

To: CAO for the Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2020-03-10

From: Christina Vugteveen, Manager of Parks and Recreation

File No: 2320-30-22200

Subject: Updated Agreement with the Province for Elk-Thurston & Mt. Cheam Regional Trails and East Sector Lands Regional Park

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board enter into a 10 year Partnership Agreement with Recreation Sites and Trails BC for the continued operation and management of Elk-Thurston Regional Trail, Mt. Cheam Trail, and Harrison Recreation Site (East Sector Lands Regional Park).

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 Parks (FVRD) Department and the Province have a long-standing relationship regarding the maintenance of popular recreation sites in the region. The day-to-day management of the Elk-Thurston Regional Trail (2005) and Mt. Cheam Regional Trail (2011) and the East Sector Lands Regional Park (2016) is the responsibility of the FVRD. These agreements have allowed for significant collaboration with the Province to apply for grants and fund trail upgrades, parking lot improvements, access road improvements, and a new urine diversion washroom facility on the top of Elk Mountain.

In 2016 the FVRD worked in partnership with the Village of Harrison Hot Springs and the Province to formally establish the East Sector Lands Regional Park. Since the agreement for Elk-Thurston and Mt. Cheam was expiring in December 2019, it was decided it would more efficient to include Harrison Recreation Site in the updated agreement for the two trails. This new agreement for all three sites replaces the agreement that expired for the trails in December of 2019.

Agreements exist for many FVRD Regional Parks for operations and management including Island 22 Regional Park, Hillkeep Regional Park, Elk Thurston Regional Trail, and Mt. Cheam Regional Trail, Sumas Mountain Regional Park, East Sector Lands Regional Park, and Dewdney Regional Park.

DISCUSSION

Elk-Thurston Regional Trail, Mt. Cheam Regional Trail, and East Sector Regional Park are significant regional assets, drawing visitors from across the FVRD and beyond. Specifically, Mt. Cheam Regional Trail is one of the most iconic hiking trails within our region. These recreation sites promote the FVRD Board's strategic priorities of Tourism and Outdoor Recreation.

An updated agreement with Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) for Elk-Thurston Regional Trail, Mt. Cheam Regional Trail, and East Sector Regional Park directly aligns with the FVRD Regional Parks Strategic Plan. The Plan specifically highlights "strengthening partnerships" and "securing long-term land-use agreements" to help achieve its objectives. Long term management agreements with the Province for Mt. Cheam and Elk-Thurston trails are also priorities under the Strategic Plan.

The new agreement would expire December 31, 2025. FVRD would continue to manage and maintain the sites, and continue working in partnership with the Province for infrastructure requirements such as the completion of a new washroom facility on Mt. Cheam which is anticipated to be completed summer of 2020.

COST

There are no new costs associated with this agreement. Regular operations and maintenance associated with these three sites are included in the 2020 approved budget.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the FVRD enters into a continued long-term agreement with RSTBC for the management and maintenance of Elk-Thurston Regional Trail, Mt. Cheam Regional Trails, and the Harrison Recreation Site (East Sector Lands).

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.