

## **Section 4 - Management Policies**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section is divided into specific topics that relate to the management, operations and administration of the park. Each topic area includes the Management Objective outlined in Section 3, a brief discussion of the topic area, and policies that form the guiding framework for the day-to-day operations and longer-term management of the park. The RDN anticipates reviewing and revising these policies before 2008.

### **4.2 Accessibility**

#### **4.2.1 Management Objective**

To provide a public Regional Park that is open and accessible for the benefit, enjoyment and use for all residents of the region and beyond.

#### **4.2.2 Background**

Descanso Bay Regional Park is the only regional park on Gabriola Island and the only public campground on Gabriola Island. The park and campground are open to the public all year round. The park is used by visitors staying at the campground, Islanders who use the park as a dog walking area and picnic area, groups and individuals using the car top boat launch to kayak from the park, by groups for special events, and people taking advantage of the shallow bays to wade and to explore the sandstone rock formations.

User fees are charged for some but not all uses at the park, for example, there is no charge for day use parking but fees are charged for camping and are in keeping with other parks in the province with a similar level of services. It is anticipated that user fees charged at Descanso Bay Regional Park and other regional parks will be consistent with BC Parks Services. However, given changes occurring within the Province including BC Parks, alternative models may need to be considered.

In the past, the park house has been used for temporary accommodation for visitors; however, it requires significant renovations before it can be used for any purpose. The lack of service availability (water and on site sewer) limits the extent to which the park house can be utilized. Once renovated it is anticipated that the park house will be used as a meeting space or place for special events. However, due to limited resources renovations will not likely be completed before 2008.

#### **4.2.3 Policies**

##### **4.2.3 (a) Public Access**

- i.) The park is open to the general public for day-use within designated areas or designated trails and routes from 7 am to 11 pm.
- ii.) Access to the park shall be restricted to registered guests and authorized personnel only between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am.

- iii.) The park is open all year round for day use and camping.
- iv.) High season at the campground runs from the May long weekend to Thanksgiving weekend.
- v.) Certain areas of the park may be closed to public access as designated in this plan or as identified by park signage due to natural hazards, emergency or environmental conservation requirements.
- vi.) Access through the park is discouraged unless confined to designated trails or public rights of way.
- vii.) Vehicle access into the park is controlled by the main gate at Taylor Bay Road that is open from 7 am to 11 pm.

**4.2.3(b) Universal Design**

- i.) Accessibility and universal design matters shall be considered in any new facility development or upgrading projects to accommodate park users with different levels of ability.

**4.2.3(c) User Fees**

- i.) User fees shall generally be consistent with rates charged for similar services or activities within BC Parks and RDN Regional Parks.
- ii.) User fees for camping shall be determined by the RDN.
- iii.) User fees for other park services and programs may be determined by the park operator, as approved by the RDN.
- iv.) Camping fees shall be developed for a high and low season.

## **4.3 Public Safety**

### **4.3.1 Management Objective**

To create and operate a park that is secure, strives to protect public safety and minimizes hazards, both natural and man-made.

### **4.3.2 Background**

Risk management is an important component in the decision-making process for the park. Through risk identification, evaluation and communication, liability in the park can be managed. In the course of protecting the natural environment and providing various recreational opportunities, not all risk can be eliminated.

Specific risks within the park property must be managed. Some of the obvious risks include: cliffs adjacent to the ocean on the north west and south west portion of the property are steep and contain walking trails; the park house is unusable and in need of repair; there is a high fire risk on the island resulting in an annual campfire ban; the water is not potable; and swimming at the beaches and boat launch use is unsupervised.

The existing and future uses at the park have the potential to cause conflicts with adjacent landowners. In particular, park users who attempt to walk along the shore from the park

to the ferry terminal are unable to complete this walk due to the steep banks and people must walk through the upland property. Therefore, day-to-day and long-term management policies must recognize the need to reduce conflicts between park users as well as with adjacent landowners.

