

*Englishman River Regional Park*  
A Conservation Area along the River Corridor



*Five-Year Management Plan*

November 2008

Prepared for:

The Regional District of Nanaimo, Recreation and Parks Department  
and  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia

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The ERRPCA Management Plan Steering Committee provided thoughtful input to this plan. The committee included:

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- S. Herle – Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee and Mayor of Parksville
- J. Stanhope – Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee and Chair, RDN Board.

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**Englishman River Regional Park  
A Conservation Area along the River Corridor  
Management Plan**

The signatories of the primary stakeholders approve the 2009-2014 Management Plan for Englishman River Regional Park and agree to work cooperatively on the implementation of management strategies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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## ***List of Acronyms***

ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
AWS	Arrowsmith Water Services
BCCF	BC Conservation Foundation
BCTC	BC Transmission Corporation
BMP	Best Management Practices
CDC	Conservation Data Centre
CDF	Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone
CFDC	Community Fisheries Development Centre
COSEWIC	Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
ERRPCA	Englishman River Regional Park: A Conservation Area along the River Corridor
ERWRP	Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan
LWD	Large woody debris
MOE	BC Ministry of Environment
MOF	BC Ministry of Forests
MOT	BC Ministry of Transportation
MVIHES	Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
OCF	Official Community Plan
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
P-QB WMA	Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area
PSEF	Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund
RDN	Regional District of Nanaimo
ROW	Right-of-Way
RPTAC	Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee
TNT	The Nature Trust of British Columbia
VIU	Vancouver Island University
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

## ***Executive Summary***

The “Englishman River Regional Park: A Conservation Area along the River Corridor” (ERRPCA) is a strategic component of the Englishman River conservation corridor, a 20-km long system of protected land and water running from the Englishman River Falls Provincial Park to the Englishman River estuary.

The ERRPCA is comprised of two parcels located mostly on the north side of the Englishman River that are owned by the Province, the Nature Trust of British Columbia (TNT), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Through lease agreements with these property owners, the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) manages the ERRPCA as a regional park with the responsibility of ensuring that management and operation are compatible with the conservation aims of the landowners. The RDN’s mandate is focused on the lands on the north side of the river; the small southern portions will be managed by TNT in conjunction with other conservation lands in this area.

***Planning Process:*** The RDN and landowners cost-shared this Management Plan to guide the management and operation of the ERRPCA. Its development was overseen by RDN parks staff and a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the landowners and the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (RPTAC). A preliminary inventory and assessment of natural resources was completed by LGL Limited in Summer 2007; their report is contained in Appendix A. The planning process included two open houses, a users' survey and a questionnaire regarding the final draft of the Plan. A variety of organizations, agencies and individuals were contacted directly regarding their interests in the ERRPCA and to review the final draft.

This Management Plan outlines the long-term vision, management principles and goals for the ERRPCA and provides specific policies and actions for the management and stewardship of the natural, cultural and recreational features of the park. This document represents the first management plan for the park, with the intent that it will be reviewed and updated every five years.

***Conservation and Recreation:*** The ERRPCA represents important conservation values:

- The ERRPCA has the potential to mature into an old-growth forest representative of the Moist Maritime subzone of the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone (CDFmm), one of the rarest ecological zones in BC; undisturbed examples of this type of forest ecosystem are dwindling.

- Eight provincial or federally-designated species at risk are known to occur, and an additional 26 at-risk species probably or possibly occur in the ERRPCA.
- The Englishman River supports all species of salmon. A hatchery and over 4.4 km of side-channels, constructed by fisheries agencies and the former timber companies that owned the property to increase salmon rearing habitat, are located within the ERRPCA. Several non-profit organizations are active in running the hatchery, maintaining the channels, and monitoring fish populations and habitat conditions.

The ERRPCA also has a long history of informal recreation use, with some 13 kilometres of trails and roads, several popular fishing spots and viewpoints, and benches and picnic tables, constructed by non-profits. Horseback riding has been a traditional use. Motorized vehicles are restricted by the presence of a gate at the entry of the service road; however, unauthorized use by ATVs and dirt bikes still exists.

The overarching management issue in the ERRPCA is achieving environmental protection while still allowing appropriate recreational use. The responses received from the user survey and the discussions at open houses reflected a desire to minimize the human use footprint and to focus on habitat protection and enhancement. Conflicts between conservation and recreation interests were evident, particularly with respect to horse crossings through the river. An interpretive component was supported in the form of self-guided trails but there was less appetite for 'hard' facilities (e.g., extensive signage or a nature centre).

**Vision and Goals:** The vision for the ERRPCA is as follows:

*As part of the Englishman River conservation corridor, the ERRPCA is a place where ecological functions are preserved, where fish and wildlife habitats are actively protected and enhanced, and where people can experience healthy ecosystems in ways that do not threaten their integrity.*

Achieving this Vision is guided by the lease agreements and associated covenants between the RDN and property owners, and the following **Management Goals**:

1. Cooperative Management: To work with partnering agencies, community stewardship and recreational groups, educational institutions, neighbouring residents and the public to effectively manage the ERRPCA to meet the management goals.
2. Environmental Conservation: To protect and conserve the long-term ecological integrity of aquatic and terrestrial habitats within the ERRPCA and as a component of the greater Englishman River conservation corridor.



3. Recreation: To ensure that recreational uses in the ERRPCA are sensitive to the environment, have minimal negative impact on its ecological assets and contribute positively to the quality of life in the Regional District.
4. Education and Interpretation: To encourage and develop educational and interpretive opportunities to enrich the public’s experience of the ERRPCA, and to enhance an appreciation and foster stewardship of its natural assets.
5. Public Safety and Park Security: To provide a safe area where natural and human-made hazards are minimized and neighbouring private property is respected.

**Management Policies and Actions:** The Plan sets out a series of Management Policies and accompanying Operational Actions to move towards achieving these goals over the next 5 years. The Policies are detailed in Section 6 and summarized below. The Operational Actions are detailed in Section 7, and are subject to review, revision and re-prioritization by the ERRPCA Management Steering Committee.

Topic	Policy
Cooperative Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish management and advisory committee to oversee the management of the park.</li> <li>• Conclude and implement an operating agreement with DFO regarding management of the fish hatchery and side channels.</li> <li>• Work with conservation partners to identify ongoing caretaking services.</li> <li>• Identify ways to ensure ongoing protection of natural buffers around the perimeter of the park.</li> <li>• Work with the current permit holder and provincial Inspector of Mines to complete reclamation of the gravel pit, and develop plans for habitat restoration and future waterworks.</li> </ul>
Park Use Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a system of park use zones to provide a framework in which to manage the ERRPCA.</li> </ul>
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish inventory and monitoring programs that support the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems and wildlife populations in the ERRPCA.</li> <li>• Work with stewardship partners to manage, restore and monitor the aquatic and riparian habitats along the Englishman River within the park.</li> </ul>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage accesses to the ERRPCA to ensure public safety, avoid or reduce impacts to natural values, and minimize adverse impacts on neighbours.</li> <li>• Manage the trail network to protect sensitive areas</li> </ul>

	from recreational impacts while providing sustainable recreation.
Education and Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve information about the ERRPCA through signage, brochures and web-based applications.</li><li>• Work with conservation and education partners to establish an interpretive signage and self-guided trail program.</li><li>• Develop partnerships with educational institutions to utilize the ERRPCA as an environmental classroom.</li><li>• Examine the potential use of existing park buildings as future interpretive and educational facilities.</li></ul>
Public Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and raise awareness among the visiting public of hazards within the ERRPCA.</li><li>• Coordinate emergency responses and fire management with local agencies.</li></ul>

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1. Overview of the ERRPCA

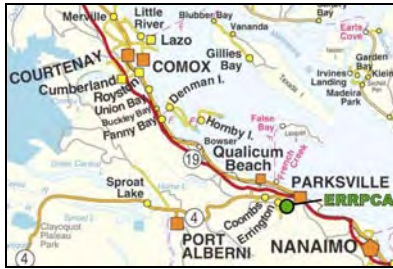


Figure 1.1 ERRPCA location

The “Englishman River Regional Park: a Conservation Area along the River Corridor” (ERRPCA) is located southeast of the City of Parksville, about five kilometres upriver from the Englishman River estuary (Figure 1.1). It consists of 207 hectares of floodplain and forest land, and includes almost five kilometres of river frontage, two constructed side channels, and a community salmon hatchery.

The ERRPCA is comprised of two parcels that make up Block 602 located mostly on the north side of the Englishman River (Figure 1.1). Lot 1 is owned by the Province and the remainder of Block 602 is owned by the Nature Trust of British Columbia (TNT), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Two small portions spill over to the south side of the river, adjacent to conservation lands (Block 564) owned by TNT.

Operationally and for the purposes of this Plan, management of the ERRPCA is focused on the north side of the river; the small southern

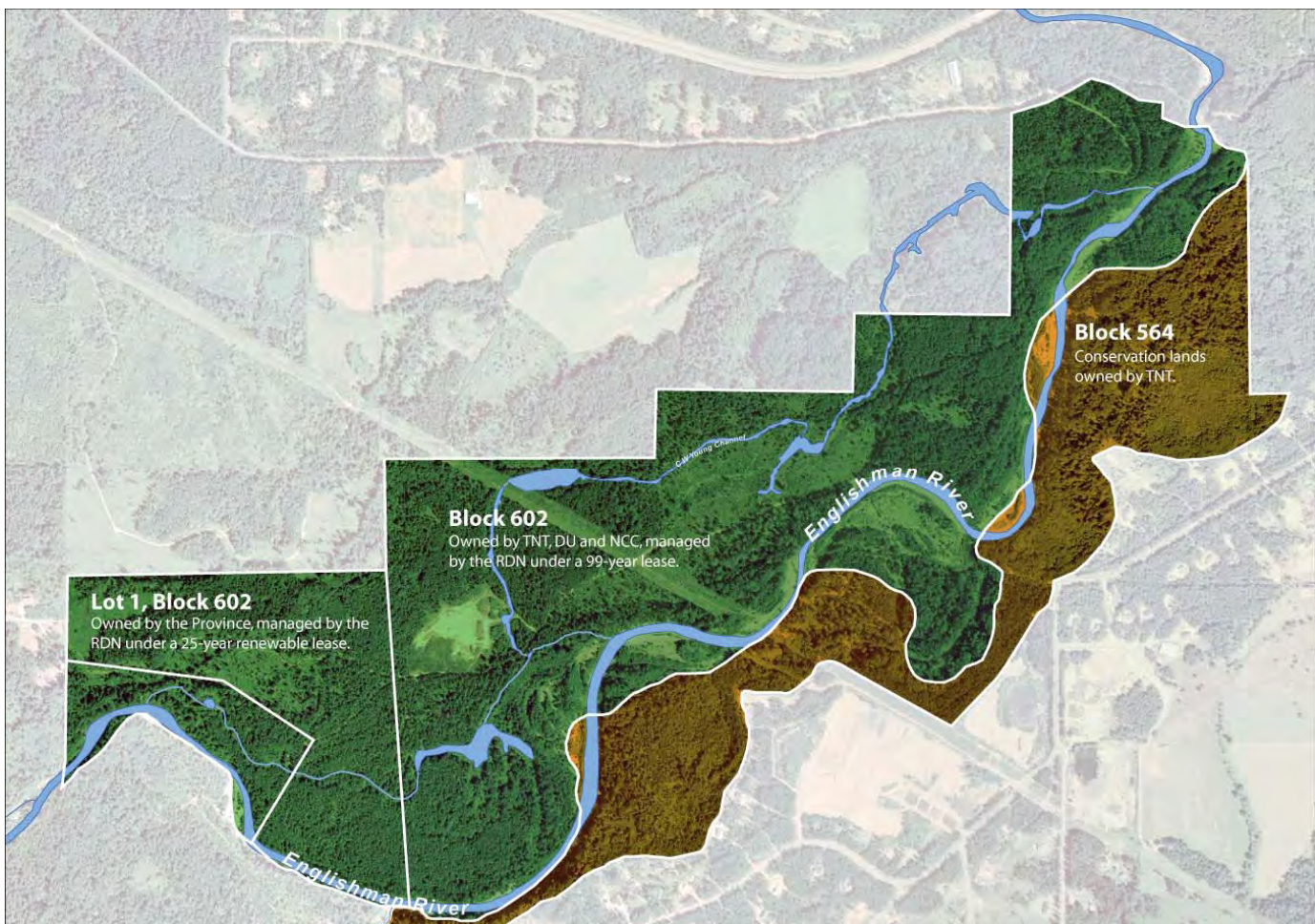


Figure 1.2 Boundaries of the ERRPCA (shown in green)

portions will be managed by TNT in conjunction with Block 564.

In the past, the ERRPCA lands were used primarily as managed forest and for informal recreational use. A fish hatchery and two spawning channels were built in the lower Englishman River in the 1990's in an effort to restore salmonid populations. However, other than a pre-existing gravel pit and an access road to the hatchery, the property is largely undeveloped and has no water or power services.

### 1.1.1 Acquisition as a Park/Conservation Area

In 2003, TNT led a partnership of agencies and funding organizations to purchase the ERRPCA property from then owners TimberWest Ltd. In the face of growing development pressure in the Oceanside area, the property was acquired to protect fish and wildlife habitat, preserve a long-term drinking water supply, and allow continuing access for passive outdoor recreation. The acquisition forms part of a larger conservation corridor stretching some 20 kilometres along the river from the estuary to Englishman River Falls Provincial Park.

