



Commission Report

Date of Report: 05, 06, 2024
Date & Type of Meeting: 05, 07, 2024, Castlegar & District Community Complex & Recreation Commission
Author: Cary Gaynor, Regional Parks and Trails Manager
Subject: VANDALISM AT WATERLOO EDDY REGIONAL PARK
File: 01-0520-50-CDR-04
Electoral Area/Municipality Castlegar and Electoral Areas I,J

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Commission on vandalism at Waterloo Eddy Regional Park.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

In January of 2016, the RDCK Board adopted the Waterloo Eddy Regional Park Management Plan. Through extensive public consultation process, one of the major themes was protection of the natural environment. In development of the management plan, it describes some of the management challenges at the time including section 2.1 “Multiple Points of Waterfront Access and Motorized Uses”:

“The desire for boat access has led to the creation of multiple roads and boat launch sites at the north end of the park. Launch sites are chosen in part by the existing water level on the Columbia River. The series of access roads and launch sites present difficulties for protecting the sensitive shoreline and back eddy. The current configuration of road access to the eddy does nothing to physically prevent motorized uses or “mud bogging” in the muddy areas of the eddy. Terrestrial and aquatic habitat can be severely impacted by such activity. These activities are unlawful in this context and are regulated by the Off Road Vehicle Act - Bill 13. The act applies to off-road vehicle use on Crown land and clearly states that off-road vehicles must not be used to harass wildlife”.

The plan also included an implementation plan for restricting motorized access to the park by working with Teck on access roads into the park:

“The RDCK will cooperate with Teck to determine optimal fencing, landscape design and signage to restrict motorized access to adjacent Teck lands at the entrance to the park, and will seek to legitimize existing pedestrian trails at the south end of the park that cross over the park boundary”.

As part of the Management Plan implementation staff was working with the Okanagan Nation Alliance on restoration of the sensitive habitat areas within the park. This would not be possible until access was restricted to motorized use. Therefore, since 2016 staff has worked diligently on a phased approach to restrict motorized access. We have received many compliments from park users on the work completed at Waterloo Eddy, however, there is a small minority of those opposed to the motorised restriction who have been vocal in the community.

RDCK staff worked with Teck to install a gate limiting road access onto Teck lands that access the park. Both of these gates were vandalised and stolen from the site in 2023, with one gate not lasting longer than 24 hours in place. Teck provided the gates at their cost but were reluctant to replace another gate with the same potential outcome. Staff decided that it might be best to block off the roads with various sized ditches and boulders that would also act as features for the public to enjoy. On Thursday May 2nd, staff were informed by Director Hanegraaf that it looked as though some vandalism had happened at the park. Staff went to the site to find much of the work performed in 2023 had been destroyed by a large machine (possibly a loader). Many of the boulders had been removed or pushed down the bank, the trail improvements had been compromised by the use of the machine and some of the rehabilitation planting had been destroyed.





In light of this situation, staff’s next steps are as follows:

- Jordan Dupuis in Bylaw will meet Jeff Phillips at the park on Tuesday for help and next enforcement steps, which may include RCMP involvement.
- Staff will discuss a media release providing a RDCK statement for communication purposes
- Potentially post signage up indicating the situation at the park
- Jeff and Cary will work on a plan to close the area back off to motorized users.
- Establish a budget for any repairs needed.

SECTION 3: DETAILED ANALYSIS

3.1 Financial Considerations – Cost and Resource Allocations:

Included in Financial Plan: Yes No Financial Plan Amendment: Yes No
Debt Bylaw Required: Yes No Public/Gov’t Approvals Required: Yes No

At this time, we do not know the budget implications and direct costs associated to the required work. We do not yet know if any budget amendment may be needed.

3.2 Legislative Considerations (Applicable Policies and/or Bylaws):

Not applicable at this time

3.3 Environmental Considerations

This situation has caused environmental damage and considerations on any mitigation is ongoing at this time

3.4 Social Considerations:

Vandalism such as this has an impact on the general public and legitimate users.

3.5 Economic Considerations:

Taxpayer funds were used for the work completed in this park. The economic impact is on the taxpayers when vandalism like this occurs.

3.6 Communication Considerations:

Staff will work on a media release and signage related to the incident.

3.7 Staffing/Departmental Workplace Considerations:

Incidents of vandalism can have significant impact on staff time and takes away from other projects and tasks.

3.8 Board Strategic Plan/Priorities Considerations:

Not applicable at this time.

SECTION 4: OPTIONS & PROS / CONS

This report was for information purposes. Staff is working on options available to us with the goal to returning the motorized access restrictions as soon as possible.

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Castlegar & District Community Complex & Recreation Commission receive this report for information purposes.

Respectfully submitted,



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Regional Parks and Trails Manager.

CONCURRENCE

Craig Stanley – Regional Manager of Operations and Asset Management