In 1992, the RDN has adopted the “Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area ‘B’ Community Park Regulations Bylaw No. 842” to regulate community parks on Gabriola Island. However, this bylaw applies to community parks and not regional parks. The RDN is preparing park bylaws for all community and regional parks and trails in the region. Once adopted Bylaw No. 842 will be repealed.

### **4.3.3 Policies**

#### **4.3.3(a) Vehicles**

- i.) Vehicles are restricted to designated roads and other designated access routes.
- ii.) Vehicle parking is restricted to designated parking areas and campsites.
- iii.) Speed limits within the park shall not exceed 10 km/hour.
- iv.) The operation of recreational off road vehicles (e.g. ATVs and motorbikes) is not permitted in the park.

#### **4.3.3(b) Hazard Trees**

- i.) The disturbance or removal of native vegetation is not permitted in the park without the permission of the RDN. The RDN may authorize the removal of vegetation including hazardous trees, for the management of invasive non-native species, and for approved park development.

#### **4.3.3 (c) Water**

- i.) Information that the water is not potable shall be posted at the water pumps and in detailed advertisements of the park.
- ii.) The Park Operator may sell potable water from the concession.

#### **4.3.3 (d) Wildlife**

- i.) The feeding of animals is not permitted and food should be properly stored to avoid conflicts between wildlife and park users.

#### **4.3.3 (e) Campfires**

- i.) Campfires and barbeques are permitted only in designated areas and campfires must be confined to approved fire pits and all other outdoor burning is prohibited.
- ii.) Campfires and charcoal BBQs may be restricted during specified periods as determined by the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department and the RDN.

**4.3.3 (f) Fire Protection**

- i.) The Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection for the Descanso Bay Regional Park.
- ii.) The reservoir located within the Descanso Bay Regional Park and used by the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department shall be formally recognized through a license agreement.

**4.3.3 (g) Nuisances**

- i.) Campsite occupants shall respect the privacy and use and enjoyment of the park for others by not causing disturbances and by maintaining quiet after 11 pm and before 7 am.
- ii.) The operation of motorized equipment is not permitted in the park other than equipment that is accessory to campground use.

**4.3.3 (h) Steep Slopes**

- i.) An assessment of slope stability must be undertaken prior to any land alteration within 15.0 metres from the top of bank, including trail construction.

**4.3.3 (i) Park Rules**

- i.) Park users are subject to rules and regulations as set out in this Plan.
- ii.) Where a bylaw regulating park uses has been adopted by the RDN the provision of the bylaw takes precedence over this Plan and the rules as set out in this plan shall be in addition to any regulations as set out in the bylaw.
- iii.) Bylaw enforcement officers shall be designated by bylaw.
- iv.) The Park Operator, their employees and designated employees of the RDN may enforce the rules as set out in this Plan and shall refer all criminal acts to the RCMP.

## **4.4 Environment**

### **4.4.1 Management Objective**

To strike a balance between the impact of human use and development on the natural environment by incorporating sustainable and best management practices and by promoting education and interpretation about the natural environment.

### **4.4.2 Background**

The Regional Park being adjacent to the marine foreshore is within an environmentally sensitive area (ESA). The beachfront is sandstone and contains three bays with natural sandy pockets. The sandstone formations found on the beaches are unique to a few gulf islands. There are abundant birds and marine mammals that can be observed from the park property. The beaches are littered with life and contain copious quantities of aquatic vegetation (eelgrass, rockweed and sea lettuce), invertebrates and shellfish (oysters, little neck clams, manila clams, varnish clams). The beach is in an approved shellfish

harvesting area and regular sampling by Environment Canada has determined that fecal coliform counts are low.

There are five registered archeological sites within the park property on the marine foreshore that are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Any land development must consider potential impacts to these significant sites. These sites are not mapped so park users are discouraged to seek out these sites.

