

To: CAO for the Regional and Corporate Services Committee  
From: Christina Vugteveen, Manager of Park Operations  
**Subject:** Fraser Valley Regional District Parks Closure Policy Updates

Date: 2019-06-11

File No: 6120-01

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### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board adopt the updated *Parks Closure Policy*.

#### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community  
Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

#### PRIORITIES

Priority #4 Tourism  
Priority #5 Outdoor Recreation

### BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) is committed to providing the public with safe parks, trails and usage of associated infrastructure. One of the ways in which this is managed, is to close parks and/or specific areas in the parks to protect its users, park infrastructure and their unique ecosystems. In 2013, the Parks Closure Policy was adopted by the FVRD Board. This policy was recently reviewed and updated to reflect the addition of new Electoral Area community parks and the Sub-Regional Parks (West) service area, and to ensure that the practices and terminology were up-to-date to accurately reflect current park operations.

### DISCUSSION

The review of this policy (attached) included an assessment of current practices and resources, as well as recommendations from the Municipal Insurance Agency (MIABC) which is our insurer. The proposed Parks Closure Policy update includes response to both emergency and non-emergency events which may require a park closure. This policy is for parks which are operated and managed directly by the FVRD.

#### General Response

Information on park conditions comes from a variety of sources including regular inspections, communication with local first responders or emergency personnel, responding to weather forecasts and conditions, and communication from the public. Public and staff safety is the priority, and as such, decisions on closures and communications regarding them will be evaluated at the time of the incident, and processes put into place to respond to the situation at hand.

### **Spring Freshet**

In 2018, much of the Fraser Valley, including our parks, experienced a sustained higher than average freshet which resulted in closures to many of our parks. This part of the policy was updated to reflect the learnings from the 2018 freshet, and to provide clarity around the special opening for Commercial Fishing guides at Island 22 Regional Park.

### **Wildfire Risk**

This is a new section added in the Parks Closure Policy, in response to climate change and the increasing wildfire presence in British Columbia over the past several years. While there is no smoking or campfires permitted in FVRD Parks, the FVRD monitors wildfire risk by following restrictions, guidelines, and closures as set out by the BC Wildfire Service, and liaising with local fire departments to determine any closures or restrictions.

### **Non-Emergency Events**

Construction, planned maintenance, and exclusive use permit requests are a regular part of Park Operations. Posting signs and giving advance notice to the public for these types of events are an important part of providing exceptional customer service. All requests for complete park closures for events must have the approval of the Board.

### **COST**

There are no new costs associated with the Parks Closure Policy.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed Park Closure Policy update will ensure that the FVRD is providing the public with safe parks and clear communication, while protecting park infrastructure.

### **COMMENTS BY:**

**Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services**

Reviewed and supported.

**Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services**

Reviewed and supported.

**Jennifer Kinneman, Acting Chief Administrative Officer**

Reviewed and supported.