

October 24, 2024

## New Addition to 707 Community Park on Gabriola Island

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce that the 78-acre (31.5 hectares) undeveloped forested property, known locally as 'Wilkinson Woods' on Gabriola Island, has been purchased. Located next to 707 Community Park, this land purchase significantly expands the adjoining protected area and will provide recreational opportunities and emergency access to the park from South Road. With this purchase, over 171 hectares have been added to the 707 Community Park since 2018, with 136 hectares added in 2018 and 3.64 hectares added in 2020. The second-largest park in the RDN, 707 Community Park has now grown to an impressive 1,137 acres (460.3 hectares) in size.

Undisturbed ecosystems on Gabriola Island are disappearing and becoming fragmented, with only 12 per cent of the island currently protected. Very few large, undeveloped forested properties on Gabriola Island are available for parkland acquisition, making this addition to 707 Community Park particularly vital. The property has second-growth forest, some mature trees and several seasonal streams that help maintain good water quality in water courses further downstream.

The purchase was funded through short-term borrowing of \$750,000 by the RDN's Electoral Area B Community Parks and Halls Service and a contribution from the Gabriola Lands & Trails Trust (GaLTT) of \$100,000, for a total purchase of \$850,000. A tax receipt was provided to the landowner for the generous reduction in price of \$483,000 based on the overall market value. The cost to maintain this new addition is estimated at \$8,000 per year and the existing 707 Community Park management plan as well as the Area B Parks Master Plan currently in development will provide direction on future uses.

A public celebration of the new parkland will be announced shortly. For information on parks in the RDN, please visit [rdn.bc.ca/parks-services](https://rdn.bc.ca/parks-services).

### Quotes

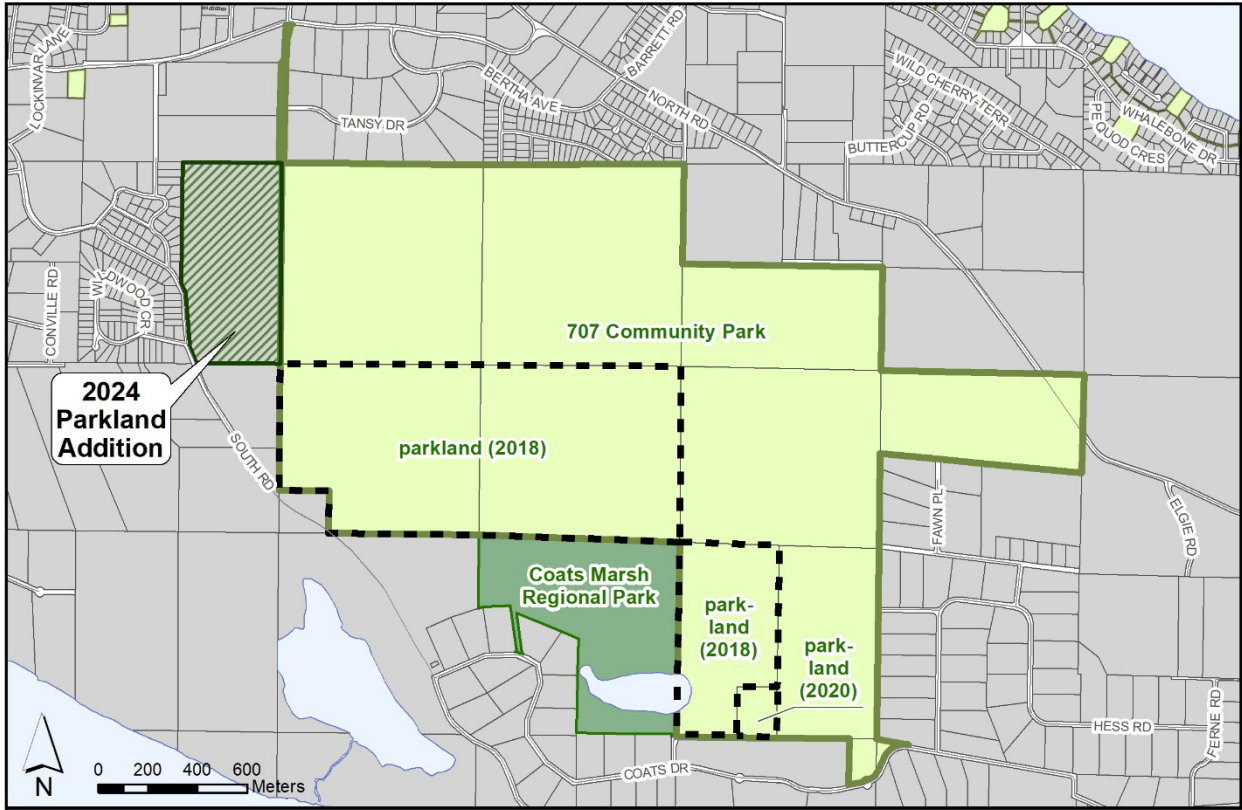
"This addition to the 707 Community Park is an exciting opportunity for residents to expand their access to outdoor recreation areas on Gabriola Island and for the RDN to conserve an important natural area. Thank you to the Gabriola Lands & Trails Trust for their generous donation and to the landowner who worked with the RDN to ensure this beautiful property, which has both recreation and conservation values, remains permanently intact."

Vanessa Craig, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo

"GaLTT has strongly supported this 78-acres purchase with a contribution of all of its Land Acquisition funds (\$100,000). The acquisition expands the amount of contiguous protected area on Gabriola Island and secures legal public access to the 707 Park from South Road. Gabriola's undisturbed ecosystems are quickly disappearing and becoming increasingly fragmented. Only 12% of Gabriola is currently protected. This investment significantly helps Gabriola to get closer to the Islands Trust average of 20%."

Hugh Skinner, President, Gabriola Land & Trails Trust

**Get Involved RDN!**



**For more information, please contact:**

Rebecca Taylor  
 Communications Coordinator  
 Regional District of Nanaimo

📞 250-713-2400

✉️ [engagement@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:engagement@rdn.bc.ca)

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