There is a small fruit tree orchard on the north side of the property. A small channelized stream flows through this area and appears to drain upland properties and likely provides irrigation for these trees. The stream does not appear to have any fisheries values but keeps the ground saturated in winter and late spring.

The day use area of the Regional Park contains an active eagle nest tree. Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection recommends a vegetated no disturbance buffer around the base of the tree.

The Islands Trust completed a landscape classification of Gabriola Island and identified four different landscapes in the Regional Park: Mature Forest covers the majority of the parcel; Herbaceous follows the marine coast; Rural applies to the point where the homestead is located; Agricultural and Young Forest applies to two small areas adjacent to the south property line. For the purposes of this Management Plan, the RDN has divided up the park up into three land use management zones that are generally consistent with the Islands Trust landscape classification. These zones are detailed in section 4.10. The purpose of these zones is to provide a framework to manage the park and to delineate the types and levels of uses appropriate throughout the park.

Long-term management of the park will incorporate best practices in order to minimize the existing impacts on the natural environment and actions will be taken to rehabilitate some of the disturbed areas where possible. In addition, interpretation and education efforts at the park will stress the value of the natural environment and the roles that individuals play in protecting it.

### **4.4.3 Policies**

#### **4.4.3 (a) Park Use**

- i.) Uses within intensive recreational zones shall avoid damage of any significant natural features, adjacent natural environment and conservation zones.
- ii.) Uses within natural environment and conservation zones shall not impact the natural environment and are not encouraged outside designated activity areas or trails.
- iii.) Where feasible, new facilities or services shall be sited on disturbed sites to recognize environmental protection and conservation values.

**4.4.3 (b) Development**

- i.) Any land alteration and development activity shall incorporate the principles and guidelines detailed in *Environmental Objectives, Best Management Practices and Requirements for Land Developments*, March 2001 by MWLAP and DFO/MELP Stewardship Series.
- ii.) The disturbance and removal of native vegetation is not permitted in the park without permission of the RDN and may be authorized for the removal of hazardous trees, for the management of invasive non-native species, and for approved park development.
- iii.) The alteration of land is not permitted in the park without permission of the RDN and may be authorized to enhance ecosystems native to the park, minimize erosion, or mitigate natural hazards and to accommodate approved park development.
- iv.) The introduction of animals or planting of vegetation is not permitted in the park without permission of the RDN. However, the RDN may authorize such activity to enhance ecosystems native to the park, to minimize shoreline erosion, and to landscape approved park development.
- v.) The development of trails, campsites, and other land alteration activities including vegetation removal shall not take place within 15 metres from the top of bank of the marine foreshore, unless otherwise permitted by the RDN and Islands Trust.

**4.4.3 (c) Interpretation and Education**

- i.) Interpretation and education may be provided by the Park Operator, as approved by the RDN.
- ii.) The creation of historical interpretation and education materials, by the RDN will be developed in consultation with other government agencies, First Nations, and the tourism industry.
- iii.) Interpretation and education services will be made available to all park users.

**4.4.3 (d) Rehabilitation**

- i.) The enhancement or rehabilitation of disturbed natural areas shall be encouraged.

**4.4.3 (e) Waste Management**

- i.) Park management and development shall incorporate the principles of reducing, reusing, and recycling waste.

**4.4.3 (f) Shellfish**

- i.) The RDN shall investigate securing tenure of the marine foreshore.
- ii.) A valid Tidal Waters Sport Fishing License is required for recreational shellfish harvesting and fishing.

**4.4.3 (g) Archeological Sites**

- i.) Where land alteration has been approved and may be in conflict with any archeological site, an impact assessment study or an archaeological overview report is required.

**4.4.3 (h) Bald Eagle Nest Tree**

- i.) During the Bald Eagle breeding season (January 30 to June 30) day use activities carried out in the grassy area shall be encouraged to be relocated to the meadow.
- ii.) Information about Bald eagles, their habitat and how to protect them shall be made available to park users by pamphlets and at the nearest information kiosk.
- iii.) A buffer shall be established around the base of the tree using native plantings and fencing.

