

APPENDIX E

THE LOCAL CONTEXT

**PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURE MASTER PLAN**

District of Saanich, BC.

July 2012

The Local Context

The Community Organization Landscape

Note: See Working Paper #4 for a more complete review.

Saanich municipality is the public sector provider of recreation opportunities. It works in collaboration with a wide variety of other private and not-for-profit providers to offer these opportunities to Saanich residents. In considering how the public sector provision should unfold over the next decade, it is important to understand the relationships with these other two sectors.

The private sector is in the business of both providing services and making money. Hence it is active in only a small segment of the overall market. Some examples include:

- Fitness facilities – a brief review of the Yellow Pages under Fitness Centres and Programs indicates that in the region there are at least 50 providers of a range of services from tanning and personal trainers to kickboxing, pilates and yoga.
- Golf – the region has five private golf clubs and over a dozen courses open to the public.

Other examples include equestrian facilities, kayak rentals and touring, scuba diving and paintball. The municipal position is generally not to compete with the main markets of these private sector providers. However in offering a comprehensive public system, some ‘competition’ or duplication can be found, generally in the following areas:

- Getting started and learning skills – most people prefer to gain a knowledge of an activity before making the longer term commitment often required by the private sector.
- Offering convenience and serving families – having a range of facilities in one location allows families to recreate together.
- Offering programming and building positive active living habits in children and young people – active living saves public health costs long term. This also applies increasingly to seniors programming.
- Offering low cost programming – many of Saanich’s families and individuals cannot afford the cost of private recreation.

However expanding these revenue positive areas of recreation is tempting in an era of increasing pressure to ‘break even’, with creative partnerships often being the best solution, allowing the municipality to meet its goals without trespassing on turf that might be seen as the exclusive domain of the private sector. Partnering with rehabilitation service providers, with sport camps, and with dance schools are examples.

Sometimes there is little difference between the private sector and the not-for-profit sector: a dance school may be a not-for-profit society which pays its executive director, or a business owned by that person. However the majority of not-for-profits are characterized by their use of volunteers. And the Parks and Recreation Department work with hundreds of different groups, in the delivery of recreation services and in parks development and stewardship.

Volunteer Issues

- Number of volunteers is declining.
- Fewer volunteers are putting in more hours – a recipe for burn-out.
- Bureaucracy is increasing – PRCs, insurance requirements, etc
- Youth are no longer able to volunteer without a guardian being present (except in school and youth groups).
- Insurance is a continuing issue, but recent Saanich changes have improved this – well done, Saanich!
- The requirement that volunteer groups sign a waiver to direct all media requests to Saanich was a concern to some groups.
- Many volunteer groups would appreciate more discussion among groups, fostered by Saanich. A staff person responsible for specific areas, such as supporting stewardship groups or coordinating outdoor sports, would be desirable.

As part of this planning process, discussions were held with a variety of groups to identify issues from their perspectives.

The Department is the primary linkage to the not-for-profit community organizations which are still at the core of the recreation system in Canadian communities. This 'organizational landscape' includes the following groups (with apologies to the many groups not listed here):

Community and Residents Associations

- Bear Hill Elk Lake Community Coalition
- Broadmead Area Residents Association
- Cadboro Bay Residents Association
- Cadboro Bay Village BIA
- Camosun Community Association
- Cordova Bay Association
- Falaise Crescent Community Association
- Gordon Head Residents' Association
- Gordon Point Estates Residents
- Gorge Tillicum Community Association
- Mount Tolmie Community Association
- Mount View Colquitz Community Assoc.
- North Quadra Land Use Protection Assoc.
- Prospect Lake Community Association
- Prospect Lake Preservation Society
- Quadra Cedar Hill Community Association
- Rainbow Park Ratepayers Association
- Royal Oak Community Association
- Saanich Community Association Network
- Strawberry Vale Community Ratepayers

Friends of Parks, Streams, and Lakes

- Bowker Creek Initiative
- Friends of Bowker Creek Society
- Friends of Cuthbert Holmes
- Friends of Fairburn
- Friends of Glencoe Cove
- Friends of Harriet Road
- Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society
- Friends of Mount Douglas Park
- Friends of Tod Creek Watershed
- Rithet's Bog Conservation Society
- Mount Tolmie Conservancy

