



# 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION 1967-2017

# 50

**YEARS 1967-2017**

**REGIONAL DISTRICT  
of CENTRAL OKANAGAN**







# Historical Review



**To mark the 50th anniversary of the Regional District of Central Okanagan in 2017, it commissioned a project to update the Historical Review created by Al Harrison in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the RDCO.**

What follows is not meant to replace the original review, rather, to compliment that initial work and bring into focus on the work of the Regional District particularly during the decade between from 2007 to 2017. As well, it's intended to provide additional information about programs and services that may not have been explained in the original historical review.

This information was compiled through interviews with some of our recent Chief Administrative Officers, former Chair Robert Hobson and from news releases, Board Reports and departmental chronologies.



# A Decade of Leadership

## Board Chairs



**GAIL GIVEN**

Gail was first elected to City of Kelowna Council in 2011 and was re-elected in 2015. She serves on the City Audit Committee and represents the City of Kelowna on the board of Tourism Kelowna, the Kelowna/Vernon Joint Biosolids Advisory Committee.

She was elected Chair of the Regional District in December 2014 and with continued support of Board Directors, she has served in that capacity since. Gail is also the Chair of the Regional Hospital District Board and is a member of the Airport Advisory Committee, RDCO Audit Committee and a Director of the Economic Development Commission.

Gail began her public service as a trustee for School District No. 23. During her three year term she chaired the Finance and Legal Committee and was a member of District Bargaining Committee, Human Resources and Staff Services Committee, Planning and Facilities Committee and Superintendent Evaluation Committee.

It was through both volunteer work at the schools and her late husband's Council work that Gail was inspired to serve her community in the municipal arena.



**ROBERT HOBSON**

Robert was first elected to Kelowna City Council in 1988 and was appointed to the Regional Board in 1990. He was first elected Chair in 1993 and served continuously for 21 years, until his retirement from political life in 2014.

He's a third generation orchardist but also a professional planner and administrator with over 42 years of experience working at all levels of government and in the private sector. As a planning consultant, Robert's area of focus has been heritage conservation and resource management.

During his years of political service, he also chaired many committees and organizations including the Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District, BC Municipal Pension Board Investment Committee and was President of the Union of BC Municipalities in 2009.





# Our Regional Boards



Standing left to right: **Graham Reid, Barrie Clark, James Baker, Michele Rule, Colin Day, Doug Findlater, Jim Edgson.**

Seated left to right: **Brian Given\*, Rosalind Neis, Robert Hobson, Patty Hanson, Sharon Shepherd.**

2008



Standing left to right: **Doug Findlater, Jim Edgson, Michele Rule, Sharon Shepherd, Angela Reid, Keith Fielding, Larry Derrickson, James Baker.**

Seated left to right: **Graeme James, Duane Ophus, Robert Hobson, Kelly Hayes, Brian Given\*.**



\*In 2009, Director Brian Given passed away. He was the Regional District representative and Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the Regional Board representative to the Okanagan Film Commission, Sterile Insect Release program and the Regional Hospital District Kelowna/Vernon Hospitals project Liaison Committee. Brian also chaired the Regional Dog Advisory Committee.

2009



Standing left to right: **Doug Findlater, Jim Edgson, Michele Rule, Keith Fielding, Sharon Shepherd, Kelly Hayes, Angela Reid, Charlie Hodge.**

Seated left to right: **Mickey Werstuik, Graeme James, Robert Hobson, Duane Ophus, James Baker.**

2011



Standing left to right: **Doug Findlater, Gail Given, Maxine DeHart, James Baker, Patty Hanson, Wayne Carson, Cindy Fortin, Chris Derickson.**

Seated left to right: **Duane Ophus, Tracy Gray, Colin Basran, Luke Stack, Brad Sieben.**

2014



# Our Chief Administrative Officers



**BRIAN REARDON**

No stranger to the Okanagan, Brian started as the Regional District's Chief Administrative Officer in mid-April 2013, after a recruitment process by the Regional Board.

He came to the RDCO following a five year term as the CAO and administrative leader for the Strathcona Regional District. Prior to his position on Vancouver Island regional district, Brian served as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Regional District of North Okanagan.

Brian's career in local government began in 1983 after receiving a diploma in Civil Engineering from BCIT. That year he became an Engineering Technologist with the District of Pitt Meadows and later held the role of Deputy Corporate Officer.



**PAUL MACKLEM**

March 2012 saw the Regional Board appoint an interim Chief Administrative Officer for a one year transition term beginning in mid-April, prior to the retirement of Harold Reay.

Paul Macklem came to the Regional District's top administrative position from the City of Kelowna, where he was General Manager of Corporate Services and had an extensive background in finance, senior management and strategic planning. In April 2013, he returned to the City of Kelowna, retiring in early 2016 from the position of Deputy City Manager. Paul is a chartered professional accountant and served as President of the Government Finance Officers of America from 2009 to 2010. Paul brought to the regional district more than 25 years experience with local government.



**HAROLD REAY**

In February 2008, the Regional Board announced it selected Harold Reay to be the new Chief Administrative Officer for the Regional District. Harold took over in August with the retirement of Wayne d'Easum.

The Board didn't have to look far, as Harold served as the RDCO's Director of Finance for 28 years. Chair Robert Hobson said of Harold "he knows the intricacies of the entire Regional District. The Board is extremely confident in Harold's abilities to move the Regional District through its next phase of development. With the high caliber of senior staff, the Board was happy it didn't have to go outside the organization for its new Chief Administrative Officer".

Harold retired in early 2012.



**WAYNE d'EASUM**

Chief Administrative Officer for the Regional District, Wayne d'Easum.

Wayne was our second Chief Administrative Officer who began in September 1996 as Deputy Administrator/Secretary of the RDCO. In February 1997 Wayne succeeded the Regional District's first Administrator, Al Harrison.

Wayne retired in August 2008.

# From the Chair



## Celebrating 50 Years of Service

On August 24th, 1967, then BC Lieutenant Governor the Honourable George Randolph Pearkes signed the Letters Patent officially incorporating the Regional District. It set the boundary, municipal membership for the City of Kelowna and District of Peachland and the interim Board members for the eight electoral areas, given letter designations from A to H.

In the time since, much has changed within the boundary. With growth, some areas were amalgamated, while others like Lake Country and West Kelowna have incorporated changing the composition of the Regional Board. Today the Board makeup is very different with six representatives appointed by the City of Kelowna, two for West Kelowna and one each from the Councils of Lake Country and Peachland. Residents in the two remaining electoral areas

(Central Okanagan East and Central Okanagan West) elect their RDCO representatives and Westbank First Nation Council appoints a non-voting member to the Regional Board.

The Regional District form of government which is unique to BC, has grown along with the population in the Central Okanagan, to provide many key services right across the region: from the award-winning innovation of our Economic Development Commission to Recycling, Dog Control, 9-1-1 and Regional Parks. As the local government for residents in the electoral areas, the Regional District provides community parks, maintains and operates six water systems and oversees four paid-on-call fire departments. It also



Letter's Patent created the Regional District in August 1967.



Our Regional Park system protects over 2,100 hectares of land for future generations.

coordinates land use and planning in these areas. For residents and businesses in West Kelowna, Peachland and Westbank First Nation reserves, it operates the Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant with its internationally-recognized Westbank treatment process.

Board Chair Gail Given says, "We have so much to celebrate in the Central Okanagan. As a region, we're blessed with beauty and fantastic natural surroundings, things that people from all over the world come here to visit and enjoy. Our region may have changed with the times, but our Regional District remains a cost-effective, efficient and relevant form of local government. And we've had incredible, visionary leadership, from our first



chair Wally Bennett, and subsequent chairs Andy Duncan, Jim Stuart, Sharron Simpson and my predecessor and our longest serving chair Robert Hobson, every elected and appointed Regional Board member has served with the best interests of the region in mind. A great example of this coming together is our Regional Park system. From our first park, Kaloya back in 1974, we now have over 30, protecting almost 2,000-hectares of significant land. And we're grateful for our partnerships that have developed over the years with those who share our vision, like the Central Okanagan Land Trust, Friends of Mission Creek, Gellatly Nut Farm Society and many others. We're excited about working closely with Westbank First Nation, not only to protect the indigenous culture and history, but to expand the awareness and knowledge of this history from time immemorial."

Given adds, "Another current example of our collective strength is our Regional Emergency Program, which dates back to the mid-90's. In the years since, first responders and staff from every jurisdiction have worked side by side in the field and at the Emergency Operation Centre to provide a coordinated response to each emergency. You only have to look to this year's flooding and more recently the Okanagan Centre wildfire, to see this in action."

"On behalf of the Regional Board" Given says, "we look forward to another half century of service to the citizens in the Central Okanagan."



Chair Gail Given (centre) is joined by Vice Chair Doug Findlater (left) and CAO Brian Reardon (right) to cut the ceremonial cake as members of the board watch from behind.





# Celebrating 50 Years

It was a challenging decade that culminated in the 2017 celebration of the Regional District of Central Okanagan's 50th anniversary.

The eyes of the world were on the region in 2003 as a raging wildfire destroyed 238 homes in the up-scale Mission residential neighbourhood, causing sudden mass evacuations and leading to benchmark decisions about emergency operations protocols and communications during such catastrophes.



# 2007



In 2003, high winds catapulted the Okanagan Mountain park wildfire into the Myra Canyon where it destroyed 12 of 16 historic wooden trestle bridges on the former Kettle Valley Railway, a scenic rail trail hiked and cycled by tens of thousands of visitors from around the world before the fire.

The century-old route through Myra Canyon, a section of the Trans Canada Trail, was rebuilt with funds from senior governments, and substantially completed in 2007.



That was the year electors in the more heavily populated but unincorporated areas across the lake from Kelowna voted by referendum to change the way the Westside was governed. They were split between a preference for creating a Westside municipality and joining the City of Kelowna, but by some 340 votes, they decided to create a new civic government.

Since historically the regional district had taken



care of such functions as planning, engineering, finance, parks and recreation for the area's estimated 27,160 residents, a major transition period began after the new municipality elected its first council in fall 2007 and got down to the business of governing. It was a period of transition that evolved over years rather than days. A rapid growth period has followed and the 2017 population of the City of West Kelowna is estimated at 35,000.

# In the beginning...

The regional level of local government in B.C. was created in 1964 when the Province of B.C. introduced legislation allowing a new form of civic government—regional districts—with twin goals to service unincorporated areas of the province and provide regional services more-efficiently, on a cooperative, federation-like basis. Directors of the 29 new regional districts would be appointed from existing civic governments and elected representatives of unincorporated areas. The legislation was amended in 1989, making it easier for regional districts to govern.