Through lease agreements with the agencies that now own the property (TNT, DUC, NCC and the Province), the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has become the manager of the ERRPCA with the responsibility of ensuring that management and operation as a regional park are compatible with the conservation aims of the landowners.

## 1.2. The Stakeholders

A variety of agencies and organizations are involved in the acquisition of the ERRPCA and/or have an interest in its use and management:

Major funders, land title holders	The Nature Trust of BC (TNT) BC Ministry of Environment (MOE) Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN)
Other funders	Pacific Estuary Conservation Program Pacific Salmon Foundation Habitat Conservation Trust Fund City of Parksville Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) EnCana TD Friends of the Environment Mid-Island Wildlife Watch Parksville-Qualicum Fish & Game Club Arrowsmith Naturalists Chemainus Rod & Gun Ministry of Transportation
Aboriginal land claim, archaeological sites	Nanoose First Nation Qualicum First Nation
Land and/or resource uses	Arrowsmith Water Service (drinking water) Terasen Gas (utility right of way)

	BC Hydro Authority/Transmission Corp. (right of way) Haylock Bros. Paving Ltd. (gravel permit)
Fisheries restoration and enhancement, environmental interests	Fisheries and Oceans Canada Community Fisheries Development Centre (CFDC) BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF) Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan Steering Committee (ERWRP) Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society (MVIHES) Arrowsmith Naturalists Streamkeeper groups
Other interests	Silver Spur Riding Club Errington Fire Dept. Neighbouring landowners Local businesses, resorts School district, Vancouver Island University (VIU), Local residents

Table 1.1 ERRPCA Stakeholders

### 1.3. Purpose of the Management Plan

The RDN and TNT have cost-shared the development of this plan to guide the management and operation of the ERRPCA for the next five to ten years. It outlines the long-term vision, management principles and goals for the property and provides specific policies and actions for the management and stewardship of the natural, cultural and recreational features of the park.

This document represents the first management plan for the park, with the intent that it will be reviewed and updated every five years.

### 1.4. Plan Organization

This management plan includes the following sections:

- **Methodology:** A summary of the methods used to create this Plan and results of the consultation processes.
- **Plan Context:** An overview of land status and natural, recreational, resource, educational and cultural values of the ERRPCA.
- **Issues Summary:** Identification of the major issues in the ERRPCA identified through the consultation and context discussion.
- **Long-term Vision, Management Principles and Goals:** Defines the vision, outlines the key components of the park operating framework and identifies management goals.
- **Management Policies:** Sets out policies regarding cooperative management, park use zones; conservation; recreation; public safety and security; education and interpretation; and park funding.
- **Operational Actions:** Identifies actions for five-year management plan term.

## **2.0 The Plan Process - Method and Results**

### **2.1. Approach**

The creation of this Management Plan was overseen by RDN parks staff and a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from TNT and the RDN Regional Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (RPTAC). The Plan was developed in three phases:

#### **Phase 1 – Inventory and Analysis (June – October 2007)**

- a. Develop draft vision, principles and goals.
- b. Conduct baseline environmental inventory and assessment.
- c. Inventory human use and values through a user survey.

#### **Phase 2 – Consultations and Evaluations (August – October 2007)**

- a. Interview agencies and organizations active in the ERRPCA.
- b. Develop 3 alternative conceptual site plans – “low, medium and high-use footprint”.
- c. Hold two public consultation sessions to inform the public about the management plan and get feedback on the alternative concept plans.

#### **Phase 3 – Plan Drafting and Development (Oct 2007 – November 2008)**

- a. Prepare draft versions, review with RDN staff and the Steering Committee, and revise.
- b. Distribute the draft Plan via the RDN website for review by other stakeholders.
- c. Compile comments; develop revisions and review with the Steering Committee and RDN staff.
- d. Finalize the Management Plan.

### **2.2. Inventory of Natural Values**

As part of the development of this management plan, a preliminary inventory and assessment of natural resources was completed by LGL Limited in summer 2007. Using existing information and available ortho-images, the authors described the habitat types, existing flora and fauna, and species designated as at-risk (either provincially or federally) that do or could occur in the park. The authors completed field visits to the park in July and August 2007 to validate the habitat delineation; all flora and fauna observed during those field visits were recorded. The resulting “Inventory of Natural Values” (LGL Ltd., 2008) is attached as [Appendix A](#); major findings are summarized in Section 3.3 “Natural Values”.

### **2.3. Consultation**

RDN Public Policy states that (a) the style of consultation must be inclusive; (b) opportunities for providing input and participating in consultation must be meaningful; (c) the process surrounding consultation must be

#### **ERRPCA Plan Steering Committee:**

S. Herle, RPTAC  
J. Stanhope, RPTAC  
J. Hope, TNT  
T. Reid, TNT/DUC/NCC  
J. Michel, RDN staff  
W. Marshall, RDN staff

transparent; (d) presentations must be clear; (e) all input must be accurately and objectively recorded and interpreted; and (f) all public input provided must be made available for public review.

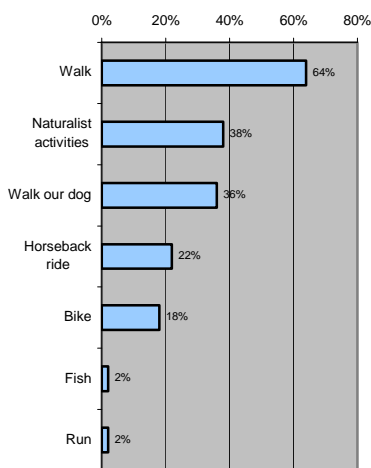
### 2.3.1 Stakeholder Contact

Appendix B lists the organizations, agencies and individuals that were contacted regarding their interests in the ERRPCA. Initial contact was made in August 2007 with subsequent communications in October 2007 to: inform about the management plan process; provide information on the public open houses; and distribute the user survey. A third contact was made in July 2008 to seek comments on the Draft Management Plan.

### 2.3.2 Public Meetings

Open houses were held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (on site as part of BC Rivers Day) and October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (at Oceanside Place in Parksville) to inform the public about the management plan and get feedback on three alternative concept plans - “low, medium and high-use footprint”. These were attended by the general public as well as representatives from TNT, Community Fisheries Development Centre (CFDC), Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan (ERWRP) Steering Committee, Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society (MVIHES), British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF), RPTAC, District 69 Recreation Commission, Area G Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, Errington Fire Department, Arrowsmith Naturalists, and Parksville Streamkeepers.

The “low-use footprint” alternative was generally favoured by those attendees who filled out a question form (8) and those who participated in a short workshop at the October 17 event (18). Protecting wildlife corridors and maintaining the natural integrity of the area were key themes in their comments. Education about the park’s natural features and the need to stay on trails was emphasized. There was considerable discussion regarding horseback access – whether more than one river crossing access point was necessary, and whether such access will be feasible in the long term (i.e., more than 5 years).



User Survey: favourite activities

### 2.3.3 User Survey

As part of the management planning process, a user survey was circulated in August 2007. A total of 45 responses were received; a summary of responses is included as Appendix C. Though too small to be statistically valid, this sample can still be considered a window on opinions of the public at large. Key results of the survey include:

- The majority of respondents were local, aged 45 and older and from families with no dependent children.
- Most respondents get to the ERRPCA by car, parking at (in order of times mentioned) Allsbrook Road, Top Bridge, and Middlegate Road.
- Favourite activities in the park included walking, dog walking and taking part in naturalist activities (see sidebar).

- The majority of respondents were generally satisfied with trails and facilities; a majority also indicated that they would like to learn more about the park's natural aspects.
- Most respondents stated that nothing limited their use of the park; a few noted limitations due to terrain, trail conditions, All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use, the lack of signage and that horse use was discouraged.
- Interpretive signs, self guided tours and trail maps were among the most desired facilities in the park. There were also suggestions for more rest areas and signage, but otherwise, most respondents wished to see minimal changes, with the park staying as natural as possible.

### **2.3.4 Review of Draft Plan**

In early July 2008, a draft version of the Management Plan was posted on the RDN's website, along with a questionnaire regarding the vision, goals and management policies of the Plan. All stakeholders were contacted by email to inform them of the availability of the draft Plan and requesting their input via the questionnaire or direct contact by September 30th.

Fourteen responses to the questionnaire were received, as well as correspondence from the Arrowsmith Water Service, BC Hydro, Terasen Gas, the Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan Steering Committee and individual residents.

For the most part, reviewers generally agreed with the goals and policies presented in the draft Plan. Key themes in their comments included the following:

- Emphasis on the natural values of the ERRPCA, promoting conservation and restoration goals.
- Keeping facilities to a minimum: "people want wilderness areas, without all the frills and bows". Education and interpretive facilities should be kept low key; promotion of this park should not create demand for increased infrastructure.
- Maintaining access to and through the park for horseback riders.
- Concern with the future presence of a water intake facility, including the potential impact of the additional water withdrawal on the integrity of the aquatic and riparian values within the ERRPCA.

Several corrections and additional ideas were also garnered from these comments and incorporated in revisions to generate the final Plan.



## 3.0 Context for the ERRPCA

### Key Legal & Policy Documents

99-year lease between RDN and TNT/DU

25-year lease between RDN and the Province

Section 219 Covenant

Statutory right of way (SRW) to RDN for future waterworks

SRW to BC Hydro and Terasen Gas for utilities

RDN Park Use Regulations Bylaw No. 1399 (2004)

RDN Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005-2015

### 3.1. Land Status

#### 3.1.1 Governing Leases and Encumbrances

ERRPCA was subdivided into two lots to accommodate the Province's contribution to the acquisition (see Figure 1.2). The 34-hectare western lot (20% of the park) legally described as Lot 1, Block 602, Nanoose District Plan, VIP76721, is owned by the Province as represented by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). Encumbrances on this property include:

- A 25-year renewable lease to the RDN concluded in 2004, for the purposes of managing the property as part of a Regional Park.
- A Section 219 Restrictive Covenant over lands located within 30 meters of the natural boundary of the Englishman River for conservation of riparian and aquatic habitat.

The 173-hectare eastern lot (80% of the park) legally described as Block 602, Nanoose District, Except Part in Plan VIP76721, is owned by TNT, DUC and the NCC. Encumbrances on this property include:

- A 99-year lease to the RDN concluded in 2006, for the purposes of managing the property as part of a regional park.
- Statutory Rights of Way (SRW) to BC Hydro and Terasen Gas within the utility corridor.

Both properties are subject to a SRW, registered by the RDN, for potential domestic water intake works by the Arrowsmith Water Service (AWS). These works could include water storage and treatment facilities, water distribution lines and a private access road.

The two leases outline conditions for management of the park. In short, the RDN must ensure that development, management and operations are compatible with the conservation aims of the landowners including the preservation of the forest ecosystem, fish and wildlife habitats.

As referenced in the RDN's 99-year lease with TNT and DUC, the operation and maintenance of the hatchery and channel system is the responsibility of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). The RDN will conclude an operating agreement with DFO in tandem with the production of this management plan.

#### 3.1.2 Neighbouring Lands

A variety of conservation and other park lands are adjacent to the park, including (Figure 3.1):

- The RDN's Top Bridge Community Park and City of Parksville's Top Bridge Park to the northeast;
- Block 564 conservation lands on the south side of the river, owned by TNT;

- Conservation covenanted land owned by Timber West on the south side of the river, southwest of the park; and
- Crown lands designated as part of the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area (P-QB WMA) at the outlet of Morison Creek, on the southwest boundary.

The western boundary is adjacent to a public road right-of-way. Private forest, agricultural and rural lands lie along the north boundary.

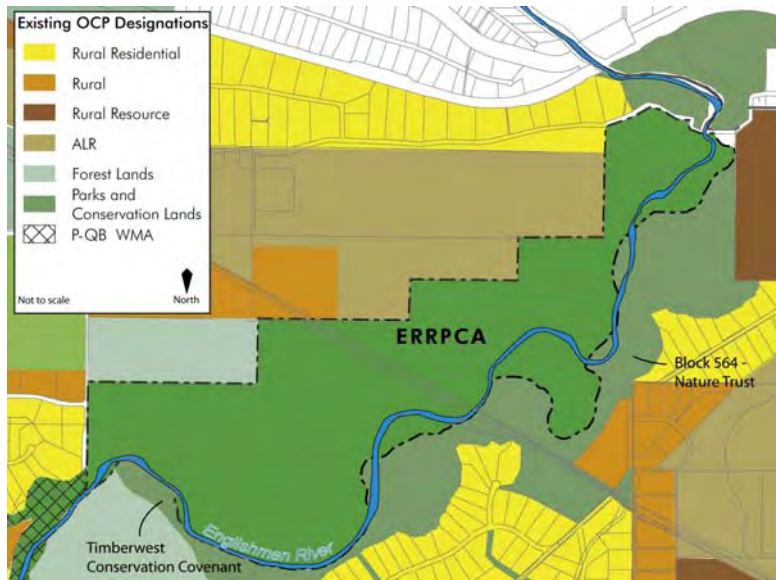


Figure 3.1 Lands adjacent to the ERRPCA

### 3.1.3 Services

There is a gravel access road (the “park road”) into the property. There are no on-site electrical services; the nearest connections to the power grid are at Middlegate Road and Allsbrook Road.