Interpretation Organizations

- Horticulture Centre of the Pacific
- Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

Food Security Organizations

- Agnes Street Allotment Gardens
- Capital City Allotment Gardens
- Gorge Tillicum Urban Farmers

Seniors Organizations

- Cedar Hill New Horizons
- Les Passmore Silver Threads
- Beacon Support Services
- Goward House
- Cordova Bay 55+ Association

Visual Arts

- Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
- Broadmead & Cordova Bay Artists
- Cedar Hill Art Club
- Gordon Head Studio Tour
- Saanich West Art Tour
- Scattered Artists Studio Tour
- Vancouver Island School of Art
- Vancouver Island Sculptors Guild
- Victoria Sketch Club
- Garth Homer Society ArtWorks
- Island Illustrators Society
- Creative Peace Mural Society
- Mosaic

Music

- Music in the Park
- City of Gardens Chorus

Performing Arts

- St. Luke's Players
- Kaleidoscope Theatre
- Victoria Storytellers' Guild
- Story Theatre
- Target Theatre

Dance

- Karen Clark Dance Studio
- Stages
- Veselka Ukrainian Dance
- Art Stars
- Victoria Ballroom Dance Society
- McGregors' Dance Studio
- Dansko Studios
- Wendy Steen-Mitchell Dance

Craft Arts

- Island Artisans Association
- Cedar Hill Pottery Club
- Victoria Handweavers & Spinners Guild
- South Vancouver Island Potters Guild

Arts Organizers

- Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria
- artsReach The OCTA Collective Society

Other Organizations

- Recreation Integration Victoria
- Queen Alexandra Centre
- Victoria Epilepsy & Parkinson's Society
- Inter-Cultural Association
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Society
- Citizen Canine

Indoor Sports

Basketball

- Royal Oak Night League

Volleyball

- Top Spin Volleyball
- Victoria Volleyball
- South Island Volleyball Association

Martial Arts

- Victoria Renshikan Karate
- Ueshiba Aikido

Racquet Sports

- Cordova Bay Badminton Club
- Pacific Sport Badminton Smash and Splash
- Cedar Hill Squash Club

Other

- Saanich Lacrosse
- Saanich Minor Lacrosse Association
- Victoria Net Ball Club
- Falcon Gymnastics
- Sportball

Adult Hockey Leagues

- Playmakers Hockey
- Barry O'Bara Ice Hockey
- BC Tel Hockey
- Colonial Counter Top Bombers
- Darrell Richmond Hockey
- Doug Sadler Ice Hockey
- Harper Hockey
- Hockey 101
- Mildenberger Ice Hockey
- Saanich Old Chiefs
- Saanich Warriors Old Timers
- Victoria Finishing Stars
- Victoria Hockey League
- Victoria Traditionals Hockey Club

Youth Hockey

- Next Level Hockey School
- Saanich Jr B Hockey Club
- Saanich Minor Hockey Association
- Spectrum School Hockey Academy

Figure Skating Clubs

- Racquet Club of Victoria Skating Club
- Saanich Figure Skating Club

Aquatic Groups

- Boardworks/Pacific Coast Diving
- Island Swimming Association
- Island Triathlon
- Oak Bay Orcas Summer Swim Club
- Pacific Coast Swimming
- Pacific Sport Synchro Victoria
- Piranhas Summer Swimming Club
- Saanich Water Polo School

Outdoor Sports

Baseball

- Carnarvon/Allenby Baseball Association
- Gordon Head Baseball Association
- Hampton Little League
- Lakehill Little League
- Lambrick Baseball Association
- Layritz Intermediate BC Minor Baseball
- Layritz Little League
- Victoria Maverick Baseball
- Victoria and District Baseball Association
- Greater Victoria Baseball Association

Fastball

- Gordon Head Fastball
- Victoria/Saanich Women's Fastball
- Victoria Womens Fastball League
- Malibu Motors Fastball
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Football

- Rebels Football
- Victoria Minor Football

Lawn Bowling

- Burnside Lawnbowling Club
- Gordon Head Lawnbowling
- Lakehill Lawnbowling

Soccer

- Bay United Soccer Association
- Cordova Bay Soccer Club
- Gordon Head Soccer Club
- Gorge Soccer Association
- Lakehill Soccer Association
- Prospect Lake Soccer Club
- Super Soccer
- Lower Island Soccer
- Thrifty Foods Soccer

