

Denman Island Parks & Greenways Master Plan

Summary of Community Survey Responses

A four-page community survey was inserted in the 13 May 2010 issue of the *Island Grapvine*, and 640 copies distributed to households on Denman Island. A total of 39 completed forms were returned to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), representing a 6% return rate – considered a good response. An average return for a universally-distributed survey (as opposed to a sample survey), with no incentive offered for completing and returning the survey, is generally assumed to be 3 to 4%.

In terms of the percentages of responses regarding activities, preferences, places frequented, etc., respondents were given the opportunity to select or name more than one activity or location in many of the questions. This results in tallies of more than 100% on some questions. On the other hand, some respondents chose not to answer some of the questions, which is also reflected in the tallies for some questions.

The **parks most frequently used** are, in order of preference, Boyle Point, Fillongley, Central and Sandy Island Marine parks. Bill Mee Park, Winter Wren Wood/Chickadee Lake and Graham Lake are also popular destinations. As could be expected, the **trails** in Central, Boyle Point and Fillongley parks are the most frequently used, followed by trails on Crown lands, North Denman Lands (NDL) lands, Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) lands including access to Chickadee Lake, trails leading to Graham Lake, and the nature reserves.

The **outdoor recreational opportunity** that respondents would most like to see more of is walking and hiking (64%), followed by nature/bird-watching (41%) and cycling (38%). Comments included multiple requests for cycling paths, horseback-riding trails, multi-use trails and additional accesses to the shoreline.

In terms of their level of satisfaction with **the number of parks** on the island, 31% of respondents say they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, followed by 28% who are very satisfied. Twenty-three percent (23%) are somewhat dissatisfied, 15% are not satisfied and the remaining 13% are somewhat satisfied. From the comments offered, it appears that more people will be satisfied if the proposed parkland in the NDL lands becomes a reality. Some respondents feel that on-going conservation efforts should be supported, but not necessarily to be undertaken by the CVRD.

With regards to the **number of trails**, the situation is different, with 36% of respondents not satisfied, 28% somewhat dissatisfied, and 26% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only 8% (3 people) were either somewhat or very satisfied. The reasons for the significantly high level of dissatisfaction are the lack of connectivity, absence of signage and trails maps, concerns for safety on road rights-of-way and restrictions on trail use. There are very few trails that may be used by equestrians.

For possible **additions to the park system**, the greatest percentage of respondents (49%) requested nature parks with public access. Another 44% of respondents asked for more oceanfront beach parks and the same percentage for beach access trails. Lakefront beach parks were sought by 28%, and nature preserves (limited public access) by 23%. Viewpoints/lookouts parks were felt by 15% to be good candidates for addition to the parks system, streamside parks by 13%, and historical sites by 10%. Comments included several requests for a linked system of multi-use trails (excluding motorized vehicles) running west-east and north-south. Other suggestions were a mini-park at Graham Lake and parks with areas for community events and ball courts.

By far the most important **type of greenway** was considered to be connecting trails, garnering 77% of preferences. This was followed by 51% in favour of hiking trails, 46% for wildlife/biodiversity corridors, 33% for beach access trails, 15% for streamside riparian corridors and 13% for waterfront trails. Other requests included a cross-island ferry-to-ferry trail, roadside paths on major roads, non-motorized multi-use trails, trails connecting trails and looping trails.

Additional **amenities** were thought desirable by 53% of respondents, while 42% thought none were needed. Outhouses or washrooms – particularly in the Village area, at picnic areas and at Graham Lake swim dock – were requested most frequently, followed by trail maps and clearly-marked trailheads, picnic areas and interpretive information. Other suggestions included parking, a snack-bar at Gravelly Bay in the summer months, benches, an amphitheatre, recycle bins, and boardwalk access to Chickadee Lake. Some respondents expressed concern that amenities might add to maintenance costs and might attract more visitors to the island.

Asked if there were potential **sites that should be acquired or protected**, 77% of respondents said “yes” and offered suggestions, while 10% saw no need for addition acquisition or protection. Sites listed included Chickadee Lake and surrounding area, Rope Trail Park (Morning Beach Park), a ferry-to-ferry greenway, a north-south greenway, Graham Lake and swim dock area, Komas Bluffs, a path to Tree Island, Morrison Marsh, ocean and lake frontage, and riparian areas such as Beadnell Creek with a creekside trail.

With regards to the **mechanism to be used to acquire parks and greenways**, 49% of respondents would like to see a combination of an increase in property taxes and funds collected from developers. A third (33%) would like to see developers foot the bill, while 26% are willing to pay an increase in property taxes, and the same percentage suggested other mechanisms.

Those willing to pay **addition property taxes** varied as to the amount, 28% opting for \$30 per year for the average household, 15% for \$20 per year, 8% for \$10 per year, and another 8% for more – up to \$100 per year being suggested by two respondents.

Other mechanisms suggested were donations or bequests, user fees, grants from government or other organizations, density offsets, Islands Trust Fund, covenants and fund-raising.

In terms of **priorities** for the CVRD in the planning of parks and greenways, these ranked as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Acquisition of land to develop new trail systems and improve linkages | 74% |
| 2. Acquisition of land to formalize and improve existing trail systems | 56% |
| 3. Acquisition of land for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas | 31% |
| 4. Acquisition of land for new parks | 28% |

“None of the above” was stated by 8% of respondents. Others suggested an emphasis be put on lands for multiple users, roadside paths – particularly a cross-island ferry-to-ferry trail, equine trails, clearing and developing beach accesses, trail maintenance, the swim dock at Graham Lake and one at Chickadee Lake.

Additional comments stressed again the desire for a network of public multi-use trails so that residents could walk, cycle and ride safely to all parts of the island. The need for trail signage and information, for linking habitat corridors, and for retaining the island’s rural character and ambiance were also mentioned. A couple of respondents noted that implementation of the parks and greenways plan will require collaborative efforts by several parties, including the CVRD, BC Parks, Islands Trust (and Fund), Denman Island Residents Association, DCA, the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, and – with respect to marine parks and protected areas – Fisheries & Oceans Canada.