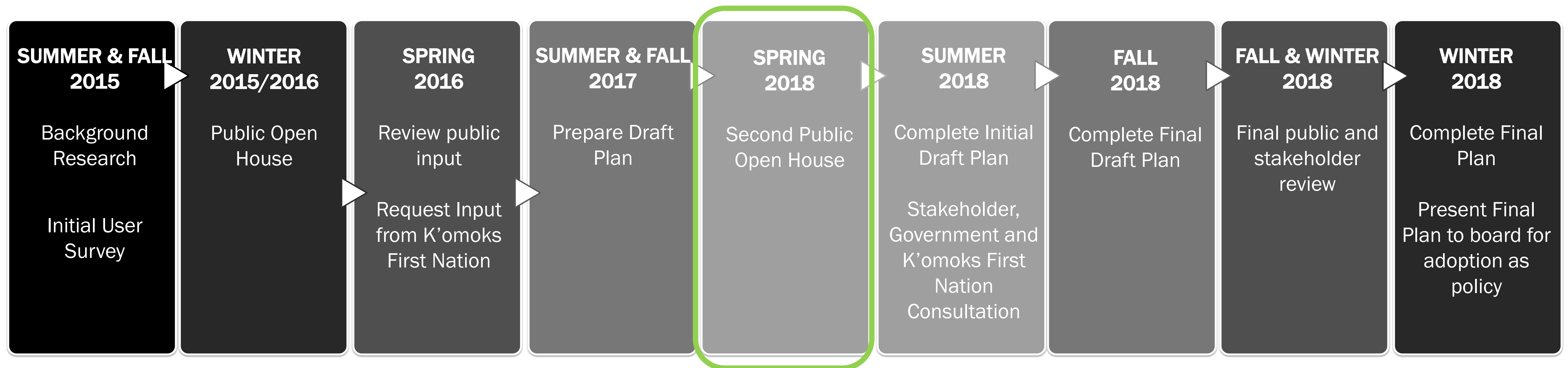


SEAL BAY PARK OPEN HOUSE



The CVRD is updating the Seal Bay Regional Nature Park and Forest Management Plan to guide park management for the next 20 years

The purpose of the second public open house is to:

- Re-engage the community and provide an opportunity for public feedback
- Present the draft short, medium and long-term action plan priorities
- Present the draft trail concept plan

The management direction is based on the 1998 park master plan, updated mapping and public feedback gathered from user surveys and the first open house.

Public involvement

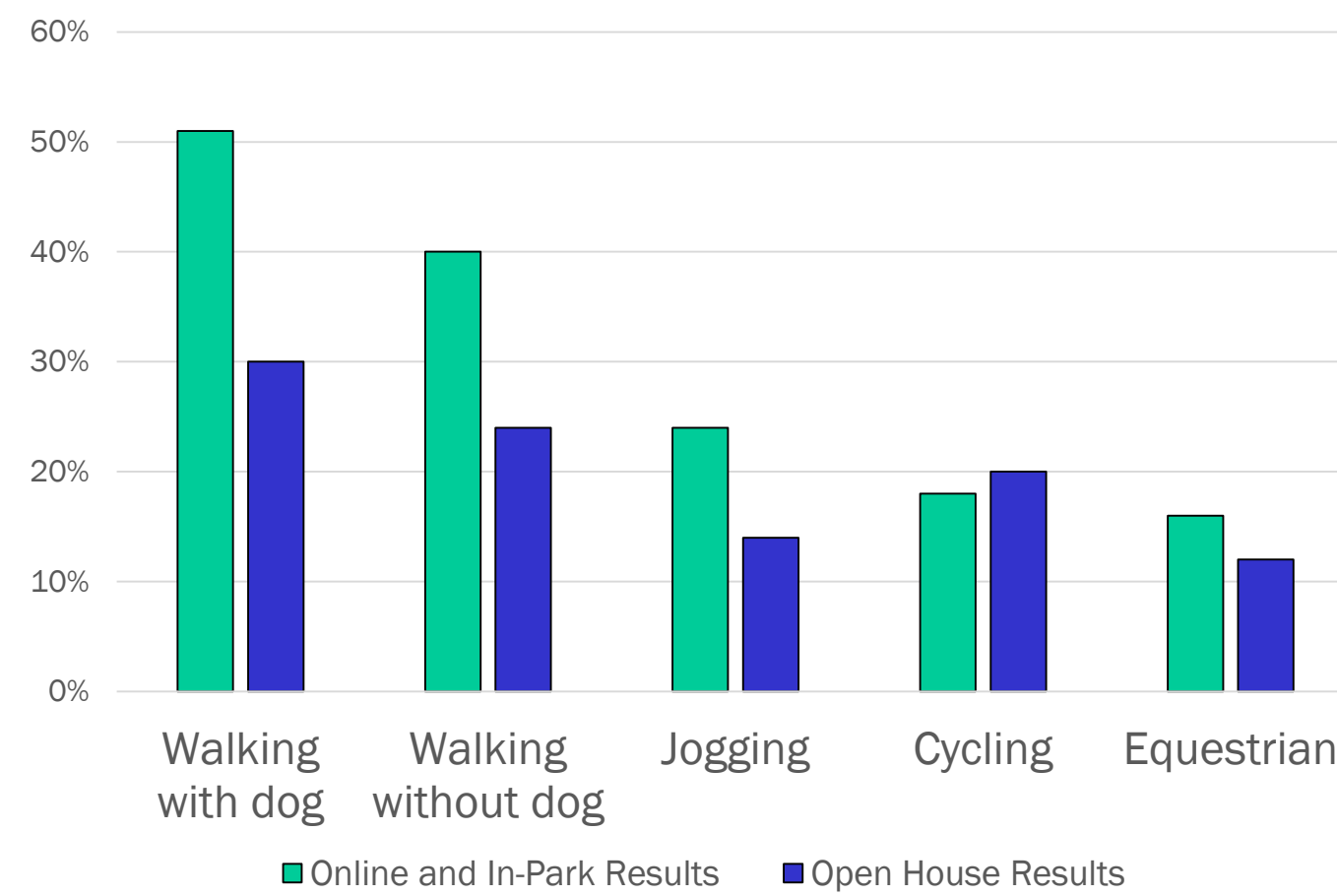
Please review the poster boards and provide us with your comments on the open house survey form. Both paper and digital copies of the survey are available.

All open house information and the open house survey will be posted at:
www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sealbay.

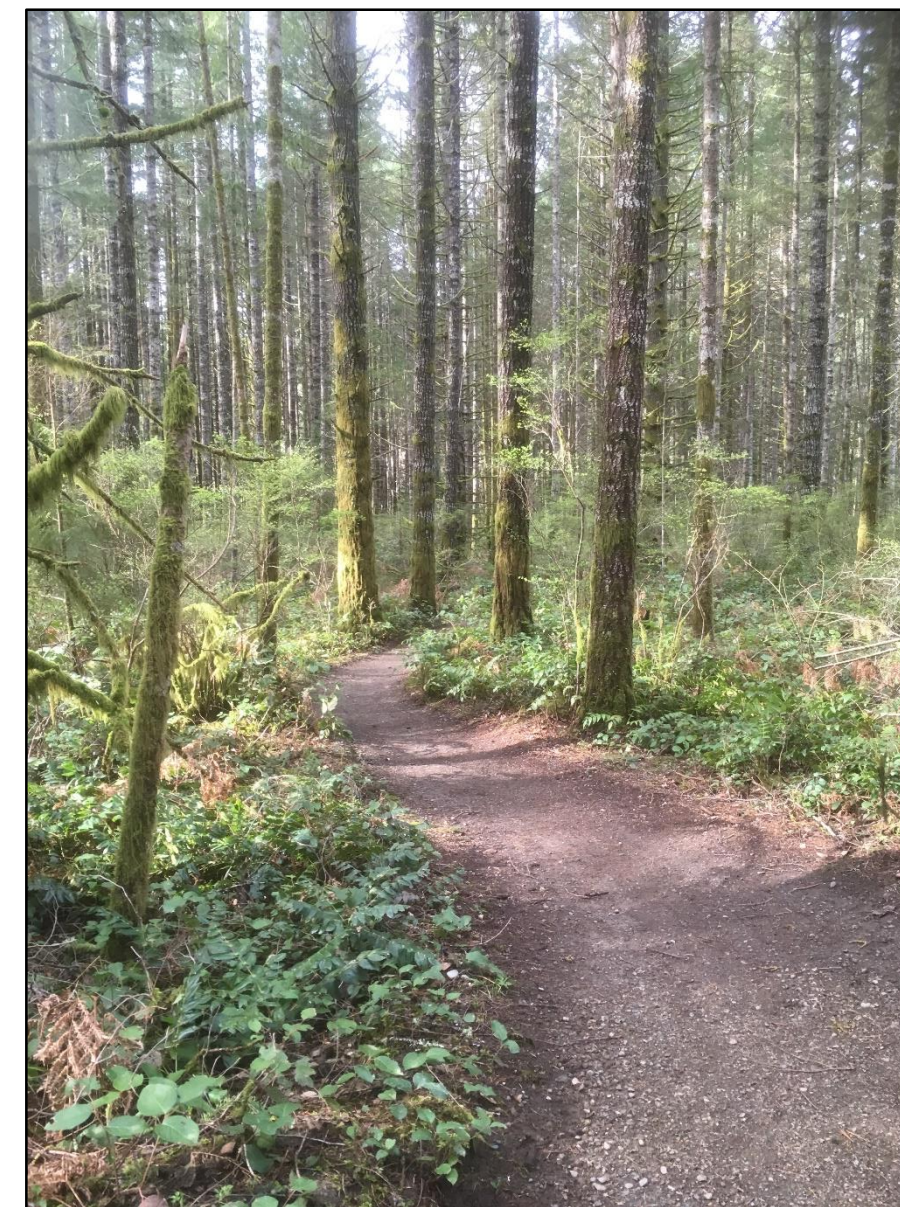
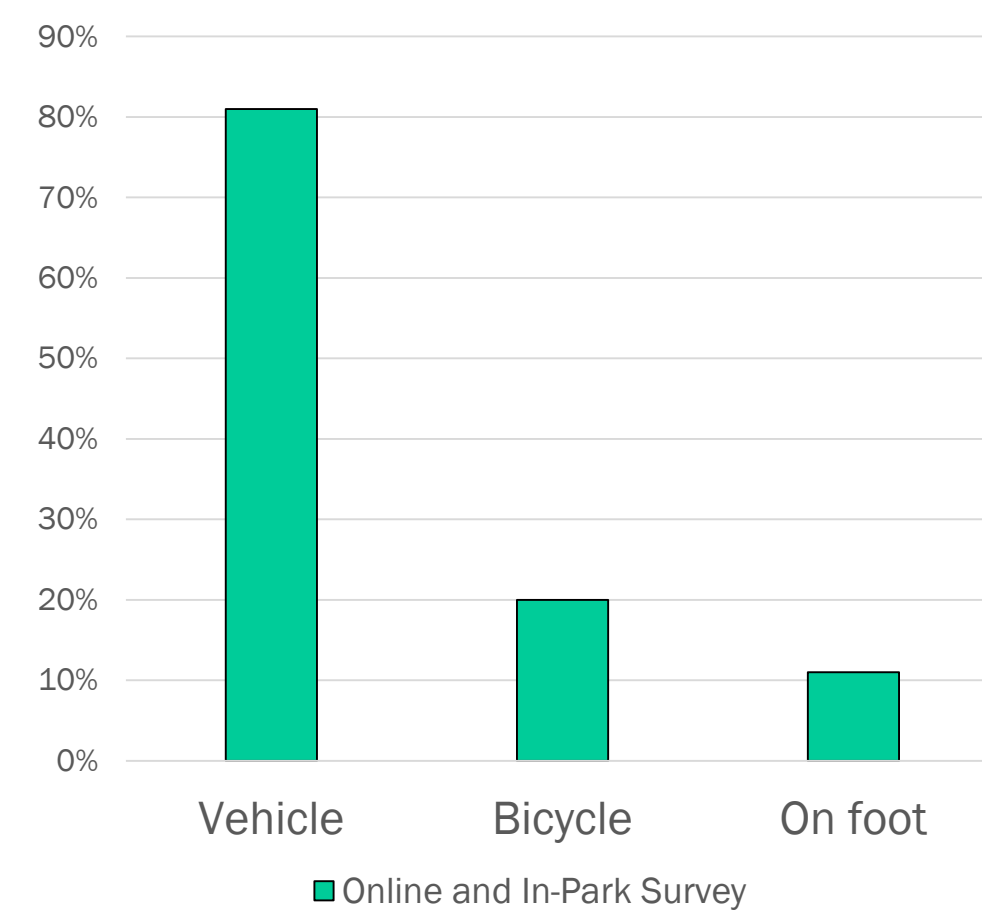


