority of the park is identified as a high wildfire hazard area. Aligning vegetation maintenance procedures at the park with FireSmart principles is encouraged. Rural residential properties are located within a half kilometer of the boundary of the park. The high wildfire hazard within and adjacent to the park boundary means that the area is at high risk of an interface fire. The installation of additional fire or cooking facilities are not supported.

5 PARK VISION

5.1 Goal

To provide a day use recreational opportunity for the community to access Cherry Creek Falls and engage in recreational pursuits such as walking, picnicking and cross-country skiing.

5.2 Key Management Issues

The park is located in an isolated location that requires vehicle access for the majority of park users. The desire for additional infrastructure and facilities shall need to be balanced against anticipated usage and required maintenance and infrastructure costs. The on-going maintenance of the safety fencing, hazard signage and staircase at the falls will be a priority for management at the park. In addition, the need for ongoing clearing of deadfall and removal of fire hazards is important in order to minimize the risk of interface fire hazard. Additional infrastructure, such as an outhouse, would require increased tax levied funding to provide contract servicing.

Noxious invasive weed management is an ongoing priority for all RDEK public facilities.

5.3 Public Safety

The RDEK prides itself on the quality of services provided to the public including the condition of RDEK parks in relation to public safety. To reduce the risk of liability associated with park use by the public, the RDEK has developed a detailed park inspection policy which includes frequency and content of inspections and encompasses all aspects of park use in relation to public safety.

6 PRIORITY ACTIONS & COST ESTIMATE

The following is a list of potential improvements to the park. It is a guideline and does not commit the RDEK to any particular course of action or investment in park infrastructure. The proposed timeframe for the improvements may change depending on future funding, human resource capacity and community involvement. The improvements could be funded through allocating funds through the annual budgeting process. Should a community or stewardship group be interested in performing maintenance or enhancement activities at the park, alternative funding mechanisms could include community fundraising efforts or working with the Electoral Area Director to secure discretionary grant-in-aid funding. The plan will be periodically reviewed by the RDEK. The plan will also be considered during the preparation of five-year financial plans.

Basic operational and maintenance items such as removing danger trees and invasive plant control are not included in the following list as they are considered to be regular maintenance items included in the annual operating budget.

<u>2019-2029</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Regulatory signage as required	\$ 300
Portable toilet annual servicing	\$ 1,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,300
<u>Possible Future Improvements</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Outhouse facility	\$8,500 - \$17,500
Kiosk and replacement signage	\$ 4,000
TOTAL	\$12,500 - \$21,500