



**DIRA Parks Committee Report to AGM\_**  
**2012-04-16.**

**From Laura Pope - Chair of DIRA Parks Cttee.**

First a thank you is due to the DIRA membership and executive for it's continued support, input of ideas and energy to the Parks Cttee. Also - thank you to the many members of the Parks Committee who regularly come to meetings and workbees.

The Parks Committee is blessed with many wonderful volunteers who continue to help with not only their time, but also with the donation of materials and expertise when needed. Without this critical support we would not have the many wonderful trails, bridges and viewing benches that have been built and maintained this past year. Work bees continue to be our main way to create, upgrade and maintain our parks. With Peter Karsten's help we now have a master list of volunteers who are covered by the Provinces group insurance plan when we are out in the field doing the work. This is very reassuring, as we can now feel a little more confident of our safety while out doing our work bees.

The Parks Committee has also agreed to work more closely with the Trails Committee. This should increase our ability to cooperate on joint projects in the coming year. The Parks Committee meetings regularly have a Trustee and a member of the DCA board in attendance. We also usually have multiple members from Trails Committee as well as from the Equine group.

This past year we created the Point People Project. As the Ministry of Environment/Future Provincial Park is really several diverse areas it needed some local oversight. The PPPs have stepped up to watch over their neighbouring areas to keep an eye out for trail damage, tree cutting, inappropriate use and just generally to make sure all is well in the areas close to them. Thank you to all those who stepped up as Point People.

In addition, 2011 saw the creation of a pocket park adjacent to the north end of Morrison Marsh. This little gem is a fantastic bird watching spot and provides a glimpse into the many species inhabiting Morrison Marsh. Many thanks to the neighbours who helped create Maple Park and continue to watch over it. And special thanks to Peter Karsten for guiding the process with his usual thoughtfulness and attention to detail!

As many of you know we have hit a bit of a roadblock in the Provincial Park process. As it stands now the lands of the future park are designated as Ministry of Environment. This has hampered our ability to progress on a signage project. Our Parks staff asked us to wait on this project until they had approval at a higher level for us to proceed. We had hoped to have accurate signage at the most commonly used entrances to trail systems by this summer but if it happens it will be in a much more restricted way than we had hoped. This slowdown was mainly because of treaty negotiations with the province and the Comox Band. The province now has an agreement in principle with the band, but we have not received an answer to our correspondence from DIRA asking for clarification on the status of our Committee's relationship with Parks staff we are working with. We will report to DIRA as soon as we hear anything in this regard.

I would just like to comment on how lucky we have been in the help and guidance we have received from the provincial parks staff in our area. Any difficulties we have encountered are certainly not due to any local employees; they have been hugely helpful at every level - from attending meetings to being available via email and phone at short notice when their counsel has been required. A special thank you goes to Senior Parks Ranger Steve Pratt. We are also exceptionally lucky to have Karin Albert as our CVRD Parks planner.

The Parks Committee will continue to work with the Trails Committee this coming year and we hope to complete one major multi-use trail project in 2012.

We will be looking for provincial funding to recreate a "heritage" trail in the Beadnell Island area. (see Ralph after meeting for location data) This trail historically linked what is now Park Road to Pickles Road. This trail route has great significance as it provides linkage to discreet areas of the future park. DIRA will be updated on this soon - hopefully at the next DIRA meeting.

Just a reminder to all present that the Parks Cttee strives to be as inclusive as possible. All are welcome to attend any meeting and encouraged to come out to field work outings. Any and all levels of participation and input are welcomed.

Laura Pope per Ralph McCuaig