2015/16 SURVEY RESULTS

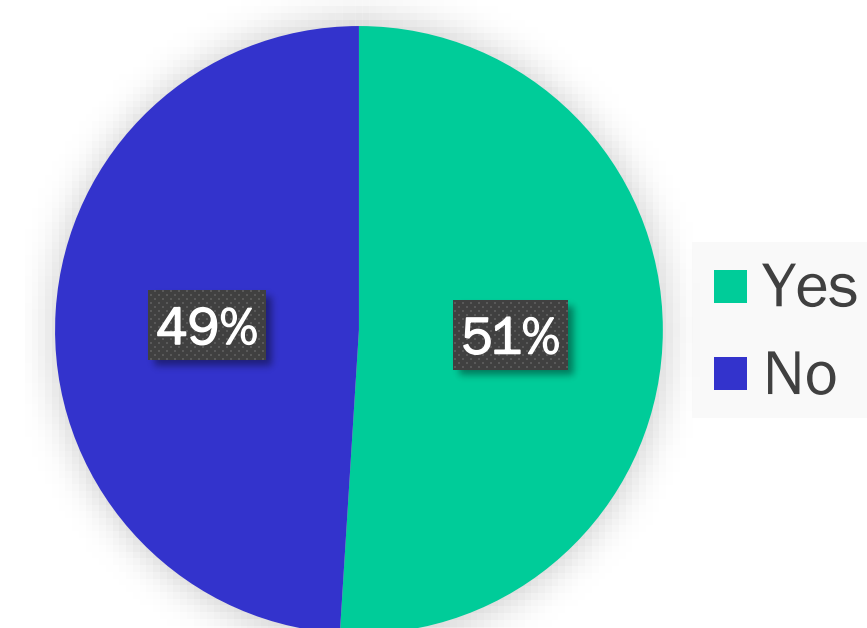
Park Use



Mode of Access



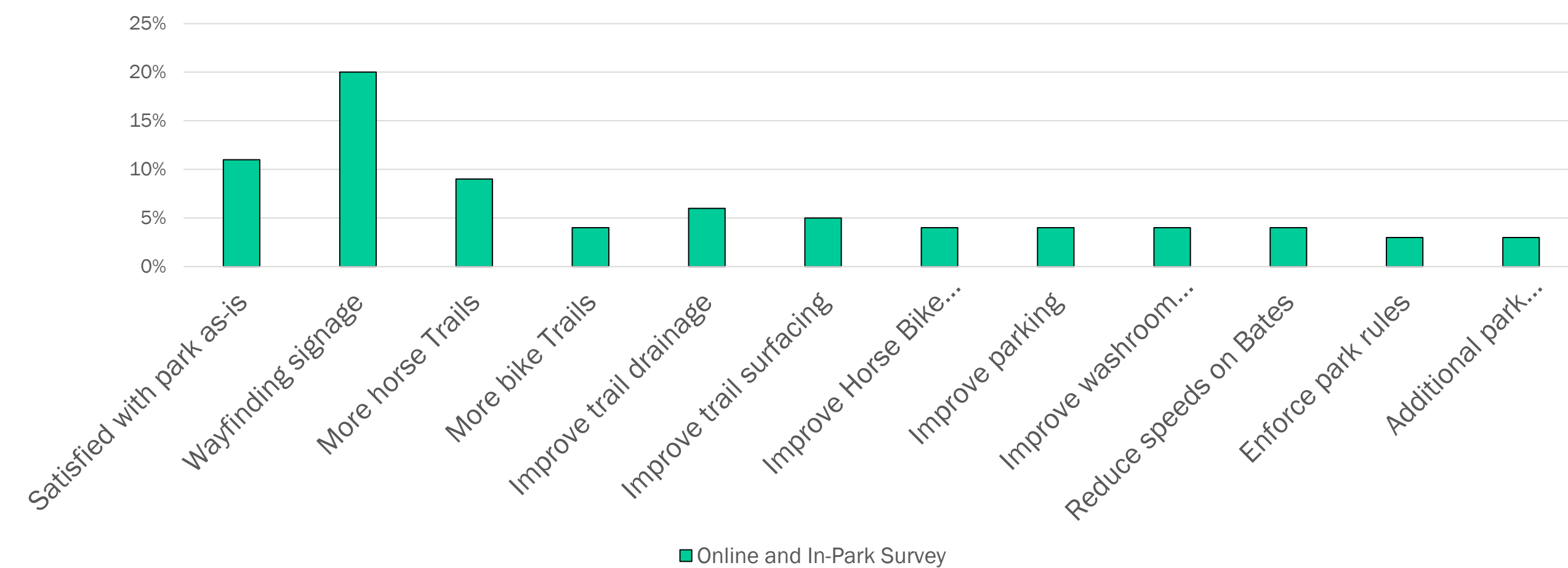
More multi-use trails?



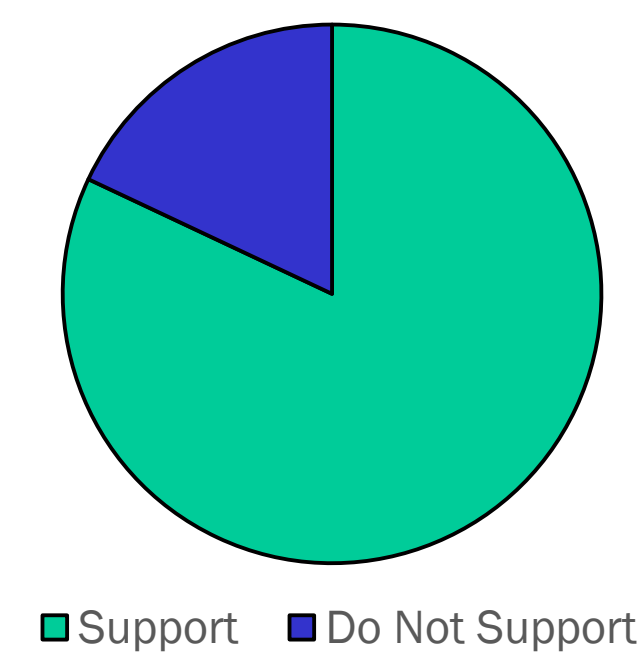
Of the first open house participants that indicated they wished to see more multi-use trails, the following were considered the most desirable:

- Mitchell Grade (55%)
- Catch-Up Loop (29%)
- Trail along west side of Bates Road (19%)

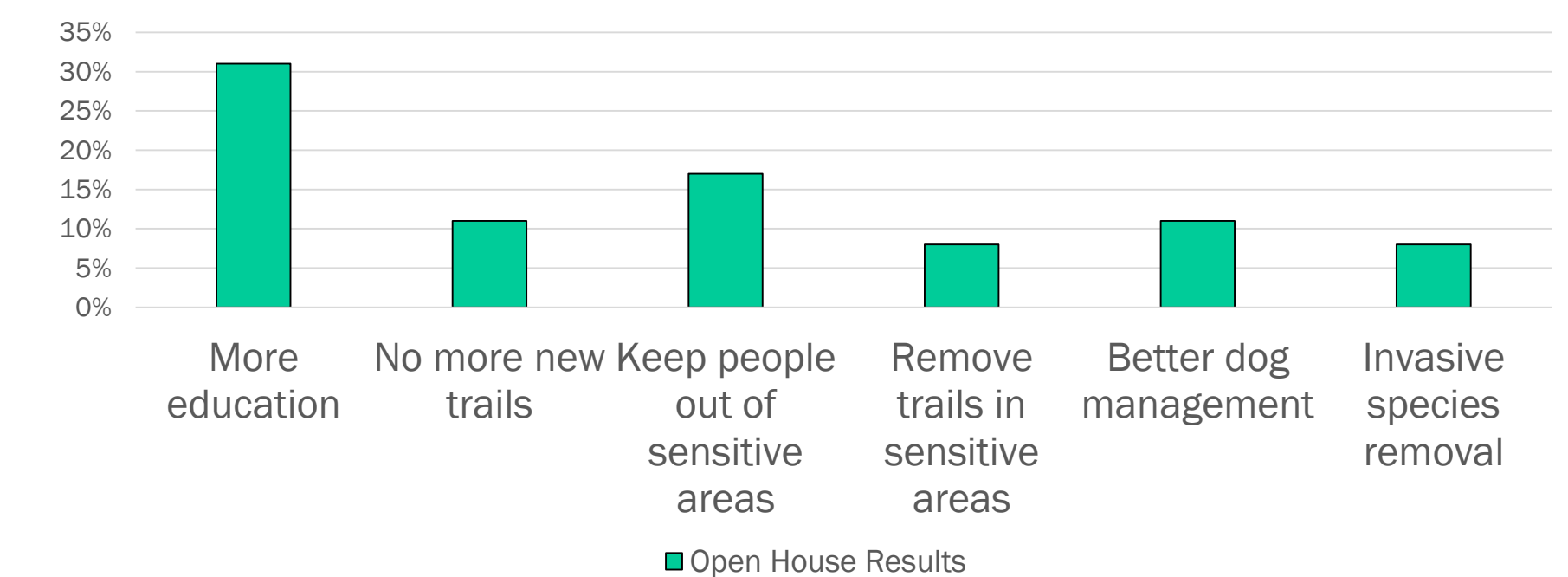
Desired Park Improvements



Do you support a wilderness conservation zone?

