

Denman Island

Parks and Greenways Master Plan



August 2011

Prepared for the Comox Valley Regional District
by



Acknowledgements

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DENMAN ISLAND PARKS AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Denman Island parks and greenways plan was initiated by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) several years ago and the planning and consultation process was launched in early 2010. The plan was developed with the assistance and input of local residents through a community survey, a questionnaire, two open houses and meetings with various committees and individuals.

Based on comments received from residents, the following vision for the Denman Island parks and greenways system was crafted:

Denman Parks and Greenways System Vision

Over the longer term, the Denman Island parks and greenways network provides opportunities for Denman residents to engage in a variety of non-motorized recreational activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, bird watching, picnicking, beachcombing, kayaking and diving. Greenways connect parks, community hubs and the two ferry terminals. Recreational activities respect and are in balance with the protection of ecosystems and wildlife.

Based on input received from residents, the goals of this parks and greenways plan are:

- A. To represent the long-term vision of Denman Island residents with regards to parks and greenways on the island;
- B. To provide short-, medium- and longer-term priorities and initiatives to develop a comprehensive parks and greenways network with a focus on filling in gaps in the current system;
- C. To suggest a wide range of tools that may be used, as appropriate, to implement the plan; and
- D. To recommend a forum through which implementation can be undertaken.

In order to identify gaps in the existing parks and trails network, a thorough examination of all parks, Crown lands, Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) lands, Denman Island Recreation Commission Society (DIRCS) lands, Island Trust Fund (ITF) lands and the Island Trust's old school property was undertaken. While there are currently no formal community pathways within dedicated rights-of-way or greenways on the island, there is a community-built path from the Arts Centre in the village along Denman Road for approximately 500 metres. It is exactly this type of function that has been noted by many residents as being highly desirable. Greenways with hard-packed (but not paved) paths would meet the needs of the active walking, cycling and horse-riding public, particularly if the greenways connected existing trails and community features.

Greenways may also serve as wildlife and biodiversity corridors¹. Denman Island residents appreciate and support efforts to protect sensitive ecosystems and the natural environment.

¹ Biodiversity corridors are corridors with natural vegetation that provide a connection between larger natural ecosystems enabling plants and wildlife to spread across a wider territory. This allows plants and wildlife to:

- respond to environmental variability including climate change, e.g. move from food/water scarce areas to food/water plentiful areas.
- respond to population pressure - move from over-populated to under-populated areas.

However, as a number of survey and questionnaire respondents pointed out, nature reserves or conservation areas need not necessarily be acquired or held by the CVRD, as there are other agencies that fulfill this role. The biggest contribution to the Denman Island parks and greenways system that the CVRD could make is in the areas of public accessibility (e.g. to the beach, to existing protected areas) and trail connectivity between protected areas.

It was noted by many residents that of the 48 road ends that provide at least theoretical access to the waterfront, only a few have been developed to permit access. It was felt that a number of additional road ends could be opened and signed and improved for safe public access to the foreshore.

The following priorities emerged from the survey responses and statements made by Denman Island residents:

1. A cross-island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail or recreational greenway.
2. A north-south multi-use trail/recreational greenway.
3. Connections between existing public trails/recreational greenways.
4. Proposed trails to the waterfront or viewpoints off high bank waterfront road ends within undeveloped road rights-of-way.
5. Public washroom at Graham Lake
6. Improved public access to nature parks and reserves.
7. Wildlife and biodiversity corridors or ecological greenways.
8. A parks and trails map.
9. Appropriate signage.

The cross-island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail or recreational greenway was clearly the highest priority with a north-south multi-use trail/recreational greenway and connections between existing trails and recreational greenways being priorities two and three.

To aid in implementation of the priorities identified in the plan, a number of potential tools were identified. These include the following:

- ◆ Partnering
- ◆ Park dedication upon subdivision
- ◆ Land purchase
- ◆ Crown land grants or transfers
- ◆ Grants and funding
- ◆ Land donations and conservation covenants
- ◆ Bequests
- ◆ Natural Areas Tax Exemption Program
- ◆ Licences or permits over road rights-of-way with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- ◆ Easements and statutory rights-of-way granted by private landowners
- ◆ Land leases
- ◆ Two-party access agreements

-
- access a wider range of breeding partners, thus preventing inbreeding and loss of genetic diversity in a local population.

One critical component of successful implementation is integration of the Denman Island Official Community Plan and the parks and greenways plan. Another essential element is collaboration between the various government jurisdictions and land owners.

The following strategies for implementation are based on the research and consultation completed. These strategies lay the basis for the on-the-ground implementation of the strategy to establish a comprehensive community parks and greenways system on Denman Island over time.

1. As a courtesy and preliminary step, it may be useful to have an informal initiation meeting between elected officials (the regional director for CVRD Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A') and the Denman Island Local Trust Committee), representatives from land management agencies (CVRD, BC Parks, federal coast guard, the Islands Trust Fund, Denman Conservancy Association, Denman Island Recreation Commission Society, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure) and voluntary organizations with an interest in parks and trails (Denman Island Residents Association parks committee, trails committee). This meeting could be in the form of a Denman Island protected area tour (real or virtual) with each land management agency showcasing their key initiatives. This would identify areas for cooperation and encourage synergies between land management agencies and voluntary organizations.
2. Building on the initiation meeting, hold an annual meeting in the fall of each year with representatives from all Denman Island land management agencies and organizations and voluntary groups working on parks, trails, greenways and conservation initiatives to update each other on current and future planned initiatives and identify areas for collaboration. These annual meetings will be helpful for coordinating planning initiatives and ensuring that trails and wildlife corridors between protected areas managed by different agencies connect up. The meetings may also result in some joint projects.
3. Work with the parks and trails committees of the Denman Island Residents Association on park and trail planning and implementation of priorities in this plan. Depending on the specific project, invite other interested parties and affected agencies to join planning meetings.
4. Consult with the Agricultural Land Commission, farmers and owners of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve early on in the process to review proposed greenways that go through the Agricultural Land Reserve and to discuss alignment and measures to minimize the effect on current and possible future agricultural operations.
5. Work together to implement the multi-use ferry to ferry trail, the top-priority project.
6. Develop an educational/awareness strategy and campaign that would include the following elements:
 - Make residents aware of the long-term goals and strategies to achieve the goals and current implementation projects.
 - Interest local land owners in providing access through their property in appropriate locations or in donating linear strips of land – for example, along lot lines – to a public agency.
 - Encourage the use of easements and rights-of-way to provide greenways.
 - Create an 'Adopt-a-Trail' program, similar to the 'Adopt-a-Park' program.

- Support development of a Denman Island parks and trails map for educational and recreational purposes, to be distributed as determined by the local community.
 - Add parks and trails signage at appropriate locations.
7. Obtain licences or permits from MOTI for appropriate road ends and greenways within road rights-of-way for the development of trails and beach accesses.
 8. Encourage the use of ‘zone’ designations within larger parks and nature reserves to establish conservation-focussed areas and areas that should be accessible for non-motorized recreation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan is to consolidate information on existing parks, trails and greenways for the island and to provide direction, policies and priorities for the foreseeable future. Specifically,

1. to identify gaps in the existing parks system; and
2. to propose ways to fill those gaps.
3. to ensure that, as much as possible, the community's recreation needs are met;
4. to support conservation efforts for sensitive ecosystem preservation, habitat, riparian areas and wildlife corridors;
5. to facilitate collaboration between provincial agencies, the Islands Trust and Island Trust Fund, the CVRD, and local community groups with regards to implementation of the plan.

This master plan is developed to support the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) in its responsibility for parkland acquisition, planning and management on Denman Island, which is located within the larger electoral area of Baynes Sound – Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A'). The plan will facilitate meeting the community's long-term needs and wishes for parks and greenways.

The plan also takes direction from the Denman Island Official Community Plan (OCP) with regards to parks, trails, conservation and recreation issues.

It is the intent of this plan to support Denman Island residents in their efforts to develop a comprehensive and integrated parks, trails and greenway system. This system will fulfill a number of functions, including the following:

- ◆ establish a long-term vision and principles for parks and greenways on the Island;
- ◆ provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities for residents and visitors, taking into consideration age-specific and barrier-free needs;
- ◆ identify and protect significant natural aquatic and upland landscapes, wildlife corridors, migration routes, and historical and cultural features;
- ◆ facilitate and promote sustainability and sustainable practices in the community;
- ◆ establish a legacy for future generations that will fulfill their long-term needs for parkland, connectivity, recreation and nature protection; and
- ◆ identify, assess and provide acquisition and/or protection strategies for priority areas.

The purpose of this plan is to fill gaps in the existing parks and greenways system, facilitate collaboration and ensure Denman Islands' recreation needs are met.

1.2 Approach

The completion of this plan was undertaken in five phases:

- ◆ analysis of existing plans, maps and information,
- ◆ consultation and collaboration,
- ◆ plan development and review,
- ◆ refinement of strategy and priorities, and
- ◆ plan finalization.

1.3 Acronyms

Throughout this plan, a number of acronyms are used in the interest of brevity and to avoid lengthy repetitions. These are consolidated here for ease of reference.

ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
BCTFA	B.C. Transportation Financing Authority
CVRD	Comox Valley Regional District
DCA	Denman Conservancy Association
DIRA	Denman Island Residents' Association
DIRCS	Denman Island Recreation Commission Society
DPA	Development Permit Area
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
ITEM	Islands Trust Ecosystem Mapping
ITF	Islands Trust Fund
LGA	<i>Local Government Act</i>
LTC	Local Trust Committee
MA	Ministry of Agriculture
MFLNRO	Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
NAPTEP	Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCP	Official Community Plan
PAN	Protected Areas Network
RAR	Riparian Areas Regulation
RCP	Regional Conservation Plan
ROW	Right-of-way
SEI	Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory
SEM	Sensitive Ecosystem Mapping
SPEA	Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area
TEM	Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping

1.4 Consultation

A number of components were critical to the development of this plan. These included a community survey, consultation with local committees and stakeholders, public meetings and presentations and collaboration with the Islands Trust, Islands Trust Fund, the Local Trust Committee, the Denman Conservancy Association (DCA), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU) and B.C. Parks.

The K'ómoks First Nation was notified of the project and a letter was sent to them in January 2010 requesting a meeting to brief them early on in the process. However, no response was received. The final draft plan was referred to the band for comments in May 2011. At the same time, the draft was also referred to senior government agencies, local governments, CVRD departments and several Denman Island organizations for comment. A compilation of responses to the community survey and public open house questionnaire, written submissions and agency and organization comments is available on the CVRD website at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman.

1.4.1 Community Survey

To initiate the consultation process, a four-page community survey was distributed to all owners and residents of Denman Island in May 2010. The survey was inserted into the *Island Grapevine* and was available on both the CVRD's and Denman Island Residents' Association (DIRA)'s websites. The survey asked about current park and trail use and sought opinions about the current state and future priorities for the system.

In total, 39 responses were received. Based on the number of homes occupied at the time of the last Census (527), this represents a return rate of 7.4%.² Based on all households (703)³, the return rate is 5.6%. The rate could have been improved if the survey had been sent to a sample population only or if incentives for completing and returning the form had been offered. However, it was felt that all residents should be given the opportunity to complete the survey.

A brief summary of the results of the survey is contained in section 5.0. A full compilation of all the responses and comments received is available at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman.

1.4.2 Local Organizations and Committees

Three Denman Island organizations/committees were particularly helpful in compiling information. The Denman Conservancy Association and the parks and trails committees of the Denman Island Residents Association are well-established groups that have a great deal of hands-on familiarity with existing parks and trails, and were able to provide the consulting team with invaluable knowledge and guidance.

Other local residents put a great deal of effort into mapping former logging roads and dedicated but undeveloped road rights-of-way that might be suitable for multi-use trails.

² According to CVRD Public Affairs and Information Systems Branch, direct marketing companies consider a 10% return on a response to a contest, for example, or a product purchase with coupon, an excellent response. NCS Pearson, an educational assessment and research firm, states that the majority of mail surveys distributed by that firm achieve a response rate between 15% and 25%. This rate would be considered hugely successful by local governments surveying constituents.

³ Denman Island has a relatively significant number of vacation homes that are occupied for only part of the year.

