



Edgewater School Path Management Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of Edgewater School Path Management Plan is to establish objectives and strategies for the long-term management of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years. It is intended to provide strategic direction and guidance for the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK), community associations and stewards of the trail.

The primary function of the trail is to provide a safe route for pedestrians.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Trail Overview

The 250m trail along Sinclair Street was constructed to provide for safer pedestrian travel to and from Edgewater School. The gravel trail begins at the intersection of Riverview Drive and Sinclair Street and parallels the east side of Sinclair Street until the path reaches Edgewater School.



FIGURE 1: LOCATION PLAN

1.2 Establishment of Regional Parks

1.2.1 Background

The provincial government granted the RDEK authority to establish a regional park function by Supplementary Letters Patent in 1966. The RDEK now operates regional parks and trails under the authority of the *Local Government Act*.

In the 1970's, the RDEK began development of its regional parks system after having acquired crown lands at Wycliffe and Tie Lake for park facilities. In 1975 a major study of potential regional park sites was undertaken by the RDEK; however, no formal park plan was adopted. In 1980, the Elk Valley Regional Park was included in the regional parks system.

In 1990, Extended Service (Regional Parks) Area Establishment Bylaw No. 933 was adopted. This bylaw converted the regional parks function to an extended service to enable the RDEK to recover annual operating and servicing costs of parks from taxes levied on properties within the Regional District.

In 2002, the RDEK added the Old Coach Greenway (Columbia Valley Regional Trail) to its services to address the absence of a regional park in the Columbia Valley subregion. In 2004, the RDEK adopted Electoral Area Regional Parks and Trails Service Area Establishment Bylaws and the Regional Park Plan to simplify the financing of parks and trails and to administer the expanding parks system.

Electoral G Regional Parks and Trails Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1753, 2004 establishes a service to provide regional parks and trails within Electoral Area G. The capital and operating cost of parks and trails are recovered by monies collected by property tax levied on property within the Electoral Area.

With the regulatory tools in place to administer an expanding park system, a Regional Parks Plan followed. The focus of the Regional Parks Plan is to provide policies to guide the expansion, administration, and financing of the regional parks system.

In 2019, the Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw No. 2833 was adopted and outlines regulations and fees related to the use and management of all parks within the RDEK.

1.2.2 Edgewater School Path Management Plan Planning Process

The RDEK operates regional parks and trails under the authority of the *Local Government Act*.

As per the RDEK Regional Parks Plan, separate management plans may be prepared for regional parks and trails on an as required basis. Management plans should address topics such as land acquisition, site planning, facility development, recreation, user groups, access management, public safety, maintenance, control of invasive plants, threat from wildfire and funding and partnership agreements.

Each management plan will be approved by the General Manager of Operations and adopted by Board resolution.

The Edgewater School Path Management plan was developed in consideration of the current improvements, usage and management of the park.

1.3 Existing Infrastructure & Current Uses

1.3.1 Existing Infrastructure

The existing infrastructure is a 250 m gravel trail.

1.3.2 Current Uses

The trail is used for walking, biking, scootering, and other forms of non-motorized forms of transportation.

2 CULTURAL HERITAGE OVERVIEW

The plan area lies within the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation, whose people have lived on and stewarded these lands for more than 10,000 years. The Ktunaxa are a culturally and linguistically distinct Nation who historically travelled seasonally throughout their territory to align with the availability of plant and animal resources. The Lake Windermere area and the Columbia River form part of the Ktunaxa Creation Story, reflecting the deep spiritual and cultural connections to the land.

The Akisq'nuk First Nation, a member of the Ktunaxa Nation, is located at Columbia Lake Indian Reserve #3, established by the Indian Reserve Commission under the Indian Act. The Shuswap Indian Band, part of the Interior Salish Secwépemc (Shuswap) Nation, also has longstanding ties to the Windermere Valley and is sometimes referred to as the Kinbasket people, after one of the families who settled in the valley approximately 200 years ago. Salish use of the valley dates back much earlier, as evidenced by pit houses (kekulis) found throughout the region. Although few have been archaeologically dated, some are more than 1,000 years old and may be significantly older. The present-day Shuswap Indian Reserve was likewise established by the Indian Reserve Commission under the Indian Act.