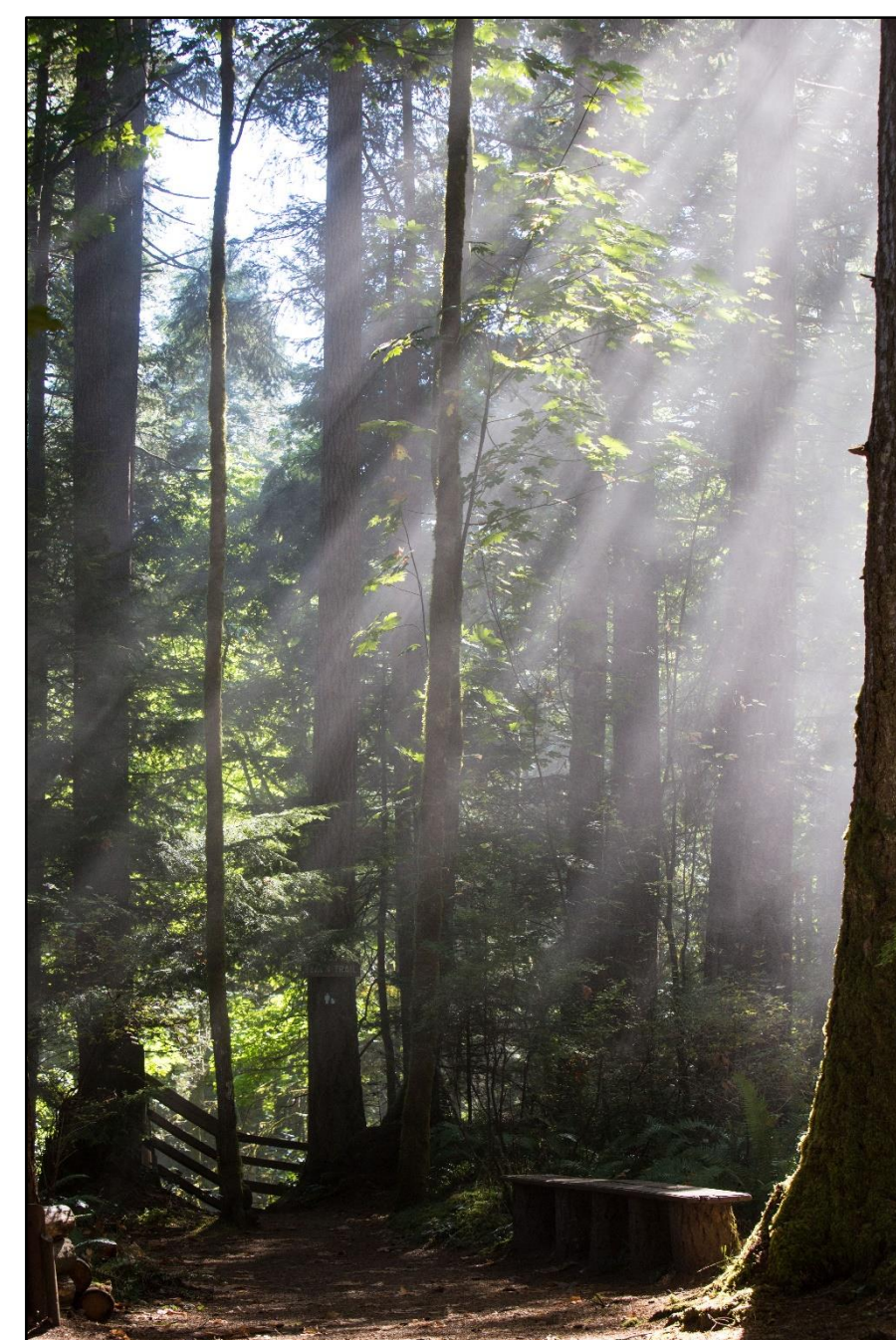


What can be done to better protect wildlife and natural ecosystems?



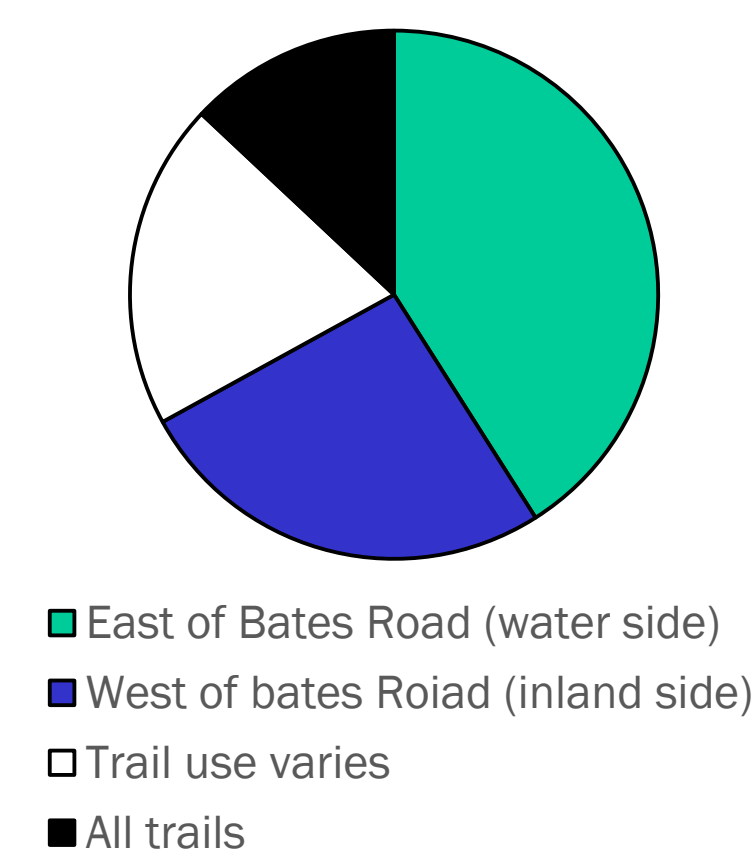
When asked to prioritize park improvements at the first open house, the following improvements were deemed the highest priority by the participants:

- Speed reduction on Bates Road
- Accessible gate at Swamp Loop entrance at Bates Road
- Improve trail drainage
- Safer Horse-Bike Loop near Bates Road
- Explore crosswalk on Bates Road
- Resurface wheelchair loop to make it more accessible

