



# FRASER VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**POLICY: Parks Closure Policy**

**Date Issued: January 30, 2013**

**Date Amended:**

## **PURPOSE**

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) is committed to providing the public with safe parks, trails and associated facilities to recreate. It is also a priority for the FVRD to protect the natural assets of these spaces, including its vegetation and wildlife. Occasionally conditions arise where closure of an area is necessary to protect the park and its users. The Parks Closure Policy sets out conditions which require the closure of a park, trail, or portion thereof, in an effort to protect the public, park infrastructure and/or the ecosystem. This policy also outlines the procedure staff must follow to identify conditions where closure is warranted and how to safely and effectively implement such a closure.

## **RISK IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT & GENERAL RESPONSE**

Both emergency and non-emergency events may require park closure. Sometimes these events are forecasted, and provide staff time to prepare (i.e. rising water levels or flooding), while others can be unpredictable with little time to prepare for a closure (landslide, flash flood, severe weather event, or police incident).

Field staff will conduct a risk assessment to identify whether conditions are present to warrant a closure. Generally, this assessment will include:

- conducting visual inspections to identify any unsafe conditions;
- communicating with local first responders, emergency personal or pertinent stakeholders;
- evaluating complaints that may have been received;
- researching outside conditions that may have impact; and
- seeking expertise if required.

If unsafe conditions arise, staff will notify the Manager of Park Operations immediately. If warranted, and if there is no immediate threat to staff safety, park staff will ask members of the public to leave the area. Staff will remain at the park gate, park entrance or safe area, and wait for further instruction or assistance.

The Manager of Park Operations or his or her designate has full authority to make a closure and remove a closure and will determine next steps. The Manager of Park Operations will inform the Director of Regional Services regarding the situation, who will then advise the Chief Administrative Officer.

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Staff will post signs advising the public of any hazardous or closed areas, and any safety concerns. All signs and notices will be posted in visible locations at the facility, area or park which is affected.

The Manager of Park Operations will prepare information, in liaison with Communications staff, regarding the closure to be posted on the FVRD website and on social media.

The Manager of Park Operations will also liaise with the appropriate Emergency Operations Centre and municipal staff when appropriate.

### SPRING FRESHET

High flows and flooding on the Fraser River and its tributaries can occur during the annual spring freshet when snow that has accumulated during the winter in the mountains of the Fraser River watershed melts. The FVRD has parks located along these low lying areas which can be impacted by high water, fast flowing water, localized flooding and associated erosion.

Environment Canada provides real time monitoring of water levels for the Fraser River and other rivers. Low level flooding may occur along the Fraser River as water levels exceed 4.0m as measured at the Mission Gauge. Parks may be closed partially or in full depending on the water levels and impacts to the parks.

For Island 22 Regional Park and Dewdney Regional Park, when the readings reach the levels identified below, the parks will be inspected as per the Parks Inspection Policy and/or closed. The chart below is intended to be used as a guideline and the parks may close at lower water levels if warranted by inspection.

Park	Mission Gauge Level	Action
Dewdney Regional Park	4.0 m	Park Inspection
	4.5 m	Close Park
Island 22 Regional Park	5.7 m	Park Inspection
	6.0 m	Close Park
	6.0 m – 6.7 m	<b>Special Opening</b> may be permitted

### Special Opening During High Water Events for Commercial Fishing Guides

The Manager of Park Operations may recommend to the Director of Regional Services and the Chief Administrative Officer that experienced Commercial Guides continue to have access to Island 22 Boat Launch for the purpose of launching watercraft. This *SPECIAL OPENING* will have the following restrictions:

- Commercial Guides who request a Special Opening will be required to sign a waiver prior to accessing and launching a watercraft at Island 22 Regional Park.
- Operational hours during the *Special Opening* will be from 8:00am – 4:00pm.
- Expenses incurred for managing the gate access during a Special Opening will be incurred as part of the annual cost of the gatehouse operation.

### WILDFIRE RISK

Extended periods of high temperatures and dry conditions make parkland vulnerable to fire. This is of particular concern when parkland is within or adjacent to municipal or rural communities where wildland-urban interface fires may occur.

As per the Parks Regulation Bylaw, smoking and campfires are not permitted in FVRD parks; however this alone is not enough to prevent the breakout of fire.

The FVRD will follow the restrictions, guidelines, and closures as set out by the BC Wildfire Service, and will liaise with the local fire department as applicable to determine any closures/restrictions.

### NON-EMERGENCY EVENTS

Any request from an agency, group, organization or members of the public to close a park for the purpose of a park permit, filming, special event (>30 people) or special request must be made in writing to the Manager of Park Operations 60 days prior to the event.

- All requests for complete park closures for events must have approval of the Board. The Manager of Park Operations will prepare a report with recommendations to the Board regarding the request.
- If approved, the Manager of Park Operations will notify the applicant.

Park closure may also occur due to construction, maintenance, and repair work. Staff will post signs and closure notices that are scheduled in advance for a minimum of 1 week before the closure to give users adequate notice.