1.4.3 Public Open Houses

An open house meeting held on 23 June 2010 was attended by 28 Denman Island residents. In addition to maps and summaries of all parks and Crown and agency lands, information was also available on a number of community and Islands Trust initiatives. These included projects of the Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) and three DIRA committees: the Parks Committee, the Trails Committee and the Graham Lake Swim Dock Committee. Representatives of these community groups hosted their displays and discussed the projects with attendees.

This format worked very well and offered attendees a number of perspectives on both the current situation and possibilities for the future.

A second open house was held on 24 November 2010. A questionnaire was available at this open house and on the CVRD's website for those wishing to respond. Although BC Parks staff were not able to attend, they provided several questions which were included in the questionnaire. A total of 44 people attended the meeting in addition to the consulting team.



Figure 1: Community open house, 24 November 2010

Both Island Equines and the DIRA Parks Committee hosted information tables to share current information with attendees.

Eighteen questionnaires were completed during the open house and left with the consulting team. A drop-off box was accommodated by Abraxas Books to allow additional opportunity for residents to complete the questionnaire and deposit it in the Village. A total of 54 completed questionnaires were received by the CVRD.

A couple of attendees expressed the preference for a townhall-style meeting, so that they could learn of the concerns and comments of their neighbours. To ensure that all expressed concerns, comments, questions and suggestions are made available to everyone, the CVRD posted the compiled responses on its website at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman. In addition, a public consultation binder containing all written submissions, including e-mails and letters, is available for review at the CVRD's office.

The general response to the draft plan received at the open house was supportive and encouraging.

The draft plan's vision statement sounded reasonable to most (42 of the 54 respondents), although some suggested variations such as adding hunting, either deleting the word "passive" or changing it to "pedestrian" or perhaps to "non-motorized" recreation.

The draft goals were supported by the majority of respondents (46), at the same time, emphasizing the need for consultation and community involvement in setting priorities.

Based on background research and discussion with local groups and committees, the following priorities for the plan were suggested in the questionnaire:

1. A cross-island, ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail or recreational greenway.
2. A north-south multi-use trail or recreational greenway.
3. Connections between existing public trails or contiguous greenways.
4. Beach access parks with cleared public access and signage.
5. Public access to nature parks.
6. Wildlife and biodiversity corridors or ecological greenways.
7. Public washrooms in the Village, camp and picnic sites and Graham Lake swim dock.
8. A parks and trails map.
9. Appropriate signage.

Forty-one respondents agreed with these priorities, three did not agree and seven offered some modifications. Respondents also provided thoughtful comments related to the priorities. It was pointed out, for example, that while biodiversity and wildlife corridors and conservation are very important, these areas fall under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust and other organizations. The number one priority for some (7) respondents would be a north-south multi-use trail rather than a cross-island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail. For others (4 each), it would be connections between existing trails or public washrooms. If some of the provincial lands are designated as nature parks, a couple of respondents would make public access to these their first priority; another couple would move beach access from priority number 4 to number 1.

Other suggested changes in the priority list included the following candidates for priority number 2: connections between existing trails (10); public washrooms (4); public access to reserves and nature parks (4); access to waterfront (3); and signage (2).

Third priority was given by others to a parks and trails map (9) and to beach accesses (9); public washrooms (5); public access to nature parks and reserves (4) and signage (3).

The suggested implementation strategies were generally seen as practical (40) – with the exception of working with the Islands Trust Fund and using the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program. These were viewed as separate and different from a parks and greenways plan. The suggestion was made that the local resource group would need to be very inclusive – not just DIRA members – in order to garner the support of the entire community. It was also pointed out that a great deal of local knowledge and expertise exists within the community that could be utilized to implement projects.

The question of a possible increase in property tax is a somewhat sensitive one, with twice as many respondents in favour (34) as not (17). Of those in favour, an acceptable amount of increase varied widely: \$10 (6), \$20 (10), \$25 (1), \$30 (8), \$30 or more (1), \$30 - \$50 (1), \$50 (1), up to \$100 (1) and "as needed" (1).

Additional suggestions included parking at park access points; designated trails for specific uses – i.e., mountain-biking, horseback riding; considering using volunteers and donations to help with costs; the desire to hunt on public lands; and the value of ongoing communication with the community. A number of open house attendees and respondents suggested that if the CVRD were to focus its time, energy and some funds on improving the trails network, this would meet with the approval of a significant portion of Denman Island residents. As reiterated through this process, attention should be focused on existing trails and on providing connectivity for non-motorized uses.

The essence of the message to BC Parks regarding the provincial lands is that each area is unique and needs to be examined for its values and features. Respondents clearly understand that there will undoubtedly be areas that need protection (especially wetlands, marshes and riparian areas), but that this should not preclude public access. Most Denman Islanders seem to believe that protection and recreation can co-exist – and should be encouraged to do so. Awareness and education were seen as tools that could be used to enhance this co-existence.

1.4.4 Written Submissions

The CVRD also received five written submissions from local residents. In their submissions, residents raised concerns about an increase in trail use and resulting impact on trails if they are mapped and become more broadly known; questioned whether there is a need for more parks on Denman Island; requested specifying the difference in definition between nature parks and nature reserves; cautioned that the open house questionnaire results are not a good indication of Denman islanders' level of support for a tax increase to fund parkland acquisition; and requested that public meetings be used rather than open houses as part of the consultation process. Residents also provided specific edits to sections of the draft plan which were considered in finalizing the draft. Written submissions are included in the compilation of public, agency and organization input available on the CVRD website at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman.

1.4.5 CVRD Electoral Areas Services Committee and Regional Board Review

The CVRD electoral areas services committee reviewed the final draft plan at their May 16, 2011 meeting. The committee supported the plan and approved it for referral to First Nations, agencies and organizations for comment. The final plan was presented to the committee on August 15, 2011 and adopted by the regional district board at their August 30, 2011 meeting.

1.4.6 Agency and Organization Review of the Final Draft Plan

The final draft plan was referred out for comment to First Nations, senior government agencies, local governments including the Islands Trust, CVRD departments and organizations such as the Islands Trust Fund (ITF), Denman Conservancy Association (DCA), the Denman Island Residents Association, Denman Works and others. For a complete list and comments received, see the compilation of public, agency and organization comments at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman.

The Islands Trust planning department was consulted with respect to the relationship between this plan and the Denman Island Official Community Plan (OCP), ensuring that the two documents are compatible and support each other's goals and objectives.

CVRD parks staff attended several meetings of the Denman Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) to receive comments on the draft plan and the conceptual parks plan map (appendix 1) and work

toward inclusion of the map as a schedule in the Denman Island OCP. Local Trust Committee comments greatly aided in finalizing both the plan and map. The Denman Island OCP amendment bylaw 199 that included the conceptual parks plan map as schedule G, was adopted by the Local Trust Committee on August 16, 2011.

1.4.7 Plan Finalization

The plan was finalized based on all the valuable input received. The final plan reflects the many varied comments received, aims to address the concerns and integrate the many well thought-out suggestions received during the public open houses and the agency and organization review process.

2.0 CONTEXT FOR THE PARKS AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

2.1 Jurisdictional Authorities

Denman Island – like all the Gulf Islands – lies within a number of political jurisdictions. As can be seen in the diagram below, governance lies predominantly with three governing bodies: local, regional and provincial.

Denman is part of the Trust Area that is overseen by the Islands Trust. The Islands Trust has jurisdiction over land use within the trust area, overseen by an elected Local Trust Committee for each island. The Islands Trust develops and administers the Denman Island Official Community Plan and the Denman Island Land-Use Bylaw No. 186.

The island falls within Electoral Area ‘A’ of the Comox Valley Regional District, where the regional government has authority for park acquisition, planning and management.

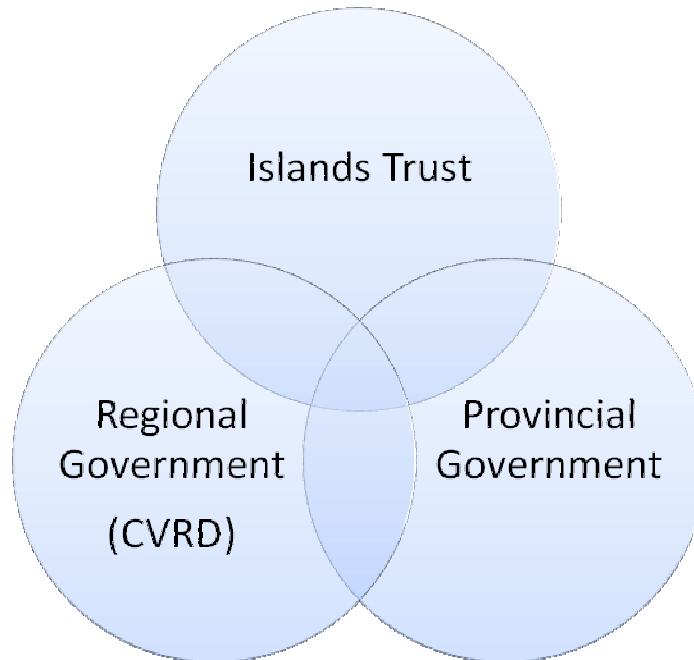


Figure 2: Jurisdictional authorities on Denman Island

The absence of a parks plan for Denman Island was identified as a potential gap in region-wide parks planning and impacted the CVRD’s ability to work towards implementing the islanders’ wishes and priorities for parks and greenways. Over the years, however, residents have identified a number of issues that require attention, such as beach accesses, a cross-island trail, emergency access at waterlot 257 adjacent to the ferry terminal and partnering or collaborating with BC Parks.

The provincial government also has a number of areas of jurisdiction on the island. Since Denman Island is an unincorporated area within the CVRD, a Provincial Approving Officer is the subdivision approval authority. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) has responsibility for roads in unincorporated areas. In addition, the Province of British Columbia, through various ministries, owns parks and other properties on the island.

The parks and greenways system identified through the planning process will ultimately serve to:

- ◆ provide active living opportunities for all ages,
- ◆ protect significant natural, historical and cultural landscapes,
- ◆ promote sustainability in the community, and
- ◆ establish a legacy for future generations.

Guidance for the preparation of this plan is found in a wide variety of sources. The following documents and regulations have an impact on decisions with regards to planning and development on Denman Island.

2.2 Islands Trust

The Islands Trust is a federation of local island governments with a provincial mandate to “preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally.” (Islands Trust Act). Trust Council is composed of local trustees and municipal trustees in the trust area and is the regulatory body for Denman Island.

2.2.1 Islands Trust Policy Statement

The following guiding principles of the Islands’ Trust policy statement specifically influence local land use planning policies: “The primary responsibility of the Island Trust Council is to provide leadership for the preservation, protection and stewardship of the amenities, environment and resources of the Trust Area. When making decisions and exercising judgment, Trust Council will place priority on preserving and protecting the integrity of the environment and amenities in the Trust Area.”

Under the section entitled ‘Ecosystem Preservation and Protection’, the policy statement explains: “Protective measures are varied and can include actions ranging from preservation of natural areas in the form of parks and ecological reserves, to increasing public awareness and understanding of the need for sustainable use and stewardship by all landowners.” Policies related to the provision of parkland or ecological reserves include the following:

- 3.1.2 It is Trust Council’s policy to work towards the establishment of a network of protected areas that preserves representative ecosystems in their natural state and in sufficient size and distribution to sustain their ecological integrity.
- 3.1.11 Trust Council encourages agents of the government of British Columbia or the government of Canada, Crown corporations, municipalities, regional districts, non-government organizations, property owners and occupiers to protect environmentally sensitive areas and significant natural sites, features and landforms through voluntary stewardship, acquisitions, conservation covenants and careful management.

Among the issues that local trust committees and island municipalities are directed to address in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws are:

- ◆ protection of unfragmented forest ecosystems,

- ◆ prevention of further loss or degradation of freshwater bodies or watercourses, wetlands and riparian zones,
- ◆ protection of views, scenic areas and distinctive features contributing to the overall visual quality and scenic value of the Trust Area,
- ◆ planning for bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian trail systems,
- ◆ location and type of recreational facilities so as not to degrade environmentally sensitive areas,
- ◆ identification of sites providing safe public access to beaches,
- ◆ identification and designation of areas for low-impact recreational activities,
- ◆ identification and designation of areas of recreational significance

2.2.2 Denman Island Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 185

Both the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the zoning or land use bylaw are the responsibility of the Islands Trust and the local trust committee. One of the guiding principles in the Denman Island OCP is “to recognize that the foreshores, parks and other Crown lands of the Island are part of a common wealth, and to strive to retain public ownership of these areas and to preserve and protect their natural environment.”