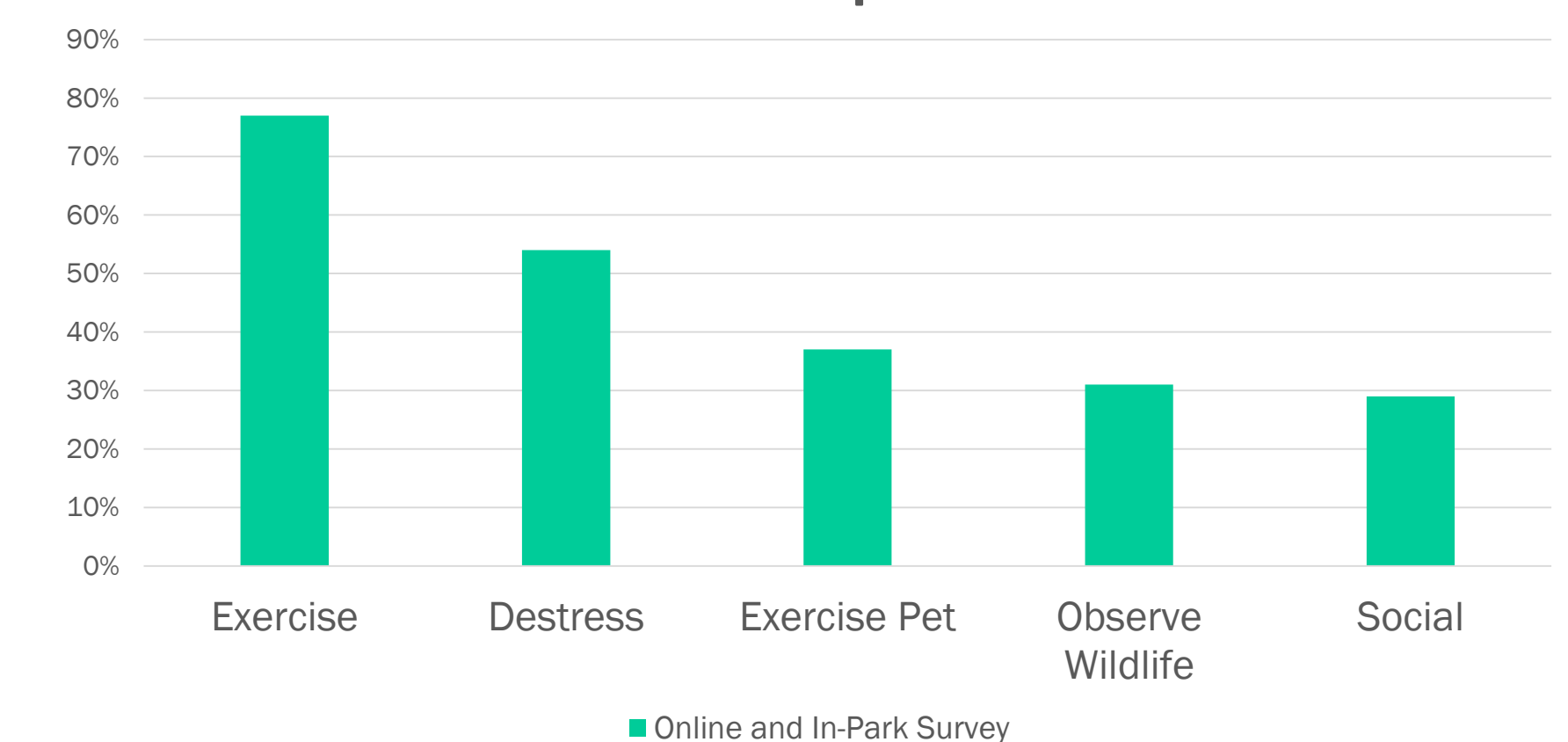


User Survey Responses:
Online and in-park - 290
Open House - 70

Trail Use



Reason for park visit



MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

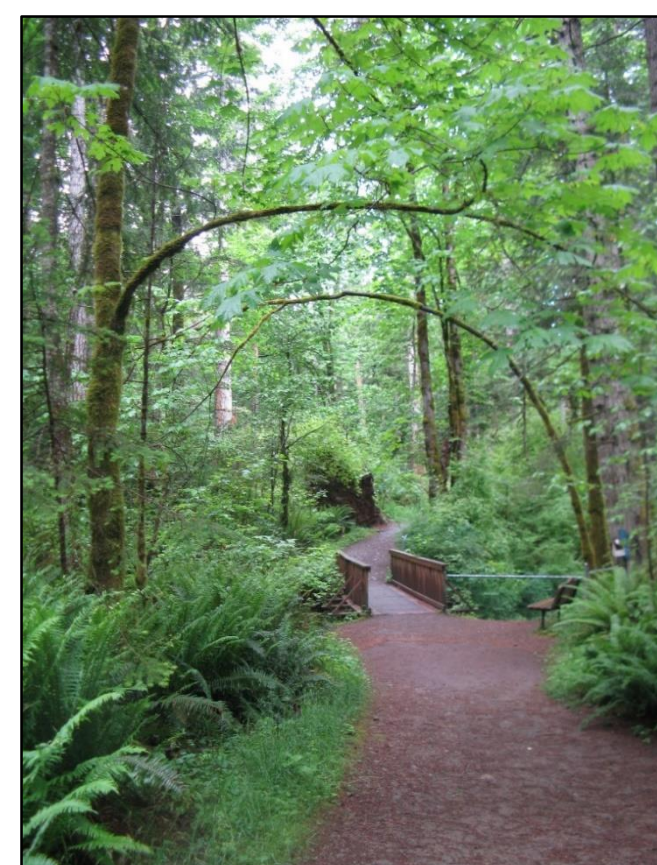
Proposed Park Vision Statement

Seal Bay Nature Park and Seal Bay Forest is envisioned as a place where users can escape into the tranquility of the natural environment. It is a place where stewardship of the land is embraced and opportunities are available to foster an appreciation and understanding of the natural environment.

Healthy and functioning natural ecosystems present in the park are protected and preserved including the high quality stand of mature second-growth forest; the rare hardhack wetlands; riparian areas; the marine foreshore and coastal bluffs; and the ecological communities associated with the rare Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone (CWHxm1). Sensitive ecosystems and wildlife habitat are protected through the implementation of conservation zones that help protect unfragmented and at-risk natural areas. Adaptive park management helps to protect or restore the parks natural ecosystems.

The park is inclusive and accessible to a range of users and encourages healthy lifestyle choices, social interaction and a strong community connection to place. First Nation culture and history are recognized. The low impact trail system is well maintained, includes a variety of typology types conducive to a range of activities, and supports a variety of experiences within the natural setting. Future park improvements are unobtrusive and blend with the natural environment.

The Park Vision statement describes the long-term desired future condition of the park based on the community's values



Proposed Park Management Themes and Goals

- 1 Environmental Stewardship**
 - Goal 1: Protect the park's rare and sensitive ecological communities
 - Goal 2: Manage the park's natural assets with a focus on the preservation of natural ecosystems
- 2 Visitor Experience**
 - Goal 3: Maintain the park's current sense of place
 - Goal 4: Provide educational opportunities to learn about the park's diverse natural environment
 - Goal 5: Recognize and protect cultural values within the park
 - Goal 6: Improve wayfinding in the park
 - Goal 7: Improve access to the park for the surrounding communities
 - Goal 8: Provide sufficient visitor services amenities to meet users' needs
- 3 Sustainable Trail Network**
 - Goal 9: Provide a trail network that is environmentally sustainable and supports low impact recreation activities
 - Goal 10: Ensure the trail system is inclusive for a range of users
- 4 Partnerships and Collaboration**
 - Goal 11: Work with government agencies, local municipalities, stakeholders and the K'omoks First Nation to protect and enhance the park's natural, social, cultural and recreational values
 - Goal 12: Be responsive to community needs by working with the local community to facilitate conservation, restoration and recreation goals within the park
- 5 Public Safety**
 - Goal 13: Ensure public safety within the park
 - Goal 14: Coordinate emergency response planning

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Goal 1: Protect the park's rare and sensitive ecological communities

Draft Actions:

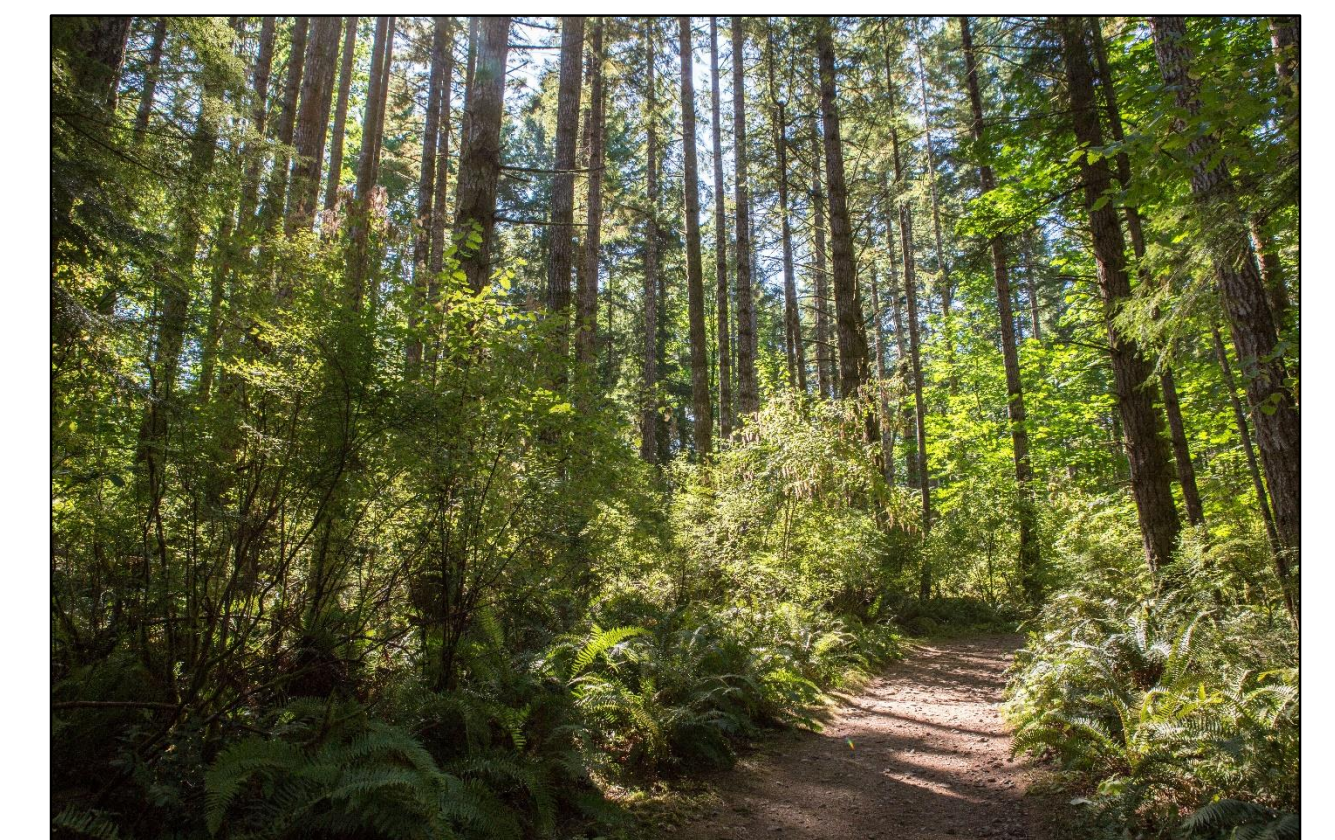
- Implement the park management zones strategy and work towards having the park trail system, park amenities and future park improvements meet the objectives of the management zone in which they are located. This may involve relocating trails, decommissioning trails and concentrating park facilities within intensive recreation zones.
- Inventory and map the park's rare and sensitive ecological communities as well as species and ecosystems at risk.
- Ensure continued protection of the wetland ecosystems and biodiversity present in the Map Reserve.



Goal 2: Manage the park's natural assets with a focus on the preservation of natural ecosystems

Draft Actions:

- Minimize ecological fragmentation through closure of unmarked or unsanctioned trails.
- Assess and monitor the health of the forest ecosystem.
- Preserve wetland habitat for waterfowl, birds, and aquatic wildlife.
- Preserve forage and denning opportunities for wildlife.
- Continue to ban salal and other plant harvesting within the park.
- Identify invasive species within the park and administer a program for removal. Emphasis shall be on the most sensitive ecological areas.
- Consider removal of the abandoned vehicle located near the old gravel pit or use as interpretive opportunity for gravel pit history.
- Continue to leave fallen logs within the park to naturally decompose.
- Complete biophysical inventories as required to ensure effective park management.
- Initiate further research on the hydrological systems that exist within the park to help better inform park planning initiatives. This includes evaluating the environmental impacts of the Melda's Marsh dam on natural system processes.
- Evaluate the vulnerability of the park to climate change and develop an adaptive strategy to address potential future impacts.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Goal 3: Maintain the park's current sense of place

Draft Actions:

- Maintain the natural 'wilderness' character of the park.
- Continue to provide non-consumptive, non-motorized, e-bike and nature-focused recreation opportunities.
- Ensure future park improvements respect the community's desire to experience nature in a quiet, peaceful setting.
- Ensure future park improvements are aesthetically pleasing, unobtrusive and blend with the natural environment.

Goal 4: Provide educational opportunities to learn about the park's diverse natural environment

Draft Actions:

- Provide opportunities for self-guided natural history interpretive programming including opportunities to identify flora and fauna and natural systems processes.
- Develop a program to provide seasonal guided nature education walks in the park.
- Include information on the park's ecology in the park brochures and interpretive materials.
- Educate users about the impacts on the parks natural resources from use of unmarked trails through discreet signage and interpretive materials.

Goal 5: Recognize and protect cultural values within the park

Draft Actions:

- Work with the K'omoks First Nation to inventory cultural values and ensure protection of these values into the future.
- Identify First Nation place names and work in collaboration with the K'omoks First Nation on signage policy within the park.
- Ensure K'omoks First Nation reviews and approves all first nation cultural references used on interpretive materials and park signage prior to installation or distribution.
- Identify the European historic use of the area and the disruption to the old growth ecosystem.