## **4.5 Park Use**

### **4.5.1 Management Objective**

To provide a park with a focus on outdoor recreation within a natural setting, and a wide range of activities, including but not limited to individual and group camping, boating, swimming, hiking, interpretation, and education.

### **4.5.2 Background**

The RDN is committed to providing opportunities for appropriate outdoor activities that foster visitor enjoyment as well as appreciation and respect for the natural environment. Descanso Bay Regional Park offers a variety of uses and activities.

The uses at the park include a 32-site campground, day use area and related facilities, car top boat launch, trails, and swimming. The campground serves individual campers, as well as opportunities for group camping for small groups from schools, churches, and service clubs, in the region and beyond. The Park Operator is permitted to provide ancillary retail and rental services to park users. Special events related to outdoor recreational activities are also permitted at the park. The park house is uninhabitable and requires renovations before it can be put to use. In addition, services (water and on site sewage disposal) need to be provided to the park house prior to it being utilized. Future uses of the park house have not yet been determined.

The car top boat launch enables small car top boats to launch from the park. The RDN is not proposing to construct a dock or boat launch for large boats requiring trailers as the cost and the potential impact to the natural environment make such a project prohibitive.

### **4.5.3 Policies**

#### **4.5.3(a) Permitted Uses**

- i.) Permitted uses within Descanso Bay Regional Park are outlined in Appendix I and shall be undertaken within the appropriate zones as detailed in section 4.10.

#### **4.5.3(b) Camping**

- i.) Camping within the park is only permitted within designated areas, as shown on Map No. 3.1, and is subject to registration, terms of agreement, and campground fees as set out in Appendix III. Schedule No. 4.
- ii.) The development or removal of camping facilities shall be the responsibility of the RDN.
- iii.) The camping season shall be divided into two seasons: high season from May long weekend to Thanksgiving; and a low season.

#### **4.5.3(c) Concession**

- i.) A concession within the park is permitted to be operated by the Park Operator or licensee and shall be conducted according to Appendix IV.

#### **4.5.3(d) Rentals**

- i.) Equipment rentals within the park are permitted by the Park Operator or licensee and shall be conducted according to Appendix IV.

#### **4.5.3(e) Boat Launch**

- i.) The boat launch shall be used by car top boats only.

#### **4.5.3(f) Special Events**

- i.) Special events may be permitted by the RDN.
- ii.) Special events must meet the following conditions:
  - 01. The special event is an appropriate outdoor recreation activity.
  - 02. The special event will have minimal environmental impact.
  - 03. The site selected will be sensitive to the natural environment and the experience of other park users.
  - 04. No permanent or temporary facilities or structures associated with the service or activity is erected or constructed, without permission of the RDN.
  - 05. On site advertising for special events shall be limited to one sign, sandwich board, or banner.

#### **4.5.3(g) Horse Riding and Mountain Biking**

- i.) Horse riding shall be restricted to low season only and shall not be permitted on the beach.
- ii.) Mountain biking will be permitted on designated routes only.

**4.5.3(h) General**

- i.) Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages outside of a reserved campsite is prohibited.
- ii.) Pets are the responsibility of their owner and shall be kept under control at all times. All pet owners must pick up their dog's waste.

**4.5.3(i) Research**

- i.) Research which contributes to the knowledge and cultural history and to environmental and recreational management, will be encouraged, providing it does not detract from park users' use and enjoyment of the park, alter land or disturb land within an archeological site or environmentally sensitive area.

**4.5.3(j) Park House**

- i.) A plan to determine future uses for the Park House shall be developed over the five-year term of this report.

## **4.6 Standards**

### **4.6.1 Management Objective**

To develop Descanso Bay Regional Park to have quality facilities and standards that correspond with Islands Trust and RDN bylaws and are on par with or better than provincial parks of similar size and scope.