On August 24, 1967, following a year of public meetings to discuss formation of a regional district in the Central Okanagan, then formation of an advisory committee, Premier WAC Bennett oversaw issuance of Letters Patent incorporating the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Member municipalities were the City of Kelowna and the District of Peachland, with eight Electoral



1969 Regional Board Directors – Standing L-R: H. Thwaite, D. Pritchard.  
Seated L-R: P. Wilkinson, W. H. Raikes, M. Marshall, W. C. Bennett, A. Duncan, H. Stuart, J. McCoubrey.

Areas. Each would be represented on the new board, with voting units based on population.

The interim directors were:	<b>John McCoubrey</b>	Electoral Area A, Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre
	<b>Wally Bennett</b>	Electoral Area B, Glenmore, Poplar Point, McKinley Landing
	<b>Mel Marshall</b>	Electoral Area C, Rutland
	<b>Jim Stuart</b>	Electoral Area D, East Kelowna
	<b>J.L. Piddocke</b>	Electoral Area E, Benvoulin, South Pandosy
	<b>W.H. Raikes</b>	Electoral Area F, Okanagan Mission
	<b>F.G. Menu</b>	Electoral Area G, Westbank
	<b>Edward Hill</b>	Electoral Area H, Lakeview Heights

Appointed as interim municipal directors were:

**R.J. Wilkinson**, a Kelowna alderman, and **Thomas Stuart**, a Peachland councillor.

However, the first election for regional board directors was held November 9, 1967 and new appointments were made by Kelowna and Peachland and some of the area representatives elected were newcomers. Remaining as directors were John McCoubrey, Wally Bennett, Mel Marshall and Jim Stuart. New directors were: L. (Bert) Jansen for Area E; Dudley Pritchard for Area G; Andy Duncan for Area H; and J.C. Piddocke for Area I, Ellison-Belgo-Joe Rich.

Wilkinson continued to represent Kelowna, but Peachland Mayor Harold Thwaite represented Peachland on the first elected board.



The elected chair of the new regional district was Wally Bennett, who served until 1972. He was followed by Andy Duncan until 1974, then Kelowna Mayor Jim Stuart until 1990 and Kelowna Councillor Sharron Simpson until 1993. Kelowna Councillor Robert Hobson then served for 21 years as chair until his retirement at the end of 2013. In 2014, Kelowna Councillor Gail Given was elected chair and has served in that capacity since.



In February, 1995, the communities of Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre and Carr's Landing, with a population of 9,000, voted to form the District of Lake Country, so a representative for Area A on the regional board was replaced by a district council member, and the services previously provided to the unincorporated area by the regional district, were taken over by the new municipality. Bob McCoubrey (son of the original Area A rep, John McCoubrey) was elected mayor of the new municipality and represented it on the regional district board. In 2017, the population had grown to about 13,000.



Representative Larry Derrickson

Following approval of a Local Services Agreement with Westbank First Nation in 1991, a new 15-year agreement was signed in 2007. It covered payment for such regional services as transit, landfill, parks and recreational facilities and 9-1-1 services. In addition, the new agreement provided for the Westbank First Nation Council to appoint a representative to sit on the regional board.

In 2008, the regional board's makeup was enlarged by the addition of a non-voting representative from the Westbank First Nation. The first representative appointed was Larry Derrickson, followed by Mickey Werstuik in 2011, Chris Derickson in 2013 and Tom Konek in 2017.

In cooperation with the local First Nations, regional park trail names were translated into the Okanagan Syilx language and these appear on signs, along with interpretive panels in many parks, explaining the cultural and historic significance of the Syilx name.

In 2017, a new Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites within regional parks, was signed by RDCO Chair Gail Given and WFN Chief Roxanne Lindley. It recognizes that the Central Okanagan



has been used by the Syilx Okanagan people since time immemorial, creating a history synonymous with the land.

A number of historical First Nation archeological sites have been identified in regional parks; and the two parties are co-managing a new regional park, Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən.



# Administration Changes through the Years

When the RDCO was first formed, its office was in its accountant's office in Kelowna. C.E. Sladen served as both accountant and secretary until Al Harrison was appointed as RDCO administrator in 1969. He recalls taking over two apple boxes of file folders and operating initially from a table in the corner of the accounting firm's office.



Original RDCO administration office located on Groves Avenue was purchased in 1974.

The board office was subsequently moved to 540 Groves Avenue, and with growth, the building was eventually purchased by the RDCO, which had expanded to the point it needed to use the entire building. Construction of a new RDCO building on land on KLO Road purchased in 1974, was completed in 1994.



Original KLO site

In 1997, Wayne d'Easum became the second administrator for RDCO, following the retirement of Al Harrison, and in 2008, Harold Reay moved from his position as finance director for 28 years to take over as administrator, with d'Easum's retirement.

It was during Reay's term that much of the transition from a regional district that was responsible for governing a very large unincorporated area with a population of about 27,000 turned over many of those responsibilities to new people operating the newly incorporated Westside District Municipality.

From a staff of 225 full-time, part-time and casual employees, the RDCO staff complement dropped to 110. For the first while, some services continued to be delivered by the regional district, while the new municipality got on its feet.

During the transition period, chairman of the regional district was Robert Hobson, who recalls that 2007 was not the first attempt to discuss whether the collection of separate communities across the lake from Kelowna should amalgamate and incorporate. One of the biggest challenges was that the several communities did not always agree.

Over the 20 years he was chair, from 1993 to 2013, there was enormous growth in that area, growth which fell to RDCO to service despite the fact a regional district form of government didn't have the same tools as a municipality. And, many decisions could not be made at the local level, including those regarding roads and drainage. Instead, these were the responsibility of the province.

"We tried to 'band-aid' a municipality, without the powers of a municipality, for many years," he comments.

"We had to re-invent the regional district after years of focusing on governing the Westside," he explains.

Then, during the transition of governance from regional district to municipality, there were negotiations regarding transfer of assets such as parks and reserve funds, computers and even pencils, to the new civic entity, he recalls.

With Reay's retirement in 2012, the Regional Board decided an interim administrator was needed while the regional district made critical decisions about its future.

The City of Kelowna's general manager of corporate sustainability, Paul Macklem, was seconded for the challenge and took a one-year leave from the City. He recalls that incorporation of West Kelowna created a major upheaval in the makeup of RDCO, particularly as the remaining staff was faced with a multitude of questions from staff at the new municipality every day, in addition to their regular duties. It was all very political as well, he remembers, as he rallied staff to move the organization forward in a positive way.



Building Inspection and Planning were among services transferred to the new municipality.

Coming in at the tail end of the transition to governance by a separate entity, he says it was important to get the regional district team working together again after it was facing challenges by such major changes. It really altered the dynamic to move to just two area representatives on the board, he notes.

While there was a saving on staff costs with incorporation of West Kelowna, which resulted in a slimmed-down regional district, there had to be a re-adjustment of departments too. For instance, planning was combined with engineering and building inspections and fire administration under the new banner of Community Services.

After his year, Macklem returned to the City, feeling he'd left a stronger team in charge at the regional district, and Brian Reardon was hired as the new Chief Administrative Officer.

Reardon took on the new post with experience as the top administrator for both the North Okanagan and the Strathcona Regional Districts.

There was also a change taking place in staff labour relations which had a long history. In 1982, staff of the regional district registered as a society, with 34 eligible voters, under the name Staff Association Regional District of Central Okanagan (SARDCO). In 1990, SARDCO received certification for Collective Bargaining, with 53 eligible voters. Staff at the District of Lake Country joined as an additional local in 1995 and staff from the Westbank Irrigation District joined in 1999. The Lake Country local left SARDCO in 2005 when it joined the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). In 2006 there were 133 RDCO members and seven WID members.



Chair Sharron Simpson signs SARDCO contract as reps look on.

Shortly after incorporation of the Westside District Municipality in 2007 (now the City of West Kelowna), members decided to rename the organization the Association of Local Government Employees Union or ALGEU. In early 2011, regional district unionized employees voted to be represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). In March of that year, the B.C. Labour Board approved the voluntary transfer of bargaining rights to CUPE Local 338. In July 2012, the regional district and CUPE successfully negotiated their first four-year collective agreement. In July 2015 following two days of bargaining a new five year collective agreement was negotiated and ratified running through the end of 2019.

# RDCO Growth & Expansion



On October 23rd, 1969, Letters Patent were issued forming the Okanagan Basin Water Board, with a board made up of three representatives from each of the three regional boards—the North, Central and South Okanagan-Similkameen Regional Districts. Initially, the focus was on aquatic weed management and providing funds through a regional levy for tertiary sewage treatment facilities.

Also in 1969, Letters Patent were issued for control of noxious insects, while in 1970, 1971 and 1974, Letters Patent were issued to allow garbage disposal operations in Westbank, Lakeview Heights and Killiney Beach.



In 1972 Dog Control Letters Patent were added to regional district functions. As a result of a couple of controversial dangerous dog incidents in the community in 2010, the regional district embarked on an extensive independent review of its dog control function, resulting in a model focused on the education, encouragement and reward of responsible dog owners. In 2014, new measures were rolled out, including higher fines for dogs at-large and off-leash and zero tolerance of unlicensed dogs. Licensing for dogs was made more convenient through the introduction of online licensing. The number of dogs licensed more than doubled between 2012 and 2016.



During the summer months, student dog ambassadors were hired to visit high traffic parks and pedestrian areas throughout the region to raise awareness, provide dog-friendly resources and educate residents and visitors about responsible dog ownership and the My Dog Matters program and App. The mobile-friendly App makes it easier to renew a license and provides access to a rewards card and also identifies local dog parks for dog owners. This program continues to evolve to further promote a dog-friendly and responsible community.

In 1971, Rutland Pool Facility Letters Patent were issued to the regional district to improve the facility, and in 1971 building inspection services for the electoral areas were added.





Mosquito Control was added in 1973 and in 2006 the regional district embarked on an expanded program of larviciding to combat the risk of West Nile Virus from mosquitoes, helped with funding from the province through the Union of B.C. Municipalities. In 2012, that funding source ended and members of the regional board decided whether to contribute funding to an enhanced control program. At that time, West Kelowna chose not to contribute to the enhanced control program. As of 2017, the program is operating in Kelowna, Lake Country, a portion of West Kelowna (a small area of West Kelowna Estates previously identified in the program Letters Patent) and the Central Okanagan East Electoral Area and in Peachland.



In 1973, construction and operation of the Mount Boucherie Recreation Centre was added and also a new Senior Citizens' Activity Centre on the Westside. Letters Patent for community parks was also added in 1973.



