



# **REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENWAYS PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN (2008 – 2020)**



### **A Brief History of the Central Okanagan Regional Parks System**

On July 21, 1971 Director J. Stuart, Chairman of the Regional Parks and Recreation Committee presented a report entitled “A Regional Parks Plan” to the Board of the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO). The report contained the synthesis of years of work and provided strategic recommendations for the establishment of a “Regional Parks System”. The report described the importance of establishing a regional parks systems and provided the following as rationale for establishing a “regional” approach to a park system delivery.

*“In this Regional District, centrally located in the Okanagan Valley, we have already experienced pains of park shortage. People are unable to find enough space at the beach, and people simply stay at home to avoid being frustrated.*

*The demands for public open space are real, and we must endeavor to satisfy all these demands adequately, within our park system. The prospect is for ever increasing need for public open space and unless we allow for these future needs now, our diminishing regional resources will not meet these needs.*

*Today, with transportation facilities available to us, it is not unusual for a casual drive to take us across the whole Regional District, or in some cases even to cross regional boundaries. It is this expanding social world that has brought the problem of regional parks to the forefront. People are no longer satisfied with only local community recreational opportunities, and cannot be expected therefore, to use only community parks.”*

*“Report to the Regional Board of the Regional District of Central Okanagan on a Regional Parks Plan” Prepared by – Regional Parks Committee Chair Mr. J. Stuart June 1971*

After several years of debate and discussion between the Regional Board and member municipalities, a Regional Park function was granted to the Regional District by supplementary Letters Patent issued on October 25, 1974 and amended on December 19, 1986. The Regional Parks “function” was converted to an “extended service” on January 22, 1990 through the adoption of Bylaw #410.

### **Central Okanagan Regional Parks and Greenways Defined**

Since 1974, the Central Okanagan Regional Parks and Greenways service program has evolved into a system of 28 regional parks and greenways totaling over 1100 Ha (2800 acres) which are now considered integral to contributing to the quality of life and sustainability interests expressed by residents within each community of the Central Okanagan.

In redefining “regional parks and greenways” in the context of other public park space providers within the Central Okanagan (i.e. municipal parks, provincial parks, etc), the 2008 plan does not attempt to reconcile existing regional park land properties that may be viewed as “inconsistent” with a new definition for future regional park land acquisition interests. Adjacent land use changes, increasing demands for recreation oriented service provision (i.e. beach access amenities, active sport amenities, etc) require that the management of the existing system of parks be responsive to these needs.

As the regional park service is delivered for the benefit of all residents of the Central Okanagan, differentiating “regional” parks from other forms of park land within the various communities is best described by emphasizing that the regional park land and greenways system was established to focus on properties that are “regionally significant”. In the Central Okanagan these areas must exhibit the following characteristics:

***Central Okanagan Regionally Significant Areas are geographic areas that exemplify natural and/or cultural attributes from the region which are considered important to all the residents of the region. These areas must provide opportunities for appropriate outdoor activities that will attract people from throughout the Central Okanagan.***

This plan proposes that future regional park land acquisition and management planning will focus on the following key regionally significant interests:

- 1. Regional Parks will secure “regionally significant” natural and human heritage park areas. Future park land acquisitions will strive to protect lands which will augment an existing provincial, regional and municipal parks system such that these parks collectively represent a complete range of ecosystems for the Central Okanagan.***
- 2. The Regional Parks system will strive to develop a “Greenway Network” of park spaces which represent and help conserve a diverse range of Central Okanagan natural environments. Central Okanagan Greenways will contribute to livability in the region by providing citizens with opportunities to recreate, commute and prosper through the protection of a complete range of area ecosystems.***

Proposed guiding principles for implementation of the regional parks and greenways plan include that:

- (1) The RDCO and Municipal Partners regional parks management relationship for greenways will continue to provide for flexibility based on the level of improvements identified for the greenway, geographic character of the trail(s), proximity to intensive urban land uses, and proximity to urban / rural boundaries. Identified future / municipal greenway management relationships include:
  - Mission Creek Greenway (RDCO / Kelowna)
  - Lebanon Creek Greenway (RDCO / Kelowna)
  - Bellevue Creek Greenway (RDCO / Kelowna)
  - Mill Creek / Wood Lake Greenway (RDCO / Kelowna / Lake Country)
  - Glen Canyon Greenway (RDCO / Westside)
  - Trepanier Greenway (RDCO / Peachland)
- (2) Future regional park land acquisitions are encouraged to explore opportunities for partnership funding. These acquisitions must clearly demonstrate that any shared park land acquisition interests demonstrate the essential characteristics of a “regional park” as defined as well as the complimentary park land values which are important to a partner organization.

- (3) Cultural heritage regional park areas will be considered only if the sites have regional, provincial or national heritage value characteristics and also can provide for other “regionally” significant values as defined above.

### **The Existing System of Regional Parks and Greenways**

The park management classification system is composed of four primary park classes: (1) Conservation, (2) Natural, (3) Recreation / Cultural / Waterfront, and (4) Trails (Greenways).

#### **1. Regional Conservation Parks**

Regional Conservation Parks are managed for the protection or enhancement of habitat values of vegetation and wildlife. The provision of recreation may occur but is subordinate to habitat values. Natural processes may take their natural course and management practices may occur at the detriment of aesthetics or public access.

#### **2. Regional Natural Area Park**

Regional Natural Area Parks provide opportunities for increasing awareness and knowledge of the natural environment of the Okanagan Valley. These areas must contain regionally significant features of geology, physiography, vegetation communities, or wildlife habitat.

#### **3. Regional Recreation / Cultural / Waterfront Park**

Regional Recreation/ Cultural/Waterfront Parks provide varied forms of more active recreation. These parks primarily focus on meeting the aquatic recreation needs of the region and/or preserve unique cultural landscapes. The management emphasis within Regional Recreation / Cultural Parks will be intensive outdoor or interpretive program day use.

#### **4. Regional Trail (Greenways)**

Regional Trails will be established to link provincial, regional and major municipal parks throughout the Central Okanagan.

Development of the Regional Trail System will require collaboration with municipal and provincial park partners as well as non-government organizations in the acquisition and development of “greenway” systems that provide both recreational and habitat links to other open spaces.

Table 1: Classification of Regional Parks by Management Class

Regional Park	Management Classification			
	Conservation	Natural	Recreation (R) / Cultural ©/ Waterfront (W)	Trails (Greenways)
1. Antlers Beach			• (R&W)	
2. Bertram Creek			• (R&W)	
3. Cedar Mountain		•		
4. Coldham Park	•			
5. Evely Forest Recreation Site			• (R&W)	
6. Gellatly Heritage Park			• ©	
7. Gellatly Nut Farm				
8. Glen Canyon				•
9. Kalamoir		•		
10. Kaloya			• (R&W)	
11. Kopje			• (R/W&©)	
12. McCulloch			• (R&©)	
13. McCulloch Recreation Site			• (R&W)	
14. Mill Creek		•		
15. Mission Creek		•		
16. Mission Creek Greenway				•
17. Mount Boucherie	•			
18. Okanagan Centre Safe Harbour			• (R&W)	
19. Raymer Bay			• (R&W)	
20. RDCO Sport Fields – KLO Road				
21. Robert Lake	•			
22. Reisdweg			• (R&W)	
23. Rose Valley	•			
24. Scenic Canyon		•		
25. Shannon Lake			• (R&W)	
26. Stevens Coyote Ridge	•			
27. Traders Cove			• (R&W)	
28. Woodhaven		•		