### **4.6.2 Background**

The property has been used as a campground since the early 1980s with well-established facilities and campground layout.

The current facilities at the Descanso Bay Regional Park are adequate, but require some upgrading. The existing facilities include 32 campsites, two pit toilets, car top boat launch, signage, parking and picnic area, park house, gatehouse and garage, four fire stations, and one well with pump and gravity flow system serves four stations and the gatehouse, but the water is not potable. The old park house is currently uninhabitable due to the state or repair and contains no plumbing or septic system.

The proposed actions outlined in Appendix II, Capital Plan and Works, are intended to reduce deficiencies and improve the standards at the park, however no large capital projects are proposed within the first five-year period.

Any upgrading of the facilities or the development of future facilities needs to be undertaken to an acceptable standard. In addition, a private contractor will manage the park; therefore, an acceptable definition of maintenance standards is required. Existing and new facilities will be constructed to protect the natural environment, support outdoor activities, and meet operational needs. The siting of existing facilities is shown on Map No. 3.1.

The regional park is zoned Tourist Commercial 2 (TC2) pursuant to the Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw No. 177, 1999. The primary use permitted in this zone is campground and the accessory uses include single-family residence, retail sales, and campground office uses. The uses are therefore consistent with the permitted uses. Bylaw No. 177 requires that any seasonal camping not exceed 90 days in a calendar year and not exceed 60 consecutive days. The bylaw also outlines the maximum number of campsites as 10 per 1.0 ha (4 per 1.0 acres), i.e. 150 or 156. As Bylaw No. 177 does not contain specific standards for campgrounds, the RDN will strive to work towards meeting the standards defined in the Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987.

BC Parks operating standards have been incorporated into the day-to-day facility maintenance standards. These are detailed in Appendix III.

### **4.6.3 Policies**

#### **4.6.3(a) Facility Standards**

- i.) As facilities require upgrading or new construction, buildings and structures shall be constructed to Islands Trust and RDN standards where applicable or generally follow Provincial standards as a guideline to address public safety concerns, ensure adequate performance, follow best practices and manage risk.

#### **4.6.3(b) Development**

- i.) Recreational uses and trail facilities shall only be developed within designated areas in accordance with the approved Capital Plan.
- ii.) No new development is anticipated within years 1 to 5 of this plan except as identified in the Capital Plan outlined in Appendix II.
- iii.) The design and maintenance of park facilities shall:
  01. Avoid or minimize impacts on the natural environment;
  02. Blend colour, scale, style, and materials with the natural environment;
  03. Avoid conflicts between existing park uses and facilities;
  04. Provide good access and circulation for vehicles and non-motorized movement within the park;
  05. Avoid or mitigate potential impacts on adjacent landowners; and
  06. Provide safety for users.
- iv.) When realigning existing trails and routes or developing new ones priority shall be given to:
  01. The provision of looped trails or consideration for return journeys incorporating a number of trails, where appropriate;
  02. Providing links within the trail network and between camping areas and other facilities; and
  03. Providing linkages from the community park and where appropriate, private land.

- v.) The provision of camping areas will be reviewed periodically and camping areas may be removed, reduced in size or consolidated based on the following:
  - 01. Demand;
  - 02. Damage to natural and physical resources; and
  - 03. Conflicts with day-use or other uses.
- vi.) The installation or construction of apparatus for outdoor recreational activities is not permitted, without the permission of the RDN.
- vii.) The RDN will be responsible for capital works. Any capital improvements undertaken by the Park Operator that are not chattels remain the property of the RDN.

**4.6.3(c) Environmental Standards**

- i.) Environmental standards shall be consistent with Provincial and Regional Health Authority protocols and standards.
- ii.) The development of a potable water system shall be investigated.

## **4.7 Operations And Administration**

### **4.7.1 Management Objective**

To develop and operate Descanso Bay Regional Park to be self-supporting.