Softball

- Cordova Bay Softball
- Greater Victoria Mixed Softball
- Strawberry Vale Softball

Tennis

- South Island Tennis Association
- Saanich Tennis Club
- Victoria Tennis Club
- Oak Bay Tennis Club

Other

- Braefoot Community Association
- Victoria Athletics
- Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club
- Elk Beaver Lake Equestrian Society
- Cordova Bay Golf Course
- Greater Victoria Horseshoe Pitching Club
- Pacific Rim Field Lacrosse
- South Island Mountain Bike Society
- Victorienteers
- Velox Rugby
- South Island Sailing Association

Demographics

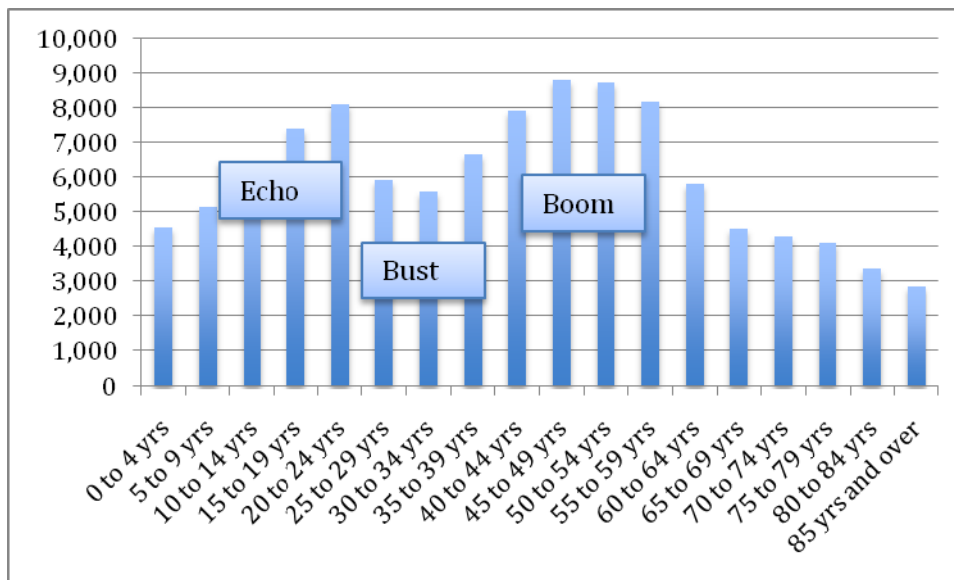
Note: See Working Paper #3 for a more complete review.

Over the past 20 years, Saanich has become a mature community. Its growth containment boundary has been strictly enforced and it has not seen the kind of suburban sprawl that has characterized other parts of the region and the Lower Mainland. Maturity has its problems, but they are ones the population are happier dealing with, than the problems that come from continuing urban or suburban growth.

The overall population has grown slowly. In 1996, there were 101,000 residents, which grew to 104,000 in 2001 and 108,000 by 2006. This slower pace of growth is projected in the District's OCP to achieve a 2026 population of 119,000.

New housing has been primarily apartments, and the number of households has also grown. By 2006 there were 44,000 households in Saanich. Of these 26,000 were couple households, with only 11,000 of them having children living at home. These couple families with children were augmented by 4,800 single parent families. In addition there were just over 12,000 one person households.

The current (2006) age structure of the Saanich population is very similar to that found in most western countries, clearly showing what demographer David Foot¹ referred to as 'boom, bust and echo'.



The 'boomer' generation were born in the period from 1945 to 1962; they are currently in their 40s and 50s. The 'bust' generation were born in the 1960s and 1970s, decades characterized by the widespread use of the contraceptive pill, and family sizes were significantly smaller than in the immediate post-war years. By 1980, the boomers were starting families and the echo generation was arriving, but by 2000, it was the smaller 'bust' generation who were having children and the size of Saanich's pre-school and elementary school age groups shrunk accordingly.

¹ Foot, David K. – 1996 – Boom, Bust and Echo.

