

## **Park Accessibility Improvements in the Regional District of Nanaimo**

Improving accessibility is one of the priorities of the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) 2022 Parks and Trail Strategy, which was completed with public input. The RDN continuously looks at ways our community and regional parks can be made more accessible for all ages and abilities. Within the past year major improvements to three popular RDN parks, such as wheelchair-friendly surfaces and grades, tapping trails and audio narrations, have enabled more residents and visitors to enjoy the many physical and mental health benefits that the natural, outdoor settings of parks provide.

"We are fortunate to have some of the most beautiful parks in the country, from seaside community parks to regional parks with trails that lead up to the mountain tops. Though not all parks can be made accessible due to the breathtaking but challenging West Coast terrain, we are integrating accessibility features where possible," said Vanessa Craig, RDN Chair. "By providing greater access to these natural areas, we can better support the health and well-being of our residents."

Accessibility is part of the planning process for all RDN Parks projects and is integrated into the project plan based on budget and site considerations. Improvements can range from resurfacing trails to new infrastructure such as installing boardwalks, improving parking lot access and installing wheelchair-accessible ramps, picnic tables and washrooms. The following substantial accessibility features were added to Anders and Dorrit's Community Park, Lighthouse Country Regional Trail and Moorecroft Regional Park in 2024:

### **Anders and Dorrit's Community Park – 3734 Jingle Pot Road, Electoral Area C**

A flat-grade trail between the parking lot and River Walk bridges has improved access to this park loop. Interpretive signs along the trail provide information about the history of the land and unique tree species in the park. Audio narrations can be accessed by scanning QR codes on the signs.

### **Lighthouse Country Regional Trail – 3480 Lioness Boulevard, Qualicum Beach**

The trail is separated into north and south sections and enables visitors to experience the beauty of our rare coastal Douglas-fir forest. The north loop and neighbouring Wildwood Community Park provide about 2 kilometres of footpath popular with walkers and equestrians. The south section offers about 2.5 kilometres of wheelchair-accessible trail. This section has benches, picnic tables, wood carvings, and a continuous tapping rail for visitors who have a visual or balance impairment. The trail is being resurfaced with gravel to improve accessibility for mobility scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, and bicycles.

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### **Moorecroft Regional Park – 1563 Stewart Road, Nanoose Bay**


This 35-hectare, oceanfront park is managed by the RDN under a conservation agreement held by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The agreement prioritizes ecological protection and enhancement and permits low-impact recreational amenities within a natural setting. An accessible pathway loops from the parking area to Vesper Point and continues through the meadow and picnic area, enabling visitors of varying abilities to enjoy the spectacular views of the Salish Sea and coastal mountains, endangered Garry Oak meadows and coastal Douglas-fir maritime ecosystems.

For more information on parks in the RDN and to read the 2022 RDN Parks and Trails Strategy, visit [rdn.bc.ca/parks-services](http://rdn.bc.ca/parks-services). To see current RDN Parks projects, visit [getinvolved.rdn.ca/rdn-parks-and-trails](http://getinvolved.rdn.ca/rdn-parks-and-trails).

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#### **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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