### **4.7.2 Background**

Management refers to the day-to-day services that enhance visitor's use and enjoyment of the Descanso Bay Regional Park, while protecting the natural environment and visitor safety. Proper management of the park is critical for achieving the goals and objectives of this plan. Park management by the Park Operator includes a variety of responsibilities including: ensuring park bylaws are understood and enforced, managing the park reservation system, maintaining and repairing facilities, maintaining equipment and signs, coordinating bylaw enforcement, and managing the campground, day-use area, parking areas and park house (when renovated). The Park Operator is also responsible for maintaining good public relations with all park users.

The RDN envisions that the management of regional parks will be self-supporting. However, revenue generated from 32 campsites and accessory services such as a small concession and rentals may be insufficient to meet both the day-to-day operating expenses and long term capital projects proposed by this plan. Therefore, operating subsidies will need to be considered by the Regional Board on an annual basis.

Volunteers play an important role in the RDN Recreation and Parks Department for trail construction, for example. BC Parks and Forestry Companies also utilize volunteer park hosts in their campgrounds around the province. Therefore, volunteers are recognized as being valuable components in the management and operations of the Descanso Bay Regional Park.

### **4.7.3 Policies**

#### **4.7.3(a) Operating Contract**

- i.) The RDN will secure an operating contract for park management and operations and strives to achieve an operating contract on a cost recovery basis.
- ii.) Park management and operations will recognize all park policies and designations as set out in this plan.

#### **4.7.3(b) Financial Management**

- i.) Fees related to the sale of products or programs, other than camping fees that are defined in Appendix IV, may be established by the Park Operator.
- ii.) The Park Operator shall prepare an annual financial statement summarizing all park operations, to the satisfaction of the RDN.

#### **4.7.3(c) Maintenance**

- i.) The Park Operator shall conduct an annual maintenance inspection and risk management evaluation, to the satisfaction of the RDN.
- ii.) Routine maintenance of buildings, structures, grounds and facilities shall be undertaken as outlined in Appendix III, Schedule No. 2.

#### **4.7.3(d) Marketing, Promotion and Communication**

- i.) The Park Operator shall develop an annual marketing strategy, in consultation with the RDN.
- ii.) The RDN shall review, approve and/or prepare all promotional materials.
- iii.) Public input on future park improvements and services may be obtained through comment cards, formal and informal surveys and subsequent park plan reviews.
- iv.) The RDN shall undertake the development of any signage and the Park Operator shall be responsible for installation and ongoing maintenance.

#### **4.7.3(e) Volunteers**

- i.) Volunteers may be used in the day-to-day operations and development of capital works at the park.

#### **4.7.3(f) Signage**

- i.) Signage and advertising may only be placed in the park with the approval of the RDN.

#### **4.7.3(g) General**

- i.) The resolution of issues not specifically identified in this plan shall be decided by the General Manager of Community Services.

## **4.8 Economic Development**

### **4.8.1 Management Objective**

To provide spin off economic and tourism opportunities for Gabriola Island, as well as the region as a whole.

### **4.8.2 Background**

According to the Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce, the operators of the Tourist Information Centre on the island, in July and August 2002 over 3,000 people visited the Centre. The Chamber also estimates that they received approximately three camping inquiries per day over July and August 2003.

Silva Bay Boatel is the only other operator on Gabriola Island that provides camping. The set up is informal and camping is limited to a couple of tents and few camper/RV sites. Descanso Bay Regional Park is the only formal campground on the island. Therefore, the park provides valuable camping accommodation for campers who would like to stay for longer periods.

The Descanso Bay Regional Park is one of seven regional parks in the RDN. There are also many trails and community parks within the Regional District that are well used by visitors from all over. The RDN regularly promotes its regional park and trail system through a variety of mediums and Gabriola Island businesses shall receive the indirect benefit of this promotion activity.

There are various opportunities to increase the number of visitors. Active kayakers have been trying to establish a marine trail system from Vancouver to Prince Rupert. The boat launch and camping provides a great spot along that route. Increased advertising should result in an increase in the number of visitors coming and staying at the park. An increase in the number of visitors and longer stays from visitors outside the region has the potential to provide economic benefits to businesses on Gabriola Island as well as the region.