The ERRPCA lies within the Errington fire protection boundary. Coverage is provided by Errington’s volunteer fire department, which operates under a Mutual Aid Agreement with its neighbouring fire departments. Under the Errington Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2006), the Wildland Fire Service of the Ministry of Forests will assist fire suppression efforts where wildfire threatens forest or other wild land values, regardless of ownership.

### 3.1.4 Land Use Regulations

The ERRPCA lies within the area covered by the current Englishman River Official Community Plan (OCP - RDN Bylaw 814). Goals of the existing OCP that relate to the park include:

- To preserve and manage natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment and prosperity of area residents;
- To preserve productive, sensitive and unique ecosystems including fish and wildlife habitat and the marine environment; and
- To protect and conserve archaeological sites.

This OCP document is currently under review and will be consolidated into one OCP for Area G in its entirety in 2008-2009.

The [RDN Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005-2015](#) sets out the future direction, policies, priorities and actions for regional parks and trails. The vision outlined in this plan is for a system that protects and stewards natural values while providing rewarding recreational opportunities, fostering education and appreciation of the natural environment and enhancing the livability of the Region.

The [RDN Park Use Regulations Bylaw No. 1399 \(2004\)](#) regulates park use in community and regional parks. This bylaw limits park use to non-motorized activities (walking, cycling and horseback riding). The ERRPCA is listed as a Level 4 Park – “Undeveloped Park, Trail and other Open Space”. Park Use Permits are issued under this bylaw for such activities as commercial recreation services, special events and research activity.

## 3.2. Conservation Context

The ERRPCA has the potential to mature into an old-growth forest representative of the Coastal Douglas Fir (CDF) biogeoclimatic zone. Undisturbed examples of this type of forest ecosystem are dwindling on the east coast of Vancouver Island, which increases the long-term conservation value of this park. Even in its current state, the ERRPCA contains a variety of habitats that contribute to a rich biodiversity.

### 3.2.1 Conservation Lands

The ERRPCA is also a strategic component of the Englishman River conservation corridor, a 20-km long system of protected land and water running from the Englishman River Falls Provincial Park to the estuary (Figure 3.2). Given its significance for fish and wildlife habitat, the Englishman River corridor has been the target of numerous conservation initiatives over the past 25 years:

- Between 1981 and 1993, TNT and the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program acquired over 76 hectares of land in the Englishman River estuary. This land was leased to the Province to form part of the PQ-WMA (see Section 3.2.2).
- In 2003, TNT purchased 100 ha of riparian land in Block 564 - on the south side of the river directly opposite the ERRPCA - from the Englishman River Land Corporation for less than 15% of its fair market value. The Land Corporation eco-gifted the difference between the market value and purchase price to TNT.
- At the same time, Weyerhaeuser donated the remaining timber and gravel rights that it held on the entire area (334 ha) of Block 564 to TNT, another form of eco-gifting that helped to protect these ecologically sensitive lands.
- In 2005, TimberWest donated an 8-hectare conservation covenant on riparian land located on the south side of the river to TNT. This site



Backwater on south side of Englishman River

also lies on the south side of the river opposite the ERRPCA, covering some 1.3 km of riverbank.

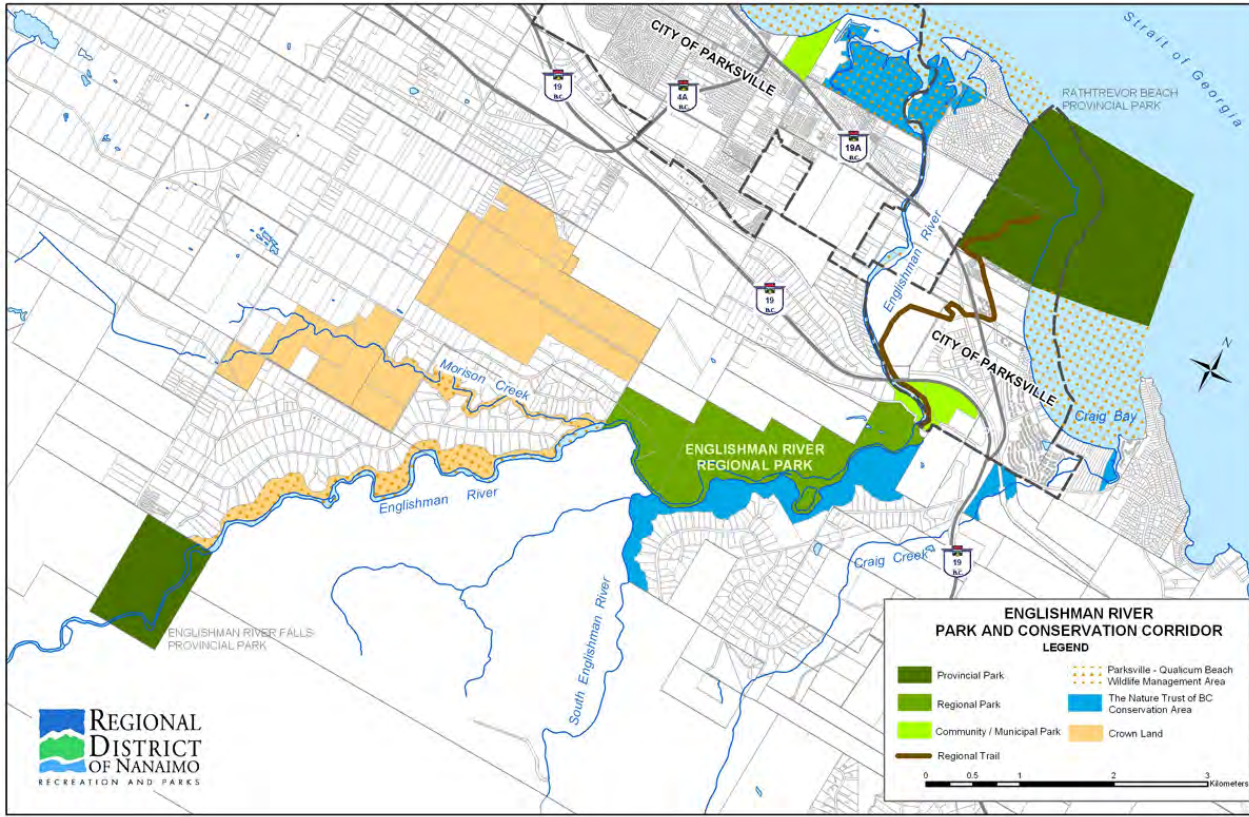


Figure 3.2 Englishman River Conservation Corridor

### 3.2.2 Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area

Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) are designated under Section 4 of the B.C. Wildlife Act as areas where conservation and management of wildlife, fish and their habitats are the priority land uses, but where other uses may be permitted depending on their compatibility with WMA goals. The MOE is responsible for administering and managing WMAs.

The ERRPCA lies adjacent to the P-QB WMA, established in April 1993. The original designation encompassed 873-ha (2,156 acre) of Crown and TNT lands over 17 kilometres of coastal foreshore and estuarine habitat, from Craig Bay to the Little Qualicum River estuary. In 2001, Crown lands along the Englishman River and the lower 5 km of Morison Creek were included in the WMA, adding 151 ha (373 acres) of Crown-owned riverbed and riparian area and creating a 14-km corridor from Englishman River Provincial Park to the estuary.

The purpose of the P-QB WMA is to protect and manage the marine, estuarine and river habitat critical to fish and wildlife populations in the area. A Management Plan was first issued in 1996, and updated in 2003, to provide guidance regarding habitat protection and restoration

and to allow for wildlife viewing and other compatible activities within the WMA.

### **3.2.3 Englishman River Watershed Recovery Planning**

The Englishman River has been identified as one of the most important salmon-producing rivers on Vancouver Island. In 2001, the Englishman was one of seven watersheds initially chosen for a Watershed Recovery Plan under the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund (PSEF). The federal government established this \$30 million fund as the first long-term funding mechanism dedicated to achieving sustainable salmon stocks in British Columbia and the Yukon.

Under the supervision of the ERWRP Steering Committee and its Technical Advisory Committee, rehabilitation activities were undertaken to:

- Improve refuge and instream cover by installing large woody debris (LWD), groins, debris catchers and boulder clusters;
- Stabilize banks and improve access for juveniles and adults;
- Monitor water flows and water quality to develop strategies for improved low flow water management.

Although the PSEF has completed its major funding for the Englishman, the ERWRP Steering Committee has been continuing the initiatives under the Recovery Plan in partnership with DFO, BCCF, CFDC, MOE, TNT, RDN and several local stewardship groups.



LWD installed on Englishman River

## **3.3. Natural Values**

The following highlights the main findings from the “Inventory of Natural Values” (LGL Ltd., 2008) attached as [Appendix A](#).

### **3.3.1 Terrestrial Habitat**

The ERRPCA lies within the Moist Maritime subzone of the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone (CDFmm) - one of the smallest ecological zones in BC, comprising only 5% of the total land area, and home to some of the province’s rarest plant communities. Almost all forests within the park are regenerating following extensive logging since the turn of the last century. Left in an undisturbed state, these areas will mature into old growth forests, an increasingly rare habitat on Vancouver Island.

The “Inventory of Natural Resources” identifies and maps 12 habitat types in the ERRPCA (see Figure 2, page 8 - Appendix A), listed in Table 3.1.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The final topographic survey of the C.W. Young Channel extension (2007) was not complete at the time the habitat types were delineated. Hence, the area occupied by the new side channel could not be established and the additional riverine and riparian habitats represented by the new channel could not be taken into account in the habitat assessment in Table 3.1. Future versions of this plan should incorporate the area of side channel habitat now that the total area and alignment of the wetted channel can be determined.

Code	Habitat Type	Hectares	% Park Area	Sensitivity to human activity
DMF	Dry Mixed Forest	62.9	30.4%	Moderate
MMF	Moist Mixed Forest	45.3	21.9%	High
SCF	Mesic 2nd-growth Coniferous Forest	33.8	16.3%	Moderate
RC	Regenerating Cutblock	25.7	12.4%	Low
RF	Riverine Flat	10.4	5.0%	High
RI	River	9.2	4.4%	High
DS	Disturbed site	6.8	3.3%	Low
DPF	Dry Pine Forest	4.2	2.0%	Moderate
RT	Riparian Thicket	4.0	1.9%	High
SP	Swamps and Ponds	3.7	1.8%	High
FC	Forest Clearing	1.1	0.5%	Moderate
EP	Ephemeral Pool	0.1	0.05%	High
	Total	207.2	100%	

Table 3.1 Habitat types delineated in ERRPCA (from Appendix A)

The habitats were also assessed with respect to their sensitivity to disturbance and damage by human activities. The ratings reflect a qualitative assessment of the potential for permanent damage to vegetation and/or habitat values from human activities (walking, running, cycling, dog-walking, horse-back riding). Habitats with the highest sensitivity are typically associated with aquatic habitats and with moist conditions where soils are easily compacted. Although some of these habitats are not currently accessible to park users, there is the potential for damage to arise from any future trail development and off-trail use.

### **3.3.2 Sensitive Ecosystems and Species at Risk**

Under the federal-provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory for Southeast Vancouver Island (1997), the only sites identified within ERRPCA are wetland areas that have been incorporated into the newly extended side channel, and riparian vegetation sites along the Englishman River mainstem.

A variety of flora and fauna were observed in the ERRPCA in the 2007 survey (see appendices A-F of Appendix A). Eight species considered to be at risk provincially or federally are known to occur, and an additional 26 at-risk species probably or possibly occur in the ERRPCA (Table 3.2).

### **3.3.3 River Habitat**

The Englishman River originates on the slopes of Mt. Arrowsmith and Mount Moriarty on Vancouver Island, and flows 40 kms in an easterly direction before entering the Strait of Georgia east of Parksville Bay.

Since the 1980s, the Englishman River has been recognized as one of the most valuable but also most endangered rivers in the province. The river supports all species of salmon. Chum is the dominant species followed by Coho; Chinook, Pink and Sockeye are also present along with Steelhead and Cutthroat trout. Resident game species include Dolly Varden and Rainbow trout.