Clearly, as the boomer generation moves into its 'senior' years, it will continue to dominate the age pyramids; the Saanich OCP is projecting that, while in 2006 those age 65+ years made up 23% of the population, by 2026 they would represent 33%.

However other factors beyond 'aging' need to be borne in mind.

Firstly, another baby boom is just beginning as the echo generation move into their child bearing/rearing years. The size of this boom will be smaller than its two forerunners, but it will be significant.

Secondly, although the attractiveness of Saanich's quality of life attracts pre-retirees and retirees from other places (from Vancouver to South Africa and everywhere in-between), it also attracts young families with children. This trend is very evident when the size of 2001 and 2006 age cohorts are compared, and it will grow in magnitude as the echo generation has its children and looks to put down roots.

Other significant demographic variables which have an influence on the demand and supply of park and recreation services in Saanich include:

- Income levels, which are above provincial averages, but are significantly offset by the cost of housing in the region.
- The increasing size of the visible minority population which in 2006 numbered 16% of the total population.
- The high levels of education, which generally correlates with a population that is aware of the importance of physical activity and health, and the overall importance of recreation activity in quality of life.

Linking with the Saanich Official Community Plan and Strategic and Financial Plans

In 2008, Saanich approved a new Official Community Plan (OCP). Unlike previous OCPs which tended to focus almost exclusively on land use planning and zoning², the new OCP has become the central document driving and managing change in Saanich. It is built around the following vision:

Saanich is a sustainable community where a healthy natural environment is recognized as paramount for ensuring social well-being and economic vibrancy, for current and future generations.

Environmental Integrity

Saanich is a model steward working diligently to improve and balance the natural and built environments. Saanich restores and protects air, land, and water quality, the biodiversity of existing natural areas and eco-systems, the network of natural areas and open spaces, and urban forests. The challenges posed by climate change are responded to. “Centres” and “Villages” accommodate the majority of future growth, using green building practices.

Social Well-Being

Saanich offers opportunities for balanced, active, and diverse lifestyles. Housing, public services and amenities are affordable, accessible and inclusive. Residents enjoy food security through the safeguarding of agricultural land and the promotion of community gardens and urban farming. The community’s heritage is valued and promoted. Residents take advantage of a diverse range of recreational, educational, civic, social, arts, and cultural services.

Economic Vibrancy

Saanich’s economy is connected locally, regionally, and globally, providing diverse economic opportunities, ranging from high technology to agriculture. Our economy and labour force is responsive and has the ability to adapt to change. Saanich’s clean, appealing environment, skilled workforce, responsive public services, and excellent community infrastructure make it an ideal location to live, work, and conduct business.

There are three key documents that strive to implement this Vision:

- The first is the OCP itself which has a section entitled ‘Taking Action and Tracking Progress’. It looks at the process of planning and the partnerships and relationships that are essential for implementing such a broad vision.
- The second is the Strategic Plan. This is a rolling five year plan – that is it looks five years into the future but is updated every year. It is organized around the vision, but identifies various types of ‘objectives’ that must necessarily be addressed and achieved if the vision is to become reality.
- The third is the Financial Plan. This is also a rolling five-year plan. It looks to ensure that financial resources are in place to move forward on the vision.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan needs to link to these documents. It must adopt and reflect the vision; it must address and be congruent with the financial plan’s imperatives, and it must use the language that is consistent within all these documents.

²This focus was dictated by the Municipal Act. This legislation has been amended several times in the past 20 years to allow and indeed mandate this broader visioning.

Other Background Reports

Note: See Working Paper #1 for a more complete review.

Many other documents and reports provide the context for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan. As noted earlier in the review of the 1990 and 2001 Master Plans, many strategies which were proposed in the 2001 plan have been completed in the last decade...and must be implemented in the term of this Master Plan. For instance the 2001 plan noted that emphasis was required on trees and arboriculture; in 2010 the Urban Forest Strategy was completed, and now must be implemented. Likewise the 1990 Master Plan indicated that trails for walking and cycling were becoming popular as recreational amenities, and that Saanich should start the process of developing a trail system and linking with the then emerging regional trail system. Plans were made, work started and in those 20 years the municipality is well on the way; the next ten years requires that the last links in the system be put in place.