The OCP contains a number of objectives and policies that offered guidance in the development of the Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan. The Denman Island OCP objectives and policies can be viewed at the Islands Trust website at www.islandstrust.bc.ca.

2.2.3 Denman Island Land-Use Bylaw No. 186

The Land-Use Bylaw contains zones for conservation (CN) and park (PK). There are also water zones for marine conservation (W1), marine protection (W4) and lakes (W5). However, the bylaw notes as follows: “Boyle Point Park, Fillongley Park and the Sandy Islets are provincial parks and are zoned Park (PK). Section 14 of the *Interpretation Act* exempts the Province from being constrained by the regulations of local bylaws; therefore, the zoning regulations in this Bylaw have no effect on provincial parks. The zoning would come into effect, however, should the Province decide to lease or otherwise dispose of all or portions of the provincial parks.”

Permitted uses in the park zone (for parks other than provincial ones) are parks, passive recreation⁴ and utilities. Within the conservation zone, only passive recreation is permitted.

The Denman Island Official Community Plan defines passive recreation as: “non-motorized outdoor leisure activities which can be carried out with minimal impact to the natural environment including, but not limited to, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding and bicycling.”

⁴ Passive recreation has been defined (by US Legal Definitions) as a non-motorized activity that:

- Offers constructive, restorative, and pleasurable human benefits and fosters appreciation and understanding of open space and its purpose,
- Is compatible with other passive recreation uses,
- Does not significantly impact natural, cultural, scientific, or agricultural values,
- Requires only minimal visitor facilities and services directly related to safety and minimizes passive recreation impact.

2.2.4 Regional Conservation Plan

The Islands Trust Fund is the conservation land trust of the Islands Trust, established in 1990 to preserve and protect unique ecological or cultural properties in the Islands Trust Area through voluntary conservation initiatives. The Islands Trust Fund is governed by the Trust Fund Board and is the body designated by Trust Council to hold Natural Area Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) covenants and develop and implement a regional conservation plan.

The Islands Trust Fund's 2011-2015 Regional Conservation Plan (RCP) sets conservation targets for the islands trust area and an implementation plan. Through extensive ecosystem mapping, the plan identifies the areas with the highest biodiversity values and greatest need for conservation.

The plan also assists Islands Trust decision makers to support ecologically responsible land use planning and serves as a resource for citizens and organizations working towards conservation of biodiversity within the Islands Trust Area.

Strategies to protect sensitive ecosystems include land acquisition and conservation covenants with willing landowners, working with island residents and landowners who wish to become better stewards of their own lands, working with partner agencies and local trust committees to encourage a culture of conservation within the Islands Trust Area and managing existing conservation lands effectively.

Following are the 2011-2015 Regional Conservation Plans' long-term goals:

1. Secure *core conservation areas* that effectively conserve *biodiversity* priorities within the Islands Trust Area and within individual local trust areas or island municipalities
2. Investigate the protection of biodiversity priorities on lands outside of core conservation areas, including *working landscapes*
3. Work with partner organizations to conserve marine ecosystems and habitats
4. Work with the Islands Trust Council, local trust committees and island municipalities to implement and accentuate Regional Conservation Plan goals and objectives within official community plans and land use bylaws
5. Promote community participation in conservation within the Islands Trust Area through effective stewardship and management of private lands, information sharing and support of conservation education
6. Support and enhance the work of conservation partners working in the Islands Trust Area
7. Monitor and manage existing Islands Trust Fund conservation areas to maintain and enhance existing biodiversity and cultural features, with the understanding that ecosystems are continuously in a state of change.

The planning and development of envisioned greenways, waterfront access and amenities identified in the Denman Parks and Greenways Master Plan will need to take into consideration sensitive ecosystems and conservation priorities identified in the 2011-2015 Regional Conservation Plan.

2.3 Comox Valley Regional District

2.3.1 Regional and Community Park Authority

The authority to establish a regional park service was initially created under the *Park (Regional) Act*. This Act was repealed when the *Local Government Act* (LGA) allowed regional districts to convert its regional park service to one exercised under the authority of a bylaw (Section 774.2). The CVRD has established a community parks function for each of its electoral areas. The authority for this function is found in the Regional District's Letter Patent, under which the CVRD may acquire, develop, operate and maintain community parks. Adopted June 25, 2001 and to be amended in fall 2011 to expand the scope of the service to greenways, the "Denman and Hornby Islands Community Parks and Greenways Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2253, 2000," enables the regional district to plan for, acquire and develop parks and greenways on Denman Island.

2.3.2 Electoral Area 'A' Greenways Plan

Although the existing CVRD electoral area 'A' greenways plan does not encompass Denman and Hornby islands, some of the goals were worth considering in the preparation of this plan:

- ◆ Preserve creeks, streams, estuaries as a valued ecological resource for the future;
- ◆ Maintain non-motorized access to creeks, streams, estuaries and in highly sensitive areas minimize public access;
- ◆ Protect existing bird nesting sites;
- ◆ Protect outdoor heritage and aesthetic resources;
- ◆ Enhance waterfront access, for example, signage indicating beach access points;
- ◆ Improve ecological diversity through protecting ecological corridors;
- ◆ Create an ecological and recreational greenway system to link communities, public lands and parks;
- ◆ Add value to the community through the implementation of a greenway system;
- ◆ Provide educational opportunities to increase stewardship of the area's natural resources;
- ◆ Balance economic land use with conservation of environmentally sensitive areas and the provision for recreational amenities; and
- ◆ Seek partnerships in developing a greenway system.

2.3.3 Comox Valley Parks and Greenways Strategic Plan

The Comox Valley Regional District adopted a strategic parks and greenways plan for the Comox Valley portion of the regional district in March 2011. The park and greenway classifications in that plan are adopted here for consistency (see section 3.4).

The six goals identified through the planning process for the Comox Valley Parks and Greenways Strategic Plan resemble the goals and aspirations expressed by Denman Island residents during the planning process for the Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan. Those goals are:

- ◆ Protect and connect native ecosystems over time
- ◆ Connect people to nature
- ◆ Link Communities with greenways
- ◆ Plan and manage parks in a proactive and responsive manner
- ◆ Form partnerships to achieve common goals

- ◆ Obtain certainty of land tenure

2.3.4 Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy

The sustainability strategy was received in February 2010 by the CVRD board as guideline for actions and decisions that will assist collective efforts to ensure the well-being of the citizens of the region and the environment. Among the objectives of the sustainability strategy are the following:

- ◆ Ensure widespread access to a variety of recreational parks and greenways.
- ◆ Shift transportation choices toward alternative modes of transportation [including pedestrian and cycling].

Specific actions associated with these objectives are listed as:

- ◆ Harmonize parks and greenways planning, land acquisition and other issues.
- ◆ Building on Comox Valley parks and greenways strategic plan, create a region-wide parks and trails network, linked by inter-community greenways, that balances the needs of people with the needs of wildlife.
- ◆ Where applicable, require new developments to include greenways that connect to a regional greenways network.
- ◆ Develop an online recreational greenways map integrating recreational trail and park information from all jurisdictions.
- ◆ Prioritize new capital spending on alternative modes of transportation and related infrastructure, such as ... bike lanes ... and pedestrian walkways, over vehicle infrastructure.
- ◆ Make pedestrian and cycling access a priority in the design or retrofits of existing or future bridge and road infrastructure, ensuring that road surfaces are designed and maintained to support cycling and pedestrians. (MOTI responsibility)

The CVRD's sustainability strategy sets targets for ecosystems protection and park creation. Implementation of the Denman Island parks and greenways master plan will contribute to achieving goal 5.4. "All citizens have access to recreational opportunities, objective 5.4.1.: Ensure widespread access to a variety of recreational parks and greenways."

Integration of the parks and greenways master plan with the Denman Island OCP will support implementation of the following specific actions under goal 5.4.:

- b. Create a region-wide parks and trails network linked by inter-community greenways that addresses social and ecological needs.
- c. Where applicable, require new developments to include greenways that connect to a regional greenways network.
- e. Pursue opportunities to jointly acquire land to meet park needs in municipal and electoral areas.

Finally, the parks plan contributes to the achievement of the 2020 target of 60 percent of residents living within 400 metres (5 minute walk) of a greenway or walkway and a dedicated cycling route that connects them to town centres, jobs and community services.

2.4 Interagency Cooperation

2.4.1 Parkland Dedication

The CVRD is the local authority to accept parkland dedicated at the time of subdivision or money in lieu of land. Because the responsibility for planning rests with the Islands Trust and the responsibility for parks and greenways with the CVRD, close cooperation between the two authorities is essential when parks are created at the time of rezoning or subdivision.

2.4.2 Protocol Agreement between the CVRD and the Islands Trust

In 1997, the then Comox-Strathcona Regional District and the Denman Island Local Trust Committee signed a protocol agreement that specified the nature in which the two parties would communicate, share information and coordinate activities. The agreement was updated in early 2011 and was signed by both parties in June 2011. The updated agreement commits the two parties to meeting a minimum of once per year to discuss and coordinate activities in areas where responsibilities overlap and/or are closely intertwined. The protocol agreement states:

“The parties agree to coordinate activities within the local trust areas/electoral areas including but not limited to such matters as:

- (a) community planning
- (b) park planning and parkland acquisition
- (c) servicing arrangements; and
- (d) bylaw enforcement where both parties participate in joint enforcement processes to effectively control situations where one or both parties’ bylaws are being contravened, including consideration of cost sharing undertakings.”

2.5 General Parks and Recreation Overview

2.5.1 Current Trends in Parks and Recreation

A study entitled “Trends in Parks and Recreation” (2008), posted on the Lifestyle Information Network <http://lin.ca/resource-details/10346>, provides information and insight into national trends in recreation and leisure activities. Some of the findings are:

- ◆ The growing age group of 65+ has the most leisure time.
- ◆ An increase in the number of active older adults will entail a shift to more informal, casual and self-scheduled activities and a demand for more arts and cultural activities and life-long learning opportunities.
- ◆ The World Health Organization estimates that obesity rates worldwide will increase by 50% over the next 6-7 years.
- ◆ Women, low-income adults, and older adults are less likely to be physically active than other demographic groups.
- ◆ The higher the income level, the greater the participation in recreational activities.
- ◆ Participation in organized sports is declining.
- ◆ The importance of environmental protection is increasingly recognized by society.

*The most popular
activities for
adults are
walking and
gardening.*

- ◆ There is a greater emphasis on the “development” of passive park space, which can include woodlots, grasslands, flower gardens, civic gathering spaces, natural and constructed wetlands, bioswales, etc.
- ◆ Providing naturalized park spaces (maintaining a site in its natural state or returning a site to its natural state) is becoming more popular and is consistent with many of the principles of environmental stewardship.
- ◆ There is a trend to providing smaller park spaces or parkettes, mainly for neighbourhood use and enjoyment.
- ◆ Walking, soccer, bicycling, swimming, running/jogging, skateboarding and basketball are popular activities for children and youth.
- ◆ BMX/trick cycling has become a growth area in recent years.
- ◆ The most popular activities for adults are walking and gardening.
- ◆ Special events and festivals create a sense of local pride, encourage people to leave their homes, and offer a greater variety of leisure activities.
- ◆ Outdoor activity represents a growing market in the leisure sector, including nature study, hiking and walking, and eco-tourism.
- ◆ Trails and pathways are a cost-effective way to provide year-round use for all age groups and to promote physical activity.

The trends described in the above-noted study bear out findings contained in the earlier (2006) Strategic Plan for the Parks and Recreation Sector in B.C. located on the website http://bcrpa.bc.ca/about_bcrpa/documents/Trends.pdf.