Species	Provincial Status*	Species	Provincial Status*
<i>Confirmed to occur in ERRPCA:</i>			
Common Wood-nymph, <i>incana</i> ssp.	Red	Red-legged Frog	Blue
Roosevelt Elk	Blue	Cutthroat Trout	Blue
Band-tailed Pigeon	Blue	Dolly Varden	Blue
Purple Martin	Blue	Pacific Sideband (mollusc)	Blue
<i>Probably occur in ERRPCA:</i>			
Vancouver Island Water Shrew	Red	Western Screech-Owl, <i>kennicottii</i> ssp.**	Blue
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	Blue	Northern Pygmy-Owl, <i>swarthy</i> ssp.	Blue
Great Blue Heron, <i>fannini</i> ssp.**	Blue	Barn Swallow	Blue
Northern Goshawk, <i>laingii</i> ssp.	Blue	Western Pine Elfyn, <i>sheltonensis</i> ssp.	Blue
Peregrine Falcon, <i>pealei</i> ssp.**	Blue	Western Toad **	Yellow
Sandhill Crane	Blue		
<i>Possibly occur in ERRPCA:</i>			
Peregrine Falcon, <i>anatum</i> ssp.	Red	Western Pondhawk (dragonfly)	Blue
Evening Fieldslug (mollusc)	Red	Blue Dasher (dragonfly)	Blue
Threaded Vertigo (mollusc)	Red	Autumn Meadowhawk (dragonfly)	Blue
Pacific Vertigo (mollusc)	Red	Western Thorn (mollusc)	Blue
Vancouver Island Ermine	Blue	Broadwhorl Tightcoil (mollusc)	Blue
Green Heron	Blue	Scarletback Taildropper (mollusc)	Blue
Canada Goose, <i>occidentalis</i> ssp.	Blue	Black Gloss (mollusc)	Blue
Pine Grosbeak, <i>carlottae</i> ssp.	Blue		

Table 3.2 Species at risk in the ERRPCA – see Appendix A for details.

\*Provincial CDC ratings: Red – endangered, extinct, extirpated or candidate for such; Blue – particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events; Yellow – uncommon or declining but not candidate for Red or Blue list.

\*\*COSEWIC “Special Concern” – may become threatened or endangered due to a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

The anadromous section extends up to Englishman River Falls, some 16 km from the mouth. The mainstem section within the ERRPCA is a primary spawning and rearing area in the Englishman River system (see Figure 5, Page 28 - Appendix A), and as discussed above in Section 3.2.3, has been a focus for restoration efforts over the last decade.

**Side channel construction:** In the 1990’s, two artificial side-channels – 1300 m on the north side and 950 m on the south side - were constructed by DFO with support of MacMillan Bloedel and TimberWest to increase rearing habitat for juvenile coho salmon. The C.W. Young Channel (north side) was lengthened in 2007, bringing the total length of constructed side-channel habitat in the system to some 4400 meters. Both of these channels are located within the ERRPCA (see Figure 5, Page 28 – Appendix A).

**Instream structures:** Since 2003, over 35 LWD and rock groin structures have been constructed by BCCF at two meander bends within ERRPCA (see Figure 11, Page 33 - Appendix A).

**River condition:** The section of the river mainstem bordering ERRPCA has shown the most channel migration over the last 50 years (see Figure 4, page 26 - Appendix A) and is considered to be over-widened due to natural as well as human influences such as logging further upstream. Large flood events in 1980-1983 and 1990 likely resulted in channel widening and destabilization, riparian damage, infilling with fine sediments, and large-scale reduction in LWD. Although it is showing signs of recovery in some reaches (evidenced by re-vegetation of the gravel bars), bank erosion and lateral channel migration along with poor pool-riffle development continues to plague the river.



CW Young Channel, new section 2007

### 3.3.4 Invasive Species

The majority of invasive species found at ERRPCA are in those areas identified as regenerating cutblock and disturbed sites. There is some invasive plant growth in other areas of the park - e.g., Scotch broom in the gravel pit site and on the riverine flats; Green frogs were found in some wetland areas and along the banks of the river mainstem.

## 3.4. Recreation Values

### 3.4.1 Local Trends

Several trends have implications on the demand for and nature of recreational activities that may be sought in the ERRPCA.

**Population growth and demographic:** For the 2001-2006 census period, the RDN had the highest rate of population growth among Vancouver Island regional districts at 9.1% (average 1.8%/year). Within the “Oceanside” area (the region comprised of Electoral Areas E to H, Parksville and Qualicum Beach), the growth rate was even higher at 11.6% (Statistics Canada, 2006). Furthermore, Oceanside is popular with retirees. At 28%, the proportion of Oceanside residents 65 or older is almost twice as high as the BC average of 14.6%.

**Tourism:** People come to visit Vancouver Island for its natural beauty and to participate in the outdoor recreation opportunities that abound. In a recent Vancouver Island Tourism study, ‘scenic beauty’ was the highest ranked feature of importance. Parks were ranked the top tourism attraction in the central Vancouver Island region with key activities being hiking and wildlife viewing.

**Recreation:** The Recreation Services Master Plan for Oceanside (RDN, 2006) identifies several trends that are relevant to the ERRPCA:

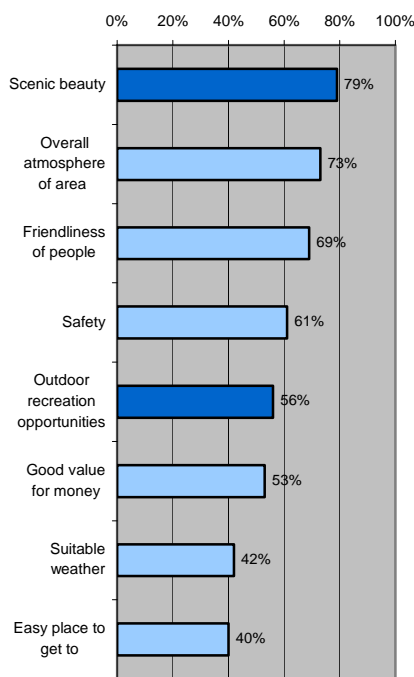
- *Passive Recreation Preferences:* an increase in “individualized and informal” activities as opposed to formal, organized sports; increased demand for more access to outdoor recreation – more trails, less



playing fields. Favourite activities for both youth and adults are walking and cycling.

- *Environmental Education*: people are seeking meaningful experiences in their activities; interest in stewardship, natural history and environmental education is growing.
- *Volunteerism*: the volunteer rate is currently down, but the expectation is for an increase in volunteers once baby boomers retire; volunteer tasks include trail building and invasive species removal days.
- *“Barrier free”*: increased demand by people with disabilities to participate in outdoor recreation.

The RDN is also a participant in Active Communities, a provincial initiative that “promotes and supports, through a coordinated strategy, a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life” (BC Recreation and Parks Association, 2005). The goal is to work with local governments and partner organizations to undertake actions that promote healthy lifestyles, build healthy communities and increase physical activity levels amongst British Columbians by 20% by the year 2010.



Features that attract visitors to Vancouver Island (Tourism Vancouver Island, 2007)

### 3.4.2 Current Use of ERRPCA

ERRPCA has a long history of informal recreation use, including hiking, cycling, ATV use and horseback riding, and there is a web of established trails within the park. The user survey and stakeholder contact identified the following trends and activities:

- The park is very popular among local residents for walking/hiking, dog-walking and to a lesser extent running.
- Several local organizations use the park for regular activities and special events. Examples include monthly walks from Allsbrook to the park hatchery by members of the Mid-Island Volkssport Club and club rides by members of the Silver Spur Riding Club.
- Horseback riders use the ERRPCA trails as part of a larger trail ride from Craig Bay to Little Mountain and beyond.
- Despite the presence of gates and other barriers at park entrances and roads, ATVs and motorbikes are still prevalent though declining, due in part to their long history of use of the site.
- Top Bridge Park is a known ‘party spot’ for local teenagers and there is evidence of these parties along the river close to Top Bridge Crossing and at the Clay Banks site (i.e. fire rings, refuse).
- The Englishman River is popular among sport fishers. The section of the Englishman River bordering ERRPCA is open to sports fishing from June 1 to November 30. All regulations specific to Region 1 Vancouver Island apply, with the exception that wild cutthroat must be released at all times.
- Special events that have occurred in the ERRPCA include BC Rivers Day celebrations, the Bob Pruess Memorial Trail Ride against Cancer, and the Brant Wildlife Festival.

### 3.4.3 Existing Conditions and Park Access

Figure 3.3 shows the existing points of access, trails and facilities in the ERRPCA.

Previous logging operations along with informal recreational use have created about 13 kilometres of trail and road within the ERRPCA. A public outhouse is located next to the hatchery buildings. Picnic tables and benches have been constructed at various locations, including four new benches constructed in 2007 by CFDC crews. Some of these amenities, however, are located in areas of winter high water levels and are subject to damage from flooding. [Appendix D](#) includes a photo inventory of the trails and constructed features currently found at ERRPCA.

Current access points include:

- Allsbrook Road: This is the only vehicle access into the park restricted by a locked gate. Groups and agencies with an interest in the park have keys; the gate is opened for special public events. Roadside parking is available; a parking lot is also located behind a second gate along the access road to Top Bridge.
- Top Bridge Trail and crossing: The footbridge provides pedestrian and bicycle access; there is a parking lot on the Community Park (south) side of the river.
- Middlegate Road: Concrete blocks and boulders block vehicle access but ATVs and motorbikes have succeeded in getting around these barriers in the past. There is limited parking within the road right-of-way; the 25-year lease with the Province specifies development of a small parking area.
- Morison Creek: An informal trail runs within the P-QB WMA adjacent to the river and crosses over Morison Creek and into ERRPCA.
- North Utility Right-of-Way: An informal trail runs north from the park road through the utility right of way, to privately held lands. This trail forms part of an informal loop from the Middlegate Entrance.
- Rivers Edge Loop: As part of the River's Edge subdivision plan, there is a looped trail system on the south side of the river from which horseback riders cross the river into ERRPCA.



Bench on Steelhead Trail



Top Bridge Crossing - a key link in the regional trail network.

### 3.4.4 RDN Regional Trail System

The RDN manages over 60 km of trail in the Regional Trail System. The ERRPCA forms an integral part of the system, providing an important link between the southern and northern portion of the regional district.

A key piece of that link is the Top Bridge Crossing, which was officially opened on BC Rivers Day in September 2007. The suspension bridge crossing connects the ERRPCA to the RDN's and the City of Parksville's Top Bridge community parks, as well as to the Top Bridge trail that runs north to Rathtrevor Provincial Park.

Future expansions of the regional trail network will connect Top Bridge to all the major parks and trails in the RDN, including Englishman River Falls Provincial Park and the Trans-Canada Trail.

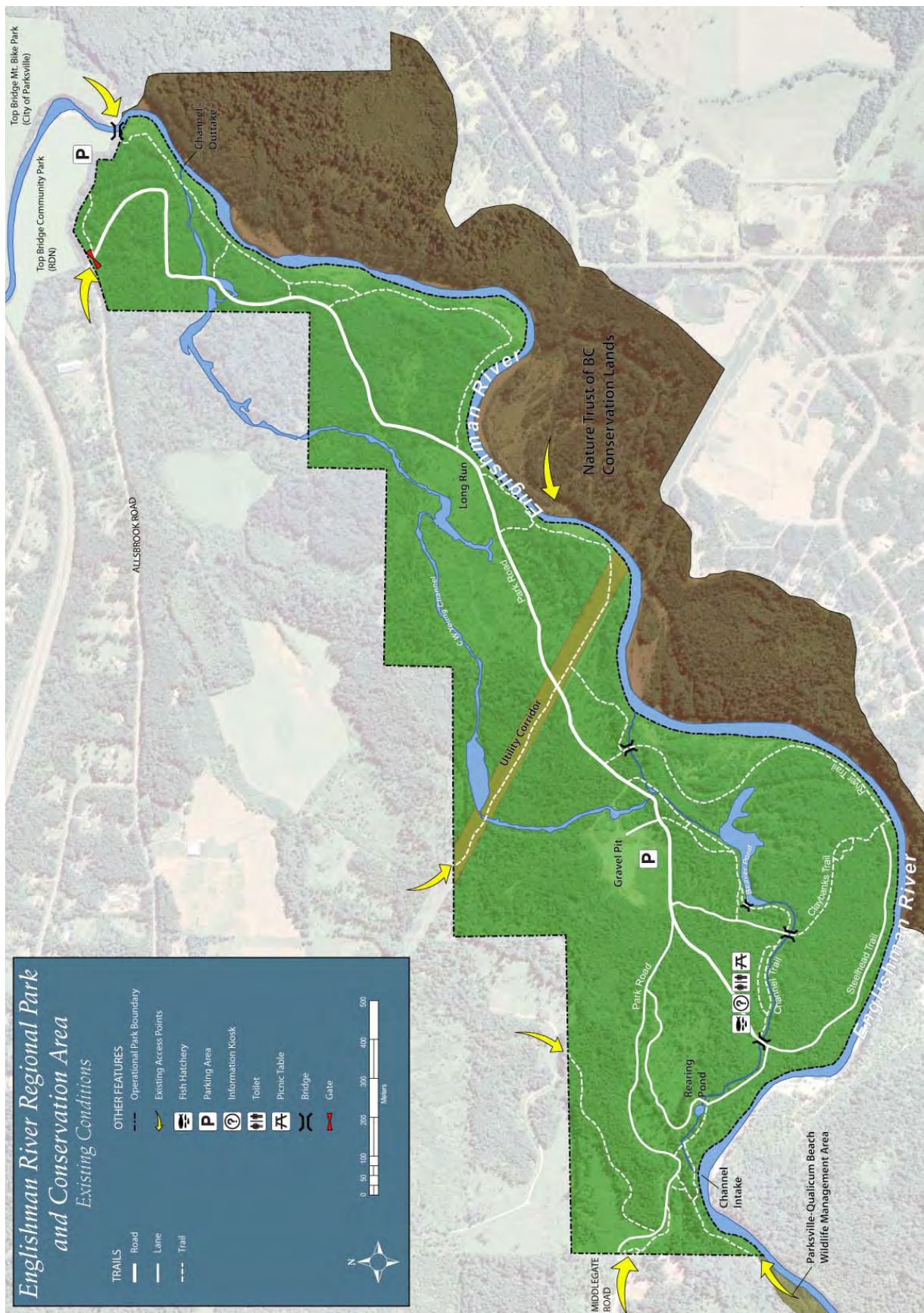


Figure 3.3. Existing conditions and accesses at ERRPCA.

