

# CHEMAINUS RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

## PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

September 2003

Approved by:



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## CHEMAINUS RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

### Primary Role

The **primary** purpose of Chemainus River Provincial Park is to provide river-based recreation opportunities in a near-urban area. Part of the Chemainus River and watershed is protected in this 103 hectare park. Established in 1959 because of its long history of use for steelhead fishing and day use excursions, the park is well known for viewing the spectacular summer steelhead and coho salmon runs and providing a variety of day use recreational opportunities. The park contains numerous deep swimming pools and forested habitat where visitors can enjoy picnicking, camping, hiking, swimming and wildlife viewing. No facilities are provided but recent land additions to the park could support group camping and related facilities. Part of the rationale for the park additions was to obtain more river frontage to enhance both the recreation and conservation values.

### Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to protect a portion of the river in its natural condition, riparian habitat and a buffer of mature second growth forest. The park protects high quality steelhead habitat with a significant summer steelhead population, which is one of only a few that exist on eastern Vancouver Island. Forested habitats in the park are ecologically diverse, and wildlife values are typical of second-growth forests on Vancouver Island. The river's floodplain and associated riparian vegetation are a sensitive ecosystem.

The park also contributes to the representation of two under-represented ecosystems – the Nanaimo Lowlands Ecoregion and the Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern very dry maritime (xm1) biogeoclimatic variant. These ecosystems are under intense pressure from urban and forest development, and any protected area that contributes to their representation may be considered important.

### Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Increasing and unregulated use, lack of facilities resulting in site degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Install a park gate and large boulders to stop vehicles from parking on side roads.</li> <li>➤ Install park boundary signs in correct locations.</li> <li>➤ Develop a strategy to deal with vandalism and dumping through the provision of a parking lot and camping facilities; investigate options to transfer the park to the Cowichan Valley Regional District for regional park purposes.</li> </ul>
Loss of habitat and loss of water quality from adjacent logging operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with the Ministry of Forests and logging companies to ensure that adjacent forest development does not impact the river and other park values.</li> </ul>
Illegal tree cutting and use of off road bikes and ATVs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with local residents and users of a nearby Capital Regional District park regarding appropriate park uses. Provide educational information on appropriate uses.</li> </ul>

## **Zoning**

**Intensive Recreation Zone** – covers the access road and day use area along the river's edge which represents an area of approximately 15 hectares or 15% of the park. The objective of this zone is to provide a variety of readily accessible, family-oriented outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Natural Environment Zone** – covers the remainder of the park to reflect the recreation and conservation values. This is an area of approximately 88 hectares or 85% of the park. The objective is to maintain or regain naturally evolving ecosystems while providing for complementary low impact outdoor recreation opportunities.

### Conservation

- |                                   |                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation<br>- ecosection    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Chemainus River Provincial Park contributes 2.18% to the representation of the Nanaimo Lowland Ecosection which has only 1.41% protected provincially.  |
| - biogeoclimatic subzone/variant  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Chemainus River Provincial Park makes a small contribution of 1.2% to the representation of the CWHxm1 variant which has only 2.07% protected provincially.   |
| Special Features                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Sensitive ecosystem related to the floodplain and riparian vegetation – recognized by the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory Program. Chemainus River is home to salmon and steelhead, the park is significant for its high quality summer run (this population represents the southernmost wild steelhead run on eastern Vancouver Island). |
| Rare/Endangered Values            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Historical use by blue-listed Roosevelt elk -- may return and increase as second-growth forest matures and more river frontage becomes protected  |
| Scientific/Research Opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Determine habitat value to Roosevelt elk  |

### Recreation

- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation<br>backcountry<br>destination | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Part of the Lake Cowichan recreation destination corridor/area; the park has recreation destination potential if developed and promoted |
| travel corridor<br>local recreation          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Potentially part of the Trans Canada Trail  |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Day use is increasing annually and includes swimming, hiking, picnicking and wildlife viewing   |
| Special Opportunities                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | None known at this time   |
| Education/Interpretation Opportunities       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | None known at this time   |

### Cultural Heritage

- |                 |                                     |   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Chemainus First Nation and MOF have conducted an inventory of traditional uses and culturally modified trees (CMTs) along the river |
| Special Feature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Remnants of abandoned railway grade   |