European exploration began in the early 1800s, with the establishment of Kootenai House, a trading post on the Columbia River operated by the Northwest Fur Trading Company. Settlement remained limited until the 1860s, when gold discoveries at Findlay Creek attracted prospectors and miners. Agricultural development followed in the 1880s and 1890s, with farms established along the east benches near Lake Windermere. The hamlet of Windermere and Lake Windermere were named in 1883 by Gilbert Sproat. Edgewater's origins date to 1886, when James L. McKay established the McKay Estate along the Columbia River after completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway main line. Early homesteaders, including the Munson, McNeill, and Larmour families, formed a small ranching community. At the turn of the twentieth century, renewed railway development spurred surveying, irrigation works, and agricultural promotion throughout the Columbia Valley. The Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands Company actively recruited settlers from Britain, encouraging immigration with low land prices and farming opportunities. Edgewater was planned as an agricultural townsite by 1912, and a post office opened in 1913. Although growth stalled during the First World War, leading to economic hardship and population decline, recovery in the 1920s—led by Dr. W.H. Gaddes and Columbia Valley Ranches—brought new European settlers and the gradual establishment of community institutions. Together, these developments shaped the Lake Windermere and Edgewater areas into resilient and enduring communities.

3 RELATIONSHIP TO RDEK GUIDING DOCUMENTS

3.1 Regional Sustainability Strategy

The Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) provides the RDEK with a wide-ranging, long-term planning tool. It equips the region with a sustainability lens to guide and evaluate operations and decision-making. The RSS was adopted by the Board on October 3, 2014.

During the RSS public consultation process, it was evident that the environment is a primary concern for the region's residents. The protection of the natural environment is consistently ranked as one of the most important considerations when decisions are made about development and economic activities. The natural environment is also integral to both the quality of life of individuals for recreational purposes and the provision of economic opportunities for many businesses.

3.2 Regional Parks Plan

The purpose of the Regional Parks Plan is to determine the goals and objectives of the RDEK's regional park and trails system, to set criteria for additions to the regional parks and trail system, to establish policy for the RDEK's administration of park land or cash-in-lieu from a developer at time of subdivision, to initiate standards for the regulation, administration and operation of park and trail facilities and to identify existing park and trail services and their funding mechanism.

3.3 Columbia Valley Zoning Bylaw

The zoning Bylaw was adopted in 2023 and is the regulatory tool used by the RDEK to establish development provisions for individual parcels of land. The zoning bylaw establishes permitted uses, development density and parcel size, and other development controls such as building setbacks, building height and parking. The zoning Bylaw also provides policies and guidelines to direct the RDEK in future decision making.

3.4 Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw

Adopted in 2019, the Parks and Trails Regulation and Fee Bylaw outlines regulations and fees related to the use and management of all parks within the RDEK and acts as an enforcement tool if required.

4 ECOSYSTEM & HABITAT

4.1 Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are typically non-native plants that have been introduced to British Columbia without the insect predators and plant pathogens that help keep them in check in their native habitats. For this reason and because of their aggressive growth, these alien plants can be highly destructive, competitive, and difficult to control.

The Ministry of Forests administers the *BC Weed Control Act*. As stated in the *Weed Control Act*, all landowners and occupiers in the Province of BC have a legal responsibility to control provincially and regionally listed invasive plants. The *Weed Control Act* is enforced within the East Kootenay through RDEK Bylaw No. 2711.

The RDEK is responsible for control of invasive plants along Edgewater School Path.

4.2 Wildlife

The Edgewater School Path is within an area that displays a very high level of badger habitat.

4.3 Natural Hazards

4.3.1 *Alluvial Fans and Flooding*

The Edgewater School is not within an alluvial fan, however, it is largely within a flood torrent hazard area.

4.3.2 *Wildfire*

Edgewater School Path is within a low wildfire hazard area.

5 PARK VISION

5.1 Goal

To provide a safe walking trail for the public.

5.2 Key Management Issues

The trail is located in the road right of way along the north bound lane of Sinclair Street. The management priority is the seasonal maintenance, done in summer months, and snow removal service, provided in the winter months.

Noxious invasive weed management is an ongoing priority for all RDEK facilities.

5.3 Public Safety

The RDEK prides itself on the quality of services provided to the public including the condition of RDEK parks and trails in relation to public safety. To reduce the risk of liability associated with trail use by the public, the RDEK has developed a detailed trail inspection policy which includes frequency and content of inspections and encompasses all aspects of the trail use in relation to public safety.

6 PRIORITY ACTIONS & COST ESTIMATE

The following is a list of potential improvements to the trail. It is a guideline and does not commit the RDEK to any particular course of action or investment in trail infrastructure. The proposed timeframe for the improvements may change depending on future funding, human resource capacity and community involvement. The improvements could be funded through allocating funds through the annual budgeting process. Should a community or stewardship group be interested in performing trail maintenance or enhancement, alternative funding mechanisms could include community fundraising efforts. The plan will be periodically reviewed by the RDEK. The plan will also be considered during the preparation of five-year financial plans.

Basic operational and maintenance items such as removing danger trees and invasive plant control are not included in the following list as they are considered to be regular maintenance items included in the annual operating budget.

Possible Future Improvements

Estimated Cost

Sign at trailhead

\$500

TOTAL

\$500