## 3.5. Resource Values and Other Land Uses

### 3.5.1 Forestry

The majority of forests within the CDF were extensively logged at the turn of the century due to the value of Douglas fir timber. Forests in the area around ERRPCA were logged as part of the World War II war effort by the Robert Dollar Company and save for a few small areas of recent activity, have been regenerating since that time.

A conservation evaluation of Block 602 was conducted in 2001 for TimberWest (Buechert, 2001). Key points from this report include:

- There are a few areas of older forest including the knoll near Allsbrook Road, a section of the riverbank near Morison Creek and a section along River Trail, just east of the Clay Banks. Trees in these areas are close to 100 years old.
- There are also areas that were cut only 8-10 years ago – such as near the Middlegate entrance and along the park road east of the utility right-of-way. These areas account for approximately 25% of the park.
- The majority of the remaining forested lands are comprised of timber dating 25-70 years old.

As discussed in Appendix A, if left alone, the mature forest and younger, regenerating forest types will follow a predictable succession in forest age and composition. In the absence of restoration or natural disturbance such as fire, major wind throw or major channel migration, “the majority of the ERRPCA would be mature forest in 20- 50 years from present. In 100 years, most of the park would be classified as old-growth.”

### 3.5.2 Gravel Pit

The 4-ha gravel pit is located on the north side of the park road in the western portion of the park. Haylock Brothers Paving of Qualicum Beach holds the permit issued under the *Mining Act* to operate the gravel pit, and extracted sand and gravel from 2001 to 2004 until it suspended operation in 2005. Under its permit, Haylock is responsible for reclamation of the pit site, and are awaiting input from the RDN as to the desired end use conditions before completing reclamation.

General reclamation requirements are set out under Part 10.7 of the *BC Health, Safety and Reclamation Code* under the *Mines Act*. Until such time as reclamation is completed to the satisfaction of the provincial Inspector of Mines and the Inspector closes the permit, Haylock remains responsible and liable for use of the pit and its structures.<sup>2</sup> In its present condition, the gravel pit does not represent a public safety hazard, as there are no steep slopes, culverts or other infrastructure present.

For its part, the RDN is obliged under the lease with TNT and DUC to “eliminate the potential for further commercial mining of the gravel pit but



8-10 year old forest



Aerial view of existing gravel pit



The gravel pit

<sup>2</sup> I. Webster, Office of the Inspector of Mines, Victoria, December 2007: pers. comm.

allow for minor extraction by the Lessee in order to maintain and develop trail and road works on the Lands and Adjacent Lands” (clause 11c).

There are some remnant ephemeral pools within the gravel pit suggesting that this part of the gravel pit is a natural collector of runoff from the surrounding area.

### **3.5.3 Potential Waterworks**

The Arrowsmith Water Service (AWS), a joint venture of the RDN, City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach, is examining options for securing a water intake in the vicinity. Works could include water storage and treatment facilities, water distribution lines and a private access road.

There are blanket Statutory Rights of Way over both portions of Block 602 for these potential works. No detailed design has been done to date beyond identifying ERRPCA as a potential location for an intake near the confluence of the South Englishman River and establishing an approximate footprint of 7 hectares. AWS expects to have a facility designed by 2010 with a new facility operating by 2013.

The AWS does not have a position regarding limited recreational use in the Englishman River watershed; the administration sees it as an active watershed and facilities would be designed accordingly. However, there could be concern regarding increased levels of activity in the immediate vicinity of existing or future water intakes.

### **3.5.4 Utility Rights of Way**

BC Hydro and Terasen Gas hold rights-of-way (ROW) through the park to install, replace, maintain and access their works. The 18m wide utility corridor within ERRPCA is approximately 800m long, comprising an area of 1.4 hectares (Figure 3.3). While BC Hydro retains the legal tenure of their portion of the ROW, BC Transmission Corporation (BCTC) is responsible for operating, planning and maintaining the system.

Within utility ROWs, landowners retain rights to use the area for activities that do not threaten or interfere with the utilities and access to them. All activities within a utility ROW require prior approval by BC Hydro and Terasen Gas. Preliminary discussions with BC Hydro and BCTC indicate that there would be no action required to use a portion of the access road as a part of a park trail. Terasen Gas, however, would like to be part of any planning for trails within or crossing the ROW. They also indicated that they would be open to discussions regarding gated access.

Both BC Hydro and Terasen Gas permit small-scale tree farms or Christmas tree operations within their rights-of-way; use permits are required.



Signage installed by BCCF highlighting the Steelhead Recovery Plan

### **3.6. Research and Education Values**

As indicated in Section 3.2.3, a variety of organizations have conducted research on fish populations and habitat in the Englishman River.

Interpretive and educational activities within ERRPCA have also been focused primarily on fisheries resources. For example:

- An interpretive sign was installed by BCCF as part of the Steelhead Recovery Plan at the Long Run.
- Information about salmon runs and wildlife brochures are posted periodically at a bulletin board at the hatchery site.
- School groups and community organizations occasionally visit on field trips, though these events appear to rely on individuals already involved in some way with restoration activities on the River.

MVIHES has worked in various ways to raise public awareness of the Englishman River watershed. Its activities included sponsoring streamkeeper education programs, public workshops and seminars on local environmental topics, landowner contact, and business stewardship awards. A primary outreach vehicle was the “Englishman Patient” newsletter. Where these programs have a field component (e.g., streamkeepers courses, Rivers Day events, youth programs), MVIHES has used the ERRPCA as well as other local natural areas (e.g., Morison Creek, Grandon Creek, Englishman River estuary).



Bulletin board at hatchery

### 3.7. Historical Values

There is one registered archeological site, a First Nations midden, within the park property and three other sites in the surrounding area. The site is within the conservation zone on the north side of the Park Road; there are no trails in this area, hence the likelihood of disturbance by human activity is very small. The Nanoose First Nation have keys to the park gate to allow access to sites of heritage interest.

Little is known of the historical use of the park properties, other than for forestry purposes and more recently for gravel extraction; this may be of interest for future research and interpretation.

### 3.8. ‘Sense of Place’

The public survey results, albeit limited, suggest that the ERRPCA is well known on a local (Oceanside) basis but not much farther afield; over 90% of respondents were from the Oceanside and immediate areas. Even within that cohort, there may be some confusion in identifying the ERRPCA from Englishman River Falls Provincial Park (e.g., reference to park fees in user survey comments). The park has an identity mostly among local streamkeepers and fishermen, walkers, horseback riders and immediate neighbours.

However, this limited profile may change soon. The recent designation as a regional park, opening of the Top Bridge Crossing, forthcoming revisions to trail guides for Vancouver Island (e.g., the Mussio Ventures Backroad Mapbook has been released in digital format) and ongoing publicizing of the RDN’s regional parks and trail system will broaden the awareness and hence the use of the ERRPCA.

## 4.0 Issues Summary

The overarching management issue in the ERRPCA is **achieving environmental protection while still allowing appropriate recreational use**. Striking this balance is not a new conundrum in park management, but the conservation mandate of this particular park and its property owners places a heavier onus on environmental protection than in most other parks in the RDN system.

The responses received from the user survey and the discussions at the open houses reflected a desire on the part of the park's users to achieve this balance. There was a general preference to minimize the human use footprint, and to focus on habitat protection and enhancement. Conflicts between conservation and recreation interests were evident, particularly with respect to horse crossings through the river. An interpretive component was supported in the form of self-guided trails but there was less appetite for 'hard' facilities (e.g., a nature centre).

Along with the need for an appropriate balance of environment and recreation, a number of more specific management issues arose through the course of the development of this plan:



Horses crossing at Top Bridge

- ❑ **Habitat management, monitoring and enhancement:** Identifying inventory, monitoring and enhancement priorities and cost-effective strategies, and finding the financial and human resources to support these activities.
- ❑ **Recreational trails and amenity development:** Removing or relocating trails in sensitive habitats; placement and construction of park amenities; development of interpretive programs that highlight the natural values of the property.
- ❑ **Park access:** Managing parking areas and trail accesses at Allsbrook and Middlegate Roads; providing for emergency access; locating and designing routes to access LWD structures for maintenance and monitoring that may or may not be public trails.
- ❑ **Unauthorized use by motorized vehicles:** How to limit access by ATVs and motorcycles effectively; working with organizations representing these users to resolve problems.
- ❑ **User conflicts:** Providing for different users while maintaining a wilderness experience; identifying effective ways to influence user behaviour.
- ❑ **Horse crossings on the river:** Managing the potential impacts of horse passage on fish habitat (streambed) and water quality; reducing the many routes that have been randomly used down to one or two well-defined routes that are agreeable to the local horseback riders; considering a future out-of-stream crossing when drinking water facilities are expanded in the park, to avoid potential contamination.
- ❑ **Interfaces with neighbouring lands:** Managing use and access at the P-QB WMA interface at the west end of park and onto

neighbouring TNT lands; other informal trails onto private neighbouring private properties.

- ❑ **Park profile:** The Park is little known outside the immediate area; how to enhance awareness of ERRPCA; to what extent and how should the Park be promoted as a tourism destination.
- ❑ **Gravel pit:** Completion of required decommissioning and reclamation of the site; determining appropriate future use.
- ❑ **Vandalism and inappropriate use:** Dealing effectively with vandalism, littering, defacement and other inappropriate activities, particularly around the Top Bridge Crossing area.
- ❑ **Future water services:** Size, location, land use requirements and timing for expansion of water service facilities within the Park by the AWS.
- ❑ **On-site staffing:** Defining staffing needs, sources and funding.

The identification of these issues informed the development of goals and policies needed to manage the ERRPCA over the next 5-10 years.



## 5.0 Vision, Principles and Goals



Englishman River

### 5.1. Vision

*As part of the Englishman River conservation corridor, the ERRPCA is a place where ecological functions are preserved, where fish and wildlife habitats are actively protected and enhanced, and where people can experience healthy ecosystems in ways that do not threaten their integrity.*

This vision reflects the underlying goal to strike a balance between environmental protection and sustainable human use in the ERRPCA. The park forms part of a larger conservation effort represented by TNT's conservation initiatives, the P-QB WMA, and the ERWRP described in section 3.2. Management decisions in the ERRPCA will work in concert with these initiatives. Conservation will be balanced with passive recreation - hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing and some amount of bicycling and horseback riding – and education about the area's natural history.

### 5.2. Principles

The leases and covenant discussed in Section 3.1.1 provide the basic principles to be reflected in the management of the ERRPCA:

- a) Management, operations and future development in the Park shall be compatible with the conservation objectives of the landowners and conservation partners TNT and DUC, including but not limited to the preservation of the forest ecosystem, fish and wildlife habitats.
- b) The statutory rights of way for domestic water (AWS) and utilities (BC Hydro and Terasen Gas) must also be respected.
- c) The operation and maintenance of the hatchery and fisheries channels are the responsibility of DFO. The RDN will conclude an operating agreement with DFO in tandem with the production of this management plan.

### 5.3. Management Goals

The following goals form the framework for policies and management actions in the ERRPCA.

1. **Cooperative Management:** To work with partnering agencies, community stewardship and recreational groups, educational institutions, neighbouring residents and the public to effectively manage the ERRPCA to meet the management goals.
2. **Environmental Conservation:** To protect and conserve the long-term ecological integrity of aquatic and terrestrial habitats within the ERRPCA and as a component of the greater Englishman River conservation corridor.

3. **Recreation:** To ensure that recreational uses in the ERRPCA are sensitive to the environment, have minimal negative impact on its ecological assets and contribute positively to the quality of life in the Regional District.
4. **Education and Interpretation:** To encourage and develop educational and interpretive opportunities to enrich the public's experience of the ERRPCA, and to enhance an appreciation and foster stewardship of its natural assets.
5. **Public Safety and Park Security:** To provide a safe area where natural and man-made hazards are minimized and neighbouring private property is respected.

## 6.0 Management Policies

The following policies reflect the order and major themes of the Management Principles and Goals for the ERRPCA:

- Given the multi-party ownership of the ERRPCA, **management must be cooperative** in nature and respect the conservation mandates of the landowners;
- Park zoning and management activities must strive for a sustainable balance between **environmental conservation and recreational use**;
- **Education and interpretation** of local natural and cultural history are key roles of the ERRPCA; and
- **Public safety and security** are underlying responsibilities of park management.