### **Financial Tools for Regional Parks and Greenways System Management**

- Annual tax requisition (i.e. 2007 tax rate = \$0.1583 per \$1000 assessed value)
- Partnerships & Donations – NGO Partners including Central Okanagan Parks & Wildlife Trust, Friends of Mission Creek, Gellatly Nut Farm Society, Friends of Kalamo Regional Park, Nature Trust of B.C., etc.)
- Regional Parkland Legacy Program (Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund) – 2007 tax requisition of \$0.02 per \$1000 assessed value

The key principle behind the establishment of the “Regional Parkland Legacy Fund” is the capacity to utilize the fund for short term (< 5 year) loan debt servicing as well the associated residual investment into a regional park land acquisition reserve fund for intermediate term acquisitions. Other benefits are:

1. Long term debt servicing costs to the Regional Parks System budget are better managed.
2. The Regional parkland acquisition program can utilize reserves in a strategic “pay-as-you-go” approach for key regional park interests.
3. Implementation of short term (< 5 year) debt servicing program for “immediate” park land acquisition interests will assist in securing protection of critical sensitive ecosystems and provide for establishing key “greenway” linkages in the Central Okanagan.
4. An option will exist for the implementation of a 5 year - \$3.5 Million debt servicing program for “immediate” park land acquisition interests which will secure protection of a critical ecosystems and provide for assisting in the establishment of key “greenway” linkages in the Central Okanagan.
5. Utilizing a debt servicing term of only 5 years will enable the RDCO to capitalize on reduced loan interest rates (estimated to be 5.5% - 5 year term) and reduce the effect of rising real estate market to secure key park land interest properties.
6. Establishment of a reserve fund for regional parks acquisition of \$0.02 per thousand of assessed value (2007) will secure reserve funds which will grow at approximately \$750,000 annually. Net effect on an average home in the Central Okanagan was \$8.40 annually (2007).
7. Long term debt servicing costs to the Regional Parks System budget are better managed.
8. The Regional parkland acquisition program can utilize reserves in a strategic “pay-as-you-go” approach for key regional park and greenways interests.
9. Upon retirement of a 2007 debt service load in 2017 and transferring the annual debt servicing requisition to reserves, the Regional park land reserve fund could accrue at a rate equivalent to \$0.08 per thousand of assessed value resulting in an estimated value of >\$2.5M annually secured in reserves for future park land acquisition purposes.



### **Future Financing for the Regional Parks and Greenways System**

The Regional District of Central Okanagan annually adopts a five year financial plan for each of its service areas and the Regional Parks. In conjunction with consideration of these annual financial plans, the Regional Board also reviews the service delivery mandate, goals and program activities and establishes performance objectives which are reviewed on a quarterly basis throughout each fiscal year. In 2008, the RDCO Board of Directors will review the following proposed service program summary which describes an updated mandate, goals and activities description that will focus the future of regional park interests into:

- (1) regionally significant natural area protection (representative Central Okanagan ecosystem conservation);
- (2) regionally significant “greenways system conservation and development

Based on the above information, the following is proposed as a revised service program summary for the 2008 Five Year Financial Plan description for the Regional Parks Service program:

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN  
PERFORMANCE BASED BUDGETING AND MEASUREMENT

PROGRAM PLAN SUMMARY

**Program:** 142 - Regional Parks

**Department:** Parks and Recreation

**Mandate:**

Provide a network of regional parks and trails that represent a complete range of ecosystems and regionally significant natural and human heritage features for residents of and visitors to the Central Okanagan. The program will provide opportunities for experiences and activities that encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the region's natural and cultural landscapes while ensuring the long term ecological and commemorative integrity of each park and trail.