Regional Parks Letters Patent were added in 1974, and three properties were acquired in that first year.

In 1974, a Winfield Recreation Centre was added to the functions provided by the regional district, and the new centre opened in 1975.



An Industrial Development Commission was added in 1978 as a service of the regional district. It later became the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and has evolved over the decades, but retains the same goals: to grow and support the business base and attract new investment to the region. The commission has an Advisory Council made up of 40 volunteer directors representing a wide-range of the region's economy. The Commission and its innovative programs have often been cited as a 'Best Practice', demonstrated by accolades and awards received provincially, nationally and internationally for its programming and success.

As the region's 'Primary Resource for Business', the EDC facilitates business and sector development, provides referrals, helps select sites; provides economic climate expertise, workforce development programs and export development. It also has an agricultural support program, the Okanagan Young Professionals Collective and Foreign Direct Investment programs. As well, the EDC provides business planning and start-up guidance, educational workshops, demographics, website and social media platforms for business and connection to all levels of government. Staff handles an average of 10,000 inquiries annually.



In 1981, Urban Transit Authority Letters Patent were issued. In July 2007, \$11 million in federal funding contributed to the development and formation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the Central Okanagan. In partnership with the province and the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the federal government provided the RDCO with Gas Tax Funds to help with development of the first of two phases of the BRT program from downtown Kelowna to the UBC-Okanagan campus as part of the Kelowna Regional Transit System. When completed in 2010, this phase of the new system provided more-frequent peak hour service and 15-minute service at other times. Work continued on expanding the BRT to include Kelowna facilities in Rutland and the H2O Centre in the Mission as well as in West Kelowna. In 2014, the Westside RapidBus infrastructure improvements were unveiled including a new Elliot Road transit exchange in the Westbank Town Centre, a new Boucherie Road transit exchange and Rapid Bus stations at Butt Road, Westlake/Hudson Road and with the Westbank First Nation with stations at Westside Road.



In May 2013, the regional district joined individual local governments in approving a new inter-municipal partnership to coordinate a regional delivery of sustainable transportation programs and projects. Formal approval of the Sustainable Transportation Partnership Central Okanagan (STPCO) came in March, 2014.



# The Evolution of RDCO's Police Community Support Services

During 2010, several community protective services programs that were provided over the years by the Regional District in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were reorganized under the umbrella of Police and Community Support Services.

Staff from the Regional District provides the day to day operation of the Crime Stoppers program which is responsible to the non-profit Central Okanagan Crime Stoppers Society and volunteer Board of Directors. Police Services also oversees the Regional Crime Prevention program and False Alarm Reduction program throughout the Central Okanagan along with the police-based Victim Services program.

In addition, the Regional District of Central Okanagan is responsible for the provision of 9-1-1 Emergency Primary Public Safety Answer Point Service to residents within its boundary as well as to eight other regional districts throughout southern BC.





## Crime Stoppers:

In 1985, a Crime Prevention Committee chaired by then Kelowna City Councillor Elise Clarke entered into discussions with Kelowna RCMP to form a local Crime Stoppers program. These discussions led in April 1987 to establishment of a Crime Stoppers program within the City of Kelowna boundary. In 1988, a group of citizens interested in establishing a Central Okanagan-wide Crime Stoppers Program approached the regional district about expansion. Those efforts successfully lead to the Province issuing Supplementary Letters Patent on September 15th, 1988 allowing the Regional District to provide a Central Okanagan Crime Stoppers program.



On July 25th, 2016, the Crime Stoppers Service Conversion and Establishment Bylaw No. 1391 replaced the annual Grant-in-Aid funding program that was in place since 1988. Although numerous local and regional governments fund Crime Stoppers programs within British Columbia, The Regional District of Central Okanagan was the first to enact a Bylaw. Our Regional District continues to fund staffing and operations while fundraising [tips] and co-promotional activities are the responsibility of the partnering volunteer board of the non-profit Central Okanagan Crime Stoppers Society.

Central Okanagan Crime Stoppers is a successful, multi-award winning community-based crime solving program working in conjunction with the police, the media and the public to help make our Central Okanagan communities safer places to live. Our Program has been recognized as Program of the Year in 2012, 2014 and 2016 as well as awarded for tips evolving into impressive drug seizures in 2005, 2009, 2010 and 2013. In 2007, the Canada Border Services Agency recognized Central Okanagan Crime Stoppers for information regarding contraband and illicit cross-border activities.



## Police-Based Victim Services:

On September 1st, 1988 the Victims Assistance Program Letters Patent were signed by the Province and the program began operating in 1989. Likewise, the Regional District of Central Okanagan Tsinstikeptum Indian Reserves Local Services Agreement Authorization Bylaw No. 533 was adopted on October 19th, 1992 for victim services support as needed within Westbank First Nation lands.

From the onset, Victim Services receives a core mandate/contract and some additional funding support from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. An RCMP E-Division Victim Services Director also supports Programs operating in British Columbia. The intent of RCMP Victim Services is to provide information, practical assistance and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime and/or trauma as well as help to reduce further victimization. Our Central Okanagan program mandate is to 'help lessen the impact of crime and/or trauma on victims, witnesses and their friends/families.' As crisis responders, in 2003 and 2009, our team was involved in wildfire responses and in July 2017 also supported

Lake Country families who lost homes during the Okanagan Centre wildfire.

In 2015, the Regional District concluded our small volunteer program and responds to victims of crime and/or trauma utilizing professionally trained, dedicated employees. Our RCMP Victim Services program is very active; demand for service has continuously increased for clients presenting with a greater complexity of needs in recent years. Current service delivery challenges are primarily attributed to the current opioid overdose/death crisis in our region.

**Central Okanagan RCMP Victim Services**

**Have you been affected by**  
 Assault • Robbery • Serious Crime • Abuse  
 Break & Enter • Other Crimes • A Traumatic Event  
 Sudden Death • Suicide • Natural Disaster

Victim Services workers are able to provide:

- Victims of Crime Act information
- emotional support, practical assistance and referrals
- safety planning
- critical incident response
- updates on police investigation and justice proceedings
- assistance with Crime Victim Assistance Program applications
- court orientation, support, and assistance with victim impact statements
- education and awareness
- referrals to and liaison with provincial and federal victim notification programs

**ASSISTANCE**

**SERVING OUR COMMUNITY**

Where to find us:  
 201 Park Avenue  
 Kelowna, BC  
 V1Y 1A2  
 Tel: 250-470-6242

If you need help call:  
**Central Okanagan RCMP  
 Victim Services  
 250-470-6242**

Central Okanagan RCMP Victim Services  
 A partnership with the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Ministry of Justice, RCMP and Westbank First Nation

## Crime Prevention:

April 15th, 1996 saw the Regional Board adopt the Regional Crime Prevention Extended Service Establishing Bylaw No. 661 creating a Crime Prevention service outside the City of Kelowna. As well, a Local Services Agreement Amendment between Westbank First Nation and RDCO was established on September 8, 2014.

The RDCO Crime Prevention program offers advice, support and leadership within the City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, District of Lake Country, Central Okanagan East and Central Okanagan West Electoral Areas and the Westbank First Nation to promote safer communities.

In 2006, our Crime Prevention programs had approximately 250 volunteers. At that time, the RCMP introduced a new, enhanced volunteer security clearance process which resulted in well over half of the volunteers stepping aside. Since then, under the continued security clearance process the program has been rebuilding. To date, there are approximately 80 active, enhanced security cleared volunteers based in three geographical areas in the Central Okanagan who, along with our skilled Coordinator, promote community crime prevention initiatives to help sustain safer Central Okanagan communities.



Volunteers play a vital role in RDCO Crime Prevention programs.

## False Alarm Reduction Program:

In 1996, Kelowna RCMP became concerned after reviewing the ever increasing number of false alarms received and responded to by members. RCMP questioned whether this was an appropriate use of valuable police resources and how best to counteract false alarms. By 2005, after initiatives originally involving the City of Kelowna, this led to discussions between RCMP, alarm and security stakeholders and the Regional District about a regional bylaw and program designed to reduce the number of false alarms requiring police attendance.



In July that year, the Regional Board adopted Security Alarm Systems Bylaw No. 1081 paving the way for the False Alarm Reduction Program, which began operating on October 15th, 2005. Initially, the bylaw and program were enforced with nominal annual registration fees for alarm systems within the Regional District Electoral Areas and the

City Of Kelowna. In 2006, the District of Peachland joined this program, followed in 2007 by the District of Lake Country and the new Westside District Municipality (now City of West Kelowna). In 2009 with Westbank First Nation participation, the program was truly region-wide.

Ten years after it began, on December 7th, 2015, the Regional District Board adopted the False Alarm Reduction Bylaw No. 1382 updating and replacing the original bylaw. Today, proactive bylaw enforcement by our program administrator engages business and residential alarm users, alarm monitoring companies and the RCMP who work together to reduce false alarms in our Central Okanagan Communities.



## 9-1-1:

The Regional District of Central Okanagan administers 9-1-1 Public Safety Answer Point [PSAP] Services on behalf of itself and eight other regional districts within the South East District policing area.

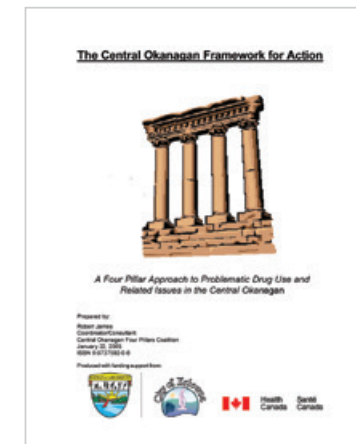
With Letters Patent issued in 1985, the RDCO was the first regional district in the province to provide 9-1-1 emergency telephone services for the region. As the program developed, the RDCO, through a contract with the RCMP, provided 9-1-1 service on behalf of the eight other interior regional districts. This arrangement provided an economy of scale that was beneficial for each participating local government and its residents.

In November 2014, following a detailed and extensive review and tender process, the contract for the Interior's 9-1-1 service was transferred to E-Comm, the province's largest 9-1-1 public-safety answer point. Along with the Central Okanagan, services for the North Okanagan, Central Kootenay, Columbia-Shuswap, Okanagan-Similkameen, Thompson-Nicola, East Kootenay, Kootenay-Boundary and Squamish-Lillooet (North) regional districts were also transferred at a significant cost-saving for the local governments and their residents.