Viewing platform at rearing ponds

It is also important to note that the RDN's Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005-2015 contains many policies of general application that are directly pertinent to the ERRPCA. As such, similar policies are not repeated in this Plan. Of particular note to the ERRPCA are general policies relating to the following (references to the applicable section of the Regional Parks and Trails Plan are noted):

- **Facilities and improvements:** Principles from *Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC* (MOE, 2006)<sup>1</sup> will be applied in planning facilities and managing operations in the ERRPCA (sec. 10.2). Park facilities and improvements will optimize public safety, reduce exposure to liability, and enhance public awareness of the sensitive nature of environmental features and natural hazards (sec. 10.3). A 'strategic' approach to improvements will be used that reflects level of use, minimize maintenance requirements and offers resistance to vandalism (sec. 10.7).
- **Barrier free access:** The RDN will endeavor to provide barrier free access in high use areas, recognizing the limits of topography, costs, and environmental/ cultural/historic sensitivity (sec. 10.8).
- **Groups and special events:** The RDN will regulate inappropriate behaviour and damaging activities through the Park Use Bylaw 1399 (sec. 10.5). Under this Bylaw, the RDN may allow for the use of the Park or its trails by groups for special events provided that the use is compatible with the purpose and management of the park/trail, and the group accepts full responsibility for maintaining the site and restoring the existing conditions of the site during and after the event (sec. 10.10). The timing of special events in the ERRPCA shall take fisheries windows into consideration, to avoid habitat

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<sup>1</sup> This document replaced *Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development in BC* (MWLAP, 2004).

disturbance while still taking advantage of opportunities to view fish migration.

## 6.1. Cooperative Management

### 6.1.1 Management structure: Establish management and advisory committee to oversee the management of the park.

As outlined in the management leases, a two-part management structure is anticipated:

- a. A Park Management Steering Committee chaired by the RDN with representation from TNT and DUC; MOE will participate at its discretion. The role of the steering committee is:
  - To review the status of Management Plan actions at least annually;
  - To reconfirm general management and conservation directions as needed; and
  - To review the Management Plan updates prepared by the RDN every five years.
- b. A Fish and Conservation Advisory Committee chaired by TNT and comprised of the RDN, DFO, MOE, stewardship groups and members at large. This committee will focus on both parcels of Block 602 as well as Block 564. Its purpose is to:
  - Provide expertise in areas of terrestrial management;
  - Provide technical advice on the effectiveness and priority of fish works; and
  - Ensure that all projects do not compromise fish and wildlife habitat.



C.W. Young Channel

### 6.1.2 Fisheries management: Conclude and implement an operating agreement with DFO regarding management of the fish hatchery and side channels.

As discussed previously, the operation and maintenance of the side channel system and the hatchery are the responsibilities of DFO. An operating agreement with DFO regarding these facilities will be established in tandem with the production of this management plan.

Appendix A recommends several actions with respect to the management of fish habitat in the side channels that should be addressed in the RDN/DFO operating agreement. These include:

1. Public safety improvements:
  - Secure the intake control valves for the side channel in a lock box.
  - Plant additional vegetation along the rearing pond dyke to discourage public access.
2. Habitat enhancements:
  - Re-vegetate the new side channel banks with appropriate riparian shrub species – e.g., willows, Black twinberry, etc.

- Add more gravel and instream LWD to enhance spawning and rearing habitat in the new side channel.

3. Monitoring:

- Assess the effectiveness of the new side channel in providing spawning, rearing, etc. habitat for salmonids.



Looking over bridge maintenance work

**6.1.3 Park caretaking: Work with conservation partners to identify ongoing caretaking services.**

Along with operating and maintaining the hatchery structures and water levels, CFDC crews also currently act as park caretakers on contract to the RDN, providing surveillance and minor maintenance as required. Preliminary discussions with CFDC indicate a willingness to continue in this role so long as funding is provided and there is hatchery-related work to be completed.

Within the term of this management plan, a park caretaker arrangement will likely continue with the CFDC. However, the long-term future (beyond 5 years) of the hatchery and CFDC's operations on the site remain unclear. At that point, the Park Management Steering Committee may consider a similar arrangement with another non-profit organization.

In the future, and as resources allow, the Committee may also undertake a volunteer park warden program to support park operations.

**6.1.4 Edge protection: Identify ways to ensure ongoing protection of natural buffers around the perimeter of the park.**

At the moment, the lands around the ERRPCA are relatively undeveloped, providing a natural buffer to the park's natural values. Should any adjacent lands be rezoned or subdivided for future development, RDN parks staff will work with planning staff to identify opportunities for protecting this buffer through site planning, conservation covenants, and other land use tools in order to ensure the continuing protection of park boundaries and the conservation efforts within ERRPCA.

**6.1.5 Gravel pit: Work with the current permit holder and provincial Inspector of Mines to complete reclamation of the pit, and develop plans for habitat restoration and future waterworks.**

*Reclamation and short to mid-term uses:* The RDN will coordinate with Haylock Brothers Paving Ltd. and the Inspector of Mines regarding completion of Haylock's reclamation commitments to allow the existing extraction permit to be closed. Reclamation activities are aimed at stabilizing the site until such time as final end uses are determined and a detailed site plan for those uses is developed, and should include:

- a. Regrade the site to eliminate any steep side slopes and recontour to a more natural landscape.
- b. Scarify compacted surfaces, reinstate topsoil and seed the site with an appropriate native seed mix to stabilize the soil surface and avoid erosion. Undertake removal of invasive species by acceptable methods for a period of 2 years after seeding.

- c. Retain (i.e., do not infill) the ephemeral pools; regrade the side slopes of the pools and plant with appropriate riparian species.

As per the management lease between the RDN and TNT/DUC, the gravel pit will continue to be a source of gravel for trail surfacing within the ERRPCA. The site can also be used as a parking and staging area for group use and special events. To expedite this, a site survey and preliminary grading/drainage plan should be commissioned by the conservation partners for installing a new access road and parking area away from the ephemeral pool; this plan could help to guide Haylock's regrading activities.

**Long-term uses:** Following required decommissioning, this area will remain as is until such time as AWS verifies its interest in developing a water intake facility in the park. Since it is already disturbed, the gravel pit site is the preferred location within the park for the future installation of new AWS waterworks.

To this end, Figure 6.1 suggests three project areas within the gravel pit:

- **Parking:** A gravel parking and staging area for group as noted above.
- **Habitat:** An opportunity exists to recreate a productive wetland around the current ephemeral pools in the eastern section of the gravel pit using natural runoff. With re-vegetation of native species typical of the area, such actions could provide significant improvements to this otherwise degraded habitat. Working with partners and local stewardship groups, habitat restoration projects can be undertaken that re-establish a wetland area and minimize invasive species.

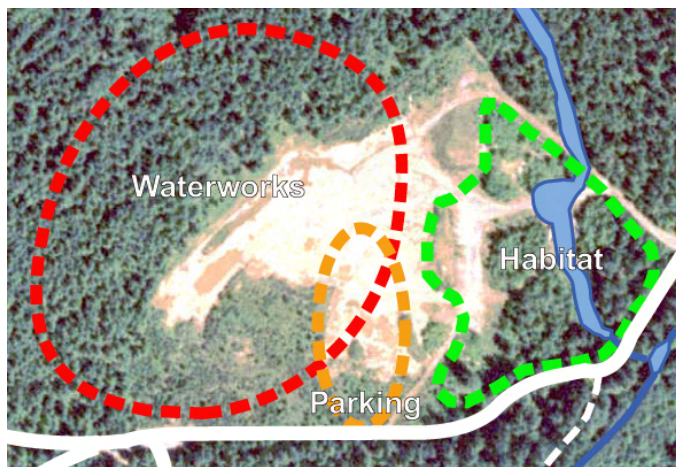


Figure 6.1 Project areas in the gravel pit

- **Potential waterworks:** The AWS has indicated that an approximate 7-hectare site is needed for a new water intake facility, along with water pipe connections to the river. Since it is already disturbed, this site is the preferred location within the park for these works. It is preferable that pipe connections to the river intake follow existing park trails; however, there is the potential that a new 6 to 9 metre wide corridor will be required from the facility to the river. This connection should

**Land Use BMPs that could be demonstrated in ERRPCA research plots:**

Infiltration swales  
Rain gardens  
Permeable paving  
Extensive green roof  
Rainwater capture and use (rainwater “harvesting”)  
Absorbent landscape – use of soils and vegetation  
Rainfall interception by trees and other vegetation  
Non-chemical pest management  
Erosion and sediment control practices  
Low-water-use landscaping and irrigation practices

be curved to fit into the terrain to minimize the scarring of a straight clearing.

Whether waterworks are developed at this site or not, the remaining area could be replanted with pioneer tree species and an interpretive program of forest succession created. Another use that could occur independently or in conjunction with a future waterworks facility is construction of plots to research and demonstrate land use “best management practices” (BMPs). The plots could be provided for experimental use by research institutions and for demonstration to developers, builders and the general public of a variety of BMPs (see sidebar).

**6.1.6 Park funding: Seek innovative revenue-generating opportunities that support park management goals.**

Capital facilities, restoration projects and interpretive/educational programs are often eligible for grants from senior governments and private foundations. However, few grants exist to help offset operational and staffing costs.

Maintaining and protecting the ERRPCA will create significant demands on the RDN’s tax-based funding resources. Under its Regional Parks and Trails Plan, the RDN’s policy is not to charge fees for entry, parking or general use of regional parks and trails. However, fees can be considered for specific services such as offering programs through the RDN’s recreation services or issuing permits for commercial tour operators.

Nonetheless, other sources of revenue streams will be explored that are compatible with the park’s mandate and objectives. Recognizing that resource development prospects in the park are limited, the Park Management Steering Committee is open to innovative proposals from the private and non-profit sectors for revenue generation.

## **6.2. Park Use Zones**

### **6.2.1 Establish a system of park use zones to provide a framework in which to manage the ERRPCA.**

Parks are zoned typically to identify the types and levels of use that are appropriate to different parts of the park. Zone designations are intended to protect and enhance environmentally sensitive features while recognizing long-standing uses and public preferences, thereby reducing existing and potential conflicts between recreational uses and environmental conservation. Designating zones often becomes a balancing act between protecting key habitats and providing a meaningful outdoor experience.

Taking this situation into account, this plan subdivides ERRPCA into three zones shown in Figure 6.2 (as discussed previously, the small sections of the park located south of the Englishman River will be managed as part of Block 564 and are therefore excluded from these zones):

- **Conservation Zone:** The focus is to protect, conserve and enhance the natural landscape and fish and wildlife habitats. Conservation of

ecological assets takes precedence over human activities. This zone includes the mainstem of the river with a *minimum* riparian buffer of 30 meters from top-of-bank. Where necessary, trails will be relocated over time to outside this buffer. Controlled viewpoints would allow public access to the river at points that can withstand such access. The zone also includes the areas in the park surrounding the new C.W. Young Channel and other areas of the park that are relatively inaccessible (no trails), and which if left alone, will mature into older and old growth forest habitat.

- **Natural Environment Zone:** The focus is to protect natural values while providing passive, non-vehicular recreational opportunities in a largely natural environment. In general, the distribution of this zone recognizes the long-established trail system in the park. The activities permitted in this zone shall have low impact and involve limited development.
- **Facility Zone:** These are areas where human use is concentrated, and includes visitor facilities that require some landscape modification. This zone includes: the fish hatchery and corridor along the rearing ponds; the utility corridor; the gravel pit site; and park entrances and associated parking areas.

## 6.3. Conservation

### 6.3.1 Terrestrial habitats: Establish inventory and monitoring programs that support the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems and wildlife populations in the ERRPCA.

The diversity of habitats within ERRPCA and the variety of ecological processes associated with the Englishman River corridor provide an excellent opportunity to monitor the status of natural environments of the lower Englishman River watershed. The 2007 summer surveys completed as background to this management plan (see Appendix A) only partially documented the flora and fauna that occur in the park. Informed management may require a more comprehensive inventory to establish a 'baseline' against which to compare ongoing changes.

A generic monitoring program is comprised of seven basic steps (see sidebar), which are discussed in greater detail in Appendix A. Monitoring programs that work in conjunction with educational objectives can provide opportunities for meaningful study programs and nurture greater public understanding of the natural values in their environment.

It is envisioned that the Fish and Conservation Advisory Committee will provide direction on inventory and monitoring priorities. Based on recommendations from the "Inventory of Natural Resources" (Appendix A), inventory and monitoring activities could include the following:

#### Basic steps in a monitoring program (from Appendix A)

- 1) Define objectives.
- 2) Identify potential sources of existing data.
- 3) Develop a survey protocol.
- 4) Design a field program and set-up.
- 5) Complete a preliminary census/inventory.
- 6) Continue monitoring on a regular basis, as defined by the survey protocol.
- 7) Compare monitoring results with the baseline inventory; adapt survey protocol and/or field program as necessary.