Goal 6: Improve wayfinding in the park

Draft Actions:

- Develop a clear and simple signage plan for the park. This will help visitor wayfinding and emergency response.
- Remove all non-conforming signage.
- Ensure signage can be read easily by cyclists and horseback riders without stopping.
- Install park trail maps at key trail intersections and replace old trail maps to ensure consistent messaging.
- Continue to provide park brochures with trail maps at the parking areas.
- Provide information to download digital map applications.

Goal 7: Improve access to the park for the surrounding communities

Draft Actions:

- Explore the feasibility of developing a bike commuter path through the park along Bates Road.
- Maintain the current park entrance connections.
- Explore further active transportation connection opportunities between adjacent neighbourhoods and the park. This includes connections to the City of Courtenay's greenway system and the Little River Ferry terminal.
- Continue to support a BC Transit stop at the Bates Road parking area.

Goal 8: Provide sufficient visitor service amenities to meet park users' needs

Draft Actions:

- Monitor park use and explore options for additional or improved park amenities (such as washrooms and garbage cans) at key locations in the park.
- Develop site plans for key parking areas. These plans should address parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulations patterns, and provide a centralized 'service area' of park amenities.
- Ensure vehicular parking is sufficient to meet the needs of day users.
- Monitor horse trailer parking and explore the development of additional parking if required.

SUSTAINABLE TRAIL NETWORK

Goal 9: Provide a trail network that is environmentally sustainable and supports low impact recreation activities

Draft Actions:

- Ensure trail construction, repair and maintenance is done as per current best management practices and that trails are built to withstand designated uses.
- Focus on maintaining the existing trail network rather than creating new trails.
- Base trail maintenance budgets on trail type classification. Accessible and higher classified trails are to receive more maintenance funding.
- Continue to keep motorized vehicles off the trail network with the exception of motorized wheelchairs, e-bikes or scooters used by individuals with mobility challenges. Service and emergency vehicles are to be allowed on designated trails.
- Continue to restrict equestrian and bike use to multi-use paths.
- Address current trail drainage issues through trail re-alignment, trail closure and/or installation of site appropriate drainage infrastructure.
- In the long term maintain and establish only two beach accesses.
- Work with the Backcountry Horsemen and adjacent landowners to re-align the horse-bike loop trail adjacent to the Langlois Road properties.
- Continue to use permeable trail surfacing to minimize ecological impacts.

Goal 10: Ensure the trail system is inclusive for a range of users

Draft Actions:

- Trail use conflicts and trail impacts to be monitored. Persistent conflicts or maintenance issues may be addressed through separation or restriction of users as required.
- Monitor unauthorized trail use and enforce as required.
- Construct accessible loop trails to a prominent landscape features in the park while recognizing limits pertaining to topography, cost and environmentally sensitive areas. These should strive to offer access to a variety of natural features and landscape types.
- Maintain current off-leash dog rules and monitor restrictions. Educate users as to why the restrictions are in place and enforce as required.



PARTNERSHIPS

Goal 11: Work with government agencies, local partners, stakeholders and the K'omoks First Nation to protect and enhance the park's natural, social, cultural and recreational values

Draft Actions:

- Engage with the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to purchase or permanently close unopened road dedications which are adjacent to or wholly enclosed within the Seal Bay Nature Park and Seal Bay Forest boundaries.
- Work with MOTI to ensure all park infrastructure located within MOTI jurisdiction has the proper permits in place.
- Continue to work with the provincial Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) to acquire Seal Bay Forest to ensure protection of the forest in perpetuity.
- Continue to work with FLNRO in accordance with the lease requirements for Seal Bay Forest.
- Continue to strengthen the working relationship with K'omoks First Nation.
- Work with neighbours who have active agricultural operations to maintain and prevent land use conflict with adjacent Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land.
- Work with School District 71 and/or local college on nature education programming within the park.
- Work with the City of Courtenay to ensure future development adjacent to the park is compatible with park objectives of environmental stewardship and connectivity.
- Work with FLNRO to establish management direction for the trails that exist within the Map Reserve.



Goal 12: Be responsive to community needs by working with the local community to facilitate conservation, restoration and recreation goals within the park

Draft Actions:

- Continue to work with the local community on new initiatives or significant park changes.
- Continue to collaborate with local volunteer groups to deliver general maintenance within the park.
- Continue to work with the Comox Valley Naturalists Society on park stewardship objectives.
- Continue to partner with the Backcountry Horsemen on horse trail development and horse trail maintenance projects in the park.
- Continue to support special events in the park that are compatible with the uses of the park. Special events would continue to require a permit issued by the CVRD parks department.
- Work with the equestrian community to find a solution to the issue of horse manure in the park.

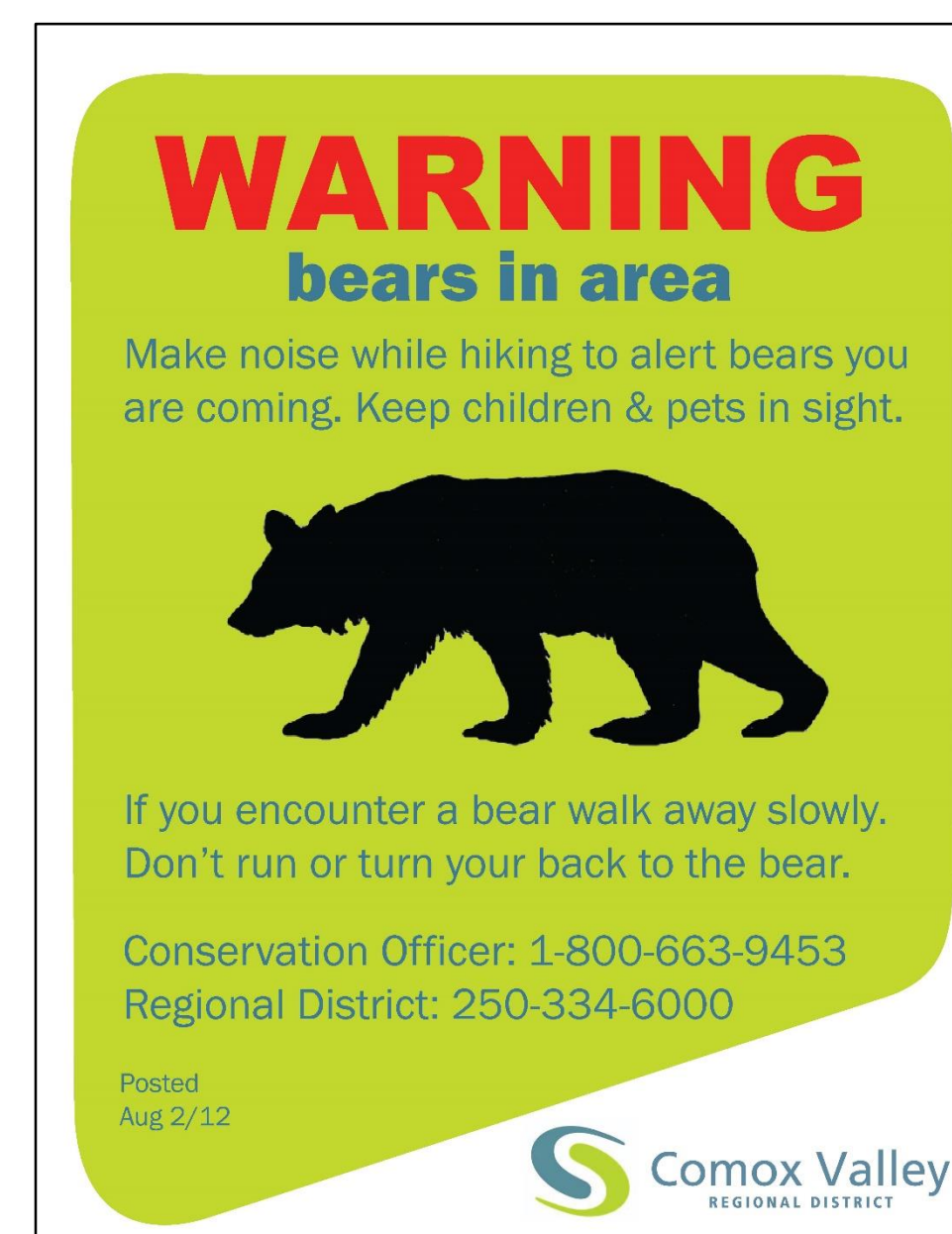


PUBLIC SAFETY

Goal 13: Ensure public safety within the park

Draft Actions:

- Engage with MOTI to explore ways to increase public safety on the section of Bates Road that passes through the park. This may be accomplished through vehicular speed reduction, traffic-calming measures, installation of signage, fewer crossing points or installation of crosswalks.
- Re-align the horse-bike loop trail off Bates Road to better meet equestrian safety concerns.
- Continue to monitor the condition of the trails and park infrastructure on a regular basis to ensure they are safe for public use.
- Provide public safety signage and notices as required.
- Continue to work with adjacent landowners on public safety concerns, notably hazardous trees and wildfire risk.
- Continue to impose 'no smoking' policy within the park during extreme dry weather.
- Work towards gradual replacement of existing hard-plastic drainage piping with hdpe piping.