2.5.2 General Recommendations

After looking at the trends in parks and recreation, the Trends in Parks and Recreation 2008 study offers a number of recommendations, suggestions and insights:

- ◆ Create more opportunities for active living and casual and unstructured activities.
- ◆ Consider adopting a multi-use approach to trails and sports fields.
- ◆ Active transportation systems⁵, particularly walking and cycling, are a major contributor to individual and community health and should be considered a priority.
- ◆ There will be continued demands for safe and inviting places for active transportation activities.
- ◆ There is a growing interest in learning about local and regional flora and fauna.
- ◆ With a heightened interest in nature and the environment, stewardship activities, interpretive programs, signage and environmental education are popular.

Adopt a multi-use approach to trails.

⁵ Active transportation is generally understood to mean non-motorized.

3.0 DENMAN ISLAND INVENTORY

3.1 Land Base

3.1.1 Denman Island Snapshot

Denman Island has an area of 51.03 km² (5,103 hectares). It is linked by ferry to Buckley Bay on Vancouver Island and to Hornby Island.

Almost half of the Island – 48% – falls with the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). While large portions of these have been cleared, only a relatively small portion is used for agricultural production.

Based on the Islands Trust's Sensitive Ecosystem Mapping (SEM), there appears to be very little old growth or woodland areas on Denman Island. There are, however, pockets of older forest and older second growth, as well as substantial areas with tree cover.

There are also significant streams and wetland areas scattered over the Island as well as two significant lakes, Chickadee Lake and Graham Lake.

3.1.2 Ecosystems Mapping

The joint federal/provincial Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) mapping identifies a wide range of ecosystems that need protection. The more-recently developed provincial Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) was used to create the SEM for Denman Island.

The SEM, while not as comprehensive as the SEI which covers all land areas, was created specifically for the islands within the Islands Trust's jurisdiction and was used in the creation of the ITF's Regional Conservation Plan. This system was used in the development of Table 3-3, Representation of Natural Ecosystems.

3.1.3 Protected Areas Network

Denman Island Ecosystem-Based Assessment, completed in 1998 by Silva Ecosystem Consultants Ltd. and known as the Silva Report, looked at large blocks of privately-held timber lands on Denman Island and examined extensively forestry land in the northern half of Denman. As stated, this report "outlines a proposed Protected Areas Network (PAN) to maintain landscape level connections and ecosystem health across Denman Island." Lands identified on mapping included in the report provide considerable help in identifying ecosystems and cultural features that could be protected and/or incorporated into the parks or greenways system.

3.1.4 Denman Island Land Values

Land values on Denman Island have increased substantially over the past decade. To get some perspective on bare land values, listing prices for unimproved land were reviewed during the summer of 2010. Waterfront properties ranged from \$70,080/ha. (\$28,361/ac.) for a large parcel to \$3,081,886/ha. (\$1,247,222/ac.) for a small lot on East Road. A lot on Graham Lake was listed at \$236,297/ha. (\$95,628/ac.). Non-waterfront properties ranged from \$31,103/ha. (\$12,587/ac.) for a very large parcel to \$98,970/ha. (\$39,980/ac.) for a 4-ha. lot.

3.1.5 Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan

The development of this master plan provided an opportunity to consolidate information from various sources, to determine the wishes and priorities of the residents of Denman Island, and to recommend a strategy for implementation. Perhaps the most important goal of this plan is to establish a forum for the CVRD, the Islands Trust, ITF, DCA, MOTI, BC Parks and other major land owners, as well as local residents, to work collaboratively to achieve the community's vision of a comprehensive parks and greenways network.

The goal is to establish a forum for agencies and local residents to work collaboratively to achieve the vision.

3.2 Parks, Reserves and Other Protected Areas

This section provides general descriptions of all publicly-owned land on Denman Island, privately-owned protected areas and lands that have been identified for protection. Specific descriptions of individual parcels are contained in Table 3.1 below.

3.2.1 Provincial Lands

Until recently, the amount of provincial Crown parkland on Denman was relatively small, in comparison with that on other major islands in the Trust Area. A number of large and smaller parcels were held by MOTI, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE), the latter through BC Parks. Of particular importance are the three provincial parks: Sandy Island Marine Park, Fillongley Park and Boyle Point Park. These three parks encompass 180 hectares.

In October 2010, as part of a public-private partnership, the Province transferred 258 hectares of Crown land to protected area. The development rights from the Crown land were transferred to North Denman Land Inc. for future residential development purposes on their private lands on the northern half of the island. In return, the company contributed a further 492 hectares of parkland on the north island and made a cash contribution – made possible through a third-party carbon offset agreement with ERA Carbon Offsets Ltd. and the Forest Carbon Group.

The lands acquired through this partnership are owned by the Province and were designated as provincial park. Management plans will be completed once their ecological values and recreational opportunities have been identified and assessed. They include Chickadee Place, the Chickadee Lake Catchment, Forestry Lookout, the Pickles Marsh/Beaver Pond Catchment, the Southwest ¼ of Section 22, McFarlane Road, Boyle Point Park Addition, Morrison Marsh North End and Remainder and Eagle Rock.

3.2.2 Comox Valley Regional District Community Parks

The CVRD owns four parks that it classifies as community parks on the Island. These are:

- ◆ Bill Mee Park, a 1.34-hectare community recreation park on the eastern shore of the Island, has a boat launch and parking lot.
- ◆ McFarlane Park is a small community nature park and wildlife viewing area.



Figure 3: Bill Mee Park

- ◆ Stanehill Park is a small .205-hectare community nature park accessed from Stanehill Road or Greenhill Road with an interpretive loop trail and signage developed thanks to local residents' efforts.



Figure 4: Denman Island Young Naturalists visit Stanehill Park

- ◆ The CVRD received the donation of a 1.2-hectare community park at “The Point” known as Morning Beach Park, at the northern end of Komas Bluffs.

3.2.3 Denman Community Park

The Denman Island OCP lists one community park, Centennial Park, located adjacent to the community hall in Denman Village. This park is owned and managed by Denman Island Recreation Commission Society (DIRCS). It includes a children's playground and tennis courts. These facilities are augmented by a soccer field and baseball diamond on the adjacent school grounds.



Figure 5: Centennial Park

3.2.4 Islands Trust Fund Lands

The ITF, a regional conservation land trust established in 1990, holds three nature reserves on Denman Island. Nature reserves differ from nature parks in that the prime purpose of nature reserves is conservation and the protection of values and features of significance on those properties. Acceptable uses within nature reserves include walking, bird-watching and the quiet appreciation of nature. Any uses that could reasonably pose a threat to vegetation, wildlife or wildlife habitat are not acceptable within nature reserves.⁶



Figure 6: Morrison Marsh

3.2.5 Island Trust Lands

Although it is not classified as a park or protected area, the Old School property on Denman Road, owned by the Islands Trust Council, is used for community activities and recreation.

⁶ Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve Management Plan, p. 24; Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve Management Plan, p. 7

3.2.6 Denman Conservancy Association Lands

The Denman Conservancy Association was founded in 1991 by a group of volunteer community members who came together with the goal of preserving unique, environmentally sensitive and historically important parcels of land on Denman Island, B.C.⁷

The DCA owns the following properties:

- ◆ Central Park is a 59.5-hectare parcel in the middle of the Island accessed by Denman Road. This park contains both multi-use trails and pedestrian paths.
- ◆ Settlement Lands, two parcels with a combined area of 63.54 hectares on both sides of Central Road, lying immediately north of Inner Island Nature Reserve.
- ◆ Winter Wren Wood, a 2.5-hectare forested property with a conservation covenant held by the ITF, has a nature trail through it.

The DCA holds conservation covenants on Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve and Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve while the Nature Conservancy of Canada holds a conservation covenant on the Inner Island Nature Reserve. All three are managed by the DCA:

- ◆ Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve, a 51.73-hectare parcel with third-growth Douglas-fir trees, rock bluffs and the headwaters of Denman's largest marsh, was acquired through the cooperation of the DCA and an anonymous donor.
- ◆ Inner Island Nature Reserve, a 9.4-hectare property, was donated to the Trust Fund by the DCA.
- ◆ Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve, a 52.4-hectare property with old growth forest and beach frontage, was acquired through joint efforts by DCA and the Province.

In addition, DCA holds conservation covenants on Railway Grade Marsh in the new provincial park and on private lands at Chocolate Bluff and Komas Bluffs.



Figure 7: Winter Wren Wood

⁷ <http://www.denmanconservancy.org/>

Table 3-1: Current Parks, Greenways, Nature Reserves and Crown Lands Inventory

Park/Reserve/ Conservation	Description/Use	Land Status	Mgmt/ Maintnc.	Area (Ha.)
Beaver Pond, Lot 1	Adjacent to and separating two portions of Inner Island Nature Reserve, contains fish, bird sanctuary, marsh, beaver pond and swans, connected to SW ¼ Sec. 22. Accessed by Pickles Road.	BC Parks	BC Parks	23
Bill Mee Park	Waterfront park located on Lambert Channel, on the northeast edge of Boyle Point Park, contains public boat-launch ramp, breakwater, picnic tables, toilet, parking for cars and trailers. Accessed by East Road.	Crown land, leased by CVRD	DIRA Boat Ramp Cmttee/ CVRD	1.34
Boyle Point Park	Provincial park located at the south end of Denman Island, hiking and walking trails, southern tip overlooks Chrome Island lighthouse.	BC Parks	Caretaker/ BC Parks	125
Boyle Point Park Addition	Former gravel reserve land, added to provincial parkland.	BC Parks	BC Parks	63.1
Centennial Park	Community park located in Denman Village adjacent to the community hall, used for outdoor sports and other activities.	DIRCS	DIRCS	0.993
Central Park	Logged around 2000, young forest is predominantly Coastal Douglas fir, two long wetlands, contains both multi-use and pedestrian trails, creates a central link in the proposed Protected Area Network. Accessed from Denman Road.	DCA	DCA	59.49
Chickadee Lake Catchment	Wetland/marsh area located immediately south of Chickadee Lake, identified in PAN and SEI, contains trails, older and second-growth forest.	BC Parks	BC Parks	65.08
Chickadee Place	Western shore of Chickadee Lake, Held by MOTI, to be closed as road and transferred to MOE with park status. Access from Lake Road not open.	BC Parks	BC Parks	7.6
Chocolate Bluff	Conservation covenant on property owned by Denman Island Chocolate Ltd. along the crest of a bluff overlooking Baynes Sound, held by DCA.	Denman Is. Chocolate	DIC/DCA	1.7
Chrome Island	Located south of Boyle Point Park, accessible only twice annually at the lowest tides of the year, hosts lighthouse and ancient aboriginal petroglyphs.	Federal Coast Guard	Federal Coast Guard	0.81
Danes Creek North (The Point)	Wetland complex, primarily regenerating forested swamp with a distinct Labrador tea bog complex in northern portion, conservation covenant held by DCA.	Private	Private/ DCA	5.6
Danes Creek	A fairly flat depression on the north end of Denman Island. A mix of	Private	Private /	12.4

Park/Reserve/ Conservation	Description/Use	Land Status	Mgmt/ Maintnc.	Area (Ha.)
South	wetland pockets with seepage water from the Quadra sands and treed areas on slightly higher ground. Conservation covenant held by DCA.		DCA	
Deep Swamp	Return to Crown, north end of Valen's Brook, accessed by Woodham Road right-of-way.	Crown Land		n/a
Eagle Rock	Off east coast of Boyle Point Park, haul-out rock for seals and sea lions. Accessed only by foot at low tide.	BC Parks	BC Parks	0.5
Fillongley Park	Provincial park located on east side of Denman, bisected by Beadnell Creek, contains walking trails and wheelchair-accessible path, public campground on waterfront.	BC Parks	BC Parks	23
Forestry Lookout	Small parcel with no legal public access, however, trails through adjacent property lead to lookout.	BC Parks	BC Parks	2.0
Inner Island Nature Reserve	Significant wetland surrounded by Coastal Douglas fir and Western Red cedar forest. Acquisition by ITF facilitated by DCA. Conservation covenant held by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Accessed from Pickles Rd.	Island Trust Fund	ITF/DCA	9.4
Komas Bluffs	Bluffs on northeast side of the island contain a mix of ecologically sensitive features – rock and sediment coastal cliffs, old growth, older second growth, wildlife habitat. Conservation covenant held by DCA, no public access.	Private	Private/ DCA	41
Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve	Diverse preserve of habitat, rare plants, old growth, wetland areas, trails and beach; Reserve is comprised of two parcels, one covenanted for agriculture use, the other for conservation, held by DCA. Access from Corrigan Rd. and East Rd.	Island Trust Fund	ITF/DCA	52.4
McFarlane Park	Small landlocked inactive park, categorized as community nature park.	CVRD	CVRD	0.18
McFarlane Road	Parcel with trails, low native vegetation diversity, moderately large tract of older forest and known archaeological/historical feature, protected as conservation land	BC Parks	BC Parks	15.05
Morning Beach Park	Located on northeast coast, contains former steep rope trail to beach. Land donated by developer to the CVRD.	CVRD	CVRD/ DIRA parks cmttee	1.2
Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve	Southern section and headwaters of Denman Island's largest marsh, contains third-growth Douglas-fir, rock bluffs, trails, numerous bird and animal species. Conservation covenant held by DCA. Accessed by Greenhill Road.	ITF	ITF/DCA	50.5
Morrison Marsh North End	Located at the north end of Morrison Marsh, on the south side of McFarlane Road, entirely under water, protected as conservation land for	BC Parks	DUC (mgmt in	2.25










