



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY

Media Release

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For immediate release

Board approves acquisition of land for new regional park in Crawford Bay

Nelson, BC: The Board of Directors of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) today took the next step in the process to purchase land for a new regional park. Based on information presented in the staff report received at today's special open meeting, the Board gave the first, second, and third readings of the loan authorization bylaw that will provide the RDCK share of the funding for the acquisition of land. This follows several months of community consultation and negotiation with the seller. The land—made up of approximately 69.68 hectares surrounding the Crawford Bay beach and wetlands—is being purchased from Kokanee Springs Resorts (KSR) for \$2.85 million.

The purchase is being partially funded with \$800,000 from Columbia Basin Trust. The remainder of funding for the purchase will be through property taxation and reserve funds.

"Public access to Kootenay Lake, recreational opportunities, protection of sensitive wetlands and riparian area restoration all resonate with residents and visitors alike," said Garry Jackman, Director of RDCK Electoral Area A. "Through the efforts of RDCK staff and with the generosity and support of Columbia Basin Trust we have reached that point at last."

"The residents of the East Shore demonstrated overwhelming support for this opportunity, and the Trust is pleased to support their efforts to create a regional park," said Johnny Strilaeff, President and CEO of Columbia Basin Trust. "It will offer a broad spectrum of benefits to the area including environmental preservation, economic development, tourism opportunities and increased community-based recreation."

In 2011, the RDCK acquired a small area of land along an undeveloped road allowance near the Crawford Bay foreshore as a preliminary step towards a potentially larger project. Historically, KSR has allowed the public to access Crawford Bay wetlands and the beach through a portion of their property. In the summer of 2017, KSR listed the land for sale, which prompted members of the community to express interest in the RDCK acquiring it for regional park purposes.

The park acquisition is the result of ongoing public consultation and community involvement. The community involvement process included a public open house on August 23, 2017, which was attended by more than 110 people; and three open houses held on December 11 in Riondel, Boswell and Wynndel. On December 14, the RDCK Board received an informal community petition with 942 signatures requesting the creation of a new park in Crawford Bay.

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Land negotiation with KSR has involved RDCK staff with support from RDCK CAO Stuart Horn and Director Jackman.

"Conversations around the potential for this site have been going on for decades," continued Director Jackman. "I realize that due to the size of this site and the multiple titles involved that there were numerous opinions as to what the acquisition should or could look like, but the consistent message has been to secure the site for generations to come."

Additional funding of \$2,070,707 for the purchase will be borrowed and funded through an annual taxation of approximately \$113,928 of the affected service area, at a rate of \$0.1607 per \$1,000 of residential converted assessment. A \$350,000 residential property would pay \$56.35/year based on the 2018 assessment. Remaining costs will be funded through reserves.

Anticipating that the public would want regional districts to acquire land and improve land for park and trails purposes, the *Local Government Act (LGA) and LGA Regional District Liabilities Regulation* provides unique powers for borrowing funds for those purposes. Pursuant to Section 407(2)(c) of the *LGA* and Section 3 of the *LGA Regional District Liabilities Regulation* the borrowing of funds for a regional park or regional trail service is not subject to voter asset. Although electoral approval is not required, the RDCK made sure to involve the public in the decision.

The Board gave first, second and third readings of the *Crawford Bay Beach Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 2602, 2018* at today's special open Board meeting. The RDCK will take possession of the lands as of October 1, 2018. A Regional Park Management Plan, which will include a public consultation process, will be developed to determine the future use and maintenance of the park.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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Photos of the park site and a map are available upon request.

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