### **4.8.3 Policies**

#### **4.8.3(a) Regional Tourism**

- i.) Where possible, the RDN will participate in efforts to promote regional tourism through the promotion of the park.
- ii.) The RDN shall develop a relationship with other tourism operators to promote Gabriola Island and the Regional District of Nanaimo.

## **4.9 Cooperation**

### **4.9.1 Management Objective**

To liaise with adjacent landowners, Islands Trust, and senior agencies in the planning, management and operations of Descanso Bay Regional Park.

### **4.9.2 Background**

Adjacent land uses include a farm and the community park. There are also residential neighbourhoods located off McConvey Road. Future development of trails in the community park will provide linkages from the north east corner to the Regional Park, the west side of the island and the ferry. Senior agencies with potential interests in the Regional Park include Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, and Ministry of Health. These agencies will be consulted as required.

Islands Trust is the local government authority for Gabriola Island and is responsible for land use on the island, however the RDN is responsible for building inspection and parks. Therefore, consultation between the two local governments is necessary to ensure each agency's requirements are met.

### **4.9.3 Policies**

#### **4.9.3(a) Adjacent Landowners**

- i.) The RDN and the Park Operator will liaise with adjacent landowners to cooperate on matters of mutual interest or benefit related to park operations including:
  01. Public access;
  02. Nuisance and vandalism;
  03. Security issues;
  04. Emergency issues (flood, rockslide, fire); and
  05. Special events.
- ii.) The RDN will seek to work with all landowners to promote park objectives and enhance natural processes on adjacent lands.

#### **4.9.3(b) Land Interests**

- i.) The RDN shall secure a lease agreement with Gabriola Fire Department for use of the reservoir.

#### **4.9.3(c) Government Agencies**

- i.) The RDN will seek to work with other government agencies to promote park objectives and uphold other agency's mandates.

## **4.10 Park Use Zones**

A system of park use zones has been developed to provide a framework in which to manage the Descanso Bay Regional Park and outlines the types and levels of use appropriate throughout the park. The park use zones are guided by the vision for future use and development. The zones are also intended to protect and enhance the environmentally sensitive or natural features, to recognize historical uses and public preferences for park use, and to assist in reducing existing and potential conflicts between uses and activities. For example, the oceanfront is a sensitive environment but it is a main feature of the park and therefore well used by park visitors. The park use zones provide a framework for assessing the suitability of future activities and development proposals.

The park has been divided into three management zones that correspond to the capacity of the park to accommodate different intensities of park use. The locations of each zone are shown on Map No. 4.1.

### **4.10.1 Intensive Recreation Zone**

The management objective of this zone is to provide high use and readily accessible visitor services and facilities. This zone is oriented to intensive outdoor recreation activity. Current uses include day-use facilities; campground; car top boat launch; parking; service facilities including rentals and concession; and management facilities. Day-use and the campground will be developed at the optimum carrying capacity of the land and water and in accordance with the policies of this plan and local government bylaws.

### **4.10.2 Natural Environment Zone**

The objective of this zone is to protect natural values, to provide low impact recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment and to provide appropriate non-vehicular recreation. The types of activities permitted shall have a low to moderate impact on the natural environment and are intended to be dispersed over a large area and include hiking and passive recreation. Development will be limited to trails, necessary signs, fencing and temporary facilities for research or management.

### **4.10.3 Conservation Zone**

The objective of this zone is to protect and enhance the natural landscape and fish and wildlife habitat. No motorized vehicles or intensive recreational activities are allowed. Conservation of natural values takes precedence over human use. This zone includes existing forestland, eagle nest tree, wildlife and trail corridors and other buffers. Development will be limited to trail, necessary signs and fencing.

**Map 4.1**  
**Park Use Zones**