Park/Reserve/ Conservation	Description/Use	Land Status	Mgmt/ Maintnc.	Area (Ha.)
	waterfowl.		transition)	
Morrison Marsh Remainder	Connecting wetland area between Morrison Marsh North End and Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve.	BC Parks	BC Parks	21.3
New provincial park (to be named)	Lands dedicated to the Province as part of the rezoning and subdivision of the North Denman Lands property. Contains some ALR land.	BC Parks	BC Parks	492
Old Quarry Site	Former sandstone quarry, contains known provincial historical feature, low native vegetation. Accessed from Denman Road, opposite Pickles Road.	BC Parks	BC Parks	.098
Railway Grade Marsh Complex	Covenanted portion of land includes sphagnum bog, peat-moss and common cattails, conservation covenant held by DCA.	BC Parks	BC Parks/DC A	31.5
SW ¼ Sec. 22*	Adjacent to Beaver Pond (Lot 1), contains trails, second-growth forest, wildlife and high level of plant diversity, recently designated as park by the Province. Accessed by Pickles Road.	BC Parks	BC Parks	64.59
Sandy Island Marine Park	Off northern tip of Denman, contains Tree Island and the Seal Islets, provincial marine park since 1966. Accessed most easily by boat or kayak, by foot only on tide of 3 m (10 ft.) or lower.	BC Parks	BC Parks	32
Settlement Lands	Located on both sides of Central Road, southern portion of which is adjacent to the Inner Island Nature Reserve and contains Pickles Road wetland. One of the homes of Taylor's Checkerspot butterflies.	DCA	DCA	63.141
Stanehill Park	Small local mini-park, adopted by the community and converted into an educational/recreational park. Accessed from Stanehill Place and Greenhill Road.	CVRD	CVRD / DIRA parks cmittee	.205
Winter Wren Wood	Property fronts on Chickadee Lake, contains interpreted walking trail and small parking area. Conservation covenant held by the ITF.	DCA	DCA/ITF	2.5
Total Park, Reserve and Conservation Land <i>[does not include Deep Swamp]</i>				1,270.93

3.3 Landscape Classifications

The parks, nature reserves, green space and Crown lands described in Table 3.1 above can be classified according to their dominant ecosystem or function. Such an analysis is pertinent to this Parks and Greenways Master Plan because of the Islands Trust's goal "to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment".⁸ The residents of Denman Island have demonstrated a desire to protect the island's amenities and natural ecosystems through a variety of methods, including the use of conservation and restrictive covenants, voluntary stewardship agreements, parkland dedication, nature reserves, conservation and restoration efforts, and education.

The Islands Trust lists natural ecosystems, those "landscape units with little or no human development"⁹, and modified ecosystems or "areas where there is human development or disturbance evident throughout the landscape".¹⁰

Table 3–2 Natural Ecosystems

	Old forest (OF): structurally complex stands comprised mainly of shade-tolerant tree species > 250 years old. Under storey includes snags, woody debris in all stages of decomposition and a fully developed moss layer.
	Mature forest (MF): usually conifer-dominated, occasionally deciduous, dry to moist forest types with stands 80 to 250 years of age.
	Woodland (WD): dry open forests, generally between 10% to 30% tree cover, can be dominated by Douglas-fir, Garry-oak or arbutus stands. Because of open canopy, will include non-forested openings, often with shallow soils and bedrock outcroppings.
	Herbaceous (HB): non-forested ecosystems (less than 10% tree cover), generally with shallow soils. They include natural grasslands, bedrock outcroppings, large openings within forested areas, spits, dunes and shorelines vegetated with grasses and herbs.
	Riparian (RI): adjacent to lakes, streams and rivers characterized by plant communities and soils that are dependent on moisture. They occur where seepage exists and can vary in width from a few metres to over 100 metres.
	Wetland (WN): areas saturated or inundated with water for long enough periods of time to develop vegetation and biological activity adapted to wet environments. This may result from flooding, fluctuating water tables, tidal influences or poor drainage conditions.
	Cliff (CL): steep, vertical or overhanging rock faces. Includes coastal cliffs with marine interaction and inland cliffs. Soil is limited to bedrock fissures and ledges.
	Lacustrine (LC): freshwater ecosystems such as lakes and ponds with portions that are deeper than 2 metres. Not specific to terrain or elevation.
	Littoral (LT): marine influenced such as mudflats and beaches where total vegetated cover is less than 5% of the surface area.

⁸ *Islands Trust Policy Statement*, Consolidated – April 2003, p. 5

⁹ <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/lup/map/ecosystem.cfm#methods>

¹⁰ ITEM legend

The natural ecosystems in the Islands' Trust area, and on Denman Island specifically, are usually remnant fragments of what once were much larger ecosystems. Natural ecosystems are commonly classified into the nine broad categories listed in table 3-2 above.

Denman Island's protected areas system includes all of the nine natural ecosystems listed. None of the protected areas are homogenous in nature but include a variety of natural ecosystems. Table 3-3 identifies, in general terms, the natural ecosystems found in each of Denman Islands protected areas. For more detailed information, the Island Trust Funds' regional conservation mapping should be consulted.

*None of the island's
protected areas are
homogenous in
nature but include a
variety of natural
ecosystems.*

Table 3-2: Representation of Natural Ecosystems

Park	OF	MF	WD	HB	RI	WN	CL	LC	LT
Beaver Pond (Lot 1)		♦			♦	♦		♦	
Bill Mee			♦	♦					♦
Boyle Point	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦	♦		♦
Boyle Point Add.		♦			♦				
Centennial (playground, soccer field)									
Central			♦		♦	♦			
Chickadee Lake Catchment		♦			♦			♦	
Chickadee Place		♦			♦				
Chocolate Bluff			♦				♦		
Chrome Island				♦			♦		♦
Danes Creek North and South					♦	♦			
Deep Swamp		♦	♦		♦	♦		♦	
Eagle Rock							♦		♦
Fillongley		♦	♦	♦	♦				♦
Forestry Lookout		♦	♦						
Inner Island Nature Reserve		♦			♦	♦			
Komas Bluffs		♦					♦		
Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦
McFarlane Park			♦		♦				
McFarlane Road		♦			♦				
Morning Beach		♦	♦						♦
Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	
Morrison Marsh North End		♦			♦	♦			
Morrison Marsh Remainder		♦			♦	♦		♦	
New Prov. Protected Area		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦		♦	
Old Quarry			♦						
Railway Grade Marsh			♦		♦	♦		♦	
SW ¼ Sec. 22		♦			♦	♦			
Sandy Island			♦	♦					♦
Settlement Lands		♦			♦	♦			
Stanehill			♦						
Winter Wren Wood		♦			♦	♦		♦	

3.4 Parkland Classifications

This plan analyzes Denman Island's park lands and green spaces according to the CVRD's classification of park and greenway types. One of the purposes of classifying all – not just regional – parks and greenways on Denman Island is to help the community to determine where there are gaps in the Denman Island park system. Residents can then decide if they wish to attempt to fill some of those gaps – and how.

3.4.1 Coastal Recreation Parks

These parks focus on providing water-based recreation opportunities. Bill Mee Park is an example of a coastal recreation park.

3.4.2 Nature Parks

Nature parks are to conserve natural features of regional significance and provide opportunities for passive recreational activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding and nature study. Nature parks are typically large parks with extensive trail networks. However, smaller parks may also be classified in this category if they include sensitive environmental features.

3.4.3 Community Parks

Community parks are intended to provide recreation opportunities for nearby residents and increase the walkability of neighbourhoods by providing short trail connections to schools, community centres and commercial centres. Typically, community parks range from 1 to 5 hectares in size.

While the CVRD classifies all regional parks on Denman Island as community parks, the park that best fits this description is Centennial Park in Denman Village.

3.4.4 Beach Accesses

These lands are established on road rights-of-way ending at the foreshore and provide access to popular beaches and coastal areas. Tenure to beach access rights-of-way is typically obtained by the regional district or another agency by permit or licence of occupation from MOTI.

Access to waterfront and particularly to a beach is highly desirable for many residents. The Provincial Approving Officer regularly exercises his right, under Section 75 of the *Land Title Act*, to require road access to bodies of water that are owned by the Crown. This has resulted in 49 road rights-of way on Denman Island that provide access to the waterfront. A large number of these rights-of-way or road ends have not been cleared or constructed; however, all are shown on Denman Island OCP Schedule F in the following locations:

*Nature parks
conserve natural
features of regional
significance and
provide opportunities
for passive
recreational
activities such as
hiking, biking,
horseback riding and
nature study.*

West Side

- ◆ Runkle Road
- ◆ Gladstone Road
- ◆ Whitney Road
- ◆ Kodak Road
- ◆ Lance Road
- ◆ Dunn Road
- ◆ McNabb Road
- ◆ Scott Road
- ◆ Piercy Road
- ◆ Kirk Road
- ◆ Denman Road West
- ◆ Kelsey Road
- ◆ Dustin Road
- ◆ Tronson/Dixon Road
- ◆ Westcliffe Road
- ◆ Eastcliffe Road
- ◆ Glen Ghorm Road
- ◆ Millard Road
- ◆ Lacon Road North
- ◆ Lacon Road South
- ◆ McFarlane Road West
- ◆ Largo Road
- ◆ Tanner Road
- ◆ Plett Road
- ◆ Hinton Road
- ◆ Dusty Road

- ◆ Repulse Road
- ◆ Reginald Drive

East Side

- ◆ Radcliffe Road
- ◆ Beadnell Road
- ◆ Mabel Road
- ◆ Janet Road
- ◆ Denman Road East
- ◆ Corrigan Road¹¹
- ◆ East Road #1
- ◆ East Road #2
- ◆ East Road #3
- ◆ Owl Crescent¹²
- ◆ East Road #4
- ◆ McFarlane Road East
- ◆ East Road #5
- ◆ Cokely Road
- ◆ East Road #6
- ◆ Gravelly Bay #1
- ◆ Gravelly Bay #2
- ◆ Sea Lion Road
- ◆ Sole Road
- ◆ Capri Road
- ◆ Boyle Point Road

In some cases, the community may decide that certain road ends are more appropriately designated for ecosystem protection and conservation. Where road ends are suitable for public access to the waterfront, MOTI has a “*policy for use of rights-of-way that provide access to water*” that accommodates public uses under certain conditions. Maintaining access to water, and limiting costs and liability to the province, are the policy’s primary considerations. Proposals for improvements are considered with these and other provincial interests affected in mind.

The policy sets out guidelines for requests for beach access permits and their consideration and management. Considerations include partnering, maintaining availability for public use, not reducing public access to water, provincial liability requirements and assurance that interests of adjacent land owners, riparian areas and foreshore regulations have been addressed. MOTI will determine its level of involvement in providing improvements on a case-by-case basis and will not take on responsibilities that are not typical to MOTI or its maintenance contractors. The policy notes that retention of

*Access to waterfront
and particularly to a
beach is highly
desirable for many
residents.*

¹¹ Corrigan Road access is not shown on the conceptual parks plan map in appendix 1 as regional district mapping does not show a road dedication to the water in that location and no trail appears to exist.