## Community Development:

The Regional District of Central Okanagan pioneered another initiative in 2007. In response to the Central Okanagan Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Problematic Drug Use and Related Issues in the Central Okanagan, the RDCO established a Drug Policy Coordinator position. Funded by the Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District, the Coordinator focused on bringing community organizations, non-profits and substance abuse service providers together using a community driven action plan in response problematic substance use across the region. In 2010, this role evolved into Social Development which added homelessness and other social issues to the mandate. In early

2015, the program ended and the Coordinator role transitioned to Police Services.



# Engineering Services and Solid Waste Management



Westside Regional Wastewater Treatment plant located in West Kelowna.

Sewage collection and treatment became a regional function in 1987 and a plant was constructed on the Westside to handle 2,800 connections, using the internationally-recognized Westbank biological Bardenpho Treatment System, which is also used in the City of Kelowna.

In 1994 it was expanded to handle 8,400 connections.

In November 2006, the second phase, \$9.2 million upgrade of that plant was underway, to provide capacity for 14,000 connections.

In October 2009, senior governments provided \$7.4 million toward the third of five phases to upgrade that facility, which treats wastewater from businesses and residences within the City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland and the

Westbank First Nation. In November 2012, the Canada-BC Building Canada Fund provided an additional \$4.9 million toward that third phase of the expansion which included the construction of a new Primary Treatment Headworks building; the addition of two new Secondary Treatment Bioreactors and two new Secondary Clarifiers and various Tertiary Treatment upgrades. Additional works were completed to improve air quality from the plant. These improvements to the plant provide the capacity to service a future population of up to 42,000 within the three participating communities. In November 2014, the \$13.3 million expansion was completed.

In October 2014, the District of Lake Country completed renovations to its wastewater treatment facility with \$4.1 million from the federal Gas Tax Fund. The facility also provides regional septage treatment, which is co-funded by RDCO, with the District of Lake Country to provide treatment of collected waste from those Central Okanagan properties with septic tanks.





**In 2008, RDCO became the first regional district in the province to have a Solid Waste Management Plan approved by the province.**

But reducing waste and encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle goes back much earlier. In 1993, a Waste Reduction Coordinator and a Solid Waste Educator were hired by the Engineering Department to implement and supervise the program. The first task was to provide curbside waste collection in the electoral areas. Since then, there has been a dramatic reduction of waste going to landfills, and corresponding increases in re-use and recycling.

In 1990, the first Household Hazardous Waste Round-up was held, allowing residents one day on which they could drop off batteries and other eco-nasties at one location. The last was held in 2010, and following a public tender the service contract was awarded to the Battery Doctors, allowing residents to drop them off all year round.

In 1994, curbside waste collection was extended to all areas in the regional district and new outreach programs were introduced, from workshops on grass cycling to home composting and school programs. A compost education garden was also built at Mission Creek Regional Park in collaboration with community partners. In 1998, a two-bag limit on household garbage was introduced, and unlimited seasonal yard waste collection was begun, four times a year. At the same time, backyard burning was discouraged to improve air quality.

In 2000, the blue bag curbside recycling collection



program was introduced. Three years later, a study showed 92.5 per cent of residents placed recycling out for collection, one of the highest participation rates in the country. The first computer and e-waste recycling event was also held, and people were invited to bring unwanted computer equipment to a central drop-off for recycling. In all, 28 tonnes were collected. It continued annually until 2009 when a provincial program took over, with various depots accepting the waste at no extra cost.



Curbside collection of waste and recycling was automated in 2009.

In 2004, the ban on cardboard going to the landfill was enforced and recycling increased almost 30 per cent at depots and 15 per cent in the blue bag program. The WRO received the Recycling Council of B.C. award for outstanding waste reduction programming and environmental education efforts.

In 2006, the regional district and City of Kelowna adopted a zero waste goal, with a focus on maximizing recycling, minimizing waste, reducing consumption and ensuring products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled. They adopted new bylaws including mandatory recycling for

multi-family units and business.

In 2007, the blue bag curbside recycling program is expanded to include more materials, but glass containers are excluded, except for collection at recycling depots. The first Community 20-Minute Make-Over is held, giving the annual Community Clean-Up Program a facelift. A new online trading post ([www.okanaganreuses.com](http://www.okanaganreuses.com)) is launched to encourage residents to reuse items not needed, by giving, selling or trading them to others. Programs like the Go Natural home garden parties are implemented to help increase awareness about sustainable living and to encourage residents to change their behaviour.



Community groups are active year round in cleaning neighbourhoods.

In 2008, a 15-year revised Solid Waste Management Plan was approved. After 16 years of volunteer compliance, random enforcement of landfill bans on cardboard, paper and hazardous waste begins at the Glenmore and Westside landfills. Contracts are awarded for the automated collection of garbage, yard waste and recyclables and for the supply of carts for these materials. The new program is in partnership with member municipalities.



Pre 2009 Curbside collection changes.

In 2009, more than 150,000 curbside collection carts for garbage, recycling and yard waste are delivered to more than 50,000 homes in the region, and pickup of the carts became automated. A Radio Frequency Identification-based data and image collection system is implemented on collection trucks to help enforce the bylaws, monitor curbside collection, evaluate program costs and conduct targeted education. As well, the regional district continued to sell garden composters at reduced rates to residents. In 2016, in conjunction with the Okanagan Basin Water Board rain barrels for water conservation were also made available.

In 2010, the Westside Landfill located off Asquith Road in West Kelowna was closed, with solid waste from West Kelowna and Peachland areas going to the City of Kelowna Glenmore Landfill site. In September 2017, the Provincial Government approved a Final Closure Plan for the old landfill site. Final contouring, grading and re-vegetation were completed during 2018.

In 2011, a new commercial waste diversion program for businesses was introduced along



with an education program, and surcharges to be levied on businesses that do not recycle.

The first Trunk Sale was held in 2011 to help residents who don't have space to hold a yard or garage sale. The first annual Repair Café was hosted by the regional district, allowing residents to bring items that aren't working and might otherwise end up in the landfill, and have them repaired by volunteers with the needed skills in woodwork, sewing, electrical and other areas.



In 2012, a Paper-Free Home program was launched to encourage residents to reduce the amount of paper they consume. As well, a new MyWaste app (now Recycle Coach) was introduced, with details about the regional district programs and information about garbage, recycling and collection. It complements the Living Greener Calendar and in keeping with the waste reduction mandate, reduced the print-run of calendars by 30,000.



In 2013, more materials were added to the recycling service through a provincial recycling support program meant to encourage such efforts. A drop off disposal program for used cooking oil for homes was initiated at the Glenmore landfill and Westside Residential Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre. A furniture de-construction program was piloted to increase recycling and reduce transport and tipping fees at the Westside Residential Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre.



Additional materials added to curbside and depot recycling in 2013.

A service review in 2016 indicated the cost of the Waste Reduction and Recycling program had decreased 60% since 2014.

Unfortunately, illegal dumping is an issue facing most local governments in BC and the Central Okanagan is no exception. As part of the Waste Reduction Office mandate, it has been cleaning up illegal dump sites for many years. In 2017, illegal dumping took on a new profile with the formation of the volunteer Okanagan Forestry Task Force, which began working in cooperation with the regional district.



Community support is strong to help clean up and fight illegal dumping.

In late 2017 the Regional Board approved the new Solid Waste Management Plan for the Central Okanagan. This was also approved by the Provincial Government. The new plan was developed after more than a year of extensive consultation with local stakeholders and the public. The plan anticipates that over the next ten years there could be 12% less garbage being thrown out along with a 16% increase in waste being diverted. The plan also includes a review of the location of the existing transfer station in West Kelowna and an investigation of the possibility of moving it to a more suitable industrial site. Programs and services implemented since the adoption of the Solid Waste Management Plan in 2008 have reduced per capita garbage disposal by almost 20% while increasing waste diversion by more than 100%.



# Emergency Responses and Preparedness



**The Regional Emergency Program has been in place since 1995 and is coordinated by the City of Kelowna's fire department on behalf of the regional district and its electoral areas, Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland, Lake Country and the Westbank First Nation. It covers such emergencies as flooding, forest fire, airplane crashes and other catastrophes.**

Officials from each member municipality, including the RCMP, fire departments, B.C. Ambulance, Interior Health Authority, School District 23, public works, transportation, communications and Emergency Support Services volunteers meet and practice the plan, which includes activating the Emergency Operations Centre in the main Kelowna fire hall.





Its first big challenge was the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park wildfire. Luckily no lives were lost in fighting this massive blaze which unfortunately consumed 238 homes. Up to that point it involved the second largest peacetime evacuation in Canadian history, with up to 30,000 residents forced from their homes.

The recovery phase of an emergency is also covered by the Regional Emergency Program. In 2017, lake levels across the Central Okanagan rose to unprecedented heights and spring runoff caused area creeks to rise, both causing significant flooding damage and requiring many localized evacuation orders. More than 140 news releases were issued to keep people informed and it was the longest single activation of the program, from early May through mid-September.



#### KEY EMERGENCY EVENTS:

##### 2009

Glenrosa and Rose Valley wildfires: an estimated 17,000 people evacuated as two separate wildfires ignited in mid-July which also forced the closure of a section of Highway 97 for three days.

Terrace Mountain: known as BC Fire K50720 this fire also started on the same day and over two weeks consumed more than 9,200 hectares forcing the evacuation of approximately 2,500 residents along Westside Road.

##### 2010

Seclusion Bay: this 30-hectare fire was ignited by gusty winds downing a tree across a power line. This blaze resulted in the evacuation of 60 people from a resort along Okanagan Lake and saw the loss of a home, two garages, a boat and a police cruiser.

Mill Creek Spill: One kilometer of Okanagan Lake beaches in Kelowna were closed after hazardous materials entered the storm drain system and Mill Creek during the response to a major fire to a business on Kirschner Road.



##### 2011

Localized flooding near the lakeshore and Mission Creek due to high spring runoff was followed by a one-hour downpour of more than 40 millimetres of rain causing additional flooding in Kelowna and West Kelowna.

A fast-spreading evening fire on Labour Day forced the evacuation of 500 Trader's Cove residents and another 100 Bear Creek Provincial Park campers. The next day the fire was contained to 40 hectares and people were allowed to return.

##### 2012

Spring flooding resulted in isolated evacuation orders for properties affected along Mill and Mission Creeks in Kelowna and McDougall Creek in West Kelowna.

In early September, strong winds fanned a fire that started just off the Okanagan Connector and spread into Peachland, forcing the evacuation of more than 1,500 residents. Three homes and an abandoned house were destroyed by the 200-hectare Trepanier wildfire.



