

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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### **Regional and community parks, trails remain open across Cowichan region**

**DUNCAN, BC** – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and its member municipalities are keeping parks and trails open to the public to provide outdoor spaces for residents to recreate responsibly.

This news comes in response to the announcement today by BC Parks of the immediate closure of all provincial parks as an escalated action to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Many park facilities owned and/or managed by the CVRD, Town of Ladysmith, City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan and Town of Lake Cowichan have been closed over the past two weeks, and will remain closed at this time. This includes ball courts, skate parks, picnic shelters, and playgrounds. However, the Cowichan governments have collectively agreed that it is essential to provide residents with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, albeit with strict guidelines and limitations on usage.

“Through our Regional Emergency Operations Centre, and in consultation with our medical health officer, we have decided it is imperative that we continue to keep our public outdoor spaces accessible to our residents,” said Brian Carruthers, CAO of the Cowichan Valley Regional District and REOC Director. “With that said, we ask residents to obey all posted signage and maintain physical distance from others. This includes a request that people from outside the Cowichan not travel here to enjoy our parks and trails at this time, and instead use those in their home community.”

Most parks and trails now have signage at entrances to reinforce public safety requirements. Bylaw enforcement and parks staff from all local governments will be actively monitoring public use of their respective parks and trails, and adjustments may be implemented in response to public compliance to social distancing and other directives of the provincial health authorities going forward.

“During this time of intense measures to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 the ability to access local parks and trails can support our health and well-being,” said Dr. Shannon Waters, Medical Health Officer for the Cowichan Valley Region. “We also must understand that while accessing these areas we have a responsibility to practice social distancing. We are all on the front line in the effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.”

For more information on BC Parks closures please visit <http://bcparks.ca/covid-19>.

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