**Program Management Goals:**

- Provide region-wide leadership in conservation and environmental stewardship through partnership, education, advocacy and management practices
- Conserve a complete range of ecosystems and regionally significant natural areas
- Provide and protect regionally significant park and trail opportunities that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Provide and protect access to crown properties, Okanagan lakes and valley trails.
- Conserve regionally significant human heritage features

**Program Activities:**

- Protect And Maintain Our Assets
- Provide More Outdoor Opportunities Close To Home
- Enrich The Park Experience
- Conserve Ecosystems For Life – Together
- Build Partnerships And Alliances
- Keep Our Parks Safe, Clean, And Well Maintained
- Secure Today For Tomorrow



**Participating Members:**

Funding: All Central Okanagan Ratepayers  
Westbank First Nation Services Contract  
Rental Fees

Committees: Regional Parks Advisory Committee

Contracts / Agreements: City of Kelowna – Mission Creek Greenway  
District of Lake Country – Okanagan Center  
Safe Harbor  
BC Parks – Fintry Provincial Park  
Gellatly Cemetery Trustees – Gellatly Heritage Park  
BC Forestry Ministry – Killiney & McCulloch Campsites  
Westbank First Nation Services Contract

**Regional Parks Listing as at January 2007**

**Conservation**

Robert Lake  
Rose Valley  
Stephens Coyote Ridge  
Mt. Boucherie  
Woodhaven  
Coldham

**Natural**

Cedar Mountain  
Kalamoair  
Mill Creek  
Mission Creek  
Scenic Canyon  
Fintry

**Trails (Greenways)**

Glen Canyon  
Mission Creek Greenway

**Recreation / Cultural / Waterfront**

Antlers Beach / Hardy Falls  
Bertram Creek  
Gellatly Heritage Park  
Gellatly Nut Farm  
Kaloya  
Kopje  
McCulloch Station  
Okanagan Centre Safe Harbor  
Raymer Bay  
Reiswig  
Shannon Lake  
Traders Cove

**Management Agreements**

Evely Forest Recreation Site  
(formerly Okanagan Lake Campsite - Killiney)  
McCulloch Campsite

### **Regional Park Land and Greenways Acquisition Options**

In 2007, the RDCO Board approved a ten year Regional park land acquisition strategy which identified seventy (70) properties of interest to the RDCO for future acquisition potential. In 2007 these properties represented an estimated \$68 million in value and the RDCO Board supported the initiation of acquisition planning on several priority properties which would support the development of significant Central Okanagan greenway park systems in the Lebanon Creek, Bellevue Creek, Mill Creek, Trepanier Creek, Mission Creek and Powers Creek corridors.

The strategy also focuses on the identification of regionally significant Central Okanagan ecosystems that are currently not represented within park tenure. Through “gap analysis” the report identified that the biogeoclimatic zone Interior Douglas-Fir Okanagan Very Dry Hot – Grassland Phase zone (IDFxh1a –) was not represented within any park system type within the region. This zone occurs between 400-1250m with a warm and dry climatic regime and a relatively long growing season in which moisture deficits are common. Types of vegetation found in the zone may be:

Moist Sites – Idaho Fescue, Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Silky Lupine, Arrow-Leaved Balsamroot, Parsnip-flowered Buckwheat, Junegrass, lichens, and mosses.

Dry Sites – Pasture Sage, Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Arrow-Leaved Balsamroot, and Silky Lupine.

Wet Sites – Idaho Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, Stiff Needlegrass, and Prairie Grass. On wetter sites Trembling Aspen and Yellow Pine are common.

The RDCO Board has also been working closely with the Province of B.C. and Westbank First Nation in negotiations to secure Crown lands of interest throughout the Central Okanagan. Future management of these interest areas will require a cooperative management model involving First Nations cultural interests, water utilities, and other resource management groups.

## **Central Okanagan Municipal Partners - Natural Areas Management**

### **City of Kelowna**

#### ***Project under development - Recreation Parks and Culture Task Force (2006 – 2007)***

##### ***Natural Parks***

Natural areas and open spaces include ravines, lands adjacent to creeks, wetlands, significant natural landscapes, hillsides not suitable for development and significant ecological features. These lands are generally maintained in their natural state but may include parkland development, which reflect environmental sensitivity.