Of course, not every plan has a 20 year life span. Many focus on shorter term actions; for instance, the Youth Development Plan prepared in 1999 and updated in 2003 has largely been implemented. One set of key documents which are now significantly out of date, but which also form a foundation for much of the more recent park and recreation planning, are the Local Area Plans. These date from the 1980s and 1990s, but have not yet been updated (although this is planned on a phased basis over the next few years). That updating process will be an essential step in community-by-community park and recreation planning.

However the key documents which would appear to have strategies or raise issues that must be addressed in the next five to ten years are as follows:

- *Active Aging Strategy*

This departmental strategy was prepared in 2004 and is designed to position the Department 'ahead of the curve' that is the aging demographic. It also focuses on the needs of aging individuals before they start to experience chronic health issues, focusing on their need to stay active physically and socially. Its recommendations include:

 - Expanding programming for physical and social recreation.
 - Ensuring that cost is not a barrier to participation, by enhancing the LIFE program.
 - Ensuring that all recreational and other facilities are physically accessible.
 - Improving communications and marketing to seniors.
 - Strengthening connections to partners and increasing the amount of outreach programming.

- *Age Friendly Cities Initiative*

In 2006, Saanich was selected as one of a number of pilot communities in a World Health Organization (WHO) initiative to develop communities that were 'age friendly'. This concept took a more holistic approach than 'active aging', focusing on how planning and programming could create communities that are supportive of seniors, while at the same time being supportive of residents of all ages. Its principal recommendations include:

 - Taking a holistic approach to mobility, and ensuring that there is a seamless system of sidewalks and trails to allow residents of all ages to connect to all community hubs, by walking, cycling and by motorized scooter.
 - Linking trail systems with community and recreation centres.
 - Adding social amenity spaces to parks, trails and recreation facilities.

- *Age Friendly Cities Initiative (cont'd)*

 - Encouraging inter-generational programming and opportunities.
 - Supporting and strengthening seniors organizations, and fostering the ability of local groups to support seniors aging in the community.

- *Cultural Bridging Strategy*

While the Cultural Bridging Strategy was developed in 1999, before the last Master Plan, some of its recommendations are still of broad significance, in particular:

 - Increasing cultural awareness among staff.
 - Promoting cultural awareness through supporting cultural festivals and events.

- *Arts and Cultural Strategy*

Over the past 20 years, there has been widespread support for the inclusion of arts and cultural activities within the jurisdiction of parks and recreation departments. Many other communities of similar size to Saanich have re-titled their departments as 'Parks, Recreation and Culture'. In the Capital Region, the situation is a little more complicated in as much as the Regional District has taken on a mandate for arts and culture, primarily as a way of ensuring regional funding for the Royal and MacPherson Theatres, and for the major, and some minor, arts organizations such as Pacific Opera and the Victoria Symphony. Saanich contributes financially to this function.

The municipality prepared an Arts and Culture Strategy in 2009, which built on its earlier Comprehensive Arts Policy (2002). The strategy proposed the following recommendations:

 - Creating more spaces for arts and cultural activities...spaces that are flexible and versatile and serve the needs of a wide variety of groups.
 - Increasing the awareness and visibility of the arts. A number of strategies were suggested including establishing a dedicated 'Arts in Saanich' website.
 - Ensuring sustainable financial support for arts and cultural groups and activities.
 - Increasing the financial stability of artists by encouraging more youth programming (employing artists to deliver them), and by other economic development initiatives.
 - Strengthening arts and cultural activity in Saanich neighbourhoods.

- *Climate Action Plan*

This Plan is a start toward providing a foundation to develop action in the community and to prepare for the changes that global warming presents. By setting goals and actions for the community and municipal operations, it will drive change over the next decade, creating a better world for current and future Saanich residents.

Its implications for Parks and Recreation lie primarily in its support for the role of trails as elements of the transportation system, and the role of trees in climate protection. It encourages the completion and implementation of the Trail Plan and the Urban Forest Strategy.

- *Urban Forest Strategy*

In 2008 the Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative (UFSI) identified the critical state of the urban forest in the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the need for urban forest strategies. The strategy's goal is to 'protect trees and enhance the urban forest'.