¹² Owl Crescent is not a dedicated road right-of-way but a trail leads to the waterfront in that location.

public access to the water is paramount, therefore encroachments are discouraged.

3.4.5 Ecological Greenways

Ecological greenways protect aquatic habitat corridors, fisheries sensitive areas, upland habitat corridors including eagle and heron nest sites, and biodiversity corridors. Although their prime function is to provide wildlife, fish and wildfowl habitat and travel or migration corridors, ecological greenways may contain trails.

3.4.6 Recreational Greenways

Recreational greenways are linear parks for the use of walkers, cyclists and, in some cases, for equestrians. They may connect natural areas or communities to each other or communities to natural areas. Often, recreational greenways are multi-use. There are currently no recreational greenways/linear parks on Denman Island.

A number of planned or potential recreational greenways have been identified for Denman Island. These include a trail along Northwest Road to Morning Beach Park, an east-west greenway in the Denman Road right-of-way or within the Lacon and McFarlane road rights-of-way. A trail within the Lacon Road right-of-way, starting at Denman Road, was started a number of years ago and extended approximately 500 metres on the west side of the road.

3.4.7 Conservation Park/Area

This category recognizes the need to protect rare or endangered species and their habitat and/or rare and endangered plant communities on the island. In recognition of their ecological sensitivity and to ensure their long-term integrity, these areas may provide limited access to people. For example, a sensitive wetland may include a viewing platform on one end but no trail around the wetland.

Denman Island's sensitive areas are identified and described in Schedule D to the OCP. Many of them are protected through one of three development permit areas that are designated for the protection of the natural environment and shown as DPA nos. 2 and 3 in Schedule E, map 1 and DPA no. 4 in Schedule E, map 2.

Environmentally sensitive areas have also been identified in the Island Trust Fund's Regional Conservation Plan and sensitive ecosystem mapping (SEM), as well as in the works of local residents, for example DCA's Central Park Vision and, for the northern part of the Island, the Silva Report's Protected Areas Network. These include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ◆ Beadnell Creek | ◆ Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve |
| ◆ Beaver Pond | ◆ Morrison Marsh |
| ◆ Central Park | ◆ Pickles Marsh, |
| ◆ Chickadee Lake | ◆ Railway Creek and Marsh |
| ◆ Danes Creek | ◆ Settlement Lands |
| ◆ Inner Island Nature Reserve | ◆ Winter Wren Wood |

Conservation areas may or may not have conservation covenants on them. Areas with conservation covenants on Denman Island include Danes Creek, Railway Grade Marsh, Komas Bluffs, Chocolate Bluff, Morrison Marsh North End, Winter Wren Wood, and the three nature reserves – Lindsay Dickson, Inner Island and Morrison Marsh.

Some of the covenanted areas are part of a larger parcel of land. This demonstrates that the entire parcel need not carry a single designation. Similarly, within conservation areas, it is not uncommon to have a number of designations or ‘zones’ to allow for different intensities of use within a protected area. The appropriate management approach and intended use for each zone can be identified in the management plan for the area.

Table 3-4 below illustrates the classification of Denman Island parks, protected areas and green space based on the types described in this section. It is acknowledged that other agency’s parks classification system does not neatly fit the CVRD’s system. Nature reserves may fit in either the ecological greenway or conservation area/park classification depending on the purpose and permitted uses identified in the reserves’ management plans.

Table 3-4: Type of Park or Greenway

Park	Coastal Recreation	Nature Park	Community Park	Beach Access Park	Ecological Greenway	Recreational Greenway	Conservation Area
Beaver Pond (Lot 1)					♦		♦
Bill Mee	♦		♦				
Boyle Point		♦					
Boyle Point Add.		♦					
Centennial			♦				
Central		♦					♦
Chickadee Lake Catchment		♦			♦		
Chickadee Place					♦		
Chocolate Bluff							♦
Chrome Island							♦
Danes Creek North							♦
Danes Creek South							♦
Deep Swamp							
Eagle Rock							♦
Fillongley	♦	♦					
Forestry Lookout							
Inner Island N.R.		♦			♦		♦
Komas Bluffs							♦
Lindsay Dickson N.R.		♦					♦
McFarlane Park			♦				
McFarlane Road							
Morning Beach	♦		♦				
Morrison Marsh Nat.Res.		♦			♦		♦
Morrison Marsh North		♦			♦		♦
Morrison Marsh Rem.		♦			♦		
New Provincial Park		♦					
Old Quarry							♦
Pickles Marsh					♦		
Railway Grade Marsh		♦			♦		♦
Sandy Island	♦	♦					
Settlement Lands							♦
Stanehill			♦				
Winter Wren Wood		♦			♦		♦

3.5 The Trails Network

3.5.1 Pedestrian Trails

Although there are no recreational greenways (linear parks) on Denman Island, there are a number of trails throughout the parks, nature reserves and Denman Conservancy lands. Trails that are accessible to the public are found within the following protected areas:

- ◆ Boyle Point Park
- ◆ Boyle Point Park Addition
- ◆ Central Park
- ◆ Chickadee Lake Catchment
- ◆ Fillongley Park
- ◆ Inner Island Nature Reserve
- ◆ Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve
- ◆ McFarlane Road
- ◆ Morning Beach
- ◆ Morrison Marsh Nature Reserve
- ◆ Railway Grade Marsh
- ◆ Sandy Island Marine Park
- ◆ Stanehill Park
- ◆ SW 1/4 Section 22
- ◆ Winter Wren Wood
- ◆ A community-built trail on the north side of Denman Road from the Arts Centre in the Village to a point across from the Lacon Road intersection.



Figure 9: Community-built trail

3.5.2 Bicycle Trails

Central Park contains some of the few trails designated for bicycle use on the island. Most bicyclists use the island's roads, which have quite narrow travel surfaces.

3.5.3 Equestrian Trails

Horses are restricted to Central Park, SW ¼ of Section 22 and Boyle Point Park Addition, unconstructed road rights-of-way such as one along the south boundary of Lindsay Dickson Nature Reserve and private lands where the owners have consented.

3.5.4 Trails in the Agricultural Land Reserve

As noted above, a large portion of Denman Island lies with the Agricultural Land Reserve and falls under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Protection of agriculture is a primary concern to the ALC, and trails are often viewed as intrusions into working agricultural landscapes. The ALC requires an application for a non-farm use in the ALR when a trail is proposed to be located within the ALR.

Every effort will be made to find alternative trail routes that go around rather than through agricultural land in order to avoid any potential conflicts. Where this is not practical, the CVRD will seek approval from the ALC for the proposed trail alignment and work with adjacent farmers and Ministry of Agriculture staff to minimize possible negative impacts of the trail on agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture's *Guide to using and developing trails in ranch and farm areas*¹³ identifies guidelines for the location of trails within the ALR and design standards including signage, fences and vegetated buffers.

The ALC requires an application for a non-farm use when a trail is proposed to be located within the ALR.

The CVRD acknowledges that much of the privately held land in the Agricultural Land Reserve on Denman Island is not currently in agricultural production but may be so in the future. Consequently, planning for trail alignment will take into consideration current as well as potential future agricultural use of adjacent lands.

As most of the ALR land on Denman Island is privately owned, existing informal trails on these agricultural lands (as on any other private lands) should be used only with the owner's permission. It is acknowledged that future owners may not support the recreational use of their property and may close off informal trails. Landowners who wish to formalize trails over their property may work with the CVRD to align the trail to minimize impact on current or possible future agricultural operations and seek approval from the Agricultural Land Commission for a statutory right-of-way or easement for the trail corridor in the CVRD's favour.

3.5.5 Trails in Riparian Areas

Streams, lakes and wetlands are identified by the provincial *Riparian Areas Regulation* (RAR), adopted under the *Fish Protection Act*, as fish-supportive habitat or connections to streams. Riparian areas also support a variety of vascular plant, moss, amphibian and small mammal species. Most of these important ecological greenways are protected by Development Permit Area (DPA) designations in the Denman Island OCP.

¹³ Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *A guide to using and developing trails in ranch and farm areas*. Available on the Agricultural Land Commission website at <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/>

DPA designations apply to the areas within 30 metres of the natural boundary of lakes, major streams and major wetlands, as shown on OCP Schedule E, Map 2, and within 10 metres of minor streams and wetlands. If Denman residents wish to locate a trail within a riparian area, a qualified environmental professional would first have to establish the Stream Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) and determine if and how a trail might be built without negative impact.

Section 9 of the *Water Act* and the *Water Regulation, Part 7* can potentially affect the location of parks and trails on the Island. Familiarity with their requirements is essential when engaging in work in and about a stream. They specify requirements that assure that work being done in and about a stream does not compromise water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and the rights of other water users. These statutes, along with other guidance material, can be found on the provincial [Water Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment](#) website.

In addition to the above, additional authorizations from other agencies, for example Fisheries and Oceans Canada, under the *Federal Fisheries Act* and *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, may be required. A notification form must be submitted prior to starting proposed changes in and about a stream. Terms and/or conditions related to the protection of habitat may also be specified by a Habitat Officer. If the applicant agrees to all the requirements, including the Habitat Officer's terms and conditions, the works may proceed with the proposed changes without waiting for a formal response from MOE. Notifications received by regional offices of MOE will be used to plan and carry out on-site inspections and monitoring during and after the changes in and about a stream.

3.5.6 Trails within Road Rights-of-Way

MOTI is responsible for coordinating roads, road accesses and maintaining highways in safe condition on Denman Island. Any construction activity within a provincial highway right-of-way must have the approval of the Ministry. MOTI permits certain works to be constructed in the highway right-of-way where it is practical and safe to do so. A permit must be applied for and received from the Ministry before constructing any improvements.

A trail along the west side of Lacon Road, starting at Denman Road, was constructed a number of years ago and extends for approximately 500 metres.

4.0 DENMAN ISLAND POPULATION

4.1 Resident Population

The 2006 census data for Denman Island lists the population as 1,095, up 7.8% from 1,016 in the previous census. The population was evenly split between males and females.

Of the total number of residents, 955 – over 87% - were 15 years of age or older. Thus less than 13% of the population was under the age of 15. There were 235 children living at home on the Island at the time of the census. Approximately 16% of all residents – 175 people – were 65 or older.

The total number of private dwellings on the Island was 703, of which 527 – almost 75% - were occupied when the 2006 census was conducted. As noted earlier, Denman Island has a significant number of vacation or seasonal homes that are occupied mainly in the summer months.

4.2 Visitors to Denman Island

Denman Island does not experience the volume of tourism-related visits that Vancouver Island does. Nevertheless, traffic does noticeably increase during the summer months.

The only data are BC Ferries' tallies of ferry passengers to Denman Island; those going on to Hornby Island were eliminated. The chart below shows the total number of passengers on a monthly basis from April 2007 to March 2010. As can be seen, monthly passenger traffic is lowest in January and February, generally around 10,000. It starts to increase through the spring and peaks in the summer. It peaked in August 2007 at 18,031, in August 2008 at 17,392 and in August 2009 at 21,098.