Goal 14: Coordinate emergency response planning

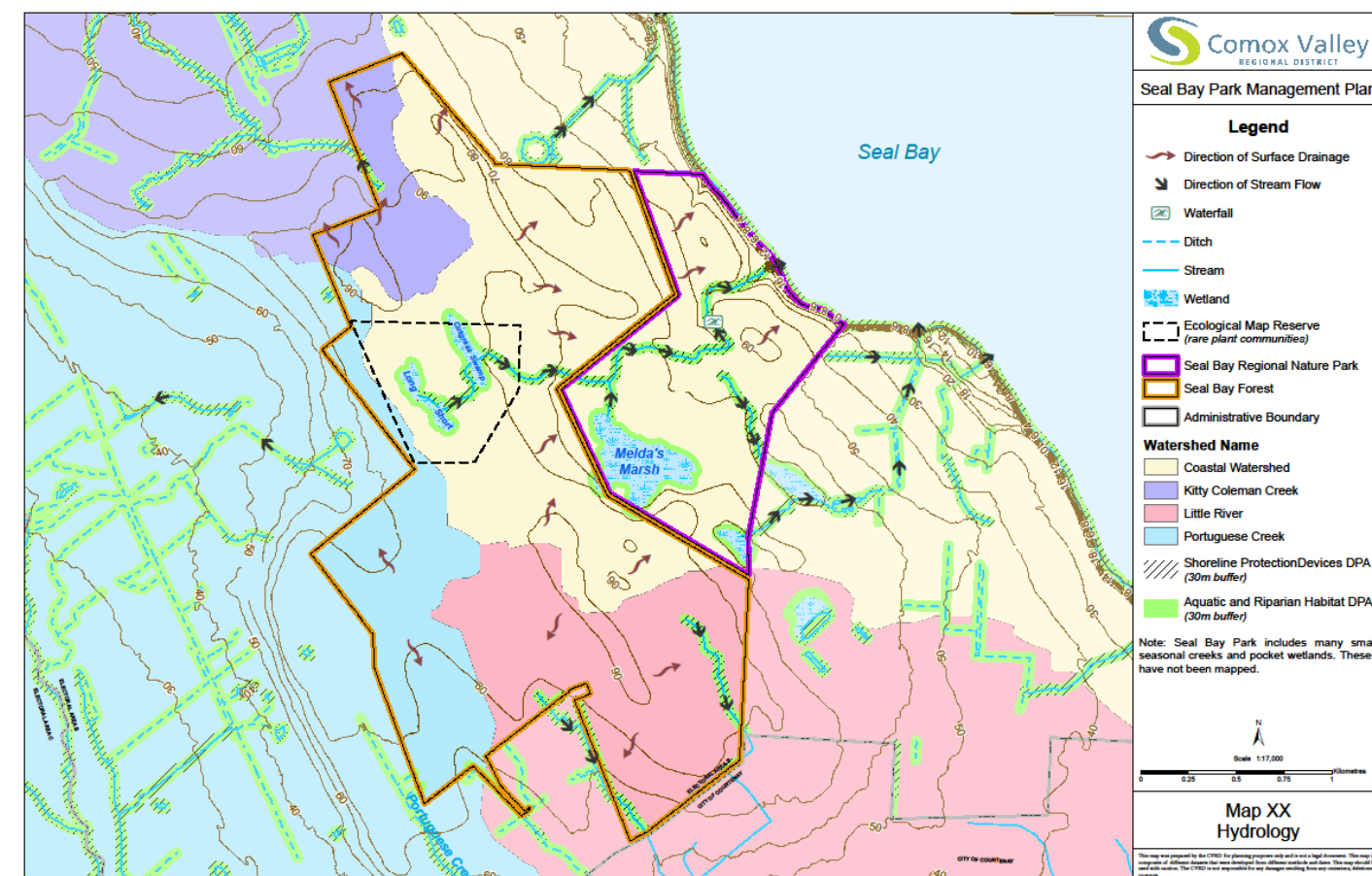
Draft Actions:

- Work towards implementing the wildfire risk recommendations for the park which are currently being developed as part of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- Work with the provincial North Island Mid Coast Fire Centre to identify areas of wildfire risk vulnerabilities in the park.
- Work with the provincial North Island Mid Coast Fire Centre, local fire chiefs and local emergency responders to develop an emergency response guidelines for the park.
- Work with the provincial North Island Mid Coast Fire Centre, local emergency first responders and the local Search and Rescue organization to ensure adequate access to the park is maintained to meet emergency response needs while not negatively impacting the park's sense of place. This may include vehicular and all-terrain vehicle access to strategic locations as well as access to gate keys.



INVENTORY MAPPING

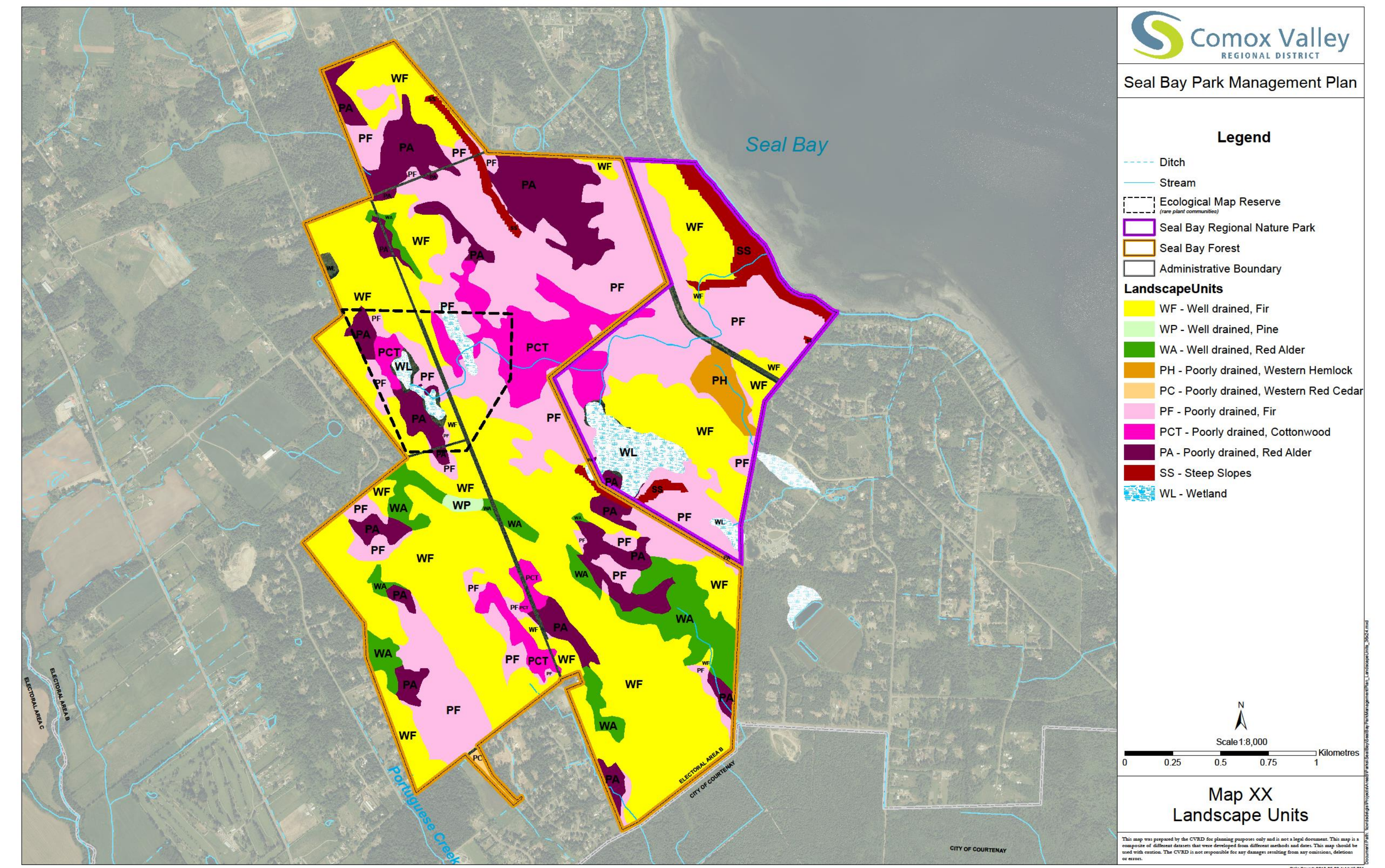
Hydrology:



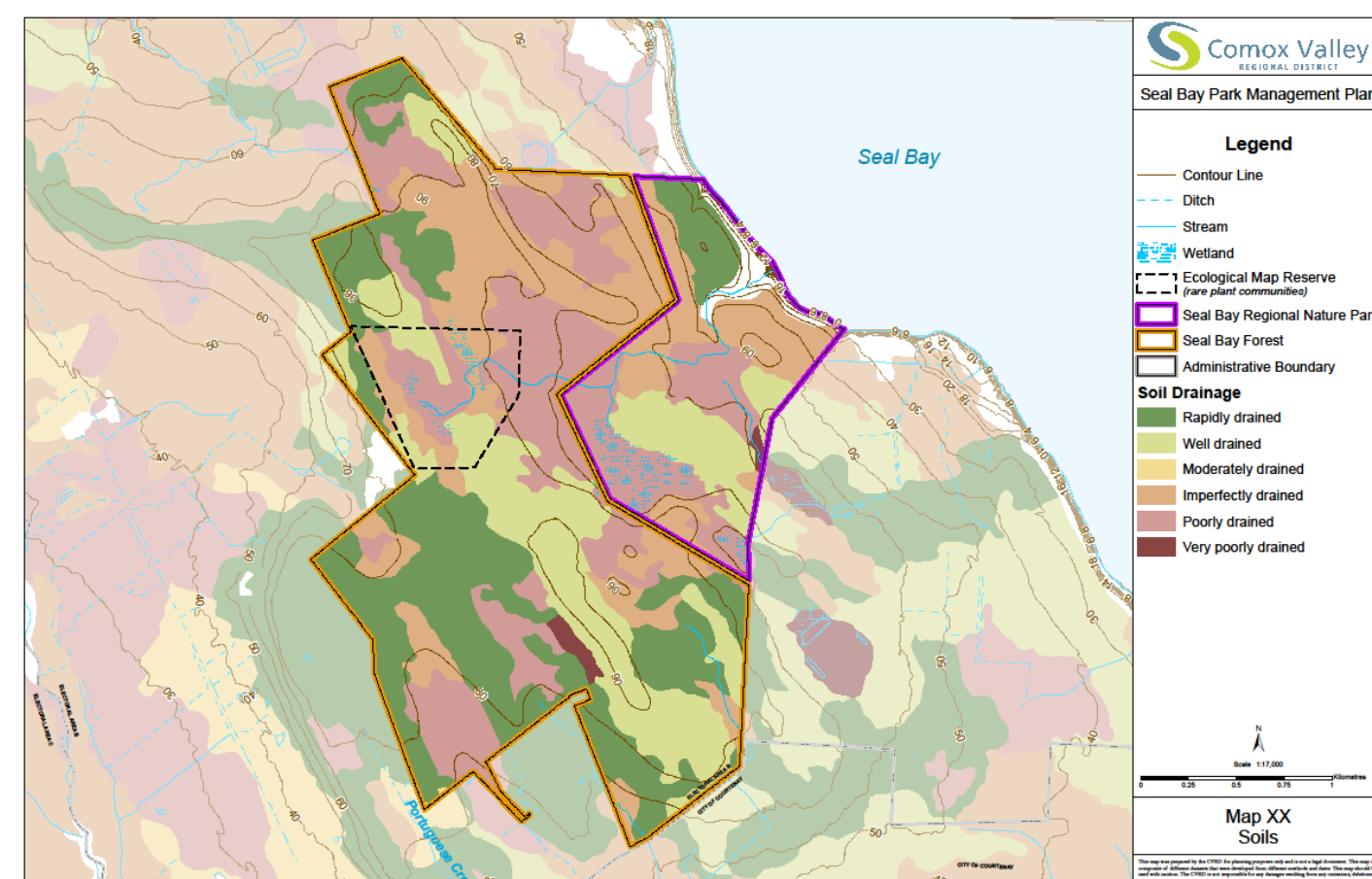
Sensitive Habitats:



