

Purchase of the Former French Creek School and Parkland

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce that the purchase of the former French Creek School site from Qualicum School District (QSD) for \$1.3 million has been completed. The property is 3.7-hectares (9.15 acre) located at 2350 Alberni Highway, Coombs. The property includes a building once used as French Creek Community School, a gymnasium and a field and playground currently used as the French Creek School Community Park.

The property was purchased by the Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service for community use. The purchase was made using \$376,000 of Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls reserve funds, \$120,000 of Community Works Funds and long-term borrowing of \$824,000 plus interest.

Background

When Qualicum School District (QSD) stopped the operation of French Creek Community School in 2014, the RDN secured a ten-year licence of use for the field and playground. In 2023, the Qualicum School District Board of Education issued a notice that it was considering the disposition of the property. On April 8, 2025, the RDN Board approved the negotiated purchase price of \$1.3 million. The RDN Board then approved long-term borrowing of up to ten years to fund the purchase, which required elector approval. The borrowing was approved via referendum on October 25, 2025, with 64.5 per cent yes votes. The RDN has been inspecting and maintaining the playground, field and trees and surrounding vegetation within the park area through the licence of use, which was extended until February 20, 2026.

For more information on the purchase, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/french-creek-school-and-parkland-purchase-referendum.

Quotes

"I am very pleased with the purchase of the French Creek heritage school and parkland, as it will provide local residents with a much-needed community gathering place. I look forward to exploring future uses for this exceptional property."

Leanne Salter, Director, Electoral Area F

"It is truly wonderful to see this historic school property continue to be used as a community asset. Built more than a century ago, it now has the opportunity to embrace a new future—still rooted in community service, connection, and shared purpose for generations to come."

Eve Flynn, Board Chair, QSD

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