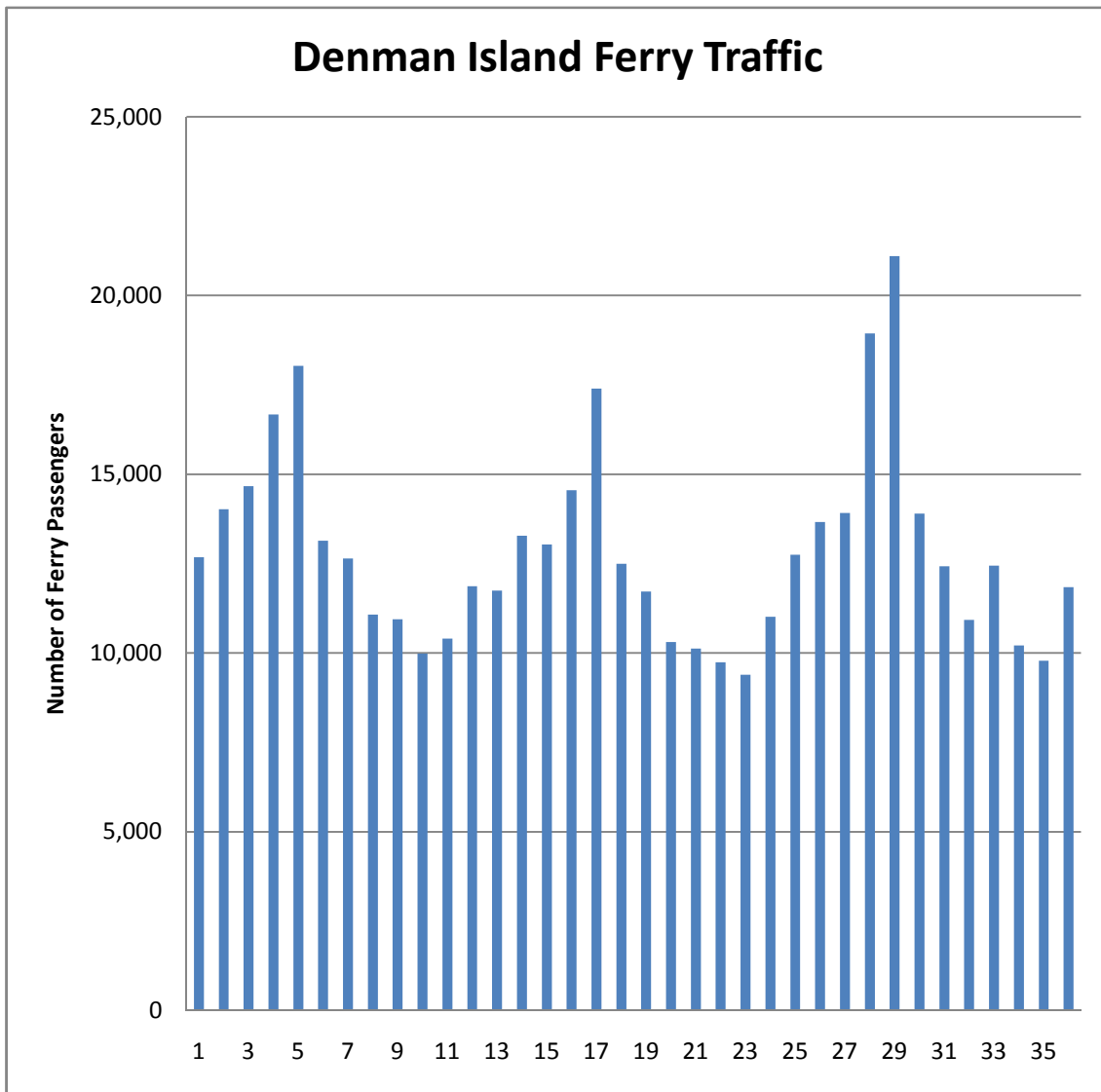


Figure 10: Monthly Passenger Trips from Buckley Bay to Denman Island for 36 Months (April 2007 to March 2010)

5.0 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

A four-page community survey was inserted in the *Island Grapevine* and distributed to Denman households in May 2010. The survey was also available on both the CVRD's and DIRA's websites. A total of 39 were completed and returned.

5.1 Parks

Based on responses received, Denman Island residents seem to feel somewhat content with the amount of parkland on the island, with 31% of respondents indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. This group was followed by 28% who were very satisfied, 23% somewhat satisfied and 15% not satisfied with the number of parks on the island. The responses showed that, although all parks, Crown lands, DCA lands, ITF lands and even privately-owned lands are frequented, the most popular parks are Boyle Point, Fillongley and Central parks. Residents also use Bill Mee Park, Winter Wren Wood and Chickadee Lake and Graham Lake, a popular swimming and picnicking destination.

When asked for suggestions for possible additions to the current parks system, the survey solicited nine options (including 'other'). Nearly half of all respondents (49%) suggested nature parks with public access, 44% requested more oceanfront beach parks, and the same percentage suggested beach access trails. Viewpoints/lookouts and streamside parks were also felt to be good candidates for addition to the parks system. (Note, the percentages do not add up to 100 % since respondents provided more than one priority).

Additional comments stressed again and again the desire for a network of public multi-use trails so that residents could walk, cycle and horseback ride safely to all parts of the island.

5.2 Greenways

By far the most important type of greenway was considered to be connecting trails, as stated by 77% of respondents. 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.

The need for linking habitat corridors was mentioned – as well as the wish to retain the island's rural character and ambiance.

Specific requests included a cross-island ferry-to-ferry trail along major roads. Suggestions included utilizing dedicated but undeveloped road rights-of-way as trails; seeking easements from private landowners for trails along lot-boundaries; identifying, developing and signing road-ends that access the waterfront; and linking habitat and wildlife corridors.

Additional comments stressed again and again the desire for a network of public multi-use trails so that residents could walk, cycle and horseback ride safely to all parts of the island.

5.3 Trail Networks in Parks and Other Protected Areas

Trails all over the island – on both public and private land – are popular, and some, such as those in Central, Fillongley and Boyle Point parks, are very well used. That being said, however, 64% of survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the number of trails on the island. Twenty-six percent (26%) were content, while only 8% said they were satisfied. The trails most frequently used are in Central, Boyle Point and Fillongley parks as well as those in the nature reserves and those accessing Graham and Chickadee Lakes. Several respondents noted that very few trails are available to equestrians.

Specific requests included non-motorized multi-use trails, trails connecting trails and looping trails and creating a map of public trails on the island.

5.4 Amenities

Additional amenities were thought desirable by 53% of respondents, while 42% thought none are needed. Public 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, benches, an amphitheatre or area for community entertainment events, recycle bins and boardwalk access to Chickadee Lake.

5.5 Potential Acquisitions

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 additional acquisition or protection. Sites listed for either acquisition or protection included Chickadee Lake and the surrounding area, Morning Beach Park (a new CVRD park), a ferry-to-ferry multi-use greenway, a north-south greenway and connecting trails, Graham Lake and the swim dock area, Komas Bluffs, a public path to Tree Island, Morrison Marsh, ocean and lake frontage and riparian areas such as Beadnell Creek with a creekside trail.

5.6 Acquisition Mechanisms

One of the options suggested to Denman Island residents on the community survey form as a possible mechanism to increase opportunities to acquire parks and greenways was a development cost charge paid by developers. While this mechanism is commonly used by local governments to secure funds for infrastructure (including parks) under Section 933 of the *Local Government Act*, subsequent research has revealed that this power was not granted to the Islands Trust.

Residents of Denman Island were given the option of choosing a property tax increase as a means of acquiring additional parkland. Of the 39 responses received, 49% said they would like to see a combination of an increase in property taxes and funds collected from developers. A third of respondents wanted to see developers pay for additional parkland. Another 26% said that they are

willing to pay an increase in property taxes. As to how much extra they might be willing to pay, 28% opted 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, conservation covenants and fund-raising.

5.7 Priorities

In terms of priorities for the CVRD in the planning of parks and greenways, respondents were asked to select three categories from those listed below. These tallied 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 the preference of 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 a dock at Chickadee Lake.

*The priority of 74%
of community
survey respondents
was to develop new
trail systems and
improve linkages.*

6.0 THE FUTURE PARKS AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM

6.1 The Parks and Greenways System Vision

Based on comments received from residents, the following vision for the Denman Island parks and greenways system was crafted:

Over the longer term, the Denman Island parks and greenways network provides opportunities for Denman residents to engage in a variety of non-motorized recreational activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, bird watching, picnicking, beachcombing, kayaking and diving. Greenways connect parks, community hubs and the two ferry terminals. Recreational activities respect and are in balance with the protection of ecosystems and wildlife.

6.2 The Goals

Based on input received from residents, the goals of this parks and greenways plan are:

1. To represent the long-term vision of Denman Island residents with regards to parks and greenways on the island;
2. To provide short-, medium- and longer-term priorities and initiatives in the development of a comprehensive parks and greenways network (filling in the gaps);
3. To suggest a wide range of methods, means and tools that may be used, as appropriate, to implement this Plan; and
4. To recommend a forum through which implementation can be undertaken.

6.3 Filling in the Gaps

The community survey, questionnaire, community meetings and the assistance of DIRA committee members were all helpful in identifying gaps in the current parks system.

A thorough examination of all parks, Crown lands, DCA lands and ITF lands revealed that there are currently no recreational greenways (linear parks) on the island. It is exactly this type of function that has been noted by residents as lacking. Greenways with hard-packed (but not paved) paths would meet the needs of the active walking, cycling and horseback riding public, particularly if the greenways connected existing trails and community features. These greenways may also serve as wildlife and biodiversity corridors.

The community built a trail from the Arts Centre in Denman Village along the north side of Denman Road to Lacon Road, and a continuation along Lacon Road was started but never completed. This can be seen as a good starting place for a more extensive greenways network.

Denman Island residents appreciate and support efforts to protect sensitive ecosystems and the natural environment. However, as a couple of survey respondents pointed out, nature reserves or conservation areas need not necessarily be acquired or held by the CVRD, as there are other agencies that fill this role well. Perhaps the biggest contribution to the parks and greenways system that the CVRD could make is in terms of public accessibility and connectivity.

Some Denman Island residents provided a map with a detailed inventory of existing constructed roads, gazetted or dedicated roads that have not been constructed, existing trails or logging roads on private property and some of the possible connections. This map forms a valuable and logical starting point for the development of an implementation strategy for this plan.

It was also noted by many residents that, of the 48 road ends that provide at least theoretical access to the waterfront, only a few have been developed to permit practical access. It was felt that a number of additional road ends could be opened and signed for safe public access to the shoreline.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Priorities

The following priorities have emerged from the survey responses and statements made by Denman Island residents:

1. A cross-island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail or recreational greenway.
2. A north-south multi-use trail/recreational greenway.
3. Connections between existing public trails/recreational greenways.
4. Proposed trails to the waterfront or viewpoints off high bank waterfront road ends within undeveloped road rights-of-way.
5. Public washroom at Graham Lake
6. Improved public access to nature parks and reserves.
7. Wildlife and biodiversity corridors or ecological greenways.
8. A parks and trails map.
9. Appropriate signage.

The cross-island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail, the north-south multi-use trail, connections between existing public trails/recreational greenways, proposed trails to the waterfront and viewpoints off high bank waterfront road ends and the proposed washroom at Graham Lake (priorities 1, 2, 3 4 and 5) are mapped conceptually on the parks plan map attached as appendix 1.

Improved public access to nature parks and reserves (priority 6) will require discussions with the relevant land management agencies as management plans for nature parks and reserves are developed or updated. The CVRD will actively encourage trail connections that further the first three priorities related to trails and greenways.

Since the scope of the Denman Island parks and greenways master plan did not include research to support accurate mapping of wildlife and biodiversity corridors, these are not shown on the conceptual parks plan. Although those islanders who commented place great importance on biodiversity corridors and ecological greenways, they acknowledge that the CVRD's efforts would be better directed at recreational greenways – making trails accessible for both recreation and active transportation and facilitating connectivity where feasible. Islanders have confidence in the ability of organizations such as the Islands Trust, ITF and DCA – as well as individual land owners – to protect sensitive ecosystems. The Islands Fund Trust's conservation mapping and the DCA's protected area network mapping should be consulted for work on wildlife and biodiversity corridors. The CVRD would provide support for a joint map that shows both the proposed parks and greenways network as well as proposed wildlife and biodiversity corridors on the island.

The CVRD will work with the parks and trails committees of the Denman Island Residents Association and land management agencies to further explore interest in and possible format of a parks and trails map for Denman Island (priority 8).

CVRD has a set of standards for its park and greenway entrance and directional signs that it will apply on Denman Island. However, whether a sign is needed and location and size of signs would be established in cooperation with the parks committee of the Denman Island Residents Association (priority 9). CVRD would also look for community participation in the development of any interpretive signs.

7.2 Park and Greenway Acquisition Toolbox

As a few survey respondents noted, implementation of the parks and greenways plan will require collaborative efforts by several parties, including the CVRD, BC Parks, the Islands Trust (and Trust Fund), Denman Island Residents' Association, the Denman Conservancy Association, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and – with respect to marine parks – Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Some of the tools or potential opportunities that can be considered for park and greenway acquisition, planning for connectivity and successful implementation of this plan are listed below.