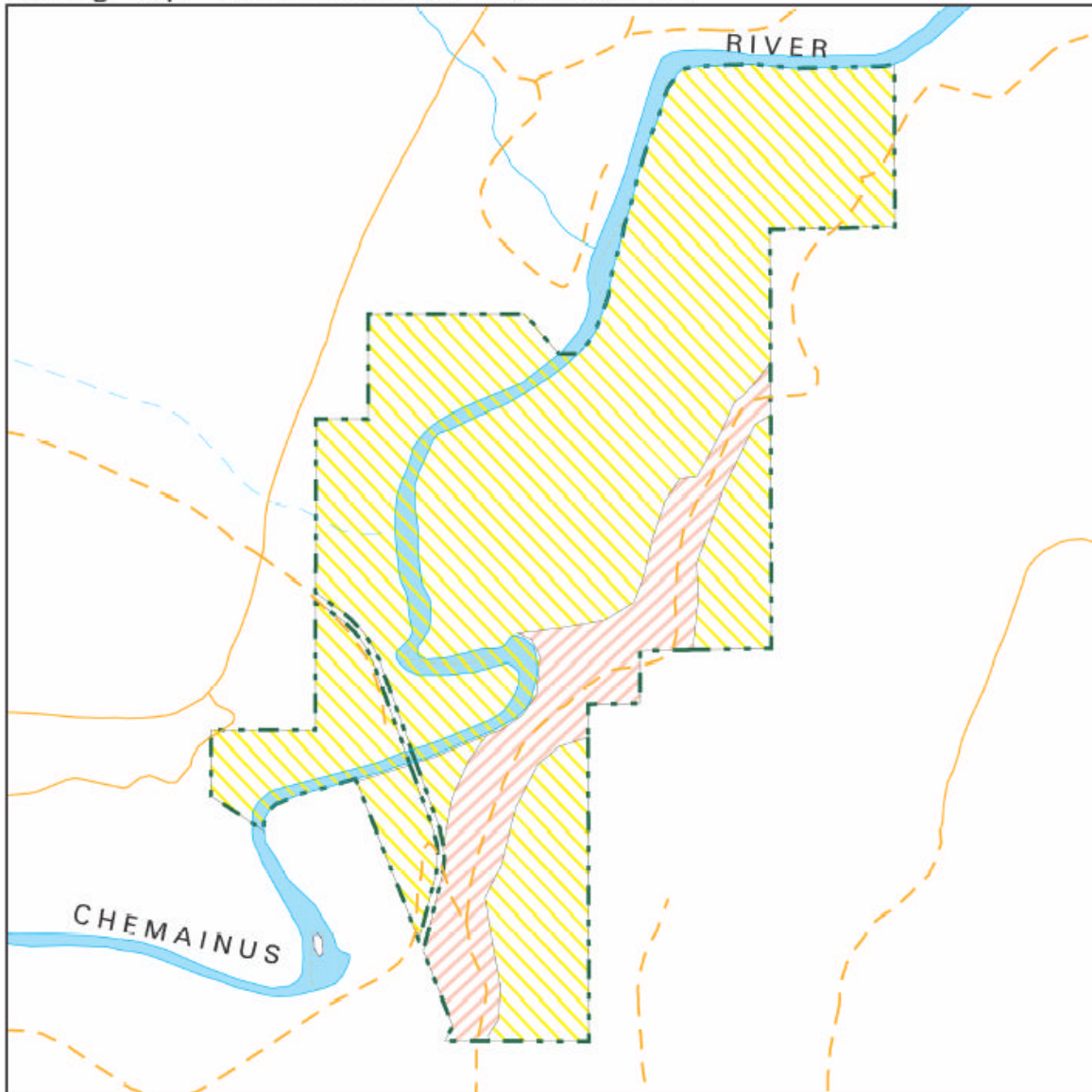
### Other Management Considerations

- |                                      |                                     |   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Other Designations                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
| Relationship to other PAs            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Part of a system of protected areas on Vancouver Island, potentially part of the Trans Canada Trail. Complement s recreation opportunities available at Cowichan River and Koksilah River provincial parks.           |
| Co-operative Management Arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
| Partnerships                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
| Vulnerability                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Site degradation from improper use patterns , illegal tree cutting, increased stream sedimentation due to adjacent land use, decrease in water quality, loss of cultural artifacts (e.g. CMTs) if present             |
| Relationship to Other Strategies     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | As a result of the Goal 2 recommendation of the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan, 17 hectares was added to the park in 1996 and an additional 16 hectares was secured from Weyerhaeuser to provide more river frontage. |

**Area:** 103 hectares




**Date of establishment:** December 30, 1959

# Zoning Map - Chemainus River Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas  
Datum: NAD83



-  Intensive Recreation
-  Natural Environment
-  Protected Area Boundary



Produced in Mar 2003 for  
Ministry of Water, Land and Air  
Protection by MSRM, Decision  
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