In 2010, Council adopted the Saanich Urban Forest Strategy which provides a long-term plan for achieving a sustainable urban forest. It proposed seven strategies, with associated actions:

 - Adopt a 'no net loss' canopy policy.
 - Amend the Tree Preservation By-law.
 - Develop Urban Forest Design Guidelines.
 - Integrate the UFS with other Saanich initiatives.
 - Inventory the Urban Forest.
 - Develop Urban Forest Operations program.
 - Engage the community.

Actions were developed for each of these strategies and have been referred to the Strategic Plan process for implementation.

- *Trail Design Guidelines and Centennial Trail Plan – 2006 and Beyond*

The 2001 Master Plan recommended the crafting of a comprehensive trail Master Plan and a strengthening of the emphasis on developing trails throughout the community. Saanich subsequently developed the Centennial Trails Plan, which lays out a network of trails identifying which ones need to be completed; and in 2007 developed the Trail Guidelines. The Guidelines define the following trail types:

 - Regional
 - Community
 - Neighbourhood
 - Rustic, and
 - Specialty,

...and define the standards for building each type of trail & its intended use. The Centennial Trails Project provides detailed information on accessing District and regional trails.

- *Saanich Park Property Inventory 2010*

This document provides a very brief introduction to the general topic of parks planning in relation to the Official Community Plan of 2008, based on the existing system of parks classification. Additional commentary is provided on parks qualitative types. These are very broad categories (eg. Structured/Athletic). Parks may embody more than one qualitative type within their boundaries. Parks are then broadly inventoried by their park classification (neighbourhood, community, municipal or regional), and again, by Local Area Plan. The document goes on to discuss challenges in setting park acquisition priorities and implementing those plans, as well as the necessity of addressing these challenges and other questions in the Master Planning process.

- *Saanich Park Property Inventory 2010 (cont'd)*

The resulting management tool, the 2011 Parks Priority Guide will include park priority acquisitions including land, capital and operating costs. It notes several challenges:

 - The gap between private land values and municipal financial resources.
 - Local area plans (LAP) that do not always consider a broader district perspective.
 - Park land acquisitions for a single purpose that are considered a lower priority than those for multiple purposes.
 - Parks and open spaces acquired by others in the region that lessen the priority for park land acquisition locally.

The inventory notes four factors that must be assessed:

- Site and environmental values.
- Community need.
- Economic considerations.
- Urgency.

Maps showing a variety of combinations of municipally owned parks, regional, school district and institutional lands are included in the report. Appendices include notes regarding the 2008 OCP Policies, the benefits of park land, methods currently available by which to acquire lands and other references to documents providing further local and regional context.

- *Park Natural Areas Management Guidelines, June 2011*

These Guidelines were developed to help the Department make appropriate decisions as they undertake new development in park natural areas and to guide the Parks Division's operations and maintenance activities within park natural areas.

The document identifies four interdependent Management Themes:

 - Ecosystem - Our ecosystem management goal is to preserve, restore, and enhance ecological integrity while providing for appropriate use and access
 - Use & access - Our use and access management goals are to meet the legitimate, appropriate and authorized recreational demands of park users while protecting areas of high or medium ecological integrity, and to educate park users regarding respect for park natural areas.
 - Risk management - In managing tree hazards in park natural areas, our goal is to provide for safe use and access while limiting risk of injury to park users and staff and increasing long term benefits to park natural area ecosystems. Our interface fire management goal is to protect people and reduce wildfire risk while conserving and supporting healthy levels of woody debris.
 - Community collaboration - Our community collaboration goal is to continue to educate and provide stewardship opportunities that strengthen relationships and develop common ground so that we can grow community stewardship and achieve our other park natural areas goals.

- *Park Natural Areas Action Plan 2011 – 2016*
June 2011

In the past, Saanich managed natural areas in public lands through a hands-off approach, following the common thinking of the day that it's best to let nature take care of itself. In more recent years the municipality has become aware that development, climate change, human caused disturbance and the spread of invasive plant species have disrupted natural ecological processes and that natural areas cannot maintain themselves in a healthy ecological state; ecosystem based management is needed.

This Action Plan is guided by the Park Natural Areas Management Guidelines. It describes the five major management initiatives to be undertaken in Saanich's park natural areas over the next five years:

- Invasive Species Management Strategy
- Mapping, inventory and monitoring
- Community collaboration and outreach
- Park Management Plans
- Best Management Practices.