7.2.1 Partnering

Both the provincial and federal governments encourage and provide incentives for integrated land-use planning, reducing greenhouse gases and green infrastructure. Various related programs are administered by the Green Municipal Fund that could possibly be linked to the provision of parks on Denman Island. A coordinated approach to funding is required to maximize the benefits of the programs. The Regional District and the Islands Trust should also take advantage of any funding available for environmental stewardship and sustainability.

The Denman Island OCP, under the section on Transportation, specifically urges cooperation among local groups, landowners, the CVRD, MOTI and the Local Trust Committee (LTC) to establish trails and linkages. Another OCP policy supports the use of undeveloped road rights-of-way as trails and beach accesses. These policies reinforce the priorities expressed by local residents and identified in this plan.

Provincial government agencies that could provide partnering opportunities include the Ministries of Transportation and Infrastructure, Environment, including BC Parks and the Ministry's Stewardship Branches, Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, and the Crown Land Branch of the Ministry Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. Federal Agencies include Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Western Economic Diversification, among others.

Non-profit organizations possibly open to partnering opportunities include Denman Conservancy Association and ITF, both of which already hold land and conservation covenants on the Island. Ducks Unlimited, The Land Conservancy of BC, the Nature Trust, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, stream stewardship groups and related groups and service clubs such as Rotary, Kinsmen and Lions may also be possible partners. Lands owned by DCA and the ITF are private lands, not public park lands; however, the owner organization may allow public use – generally of a passive nature – of the lands.

7.2.2 Park Dedication upon Subdivision

Most local governments on Vancouver Island rely on Section 941 of the *Local Government Act* for parkland acquisition. Under this authority, if the OCP and the Parks and Greenways Master Plan contain policies and designations with regards to the location and type of future parks desired, the local government (in this case, the Islands Trust; see Section 2.4.2 above) may determine whether the owner of land proposed for subdivision must provide parkland or money in lieu of parkland. This option exists only if the proposed subdivision is for a minimum of three *additional* lots (in

addition to the remainder of the original lot) and the smallest lot being created is two hectares or smaller. The option does not apply to land within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

This provision in the *Local Government Act* has some potential; however, it is limited because there are few large parcels on Denman Island that are currently zoned to allow subdivision into smaller parcels. The Islands Trust planning department has done a calculation of the number of potential new lots that could be created through subdivision, based on current zoning. This calculation reveals that only 168 new lots could be created, most of these within the residential and rural residential zones.

As the OCP is the Islands Trust's jurisdiction and the Parks and Greenways Master Plan is a CVRD document, the need for collaboration at the inter-governmental level is very important.

7.2.3 Land Purchase

Some local government authorities are able to purchase parkland, which means that they maintain a parks acquisition fund within their budget. This is generally more successful in jurisdictions with larger population bases and, therefore, greater tax revenues than in more rural areas.

As noted in Section 3.1.4, however, bare-land values on Denman Island range from a low of \$31,103/ha. to a high of \$3,081,886/ha., based on summer 2010 listings. As non-waterfront properties are less expensive than waterfront, an upland greenway would be more affordable than one on a lake or the ocean. Nevertheless, using the lowest price listed, a 1km linear strip of land 10 m wide (1 ha) would cost \$31,103.

The CVRD has a minimal parkland acquisition reserve, \$7,011 in 2011, for both Denman and Hornby Islands. Thus purchasing land would only be possible through some form of a partnership between the CVRD and another agency such as a land trust, a land conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, the Islands Trust Fund, etc.

7.2.4 Crown Land Grants or Transfers

Occasionally a local government may apply for Crown land grants for parkland acquisition. The Province of B.C. is reluctant to relinquish its holdings, but may be receptive to negotiating the transfer of land from one ministry to another – such as to BC Parks in the Ministry of Environment – and to the transfer of density from Crown to development lands, as occurred recently on Denman Island, in return for the dedication by a third party of additional land for parks.

There is also a process whereby a local government may apply for a Crown land grant. Transfers of land from the Province to a local government require a ministry to sponsor the transfer and account for the value of the land transferred in its budget. Applications are made through the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. In 2011, the annual budget available for Crown land transfers was around \$4 million for the entire province.

7.2.5 Grants and Funding

Grant programs are many, varied and constantly changing. One of the most comprehensive and up-to-date sources of information on current grant programs is the Union of B.C. Municipalities' website: <http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/18.asp>. This site includes programs offered by federal and provincial governments, as well by foundations, trusts and other NGOs.

7.2.6 Donation of Land/ Conservation Covenants

There are also opportunities for private initiatives or partnerships with private landowners. Landowners may choose to gift cash, land or a partial interest in the land through a conservation covenant to a qualified Land Trust or directly to the regional district in return for a federal tax benefit under the *Income Tax Act*. If the conservation covenant or land gifted can be certified as ‘ecologically sensitive’, additional tax benefits may accrue through the federal Ecological Gifts (Ecogifts) Program. In the 2006 federal budget, the Government of Canada announced the removal of capital gains tax on donations of ecologically sensitive lands and publicly listed securities to Canadian charities, effective May 2, 2006. Donations of land that do not qualify as ecogifts continue to benefit from a 50% exemption from capital gains tax.

In two local transactions on Denman, land owners have donated land – in one case, to the Province of B.C., and in another to The Land Conservancy – in return for a ‘life estate’ or life tenancy, which allows the donors to remain on the land as long as they live with the recipient agency paying the property taxes.

Cash donations can also be accepted by organizations such as The Land Conservancy, the regional district and the Islands Trust Fund and used for land acquisition.

7.2.7 Bequests

A charitable bequest is a gift to an agency, charity or NGO made in the donor’s will. Bequests can be made to the CVRD in the form of money or land. This option might appeal particularly to individuals who have no heirs and who wish their land to be used for park purposes after their death.

7.2.8 Conservation Covenants and Natural Areas Tax Exemption

A conservation covenant, registered on title to property, does not place the property in the public domain, but it does provide permanent environmental protection for the area covenanted. A number of organizations, such as the Land Conservancy of BC and the Denman Conservancy Association, are designated to hold conservation covenants. Covenants are monitored annually to ensure compliance.

The Islands Trust has a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) that offers a 65% reduction in property taxes for the area covenanted to landowners who register a conservation covenant on their property. The NAPTEP covenant must be held by the Islands Trust Fund. As the result of a 2010 Trust Council decision, this program is now available on Denman Island.

Any covenants proposed for land within the Agricultural Land Reserve requires the approval of the Agricultural Land Commission.

7.2.9 Licences or Permits from MOTI

It is becoming more common for MOTI to issue a licence or permit to a local government or responsible, insurable organization to occupy land within a road dedication adjacent to the constructed travel surface or within an unopened right-of-way, such as those connecting roads with waterfront. Under the terms of the licence or permit, the licensee or permittee may construct a path or trail to be used by the public.

7.2.10 Easements and Statutory Rights-of-Way

Landowners may choose to grant an easement or statutory right-of-way to the CVRD for the use of a strip of their land for public trail purposes. Easements for more than three years in duration must be registered as an encumbrance on title to the land. Together with the easement or right-of-way, the CVRD takes over any liability resulting from the use of the trail corridor by the public.

Where a proposed easement or statutory right-of-way crosses Agricultural Land Reserve, the approval of the Agricultural Land Commission is required.

7.2.11 Leases

Occasionally an individual land owner or company may be willing to lease land to the local government or an agency for park or trail purposes. For example, a corporation in the Municipality of North Cowichan owns 14 kilometres of linear properties within which it maintains an underground waterline. The company has leased a number of the properties to the municipality for a public trail. The lessee would generally prefer a longer-term, more secure form of tenure in order to justify the costs associated with the construction and maintenance of a trail.

Leases on agricultural land should be noted on title so that any subsequent owner has full disclosure prior to purchasing the property.

7.2.12 Two-Party Agreements

Two-party access or land use agreements provide another alternative form of agreement between the land owner and a user-group or agency. As with leases, this form of tenure does not offer much security for the user-group, as a change in land ownership may result in the termination of the agreement.

7.3 Strategy for Implementation

7.3.1 Integration with the Denman Island OCP

The parks and greenways master plan was adopted by the CVRD Board as policy to guide parkland acquisition and development on Denman Island at their August 30, 2011 meeting.

Since the planning authority for the island lies with the Islands Trust, the plan must work in conjunction with the Denman Island OCP. To accomplish this, the Islands Trust included a reference to the plan in their OCP amendment bylaw no. 199 and included the conceptual parks plan map as schedule G to the OCP. The OCP amendment bylaw no. 199 was adopted by the Local Trust Committee on August 16, 2011. The inclusion of the map as a schedule to the OCP means parks plan priorities are now part of the broader strategic planning framework for Denman Island and will be one of the considerations during the development process.

7.3.2 Amendment of the Community Parks Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw

The priority for acquisition of parkland is in the form of recreational greenways (see appendix 1 for proposed conceptual locations). The 2001 establishment bylaw that gives the CVRD the authority to plan for, acquire and develop community parks on Denman and Hornby islands was silent on greenways. In order to enable the CVRD to develop recreational greenways on Denman Island,

the bylaw had to be amended. The amending bylaw 2253 is expected to be adopted in late fall 2011.

7.3.3 Collaboration

A wide variety of strategies will be critical in order to implement the community's wishes for a comprehensive parks and greenways network. As noted in Section 7.1 above, collaboration with other agencies and with land owners is the key to successful implementation.

7.4 Implementation Strategies

The following strategies are based on the research completed, discussions with the Islands Trust and Trust Fund staff and with BC Parks, consultation with DIRA committees and Denman Conservancy members and public input through the community survey, meetings and e-mail exchanges. These strategies lay the basis for the on-the-ground implementation of the plan to establish a comprehensive community parks and greenways system on Denman Island over time.

1. As a courtesy and preliminary step, it may be useful to have an informal initiation meeting between elected officials (the regional director for CVRD Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A') and the Denman Island Local Trust Committee), representatives from land management agencies (CVRD, BC Parks, federal coast guard, the Islands Trust Fund, Denman Conservancy Association, Denman Island Recreation Commission Society, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure) and voluntary organizations with an interest in parks and trails (Denman Island Residents Association parks committee, trails committee). This meeting could be in the form of a Denman Island protected area tour (real or virtual) with each land management agency showcasing their key initiatives. This would identify areas for cooperation and encourage synergies between land management agencies and voluntary organizations.
2. Building on the first initiation meeting, hold an annual meeting in the fall of each year with representatives from all Denman Island land management agencies and organizations and voluntary groups working on parks, trails, greenways and conservation initiatives to update each other on current and future planned initiatives and identify areas for collaboration. These annual meetings will be helpful for coordinating planning initiatives and ensuring that trails and wildlife corridors between protected areas managed by different agencies connect up. The meetings may also result in some joint projects.
3. Work with the parks and trails committees of the Denman Island Residents Association on park and trail planning and implementation of priorities in this plan. Depending on the specific project, invite other interested parties and affected agencies to join planning meetings.
4. Consult with the Agricultural Land Commission, farmers and owners of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve early on in the process to review proposed greenways that go through the Agricultural Land Reserve and to discuss alignment and measures to minimize the effect on current and possible future agricultural operations.
5. Work together to implement the multi-use ferry to ferry trail, the top-priority project.

6. Develop an educational/awareness strategy and campaign that would include the following elements:
 - Make residents aware of the long-term goals and strategies to achieve the goals and current implementation projects.
 - Interest local land owners in providing access through their property in appropriate locations or in donating linear strips of land – for example, along lot lines – to a public agency.
 - Encourage the use of easements and rights-of-way to provide greenways.
 - Create an ‘Adopt-a-Trail’ program, similar to the ‘Adopt-a-Park’ program.
 - Support development of a Denman Island parks and trails map for educational and recreational purposes, to be distributed as determined by the local community.
 - Add parks and trails signage at appropriate locations.
9. Obtain licences or permits from MOTI for appropriate road ends and greenways within road rights-of-way for the development of trails and beach accesses.
10. Encourage the use of ‘zone’ designations within larger parks and nature reserves to establish conservation-focussed areas and areas that should be accessible for non-motorized recreation.

Appendix 1: Denman Island Parks and Greenways Priorities – Conceptual Parks Plan

The map is posted as a separate document at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/denman