## 2013

Spring runoff caused flooding along McDougall Creek in West Kelowna and Mission Creek in Kelowna along with upstream properties in the Joe Rich area of Central Okanagan East. A local State of Emergency allowed crews to demolish and remove structures that threatened critical provincial infrastructure on the creek along Highway 33.

## 2014

A 150-hectare fire forced the evacuation of more than 2,900 residents from the West Kelowna subdivisions of Smith Creek, Talus Ridge and Shannon Lake.

Over six days in August, the Drought Hill fire burned 40 hectares and saw one home evacuated north of Highway 97-C.



## 2015

In July, residents from more than 140 properties were evacuated for three days as crews fought the 55-hectare Huckleberry Road/Joe Rich wildfire.

Later in the month, a two-hectare wildfire spreading from Bear Creek Provincial Park saw an Evacuation Alert for 80 properties. Overlapping this event was another interface blaze, this one caused by lightning and it spread quickly, forcing residents from 70 homes as crews worked to get a handle on the Shelter Cove/Westside Road wildfire.

## 2016

The mid-August three-hectare Cinnabar Creek fire resulted in Evacuation Alerts but it was the Bear Creek wildfire that forced a nighttime Evacuation of almost 160 properties in the Traders Cove subdivision and campers in Bear Creek Provincial Park. The order was lifted three days later.



## 2017


A very wet spring coupled with a high late-spring snowpack resulted in significant isolated flooding along Mission and Mill Creeks and new records for lake levels in the Okanagan which saw the deployment of more than two million sandbags to protect creek-side and waterfront properties from Peachland to Lake Country.

A streak of hot, dry weather saw the fire danger rise to Extreme in early summer providing the perfect conditions for the rapidly-spreading Okanagan Centre wildfire. Residents from more than 350 properties were evacuated while crews worked to contain this blaze, which grew to 55 hectares.

In late August, another fire ignited just off Highway 33 East near Philpott Road in the Joe Rich community. This blaze, fanned by strong winds, grew quickly forcing the evacuation of 1,100 people from over 470 properties. The fire burned more than 460-hectares, but luckily didn't result in any damage to homes and buildings.

In early September, the Finlay Creek fire began in the rural area just southwest of Peachland. It grew southerly to burn more than 2,200 hectares and initially saw more than 300 Peachland and Brent Road residents on Evacuation Alert for six days.





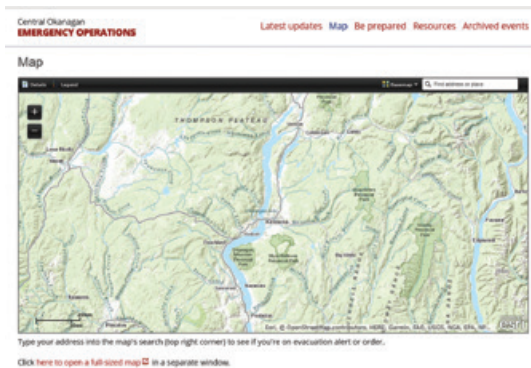
# Planning and Geographic Information Services

# 2013

In 2000, an Aggregate Supply and Demand Study was completed by the regional district and it was updated as a component of the Regional Growth Strategy in 2013. It predicted the supply and demand for aggregate materials over the next 100 years and provided a site suitability assessment checklist to be used by local government to help evaluate referral applications from the province for new sites or expansion of existing operations.

In 2008, the regional board approved providing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to all areas in the region outside the City of Kelowna at a cost based on assessments to several local governments, providing a very cost-effective and efficient technological service to those participants (Westside District Municipality received service from 2010 to 2012). In 2012, GIS services were provided for Lake Country, Peachland and the WFN, as well as the regional district, Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) and Sterile Insect Release program. Provision of such 'geospatial' information and technology helps enhance decision-making.

Since 2014, GIS services have been enhanced through the provision of several unique and specific mapping applications for parks (trail elevation profiles, park tours), dog-friendly parks, waste collection areas, illegal dumpsites and even historical air photos dating back to the early 50's.



In collaboration with other local governments, the integration of GIS mapping into the Regional Emergency Program website ([www.cordemergency.ca](http://www.cordemergency.ca)) provided a major source of detailed, accurate information for residents regarding evacuation alerts and areas under evacuation order.

December 2010 saw the adoption of the Rural Westside Official Community Plan for the areas off Westside Road and outside the boundaries of the Westside District Municipality and Westbank First Nation reserves. This plan recognizes that the North Westside area will continue to remain a rural area with limited community services and infrastructure. This plan, has established objectives and policies which recognize the present limited services, lot inventories and the public's desire to retain the area's rural character, and thereby direct significant urban growth to other parts of the region where services and infrastructure are available.



In 2012 the regional board approved the first Official Community Plan (OCP) for the Brent Road-Trepanier area of the Central Okanagan West electoral area that are outside the boundary of the District of Peachland. It followed an extensive public consultation process.

As well, a lengthy and details public engagement resulted in approval of the first OCP for the South Slopes area in the Central Okanagan East electoral area. This OCP had the addition of a Recreation Resort Special Study Area that was identified for a proposed Kelowna Mountain development.

In 2014 the regional board adopted a new Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) following a process that began in 2010 and included detailed and lengthy consultations and engagement with the public, stakeholders, local governments, Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band and many agencies of senior governments. As required by the Local Government Act, all member municipalities and adjacent regional districts supported the RGS. The process was supported



with a Green Municipal Fund grant from the federal government through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. This new Regional Growth Strategy replaced the previous one which was adopted in 2000. In 2017, the Regional Board received a Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan. The five-year action plan outlines priority initiatives for consideration based on commitments defined in the Regional Growth Strategy. A collaborative approach was utilized to develop this plan with a significant amount of consultation between a steering committee, RDCO staff and Board, municipal partners, area non-governmental organizations, and other governmental agencies.

A Regional Floodplain Management Plan was begun in 2016 with the assistance of funds from the Okanagan Basin Water Board and the federal Gas Tax Fund as well as the regional district. The three-phase plan had moved into the second phase in 2016, which was to set priorities for detailed hazard, consequence and risk assessment. Outcomes of the three phases are to reduce flood risk, improve emergency response and increase resiliency to climate change.



# Significant Facilities and Infrastructure

A borrowing bylaw for expansion of a \$5.1 million expansion of the Mount Boucherie Multiplex was approved in 2003. In 2004, an expansion was approved, with the support of a \$2 million federal-provincial infrastructure grant to go towards the more than \$7 million project. A revised budget for the project was approved in 2006 due to increased costs, to \$9.7 million. Royal LePage Kelowna agreed to a contract for the naming rights to the new arena facility, to be named Royal LePage Place. A further revised budget was approved for the project, of \$12.7 million, including an expansion of the original plan. The project was completed and the facility opened in 2007.

In October, 2012, a new \$6 million water system was approved to serve the Upper Fintry, Shalal Road and Valley of the Sun areas, to provide sufficient water pressure for fire protection, as well as safe, reliable drinking water. The project was completed with assistance from the federal Gas Tax Fund and the provincial Towns for Tomorrow fund, for a total of \$800,000. There are five other water systems operated by RDCO: Sunset Ranch, Westshore Estates, Killiney Beach, Falcon Ridge and Trepanier (Star Place).

A small water system servicing the combined Joe Rich Community Hall and Joe Rich Fire Rescue main hall along Highway 33 was upgraded during 2017 to include filtration, chlorine and UV disinfection. This major improvement has resulted in the lifting of a long standing Boil Water Advisory. The system was originally constructed in 1978 and sources water from nearby Joe Rich Creek.

The Regional District has taken a proactive approach to managing its key water infrastructure. In 2012, the Regional Board approved an Asset Management Plan which recognizes the importance of preparing for replacing water infrastructure. It's the normal course of these assets to deteriorate over time. Over the next decades, the six water systems operated by the Regional District will reach the end of their useful lives and will require significant investment to maintain levels of service. In order to prepare for this eventual investment, the RDCO's Asset Management Plan and related fees for water customers will build up capital reserves to either leverage grants or help to reduce borrowing costs. Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of community infrastructure has been a growing focus of governments at every level and increasingly, grant programs require infrastructure asset management plans as a condition for funding and health agencies are asking for evidence of well-thought out and documented rationale behind capital planning decisions. In developing its asset management plans, the Regional District has become one of the local government leaders in BC.

In collaboration with a number of local non-profit groups, the Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Nation Alliance and the province, the Mission Creek Restoration Initiative began work in 2015 to set back the dikes along a section of the river to permit the re-establishment of the floodplain and re-connect remnant oxbows to improve habitat for fish and re-create habitat for other species. At the same time the project improved drainage for nearby agricultural land and reduced flooding risks. The regional district's Park Legacy Fund helped in purchase of a property needed to allow the first dike set-back project to proceed and re-naturalization of Mission Creek's traditional meanders to begin.





# The Regional Parks System

Only four regional districts in B.C. took on parks as a key function decades ago, and one of those was the RDCO, in part because the province was interested in passing on some former provincial campsites, recalls Robert Hobson, who was RDCO chair for 21 years. There was also significant community encouragement to create regional parks in the Central Okanagan—right from the get-go, he notes. Groups such as the Oceola Fish and Game Club in Lake Country and the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club were involved at the grassroots level working with neighbourhood groups to get a regional park system started.

There were a series of plans identifying natural features within the region, based on biodiversity and representative bio-regions. These were not just places for people to play, he emphasizes. The thinking was that cities were able to provide facilities and recreation areas. Instead, the regional district focused on areas of the region with high capability; sites which represented important natural features, from wetlands and grasslands to mountain tops.







Some of the acquisitions were particularly complicated and challenging, but for very different reasons, Hobson notes. For instance, Fintry Provincial Park was created in 1995, and its purchase from private owners required quick work by the RDCO to convince the province of the importance of purchasing the historic estate to create a new provincial park. That buy ensured the 360 hectares of Okanagan heritage buildings and natural features such as two kilometres of natural waterfront and a stunning triple waterfall on Shorts Creek, were brought into the public domain from private hands. The former Fintry Estate included the early-1900s granite Manor House, an architect-designed octagonal dairy barn, the gatehouse and the historic lakefront packinghouse where steamers picked up the fruit from J. C. Dun-Waters' 100-acre orchard in the last century. The regional district's contribution was \$2 million for 129.5 hectares above Westside Road. The non-profit Friends of Fintry works in partnership with B.C. Parks to maintain, restore and refurbish buildings on the property and operates the Manor House as a museum.



## Beginning in 1974

The first jewel in the regional district's crown of parks was Kaloya Regional Park in Lake Country in 1974, with completion of the purchase in January, 1975. It is a 4.6-hectare beachfront park on Kalamalka Lake featuring a gazebo and covered picnic area, walking trails, wedding arbour, playground and boat beach.

