

Denman Park Committee 2015/16 Winter Update

Denman Island Provincial Park: There is positive news and negative news for our largest park. On the negative front, sadly, someone or some ones have been vandalizing the Provincial Park signs placed at the entrances to various areas. These signs were placed *at the request of the D.I. Parks Committee* as a guide to park users. They are intended to help park users firstly, to know they are in the park, and secondly, to indicate the use criteria for that area. The north end of Denman Park is primarily multi-use, while the south end (including Boyle Pt. and the protected area) is primarily hiking only. The types of use for these two distinct areas was established by public consultation and based on the types of trails and overlap of land use: it was not arbitrary, nor was it the decision of the Parks Committee. Several signs at both the south end and the north end have been pushed over with vehicles, some have been pulled out and thrown in the bushes and have had anti-government graffiti written on them.

The second act of a sadly petty nature is the continued removal of flagging tape used by the parks and trails volunteers to mark trails that are to be re-habilitated, marked for work bees, or are to have clearing done. The parks and trails committee volunteers work exceptionally hard to maintain and rehab, and in some cases construct the many trails in the provincial and CVRD parks so that hikers, bikers and equestrians continue to have a safe experience in the park. Islanders are working for Islanders, and the people of the province in the most egalitarian spirit possible. It is very discouraging to have certain individuals undermining this work, especially as they must also be using the very trails they are vandalizing! It is estimated that 60% of all physical work done in parks across Canada is done by volunteers; on Denman Island, it is more like 98%.

Vandalism in Provincial Parks is an offense under the Provincial Parks Act and should a person be caught there is a first offense fine of \$288.00. This is just to point out that there could be legal consequences if caught; *this is not the direction we want to go*. I would like to think that those people who have been vandalizing the park will decide on their own that they are better people than that, and they will have a serious second thought before creating more work for their fellow islanders.

I would like to ask all park users and the public in general to please be vigilant, and if you see anyone vandalizing the park to call Crimestoppers if you wish to remain anonymous; call Derek Moore or myself if you are comfortable reporting personally.

On the hugely positive side the provincial park is attracting many happy users as we all become more familiar with the area it encompasses and the various trails we can all access. It is so great to see all ages being able to hike, ride their horses, and bike the various areas and to be out enjoying the natural beauty of Denman. Many Islanders have asked for maps of the trails within the park and we are nearing the posting of the first official map. The map will show only those trails that are actually within the boundaries of the park, as accessed from the location of the sign posted, which will be at the north end of the provincial park. It is important to note that some entrances to the park cross private property and this means that you must have permission to use that access. *No access or trails will be shown on this map that crosses any private property.*

CVRD Parks: The Cross Island Trail is now about a year old, and continues to be a hit with both new and familiar users. The Trails Committee (Chaired by Alan Danks) monitors the CIT to make sure it stays in good shape and to do any minor maintenance as required. The CIT did not get the grant needed to continue the East Road section for the coming year, and the graffiti hill section remains a conundrum for all concerned. CVRD is committed to continuing the trail and will look for funding to continue the construction. This break in the action may give the Parks and Trail Committees and the CVRD some time to finalize specific routes for the trail so that when the funding returns we will be ready to proceed.

The current CIT continues to attract mostly local users. It has proven to be a boon for locals from Fillongley and Swan Rd. area up to Pickles Rd. who now have a safe way to access mailboxes, the recycle center, the beach, the church, and areas beyond in the provincial park while walking, biking and riding on a trail safely removed from the traffic. Residents from all areas of the Island are using and enjoying this section of the trail. The Trails Committee, Parks Committee, CVRD and the DCA, and last but not least DIRA, all combined efforts to achieve this fabulous, lasting benefit for the island and we are looking forward to the next phase when funding comes available.

Morning Beach Park took a few knocks last winter as high tides and storms lashed the beach, causing a slump in the lower section of trail. CVRD has engaged a Professional Arborist who is doing some tree pruning and topping on the steep slopes (approved by the Islands Trust), spiral pruning, plus removal of a few large, top-heavy firs at the top of the bank. We have agreed with the CVRD that in high wind or heavy rain events the stairs will be closed to the public as a safety measure. This has become a very popular beach access, but we ask that for your own safety you respect the closures. We had a series of meetings with CVRD to work out the protocols for continued use of Morning Beach (which included the tree removals and periodic closures) and we continue to monitor it on a regular basis to keep this lovely little park open for the public.

The other CVRD Parks – **Maple Park and Stanehill Park** – are little gems affording a lovely nature experience in miniature. **Graham Lake Swim Dock** and **Bill Mee Park** are also part of the CVRD parks on Denman; more information is available from DIRA Chair, Frank Frketich.

I want to thank the many islanders who contacted me with information about our current Beaver population. I can report that there is no current provincial trapping license for Beavers on Denman, that there are Beaver in every large wetland area and Lake on Denman, and that there is at least one lodge currently active. There were also reports of Beavers in smaller streams and wetlands on private property as well. I feel this is good news as Beavers are a huge benefit to maintaining our lakes and wetlands, plus many species of wildlife and birds.

As we are officially a committee of DIRA, members may consider this my report to them.

As always, you are welcome to attend a Parks meeting: First Wednesday of the month at the Firehall at 10:00. Decembers meeting will have CVRDs Brian Allert attending. Submitted by the chair Laura Pope 250-335-1203

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