In 1996 City Council endorsed a policy to protect natural areas and open spaces through public ownership in the order of 5% of the total land area of the City within 20 years. In 1996 the City owned 2.3% or 493 ha. By 1999 this total had risen to 3.3% or 710 ha. Although 5% is an achievable target, the standard should be stated as a minimum of 5% to ensure significant ecological features are protected through public ownership.

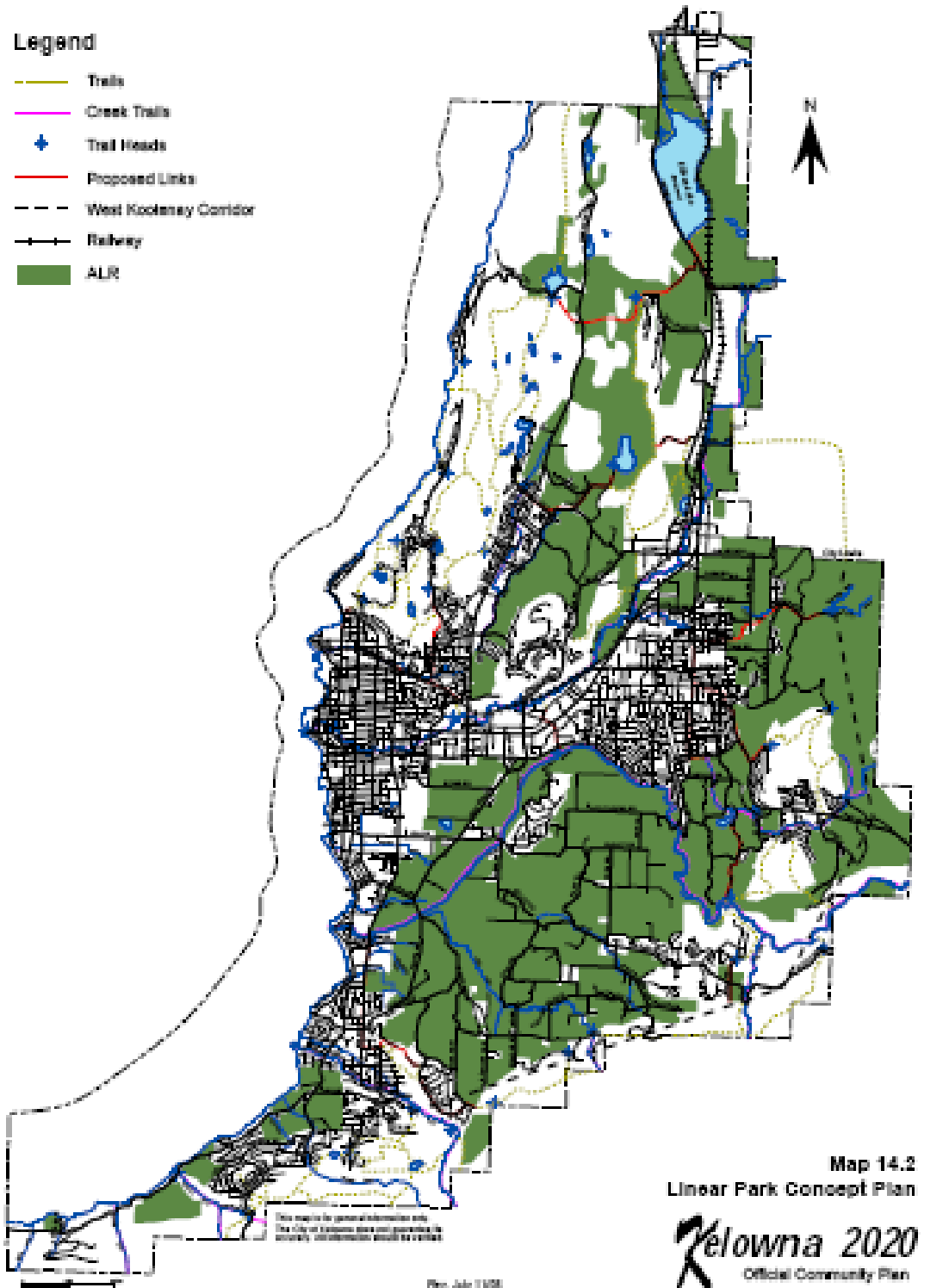
In addition to preserve natural landscapes or open space, it is not necessary that these be held in a public trust. More importantly “no disturb” instruments should be placed on these privately held lands to ensure preservation. Privately held lands are not calculated within the 5% goal of public ownership.