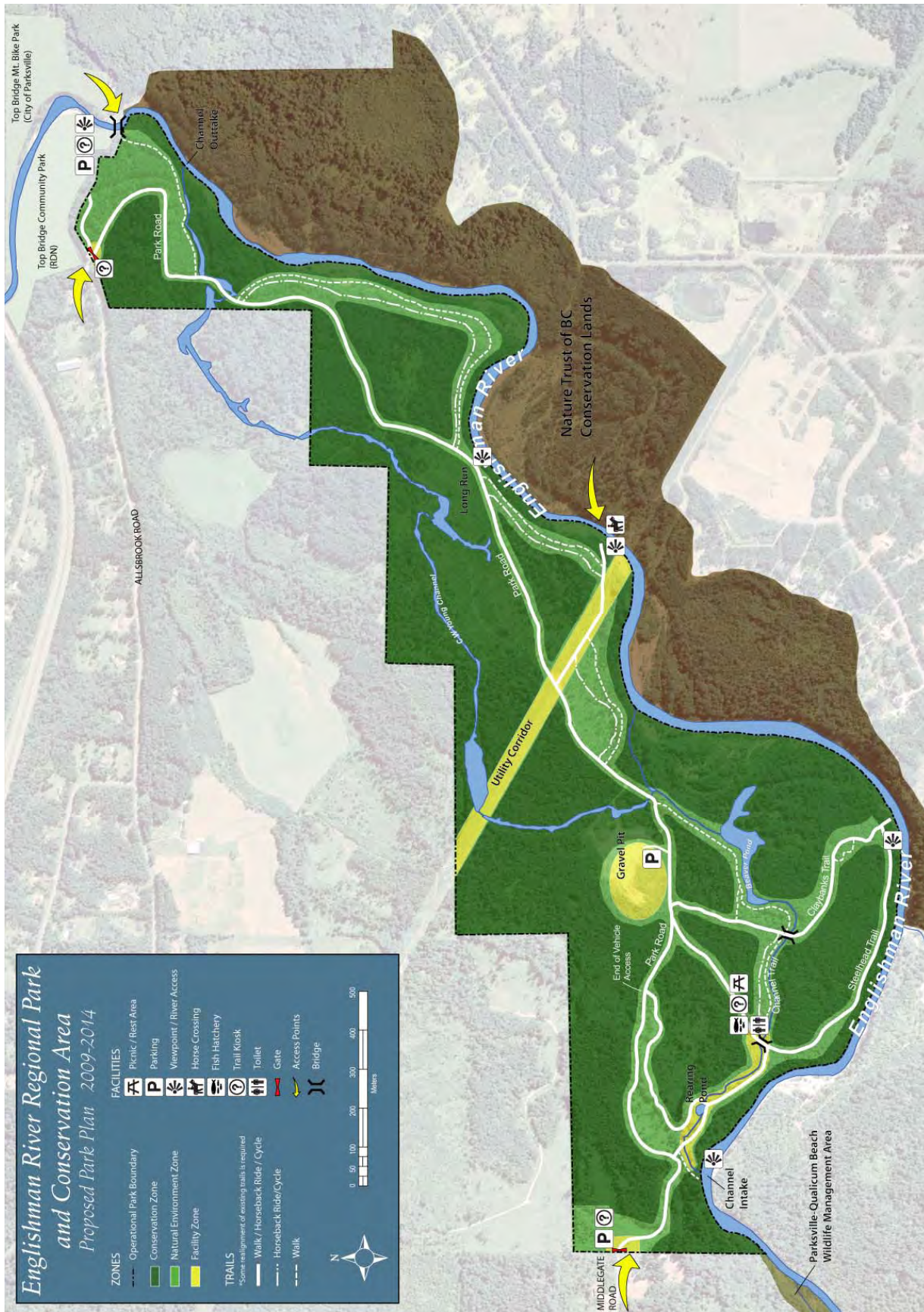


Figure 6.2 ERRPCA Park Zones and 5-year plan for park amenities

- Basic inventories: address flora and fauna that were not fully covered in the summer 2007 surveys (Appendix A), such as non-vascular plants, other invertebrates, etc.
- Habitat change: changes in the spatial distribution of the habitat types identified in Appendix A, using aerial photo analysis.
- Human use: impacts of authorized activities on sensitive sites or habitats using standard methods applied in BC Parks.
- Mammal populations: focus on size and movement of large ungulates such as Roosevelt Elk.
- Beaver populations: monitor beaver activities and possibly identify management needs to avoid conflicts with fisheries and recreational uses.
- Bird populations: develop an ERRPCA-specific bird inventory, starting with Christmas bird count data and expanding to other seasonal bird use of the park.
- Invasive species: develop a baseline inventory of invasive species distribution, along with management/removal plans where needed; e.g., Scotch broom, English ivy, English holly, Himalayan blackberry and possibly green frogs.

### **6.3.2 River habitats: Work with stewardship partners to manage, restore and monitor the aquatic and riparian habitats along the Englishman River within the park.**

Of primary concern for the protection of these habitats, as well as for public safety, is the stability of the river banks. The Park Management Steering Committee will work with fisheries partners on the following:

- LWD structures: review the status of river structures and channel works and plans for their maintenance and upgrading.
- Riparian planting: review the riparian planting prescriptions recommended in the Poulin (2005) report and summarized in Appendix A, and implement them as appropriate.
- Erosion monitoring: monitor bank erosion rates in key sites.

## **6.4. Recreation**

Figure 6.2 provides a conceptual plan for park entrances, trails and public amenities for the period of this plan. This plan is subject to review and revision based on use trends and impacts observed over the next 5 years.

### **6.4.1 Access points: Manage accesses to the ERRPCA to ensure public safety, avoid or reduce impacts to natural values, and minimize adverse impacts on neighbours.**

**Park entrances:** As shown in Figure 6.2, there will be three authorized points of access: Allsbrook Road, Middlegate Road and Top Bridge Crossing. These three locations serve as gateways to ERRPCA and will be

given a consistent visual identity, including common signage that welcomes users to the park, provides a map and directions, and sets out user rules and risks. Measures specific to each entrance include the following:



Stopping motor vehicles

- *Allsbrook Road*: As the entrance to the Park Road, Allsbrook provides the only entrance for vehicle access into the park. A listing of parties with keys to the gate to the park road will be maintained and updated on a regular basis.
- *Top Bridge Crossing*: Provide direction to the main trail from the ERRPCA side of the bridge; block off access and post warning signs to the informal riverside trail until a safe route has been defined and installed.
- *Middlegate Road*: Establish a parking area as per article 4.1 (g) in the 25-year lease. This requires a topographical survey and detail plans prepared with a civil engineer, placing the majority of works on existing disturbed lands. Design details should help to protect the park from unauthorized ATV access through the use of barriers and gates.

**Horseback access:** An agreement exists between the RDN and TNT (2003) regarding horse trail links across the river to the River's Edge subdivision on the south bank. One of these trails crosses just north of the utility right of way with a trail linking this crossing to the ERRPCA park road. This horse crossing will be formalized for the term of this plan, but is subject to change in the long term based on a review of impacts on aquatic habitat and the protection of future community water intakes.

**Adjacent lands:** The western edge of the ERRPCA abuts a public road right-of-way; otherwise, the park is surrounded by conservation and private farmlands. Extending trails from the ERRPCA to lands beyond, as part of the growing regional trail system, can be done only with the permission of the adjacent landowners. Desired linkages to trails outside the ERRPCA should be identified and negotiated with these landowners. Once the desired linkages are determined, other existing informal linkages should be decommissioned.

#### **6.4.2 Trails: Manage the trail network to protect sensitive areas from recreational impacts while providing sustainable recreation.**

Figure 6.2 also shows the location of trails and related facilities.

**Regional trail connection:** The Park Road operates as a multi-use trail for hikers, horseback riders and cyclists, linking Top Bridge Crossing to the Middlegate entrance. It is a key segment in the regional trail system. There are sites on this road that are prone to drainage and flooding problems. These sites will be monitored over the next five years to determine the sources of these problems and to investigate potential solutions.

**Trail rationalization and improvements:** The internal trail system will provide opportunities for enjoying accessible natural features while ensuring their continuing protection. To do this, some existing trails will be

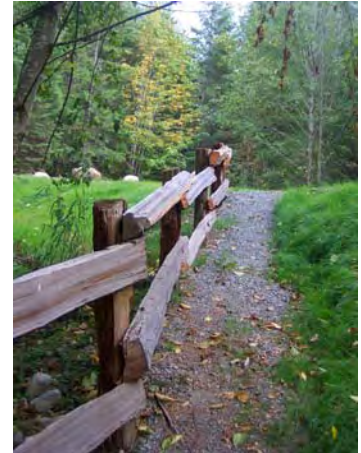
extended, realigned or improved, and a few will be decommissioned. In particular:

- Trails paralleling the river that are within the Conservation Zone will, over time, be set back at least 30 m from the top of bank, to protect riparian habitat, prevent bank erosion, and avoid flooding.
- An educational campaign will be aimed at encouraging park users to stay on authorized trails, through directional and informational signage.
- The River Trail (currently running from the utility corridor to the Clay Banks viewpoint) will be decommissioned.
- Access to the river will be provided for viewpoints at sites that can withstand public use.
- Where needed, trails to riverside points may also be designed to serve as accesses for monitoring and maintenance of LWD structures. They will be sufficiently wide and surfaced to support occasional use by heavy equipment. Where additional accesses are needed for this purpose (e.g., at the former River Trail trailhead), they shall be temporary in nature, and blocked off after each use with sufficient woody debris to discourage public use.
- The twinning of the Channel Trail from the hatchery to Clay Banks Trail will be completed. The rearing pond at the west end of the Channel Trail provides a unique opportunity for viewing fish, and access to the small dock overlooking the pond should be provided. Benches could be provided on the dock for observers.
- No new trails will be constructed along the recently completed section of the C.W. Young Channel. Accesses for maintenance and monitoring purposes will be of minimal nature and be blocked off after each use with sufficient woody debris to discourage public use.

As in any public park, some park visitors will still use temporary access trails, decommissioned trails and 'off trail' areas; for example, some fishers will still walk the length of the river bank, whether there is an official trail there or not. It is anticipated that these users will be of sufficiently small numbers as to have minimal impact on the environment, and that they are doing so at their own risk.

**Unauthorized vehicle use:** Unauthorized use by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and "dirt bikes" has negative impacts on the natural environment as well as on the outdoor experiences of other users. BC is one of the few remaining areas in Canada with no form of registration or licensing for ATV's and dirt bikes. However, the Off-Road Vehicle Coalition is working to achieve improved management in the province. The RDN and its partners will continue to urge the Province to legislate licensing while working on awareness of the conservation values at stake in the ERRPCA.

**Dogs:** Although not identified as a major problem at this time, as user levels in ERRPCA rise, conflicts with dogs could increase as well as the potential for wildlife harassment or habitat damage. Dogs on-leash is a requirement of TNT on all of its properties, but is not stipulated for the



Rustic materials as fencing



Addressing pet issues with humour

ERRPCA in Bylaw 1399; however, the Bylaw does call for dogs to be kept under control at all times. Given its conservation objectives, consideration will be given to designating the ERRPCA as a 'dog-on-leash' area under Bylaw 1399. As in other regional parks, indeed in park systems in general, enforcement is largely through awareness and 'peer pressure' by other park users.

## 6.5. Education and Interpretation

### 6.5.1 Park information: Improve information about the ERRPCA through signage, brochures and web-based applications.

With a Community Tourism grant from the Province, the RDN has designed and installed entry signs at some of its regional parks as well as directional signs on roads to these parks, with the concurrence of the Ministry of Transportation. Signs for the ERRPCA were installed in 2008 at the Allsbrook/Top Bridge access.

An information kiosk has also been installed at the Allsbrook/Top Bridge access area, which will act as a platform for information about the ERRPCA and its place in the regional parks and trails system. Information about the natural values of the ERRPCA will be developed for use at the kiosk, as well as in park brochures and the RDN website.

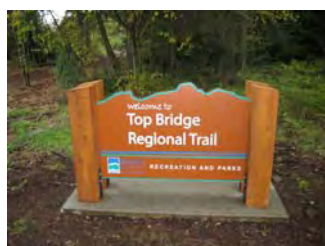
Trails maps will also be developed for use at the information kiosk, and in brochures and on the RDN website. Small-scale directional signage will also be considered for major trail junctions and destinations in the ERRPCA.

### 6.5.2 Self-guided interpretation: Work with conservation and education partners to establish an interpretive signage and self-guided trail program.

An interpretive program can enrich visitors' experiences as well as promote public understanding of park goals and objectives. Self-guided trails at ERRPCA would help visitors to learn about the diversity of habitat types, native flora and fauna of the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem; and the conservation aims of the park. Opportunities for self-guided trails in the ERRPCA include:

- **Riverside trails and viewpoints:** inform about sensitive riparian habitats and restoration work on the river mainstem.
- **Channel trail:** inform of the life cycle and efforts to provide habitat for salmon, and hatchery activities.
- **Big Tree Interpretive Trail:** highlight historical forest ecology.
- **Clay Banks Viewpoint:** highlight the geological history of the clay banks, and the power of the river to transform landscapes.

Mindful of the desire to minimize intrusions on the natural character of the ERRPCA, self-guiding can be relatively unobtrusive using numbered posts with brochures with explanations corresponding to the numbered sites. The brochures could be available for pick-up and drop-off at the park



New design for RDN Regional Park/Trail signs

entrances or by downloading from the RDN's website. Over time, major viewpoints could have permanently mounted interpretive signs.

### **6.5.3 Educational programming: Develop partnerships with educational institutions to utilize the ERRPCA as an environmental classroom.**

Educational activities in the ERRPCA will be supported in the short- to mid-term by creating a parking and staging area in the gravel pit site for use by buses and vans.

**University-level activities:** Preliminary discussions with faculty in the Resource Management Program at Vancouver Island University (VIU - former Malaspina University-College) suggest a strong interest in incorporating research and interpretive activities at ERRPCA into the curriculum. Faculty members were enthusiastic about involving students in a hands-on setting where their efforts could have ongoing management value.