A week later, purchase of the first parcel of 8.5 hectares became the basis for Glen Canyon Regional Park in West Kelowna. Additional property acquisitions were made between 1975 and 2013 by way of Crown License and other purchases. These properties along Powers Creek include creekside flora and fauna, dry grasslands and cliff faces with rocky outcrops, shrubs and summer wildflowers. It's a largely undisturbed wildlife corridor with unique geological formations such as stone columns, hoodoos and exposed sedimentary layers. Trails can be accessed from three points and include an easy walk along a historic irrigation flume to steep and more-challenging trails;



more-developed trails with stairs, and rustic trails. It encompasses the Constable Neil Bruce Memorial at the Aberdeen Road entrance, which remembers the slaying of the RCMP member in April 1965 while attempting to rescue a woman from a cabin along the creek, below the memorial site.

In 2013, using proceeds from the Parks Legacy Fund, a 12.9-hectare property on Brown Road in Westbank was purchased to add to the pathway through the lower section of Glen Canyon Regional Park. Because it is a forested park adjacent to a residential area, fuel modification projects were carried out in the park in 2010, 2014 and 2017. In 2014, a co-management agreement with West Kelowna was approved for municipal parkland below Canyon Ridge Estates to be managed by the RDCO as part of this regional park.



Mission Creek Regional Park in Kelowna was also created later in 1975, with transfer of the 22-hectare North Sutherland Hills Park from the province. In 1977, four more parcels were purchased for a total of 81 hectares. The park features three kilometres along the creek, as well as 12 kilometres of hiking trails through the native forest and riparian area, complete with interpretive signs. It's also the site of the Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan, a log interpretive centre built on Springfield Road with community support, featuring ever-changing environmental displays and information. A kokanee spawning channel was constructed adjacent to the creek to increase habitat for the land-locked sockeye which swim up this river each fall to complete their life cycle. It is the focus of interpretive programs annually. In 2004, a beetle infestation in the Sutherland Hills area of the park made it necessary to remove trees to help prevent wildfire. Horse logging was used in order to leave the least footprint on the park. To replace the trees removed, 6,000 seedlings were planted in the area. Fuel modification projects were conducted in the park in 2009 and 2010 with



funds from the Western Economic Diversification program.

In 1976, Scenic Canyon Regional Park was created with more parcels acquired in 1978, 1996 and 1997 through a combination land exchange, purchase, free Crown grant and a maintenance agreement with the province. It now totals 132 hectares and includes a mature cedar grove along Mission Creek adjacent to the Gallaghers Canyon community, some unique geological formations, including Layer Cake Mountain, Pinnacle Rock and hoodoos; as well as historic cultural sites where gold mining historically took place, as well as the early settlement of Dan Gallagher and rock ovens used by labourers. This park became more easily accessible in May, 2005 with the opening of Phase 2 of the Mission Creek Greenway. In 2010, fuel modification was conducted in the park with the assistance of the senior government Job Opportunities program.

Trader's Cove Regional Park was also created in late 1976 with the purchase of 13.6 hectares of natural lakefront. It includes buoys to allow boats



to tie up outside the swimming areas; a covered picnic shelter and playground. It's located just past Bear Creek Provincial Park and the Trader's Cove subdivision.

Shannon Lake Regional Park in West Kelowna was acquired as the result of a subdivision in 1977. It was upgraded in 2015 with installation of a floating dock donated by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C., with support from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and Peachland Sportsmen's Association. It is a 3.95-hectare park on the shores of Shannon Lake with a washroom, walking paths and wheelchair access to the dock.

Later in 1977, Bertram Creek Regional Park was purchased, a 26.5-hectare lakefront parcel in the Mission area of Kelowna along Okanagan Lake that includes swimming and boat beaches, a pavilion, playground, playing fields, washrooms and walking paths. It was seriously damaged by the Okanagan Mountain Park wildfire in 2003, but was restored and re-opened in 2006.





Woodhaven Nature Conservancy in Kelowna was acquired through a free Crown grant in 1978; 8.73 hectares of wild land which features distinct zones representative of different Okanagan ecosystems, from the dry interior zone with its ponderosa pines to the wet interior zone with black cottonwood, western red cedars and the thick undergrowth along Bellevue Creek. The land was going to be developed for housing until citizens in the area objected. Using funds from the Parks Legacy Fund, in 2011 and 2012, a 17.7-hectare parcel and a 3.5-hectare site on Raymer Road were purchased to protect a critical natural corridor to the higher elevations of Bellevue Creek, and helping the City of Kelowna's plan for a linear park along the creek at the same time. In 2010, an Eco Art project was launched in the park in collaboration with UBC Okanagan. In 2013, an Eco Culture Centre in partnership with the UBCO Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies was also established.



Kopje Regional Park in Lake Country was purchased in 1981. The 3.5-hectare park on Okanagan Lake is the site of George Gibson's 1912 home, which has been restored by the community and is now operated as a museum. As well, there is a playground and picnic area, washrooms, a swimming beach and field for games. In 2012, Grant Island in Okanagan Lake was added to this park, for a nominal fee, from the Bishop Wild Bird Foundation.

Kalamo Regional Park in West Kelowna was transferred from the province in 1982, a 28-hectare combination of free Crown grant and dedication by subdivision, which stretches along Okanagan Lake. It includes a swimming beach, washrooms, wild grassland and lakeshore trails, spectacular views over the lake and interesting remnants from ancient volcanic eruptions. The native spring sunflowers make a dramatic showing along the hillside trails.



Antlers Beach and Hardy Falls Regional Park, set along Okanagan Lake and up Deep Creek, were transferred from Peachland to the regional district in 1982 and 1992. It is 11.4 hectares of swimming beach, picnic area and trails along the treed riparian area up the creek from the lake to Hardy Falls. It's named after Harry Hardy, one of the first orchardists in the area. Deep Creek is also an important spawning area for kokanee in the fall.

Raymer Bay, along Westside Road in West Kelowna was purchased in 1985. It's a 6.84-hectare waterfront property which includes a covered picnic shelter, swimming area and playground.

The three-hectare Gellatly Heritage Regional Park was purchased in 1989, in partnership with the pioneer Gellatly family and includes a restored log home and barn, picnic area, century-old Gellatly family cemetery and a short interpretive trail.



Mill Creek Park in the Ellison area just outside of Kelowna was dedicated in 1990 when a subdivision was built, and includes 15 hectares along the creek with a shaded hiking trail which is flat and easy in places, and more-rustic and rocky in other sections.

In 1991, Reiswig Regional Park was purchased in Lake Country, providing 3.8 hectares of swimming beach, picnic area and fields with a running track and a natural area which is habitat for osprey and other birds in the mature poplars.

In 1994, the 111-hectare Stephens Coyote Ridge Regional Park in Kelowna was created through a combination of purchase, a donation from Kay Stephens and Crown license, conserving a natural area which includes both ponds and grasslands, wetlands and hiking trails. This park includes the small but scenic, Light Blue Lake.

In 1995, McCulloch Station Regional Park was acquired. It includes 2.56 hectares and is the site of the McCulloch Station on the old Kettle Valley Railway in East Kelowna.



The 230-hectare Rose Valley Regional Park in West Kelowna was created by Crown license in 1996, sparked by a community effort to prevent development of a parcel on Goldie's Pond on Westlake Road. After fund-raising in the community, that small parcel has been owned by the Nature Trust of B.C. since 1992, and maintained as part of the regional park. The park now includes frontage on Rose Valley Reservoir, over the ridge from the pond where there are spectacular views of Okanagan Lake and the valley below. A comprehensive system of trails feature grasslands, rocky outcroppings, ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forest, as well as amenities such as interpretive signs, benches at viewpoints and a washroom. Extensive fuel modification work was conducted in the park during 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2017 to help protect adjacent residential areas from wildfire. Funds for much of the work were provided by the Union of B.C. Municipalities' Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative, and senior government funds.



In 1997 the 1.3-hectare Okanagan Centre Safe Harbour property in Lake Country was transferred from the provincial government to the regional district and is now operated as a boat launch and provides safe refuge for boaters during rough weather. In 2013-2014 this facility underwent several major upgrades and improvements to better serve the boating public. The old deteriorating wooden breakwater structure was replaced with new concrete panel/steel pilings, a 53-meter aluminum walkway was installed and a courtesy dock was constructed.





Also in 1997, with a combination of purchases funded in part by the community, Crown licenses and operational agreements, the 7.5-kilometre-long, 16.9-hectare first phase of the Mission Creek Greenway was opened. In 2005, the second phase of a further 30 hectares, extending nine kilometres upstream was added to it. This park provides a green riparian corridor for wildlife and a shady trail along the creek for the use of walkers, hikers, joggers, bikers and horse riders. Creation of the greenway was a project of the Friends of Mission Creek, in partnership with the regional district, City of Kelowna, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Westbank First Nation, Central Okanagan Land Trust and Central Okanagan Foundation. It is operated by the regional district. In 2013, an additional 36 hectares of property was added to the corridor through the Parks Legacy Fund and Crown license and a further six kilometres of phase three opened in 2018, taking the trail to Mission Creek Falls. The greenway property encompasses the region's early history as well, from irrigation for farms, to placer gold mining activity.



In 1998, a two-hectare parcel in the City of Kelowna became Robert Lake Regional Park, through a combination of purchase and donation, to help conserve the sensitive ecosystem of this alkali lake, which is important habitat for waterbirds and shorebirds such as the American Avocet. The acquisition was in partnership with the Central Okanagan Land Trust with the support of the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club, TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Lunam Family.



Also in 1998, in a combination of purchase, donation and Crown license, the 79.5-hectare Cedar Mountain Regional Park was created in Kelowna, providing access to The Craggs, a distinctive geological formation with sweeping views out over Okanagan Lake. In 2013, the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park in Kelowna's south Mission area was formed of 323 hectares bequeathed by the family to the Central Okanagan Land Trust, and joined with the adjacent Cedar Mountain Regional Park. That portion of the new park remains open, with its hiking trails, washroom and parking lot, but the adjacent new parkland is not yet developed for public use. The park includes a diverse range of ecosystems, from creeks and wetlands to open grassland and forest, although much of the property is evolving after the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park wildfire tore through it.