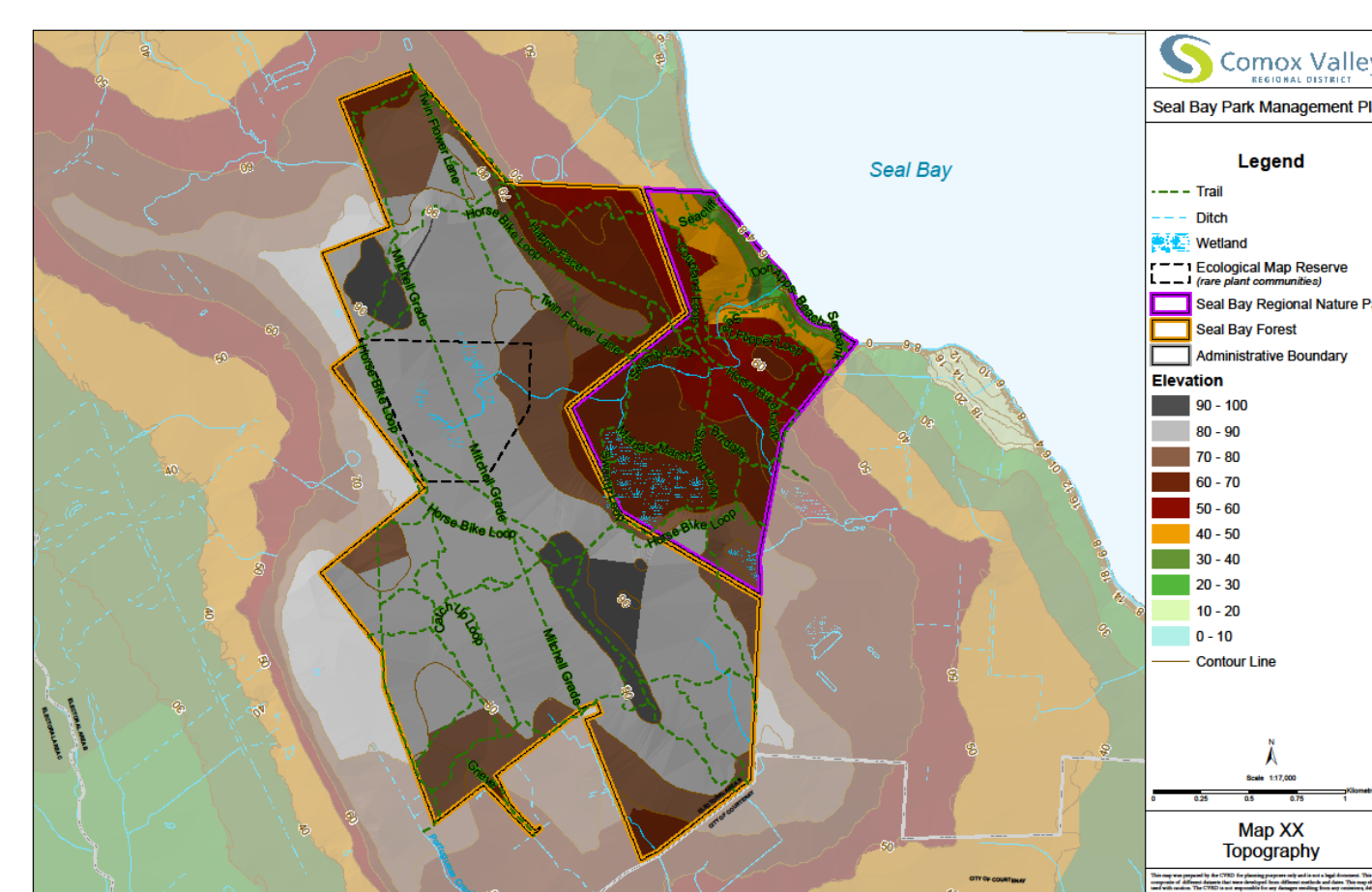
Landscape Units:



Soils:



Topography:

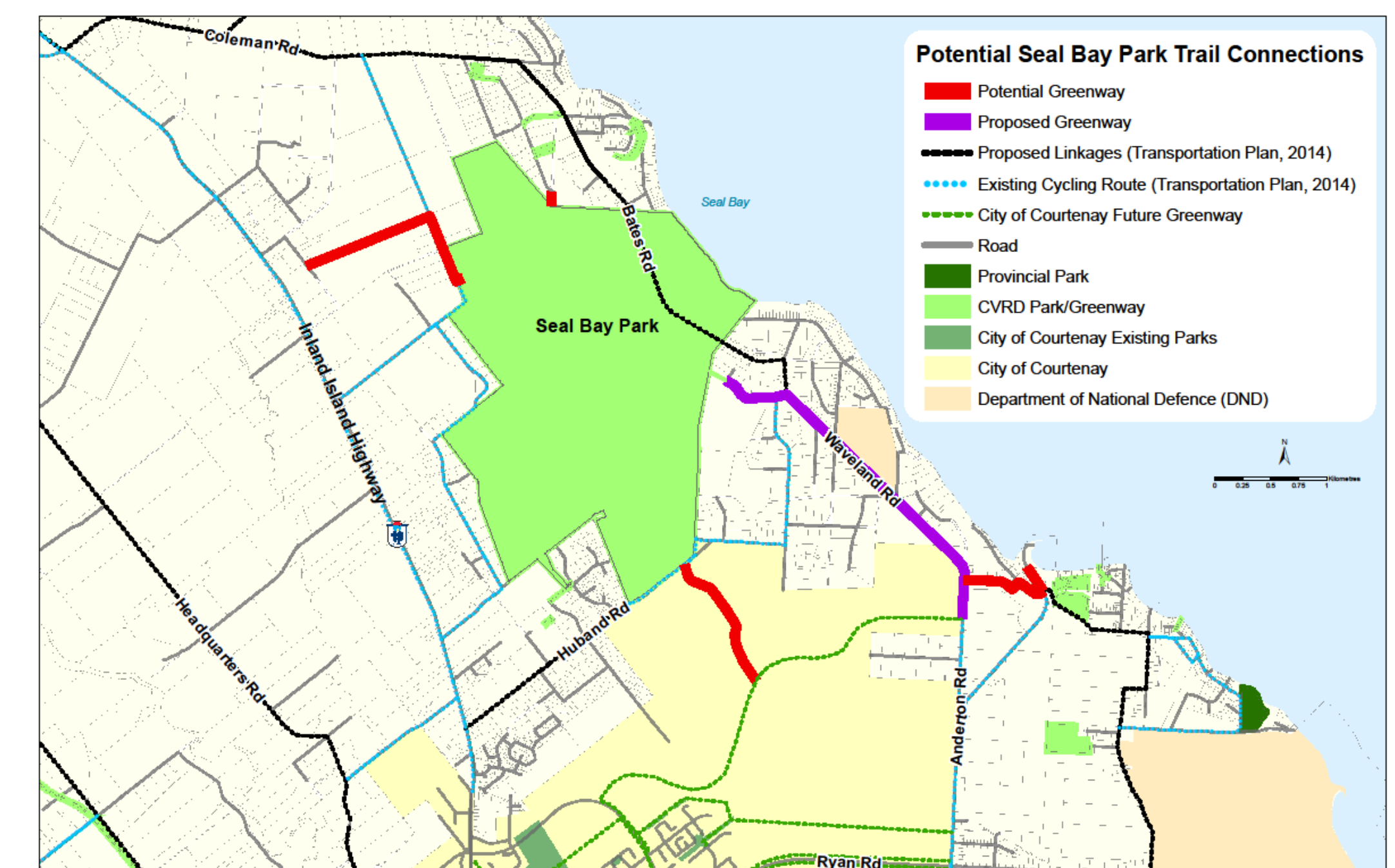
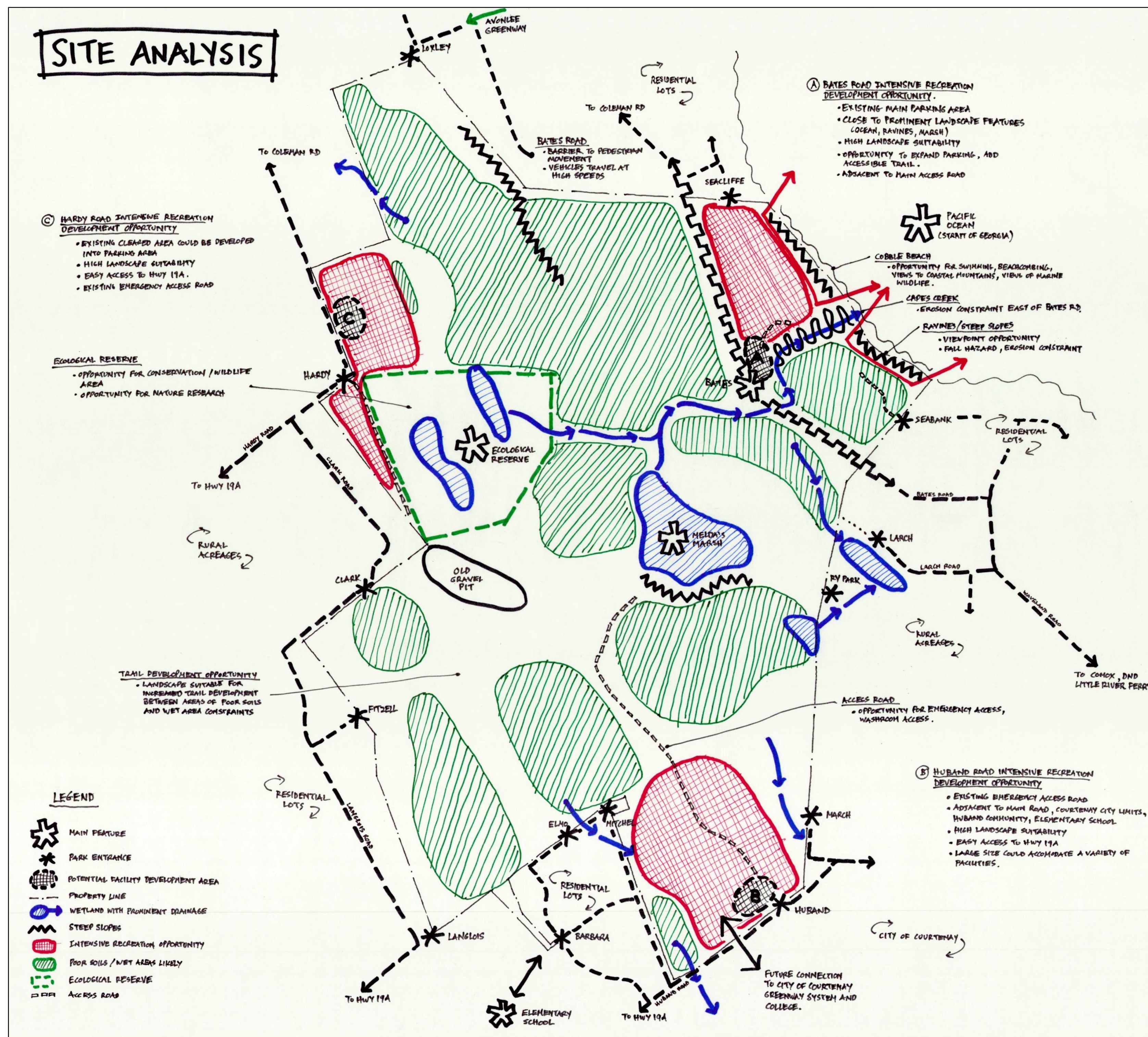