Two programs of particular relevance are the Bachelor of Natural Resource Protection (a 4-year degree) and the Resource Management Officer Technology program (2-year diploma). In time, the ERRPCA could become a 'living laboratory' for training in field and analytical skills in these programs, in the same way as Milner Garden has become an on-site classroom for VIU's horticultural programs. Examples of activities with some management relevance that could be undertaken through these programs include:

- Standardized mammal inventories – e.g., pellet count transects to estimate deer abundance; beaver "influence" counts; small mammal trapping (advanced field skills).
- Baseline inventories and development of management programs, if needed, for invasive species (e.g., Scotch broom, Green frogs).
- Determining and monitoring the ecological impacts of recreational activities using methods applied in BC provincial parks.
- Designing 'self-guided' interpretive programs and signage along trails and at viewpoints in the park.

**Public school programs:** A few larger regional park systems in B.C. offer educational programs to the general public and school districts; e.g., the Capital Regional District ([www.crd.bc.ca/parks/events/schoolschedule.htm](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks/events/schoolschedule.htm)) and Metro Vancouver ([www.gvrd.bc.ca/parks/events-and-programs.htm](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/parks/events-and-programs.htm)). In the long term, the RDN Recreation and Parks Department may explore opportunities to develop similar programs in regional parks.

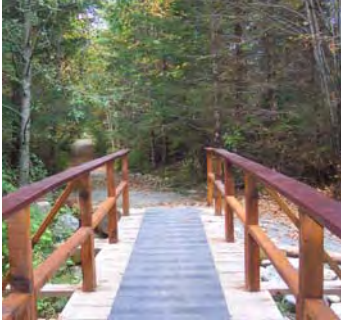
In the ERRPCA, school programs focused on natural history could be developed that involve completing small-scale studies that could assist in maintaining a flora and fauna database. However, preliminary discussions with staff at School District 69 indicate that these programs would require development and marketing to area schools, and should be

**School group in ERRPCA** (from Englishman Patient newsletter, Spring 2004, p.4)

*"Grades one and two classes from Winchelsea Elementary School in Parksville had a fun Friday morning recently when they visited the small hatchery on the Englishman River. One of the dads, Jeff Young, who works for the Englishman River Enhancement Group, led the kids on a tour of the hatchery and the side channel. The children were intrigued to see the thousands of tiny pinks racing into the exit pipe to the channel as soon as the light was let into their rearing tank. After a snack of nutritious cookies (baked by Carol—hers are the best!) the students headed down the path to the mainstem where Mike and Bob were tagging coho smolts. Along the way, the kids planted some of the donated cedar seedlings. These students would not have been able to experience nature and learn about fish that day if ERWRP had not paid for the school bus. Unfortunately, school budgets don't include these kinds of field trips any more."*

complementary to the existing school curriculum and readily accessible (travel may need to be subsidized).<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, the RDN will support stewardship groups that already provide natural history programs for schools and youth to expand their efforts into the ERRPCA.



Bridge crossing along Steelhead Trail

#### **6.5.4 Educational facilities: Examine the potential use of existing park buildings as future interpretive and educational facilities.**

The existing hatchery buildings are owned by the CFDC. This plan has assumed that the hatchery will function as is for the next 5 years. However, depending on the future of hatchery activities, the hatchery buildings may become available for re-use. Potential opportunities include an indoor or outdoor classroom or small-scale research facility.

### **6.6. Public Safety and Security**

#### **6.6.1 Risk management: Identify and raise awareness among the visiting public of hazards within the ERRPCA.**

The specific hazards within the park include:

- Floods: trails may be closed during seasonally high waters.
- Natural fire risk exacerbated by unauthorized party activities: under Bylaw 1399, open fires are not allowed in the park. As in its other regional parks, the RDN will impose a “no smoking” rule whenever the Province bans campfires in provincial parks and on Crown lands during the summer months.
- Slipping and drowning hazards in waterbodies: particularly at the Englishman River at Top Bridge, which is a popular ‘swimming hole’ during the summer. Other risk areas are the fisheries side channels, the rearing ponds, and at the fisheries-related water intake works.
- Exposed cliffs in limited areas within the park.

Warning signs regarding these hazards will be a part of the overall sign strategy for the park.

#### **6.6.2 Emergency planning: Coordinate emergency responses and fire management with local agencies.**

The RDN will work with the Errington Volunteer Fire Department and the Coastal Fire Centre of MOF to develop coordinated responses to emergencies and fires in the ERRPCA, including protocols for fuel management. Opportunities for emergency training activities in the ERRPCA may also be explored.

The Errington Fire Department has approached the RDN regarding a secondary emergency route to and from the Errington area (particularly Englishman River Estates) through the ERRPCA. A route was proposed to

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<sup>2</sup> J. Powell, School District 69

connect the end of Middlegate Road to the Park Road and thence to Allsbrook Road.

Due to the steep grade and very unstable soils, the ERRPCA partners do not support vehicle access being developed from Middlegate Road into the park. However, they do support the use of the future parking lot at Middlegate Road as a staging area for emergency vehicles, and encourage the Fire Department to find a route that remains above the river valley and connects to Allsbrook Road via existing logging roads.

**6.6.3 Hazard inspection:**

RDN staff will monitor tree hazards along trails and inspect gates, bridges and other park amenities on a regular basis, and particularly after storm events, to ensure that they are safe for public use.



## 7.0 Operational Actions

The following provides a guide of specific actions to be completed within this five-year management term.

- ❑ “High” priority indicates actions to be undertaken in the first 1-2 years.
- ❑ “Medium” priority indicates actions to be undertaken in year 3-4.
- ❑ “Low” priority indicates actions that can wait until year 5 or beyond.

Note that action priorities may change as a result of the annual review of this Plan and in any subsequent revised Plans.

POLICY TOPIC	ACTIONS	PRIORITY for 2009-2014	COST (order of magnitude)
1. Cooperative Management	a) Determine representatives for the Park Management Steering Committee and call the first meeting to confirm mandate, meeting formats, schedule, minute taking responsibility, etc. Continue to meet at least annually.	High	\$100/year
	b) Establish initial representation on the Fisheries and Conservation Advisory Committee; contact organizations with invitation and request for representatives; convene first meeting to confirm mandate, meeting formats, schedule, etc.; continue to meet at least annually.	High	\$200/year
	c) Finalize the operating agreement with DFO for the operation and maintenance of the side channel and related works, including the hatchery.	High	---
	d) Continue the caretaking contract with CFDC; monitor for effectiveness. Identify other possible parties that could take over caretaking service if arrangements with CFDC are discontinued.	High	\$12000/year
	e) Organize a seminar session with RDN Planning staff to introduce the ERRPCA and its management plan, and to discuss future possible land uses around the park. Establish a protocol whereby Parks staff provides input on future land use designations, zoning decisions, etc. for lands around the ERRPCA.	High	---
	f) Continue to collaborate with the AWS in identifying a site for a future water intake facility that does not compromise the integrity of the park’s natural systems.	High	---
	g) Work with Haylock Brothers and the Superintendent of Mines to complete the decommissioning of the gravel pit. Decommissioning will take into account preserving the ephemeral pools and completing a survey and grading plan for a parking area.	High	\$500

POLICY TOPIC	ACTIONS	PRIORITY for 2009-2014	COST (order of magnitude)
	h) Investigate the feasibility of a volunteer park warden program.	Low	---
<b>2. Park Use Zones</b>	a) Initiate an information and education program to inform park users and the public about the purpose of the zones and the need to stay on designated trails.	High	Part of park signage
	b) Institute the Park Use Zone template in all aspects of management of the ERRPCA; i.e., include in management directions, public messaging, etc.	High	---
	c) Initiate decommissioning of trails that do not form part of the 5-year Plan; construct barriers (native vegetation, split-rail fencing, etc.) along trail edges, at former trail entries and wherever needed to ensure that park users remain on authorized trails and discourage entry to Conservation Zones.	Medium	\$5000/year
	d) Over time, relocate applicable trails, or portions thereof, to outside the 30-m buffer (from top of bank) that comprises the Conservation Zone along the Englishman River.	Low	\$5000/year
<b>3. Conservation</b>	a) Develop a 5-year plan for generating a comprehensive baseline inventory of natural resources in the ERRPCA, based on the findings and recommendations of the initial Inventory of Natural Resources (Appendix A). Execute the plan and review annually.	High	\$5000
	b) Develop a 5 year plan for monitoring the ecological health of the ERRPCA. The plan should identify key indicators and methods for consistently and systematically measuring them. It should address the effects of <u>human use</u> on the park. Initiate the monitoring program, assess results annually, and adapt the program as needed.	High	\$5000
	c) Initiate a baseline inventory of invasive plant distribution and a management /removal plan (e.g., community 'broom bashes').	Medium	\$1000
	d) Work with fisheries partners (DFO, CFC, ERWRP, etc.) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review status of river structures and channel works, and plans for their maintenance and upgrading;</li> <li>- monitor bank erosion in key sites (e.g., side channel intake);</li> <li>- review and implement the riparian planting prescriptions recommended in the Poulin, 2005 report, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Medium	----
	e) Design and implement habitat restoration projects at the ephemeral pool in the eastern portion of the gravel pit area.	Low	---

POLICY TOPIC	ACTIONS	PRIORITY for 2009-2014	COST (order of magnitude)
<b>4. Recreation</b>	a) Design and install directional signs at major trail nodes, including small trail maps and approximate distances and times to other park nodes.	High	\$5000
	b) Install improvements to the Allsbrook Road park entrance including the installation of park signage and an information kiosk.	High	Completed
	c) Identify the specific location for a horse crossing of the river; design and construct the crossing.	High	\$10,000
	d) Confer with utility companies regarding portions of the utility corridor that form part of the 5-year trail network, particularly with respect to hazard tree removal and invasive species management programs.	High	--
	e) Complete design and construction of the Middlegate parking area, including entry signage and an information kiosk.	Medium	\$25,000
	f) Identify issues at other informal access points (i.e. P-QB WMA, utility corridors); work with partnering agencies to resolve issues.	Low	--
	g) Implement specific trail improvements and generate names for new trails as needed – e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Northeast corner: formalize a pedestrian connection to Top Bridge Crossing and develop a feasible route below the bluffs along the north side of the C.W. Young Channel outlet, to connect to the Park Road. Consider a viewing platform overlooking the channel.</li> <li>ii) Trails east and west of Long Run lookout: create a distinct connection to the Park Road at the north end; develop a separate horseback/cycling inner trail; relocate the pedestrian trail out of the 30-meter Conservation Zone.</li> <li>iii) Decommission former River Trail; remove counting station bridge; install barriers and signs explaining reasons for trail closure at former Park Road and Claybanks Trail connections.</li> <li>iv) Channel Trail at Beaver Pond: re-vegetate existing clearing and old logging road with pioneer species and decommission side trails.</li> <li>v) Channel Dam: construct split-rail barrier at Park Road to prevent access onto dam; replant top of dyke with willow species.</li> </ul>	Low	\$20,000 +

POLICY TOPIC	ACTIONS	PRIORITY for 2009-2014	COST (order of magnitude)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vi) West end of Channel Trail: design and construct a switchback connection to the Park Road, taking into account the steep slope and loose soil conditions.</li> <li>vii) Connection from west end of Park Road to Middlegate entrance: improve trail conditions by repairing tank traps, decommissioning side trail webs and improving surfacing materials.</li> </ul>		
<b>5. Education and Interpretation</b>	a) With Ministry of Transportation approval, install road signs with directions to the park.	High	Completed
	b) Continue public/open house events on BC Rivers Day and during the Brant Festival.	High	---
	c) Develop interpretive information for use at the entrance kiosks that focuses on the natural resources and values of the park - native flora and fauna, post-logging plant succession, geology, riparian habitat, stream ecology and restoration efforts, etc.	Medium	\$5000
	d) Design a brochure that introduces the ERRPCA's conservation values, recreation opportunities, and a map with overview of available trails. Distribute through the RDN website, and make them available to tourism outlets and community facilities.	Medium	\$3000
	e) Design a self-directed interpretive system for one of the key trails in the park. Based on experience with the pilot, develop interpretive facilities on other trails and key viewpoints within the park.	Low	\$3500
	f) In consultation with stewardship groups and the School District, build on existing school and youth programs to undertake educational activities in the park.	Low	---
	g) If and when hatchery facilities are decommissioned, consider their use as classrooms or labs in the next phase of educational and/or research programming in the park.	Low	
<b>6. Public Safety and Security</b>	a) Work with the Errington Volunteer Fire Department, the MOF Coastal Fire Centre and other emergency agencies to develop coordinated responses to emergencies in the park, training needs and fuel suppression management protocols.	High	---
	b) Review tree hazards and inspect and repair gates, bridges and other constructed amenities regularly, and particularly after storm or high wind events.	High	---
	c) Monitor drainage and flooding along the Park Road, identifying sources and possible solutions as needed.	Medium	

## **8.0 Bibliography**

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## ***Appendices***

A: Inventory of Natural Values (Hawkes et al., 2007)

B: Stakeholder Agencies and Organizations Contacted

C: User Survey Results Summary

D: Amenity and Trail Photo Inventory