Management plans may be necessary for those significant natural areas to be developed as natural park, to ensure the recreational and environmental needs of the community are balanced.

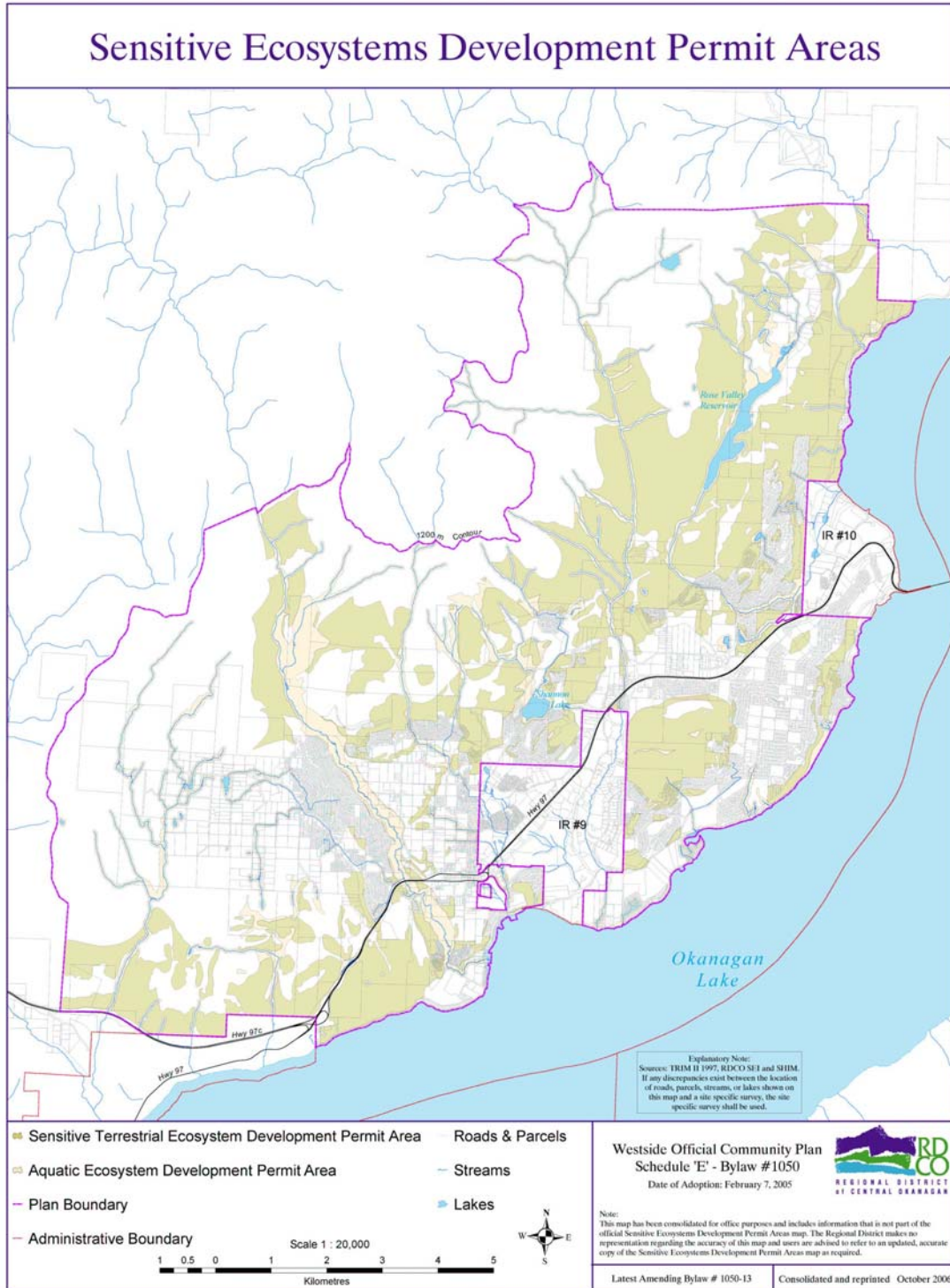
Natural areas provide a range of use and protection. Natural areas will be categorized as follows:

- Natural Parks contain a variety of uses and areas of preservation, conservation and recreation. Knox Mountain Park is a good example.
- Preservation Areas have limited recreational use and may not be accessible to the general public due to steep slopes or significant wetlands. Some of the steep slopes on Dilworth Mountain and Chichester Wetland are good examples.
- Private Conservation Open Space areas, are privately owned lands which preserve natural features and wetlands through no build and no disturb covenants on title. These lands are not part of the 5% goal of public ownership.

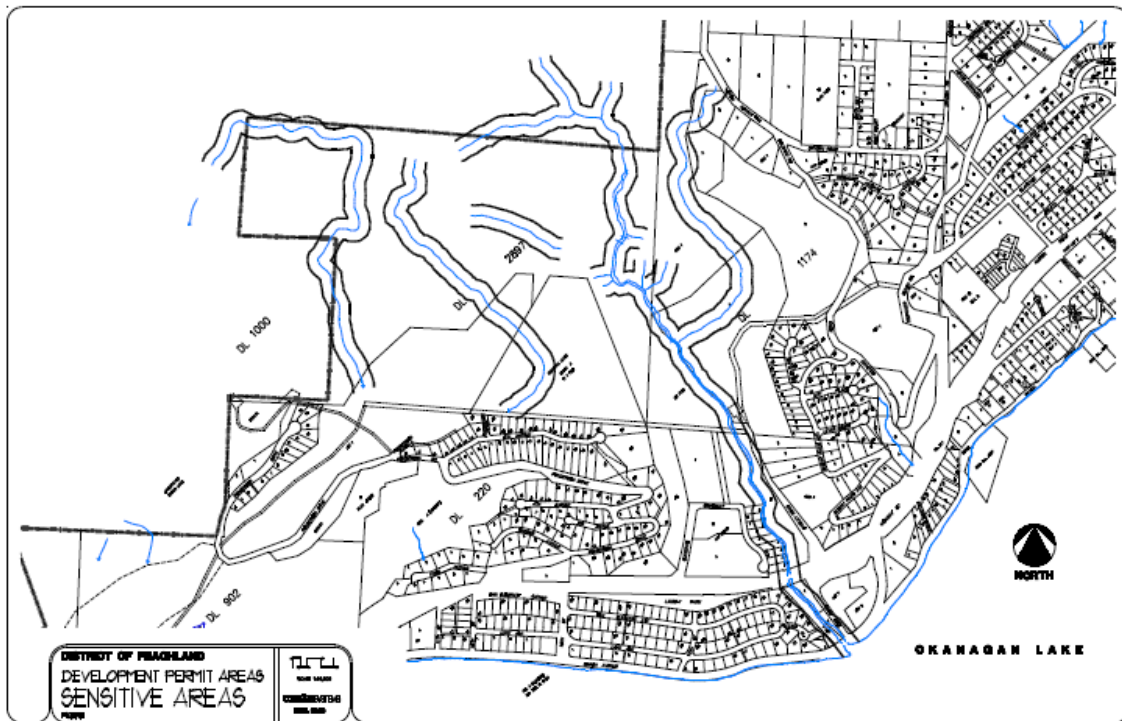
City of Kelowna



**District of Westside**



**District of Peachland**





**District of Lake Country District of Lake Country**