SITE ANALYSIS

Site Analysis

Highlights:

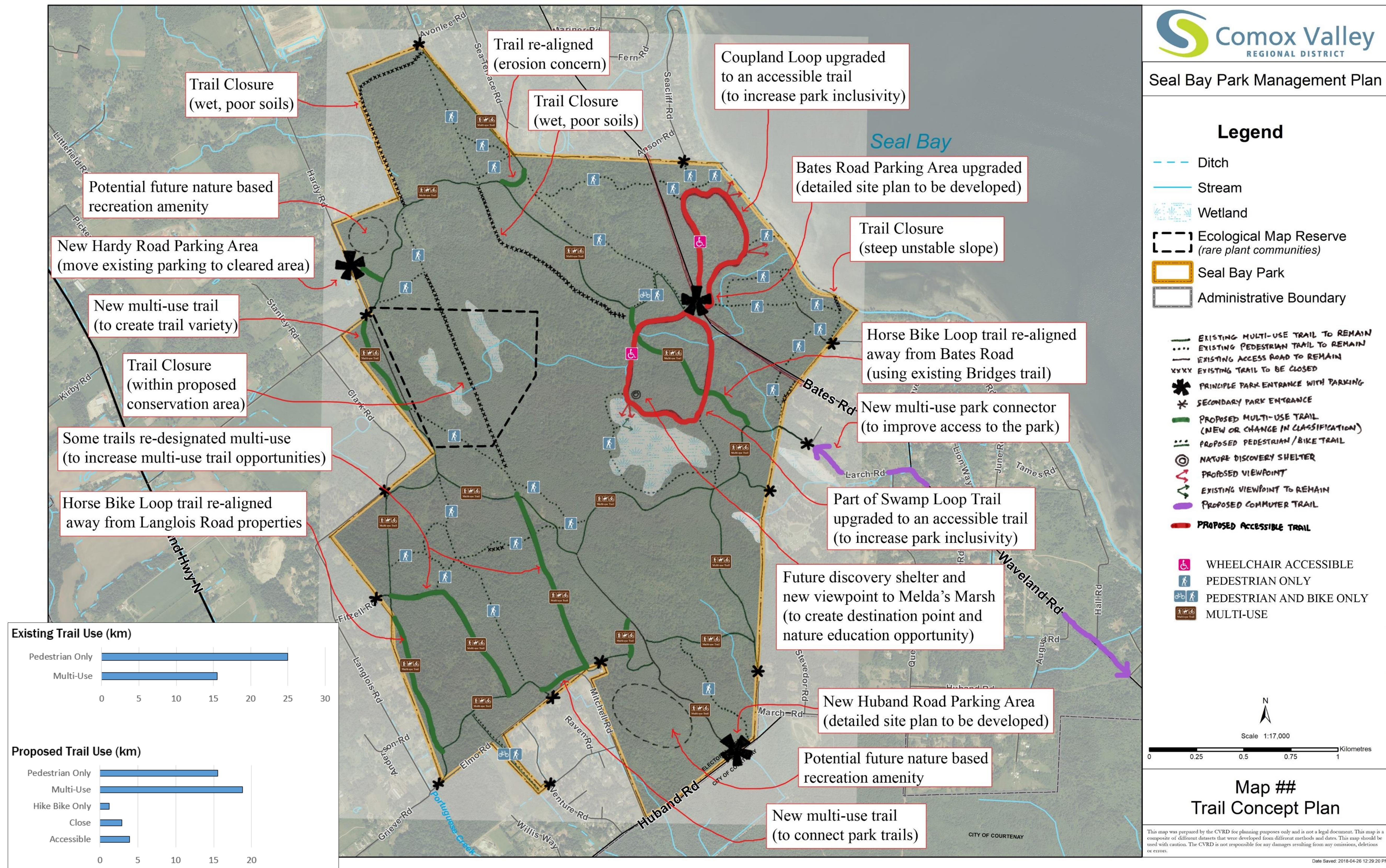
- Areas in GREEN represent areas with imperfectly to very poorly drained soils. These areas are not conducive to trail or facility development.
- Areas in RED represent areas close to main roads that are conducive to facility development. Each represent a parking opportunity.
- Areas in BLUE represent principle wetlands and primary water flow.



Adjacent trail connection Highlights:

- Trails in RED and PURPLE indicate potential or proposed CVRD trail connections to the park.
- Trails in BLACK indicate proposed trail connections in the 2014 CVRD Transportation Plan.
- Trails in GREEN indicate proposed or existing City of Courtenay trails.

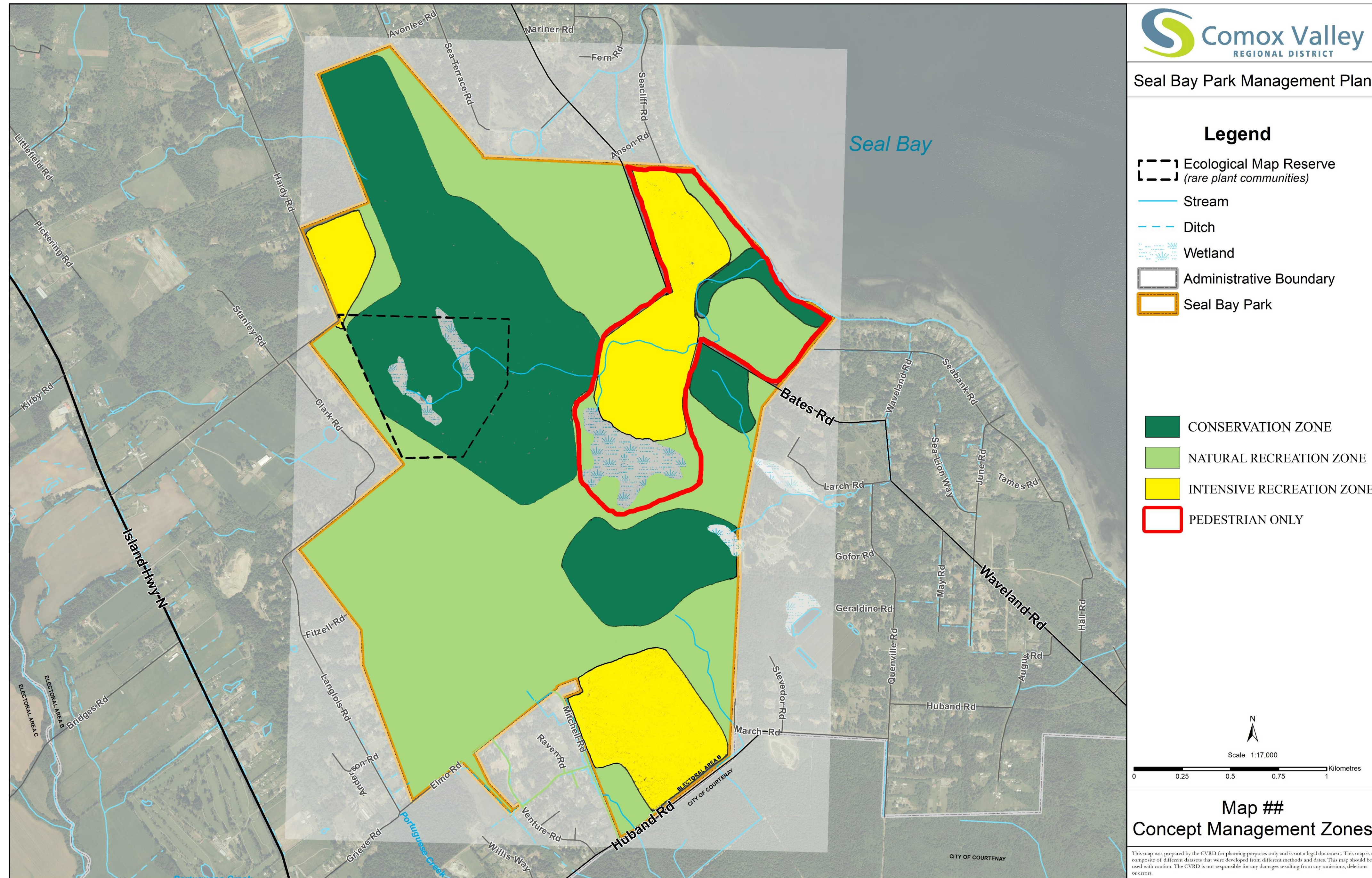
CONCEPT TRAIL PLAN



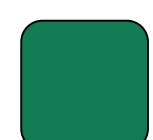
Highlights:

- Three principle parking areas. This will help accommodate current/future vehicular access demands and help disperse user groups into different areas of the park.
- Two accessible trails to promote inclusivity. These would be accessed from the Bates Road parking area.
- Increased number of multi-use trails to create more multi-use loop trail opportunities.
- Re-route of the Horse-Bike loop trail away from Bates Road.
- Trail closures in wet areas, areas of high erosion and to establish a large central conservation area in the heart of the park.

CONCEPT MANAGEMENT ZONES



- To help balance conservation and recreation values in the park three management zones are being proposed.
- These zones were established based on existing use, inventory mapping, user preferences and the conceptual trail plan.
- All the zones offer opportunities for recreation with varying degrees of environmental protection.



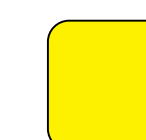
Conservation Zone

This zone emphasizes conservation and focuses on the protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems. This zone includes areas of high ecological value and areas that are sensitive to human disturbance. Human activities in this zone are controlled and managed so as to not adversely impact the natural environment.



Natural Recreation Zone

This zone allows for low intensity recreation in a mostly unmodified natural environment. Activities in this zone should be compatible with conservation and trail and park development would be limited.



Intensive Recreation Zone

This zone allows for the development of a variety of visitor service amenities and can withstand heavier recreational use. Within this zone the environment may be modified but will still retain a natural appearance.