The four-hectare Gellatly Nut Farm was acquired in 2002 following a lengthy campaign of fund-raising and lobbying by neighbours and the community sparked by a proposal in 1998 to re-develop the historic lakefront nut orchard with a condominium resort. During the lengthy campaign, the Gellatly Nut Farm Society was formed, a non-profit group which today continues fund-raising to restore and help maintain the buildings and orchard, as well as acting in an advisory capacity to RDCO. It also manages the annual nut harvest as part of its fund-raising activities. The park encompasses heritage, archeological and educational values along with 485 feet of lake frontage and recreational amenities. It includes a heritage house, log cabin, other heritage buildings and historical articles along with washrooms and pathways.

In 2003, the Coldham family of Peachland donated a 6.1-hectare property along Jack Creek which is undeveloped and has limited access at this time. Coldham Regional Park includes mixed woodland of Douglas fir, lush wet areas of birch and other shrubs in a corridor providing forage and cover for wildlife. In 2009, a five-hectare parcel was purchased to add to the park and in 2010 another small parcel was added to it.



## Partnering With Friends and Supporters

Several parks interpretive programs are only possible with the help of community-based volunteer organizations.

Urban fishing opportunities for children and seniors were the aim of a pilot project in 2006, with the cooperation of a number of non-profit community groups and companies, as well as volunteers. Sites at Shannon Lake and the Hall Road pond in Mission Creek Regional Park were prepared. As a result, an annual spring Go Fish program has been provided in both parks since 2007 with catchable-sized trout provided by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C. while parks staff and volunteers from the Peachland Sportsmen's Association and Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club provide knowledge and expert assistance to young fishers!

Volunteers with the Community Recreation Initiatives Society or CRIS, through its Adaptive Adventures programs, provide barrier-free access to regional parks by participating in regional park programs such as 'Wild Walks' and 'Take a Hike'.

Several 'Friends' organizations have and continue to contribute in various ways for the betterment of our regional parks.

The Friends of Kalamoior offer guidance and oversight into the improvements of Kalamoior Regional Park. The Gellatly Nut Farm Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the hundred year old orchard and trees in perpetuity. Each fall, society volunteers collect and sell nuts from the farm with proceeds going to future park enhancement, restoration and development of amenities.

One of the newest of our partner organizations is the Friends of Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən Society. It is also a volunteer group which advocates for public stewardship of the protected lands and promotes conservation and informed and responsible public use of the new regional park area.

Perhaps the longest serving and best known of the groups focused on regional parks is the 'Friends of Mission Creek'. Its campaign in the mid-90's raised funds to complete the initial 7.5-kilometres of the highly popular Mission Creek Greenway recreational trail. To this day, volunteer members continue to support enhancement of the now 19 plus kilometer creekside trail and contribute funding for additional amenities and infrastructure.



## Parks Legacy Program

In 2007, the regional district approved a 10-year Central Okanagan Regional Parks Legacy Program to raise funds toward the purchase and protection of key properties for parkland. Approval of that bylaw by the regional board allowed taxation for future parkland purchases in the amount of two cents for every thousand dollars of assessed value in 2007. In 2008 \$440,800 was allocated by the board for acquisitions. As the result of a favourable public survey that same year, the board approved further park acquisition spending. However, in 2010, the board reduced program spending, approving collection of a total of five cents per thousand dollars of assessed value rather than the seven cents that had been planned.

As a result of the Legacy funding, in 2008 and 2009, five small parcels of land were acquired to consolidate and form part of the Trepanier Creek Greenway Regional Park, and in 2011, a further two hectares was leased from the province for a nominal fee to create a five-kilometre trail between Clements Crescent in Peachland and the Okanagan Connector, for a total of 18.5 hectares. This is a natural forest trail ascending from the valley bottom to high above Trepanier Creek Canyon, with views of Okanagan Lake, the canyon, waterfalls, and the historic remnants of the Trepanier Creek Dam.



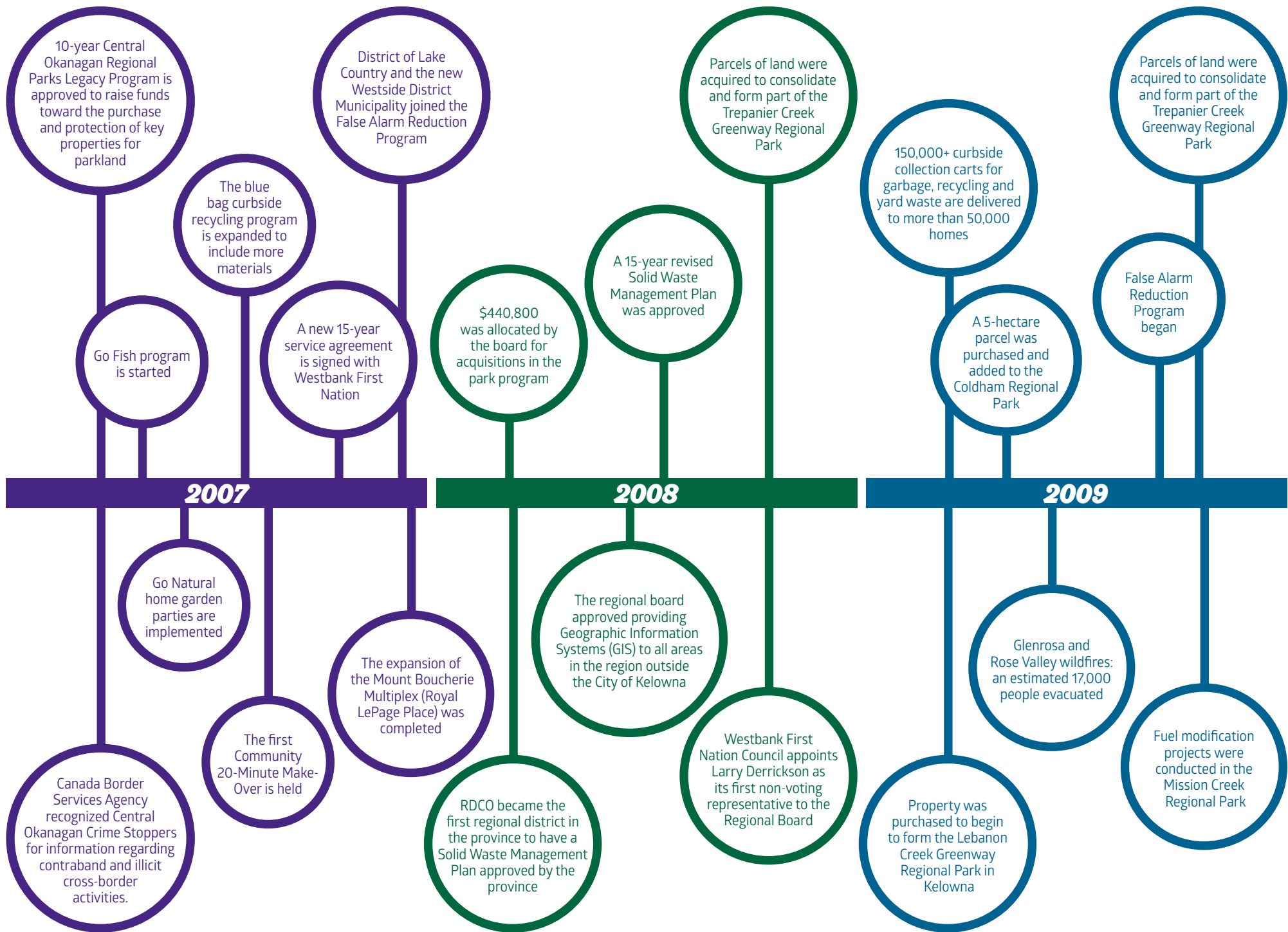
Also in 2009, a .93-hectare property was purchased to begin to form the Lebanon Creek Greenway Regional Park in Kelowna. Another small property was added to it in 2010. This is a fairly-steep 2.3-kilometre trail on a total of four hectares connecting Lakeshore Road to the Kettle Valley Subdivision and the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park.

In 2014, another Parks Legacy Fund purchase resulted in formation of Goats Peak Regional Park on West Kelowna's southern boundary. Its 52 hectares of cliff and headland includes almost 900 metres of lakefront with critical kokanee spawning beds, hiking trails and panoramic views out over the lake. A management plan for the park was adopted by the Regional Board in the spring of 2016 to help guide public access and interpretation in the area.

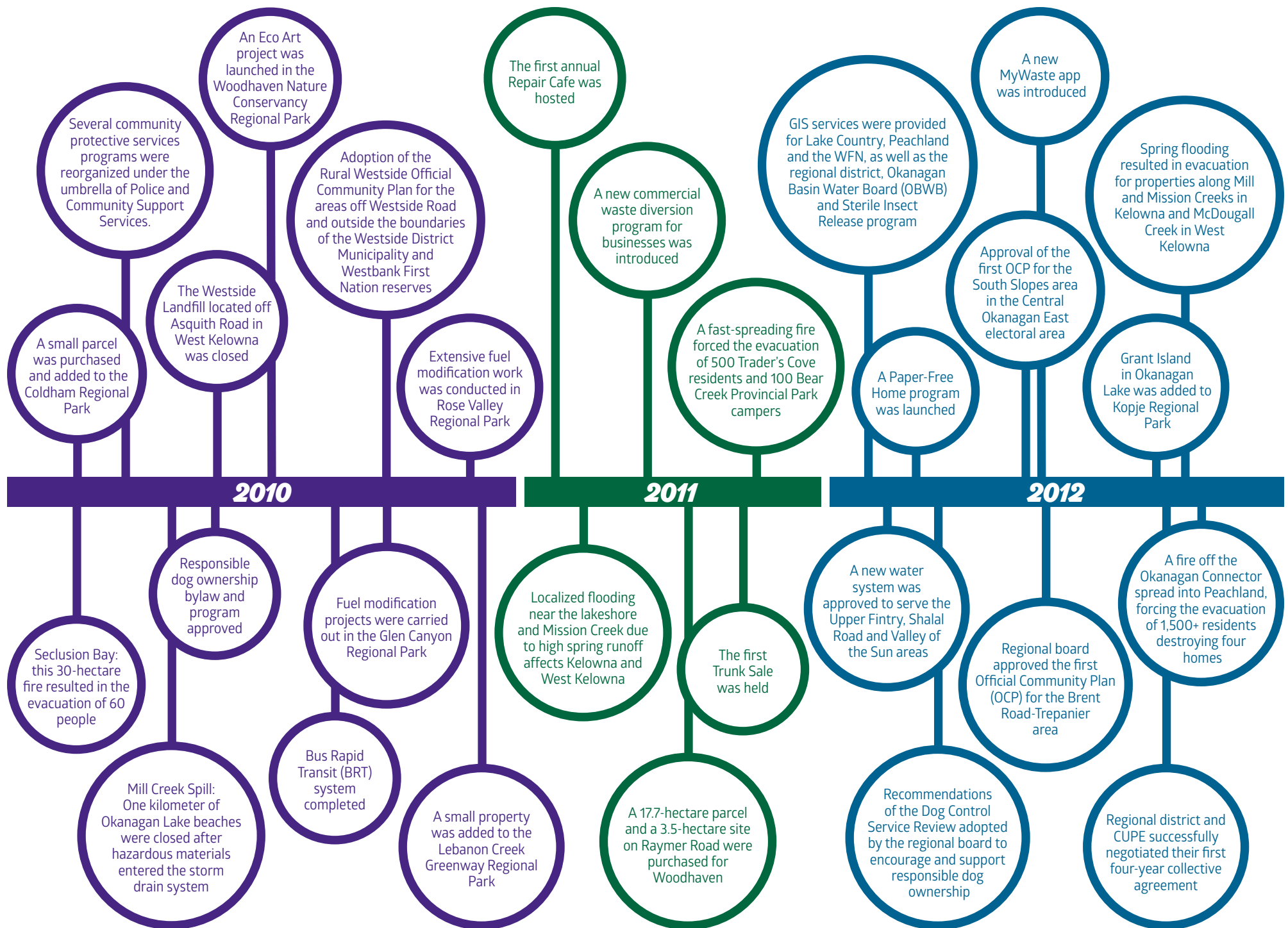
Later in 2014, purchase of another Parks Legacy Fund park was announced. Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən Regional Park off Highway 33 in Kelowna is 516 hectares in size featuring a variety of ecosystems, trails and history. Its acquisition was a collective effort of the regional district, the Westbank First Nation, private property owners and the province. In the Sylix language sntsk'il'ntən translates to 'the place where arrowhead/flint is found' and the

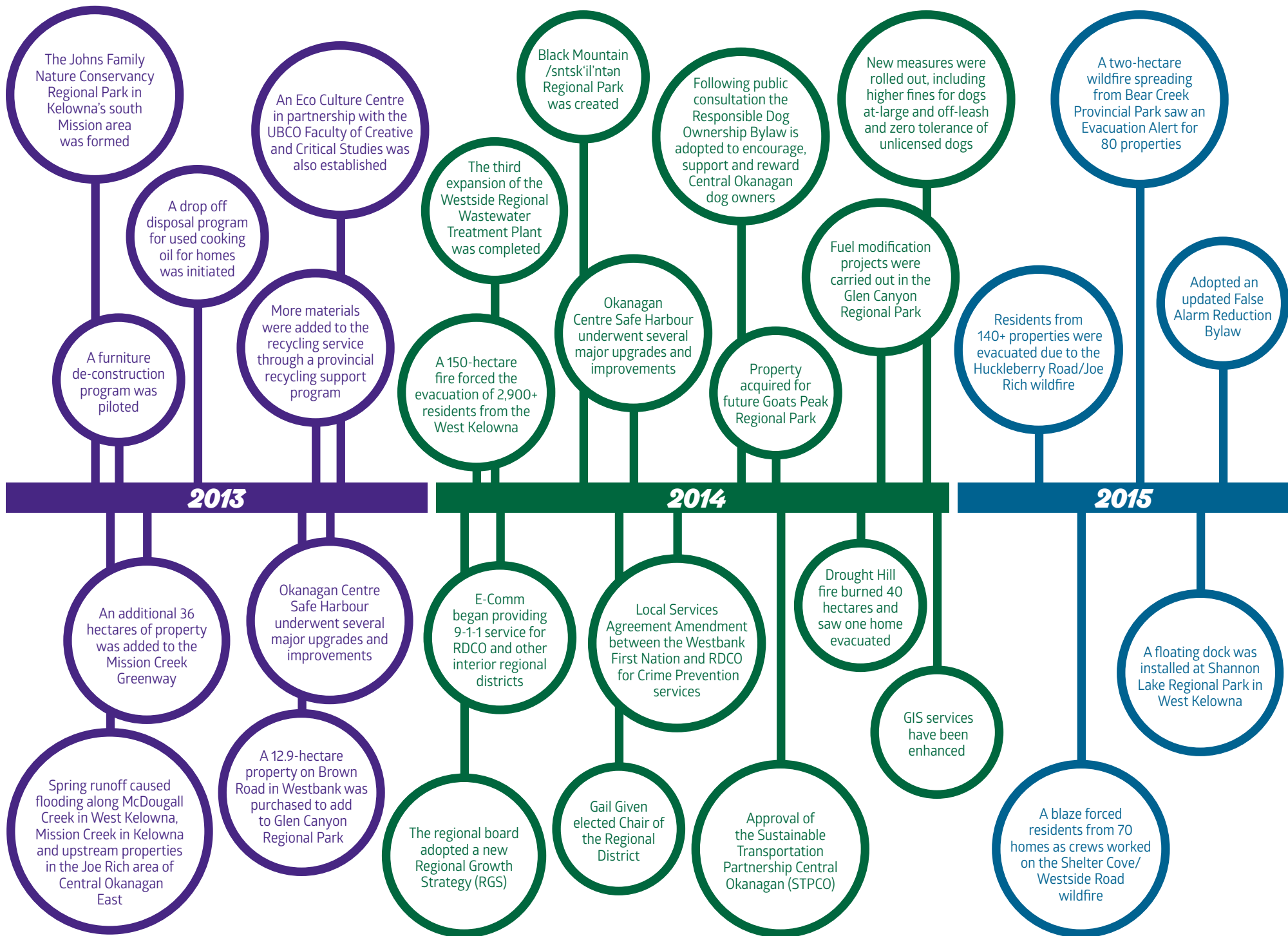
area has immense cultural and historical significance to the sylix Okanagan people. It's historic to others because it has been used as a forest fire lookout for a century, and was once a ski hill in the region's early days. It is co-managed by the regional district and WFN, but not yet open to the public. The initial acquisition includes significant parcel donated by the Adria and Holterhus families under the Government of Canada Ecological Gifts Program and a joint Crown land tenure with the Westbank First Nation.

In September 2017, the Regional District announced the purchase of almost 127-hectares of land to be added to the existing 516-hectares of geographically, ecologically and culturally significant lands that make up the park which prominently towers over Kelowna's eastern boundary. The new property was purchased for just over \$2.3-million of which \$2.1-million came from two Regional Parks reserve funds. The Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship program contributed \$200,000 towards the purchase and the Central Okanagan Land Trust donated \$15,000. With the additional lands, Black Mountain/sntsk'il'ntən Regional Park protects more than 640 hectares of significant grassland, open Ponderosa pine and grassland savanna. It is home to at least nine endangered or threatened species and ecological communities.

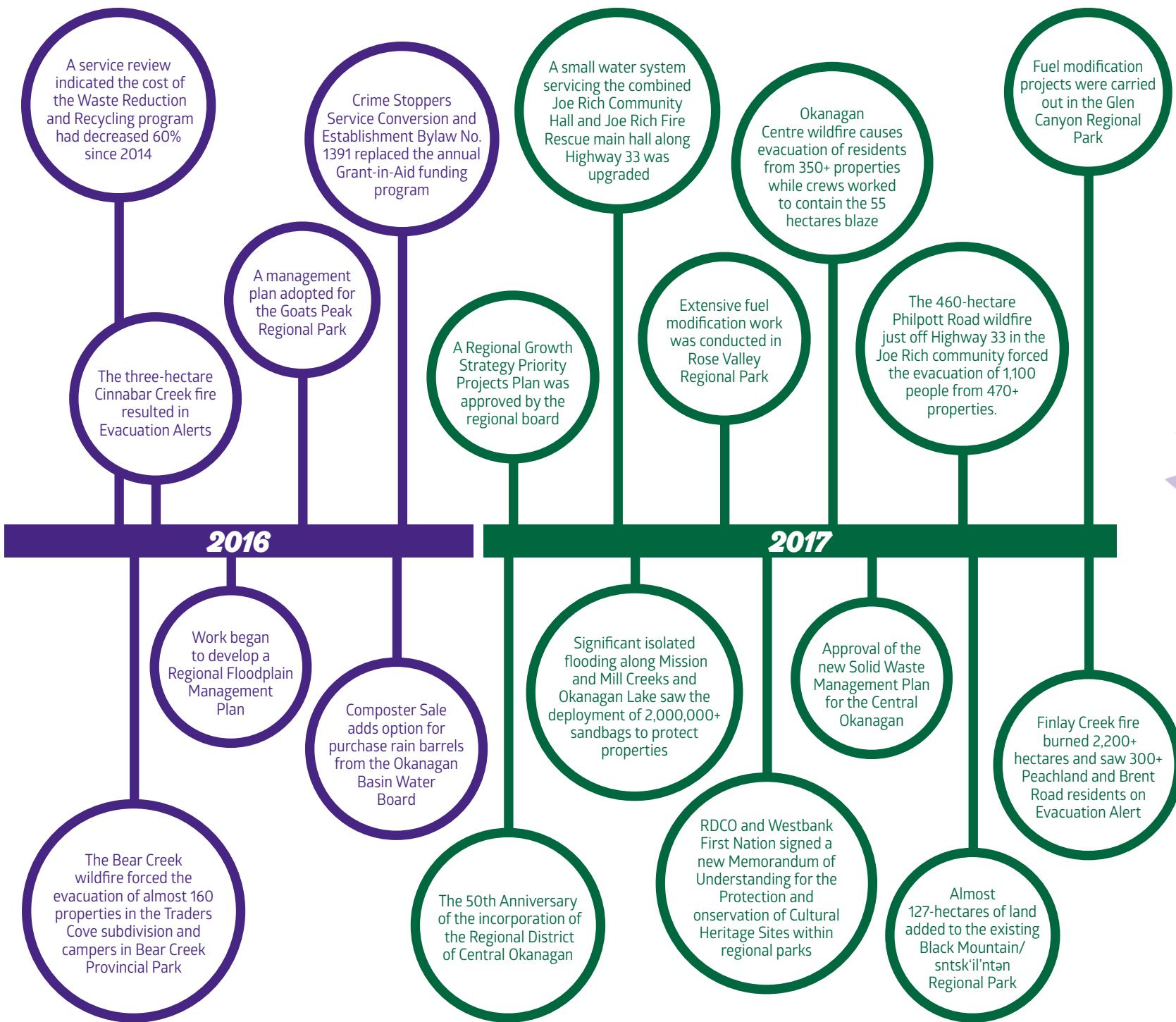












YEARS 1967-2017

REGIONAL DISTRICT  
of CENTRAL OKANAGAN





**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN**

**1967-2017**

**50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**