

# Maris Nature Park Management Plan | Engagement Summary

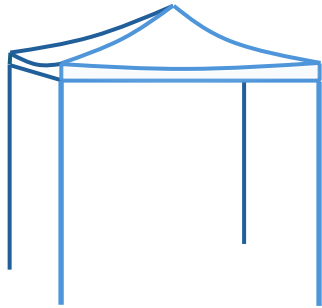
June 2025

## Planning Process

Maris Nature Park was established through two generous donations through the Federal government’s [Ecological Gifts Program](#). The CVRD initiated a management planning process for the park in 2022 with public engagement towards the plan happening between April 15 and May 30, 2025. This report presents a snapshot of what the CVRD heard and learned from that engagement.

<b>PHASE 1</b> Background study <b>(COMPLETE)</b>	<b>PHASE 2</b> Engagement <b>(IN PROGRESS)</b>	<b>PHASE 3</b> Plan draft, review, and adoption <b>(NOT STARTED)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ K’ómoks First Nation consultation</li> <li>○ Information gathering</li> <li>○ Mapping</li> <li>○ Process planning</li> </ul>	<p><u>Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Website, news release, social media posts</li> <li>○ Survey</li> <li>○ Open house events</li> <li>○ Targeted communications</li> </ul> <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engagement summary</li> </ul> <p><i>We are here!</i></p>	<p><u>Plan Drafting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Draft plan to EASC</li> <li>○ Plan updates</li> </ul> <p><u>Plan review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public review</li> <li>○ EASC review</li> </ul> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approved plan</li> </ul>
2022 – 2025	2025	2025-2026

## Engagement Highlights



**150+ People**

connected with CVRD staff  
at open house events

**36 letters**

delivered to nearby residents



**37 followers**

subscribed to  
[engagecomoxvalley.ca/maris](https://engagecomoxvalley.ca/maris)



**6 Interest Groups**

identified, informed, and invited to  
participate in engagement activities



**1,259 people**

engaged via [engagecomoxvalley.ca/maris](https://engagecomoxvalley.ca/maris)  
and the [Maris Nature Park project page](#)



**178 Surveys**

Completed



**49 interactions**

on social media



## What We Heard | Themes

A few **key themes** emerged through the engagement process.

### 1. Conservation First

Maris Nature Park is seen as a precious ecological and cultural resource, and the community wants it to stay that way. While there is strong support for some public access, conservation is the overriding priority. The public would like to see the CVRD tread lightly in the Park.

### 2. Low-Impact Access


The public's preference for conservation included a corresponding desire for low impact amenities which preserve or enhance the Park's natural setting. Examples include a preference for walking trails which avoid ecologically and culturally sensitive areas and prohibit higher impact activities like off-road vehicle use, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The preference is for small footprint and low-impact amenities.

### 3. Making Connections

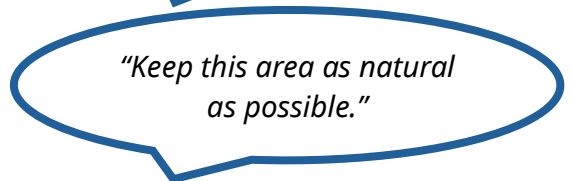
The community sees the Park as part of a larger system of green spaces and trails in the area. There is strong support for improving beach access and adding viewpoints within the Park while making trail connections and improving ecological connectivity to nearby parks.

### 4. Preserve Cultural Values

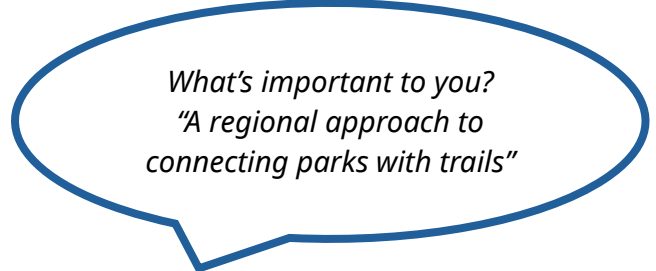
The community is eager to preserve or enhance the Park's cultural values. Interpretive signage, particularly signage about Indigenous cultural heritage, was identified as a key priority.

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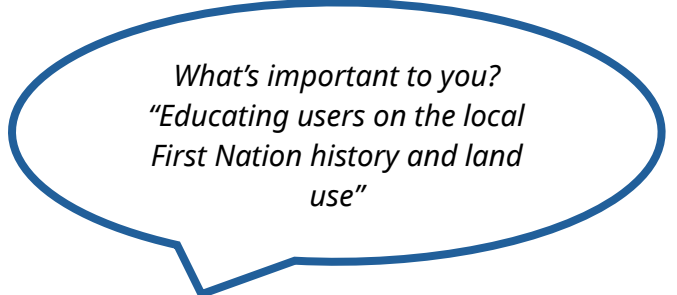
*"This is a beautiful natural area... would like to see minimum amenities to conserve nature."*

A blue-outlined speech bubble containing the text: 

*"Keep this area as natural as possible."*

A blue-outlined speech bubble containing the text: 

*What's important to you?  
"A regional approach to connecting parks with trails"*

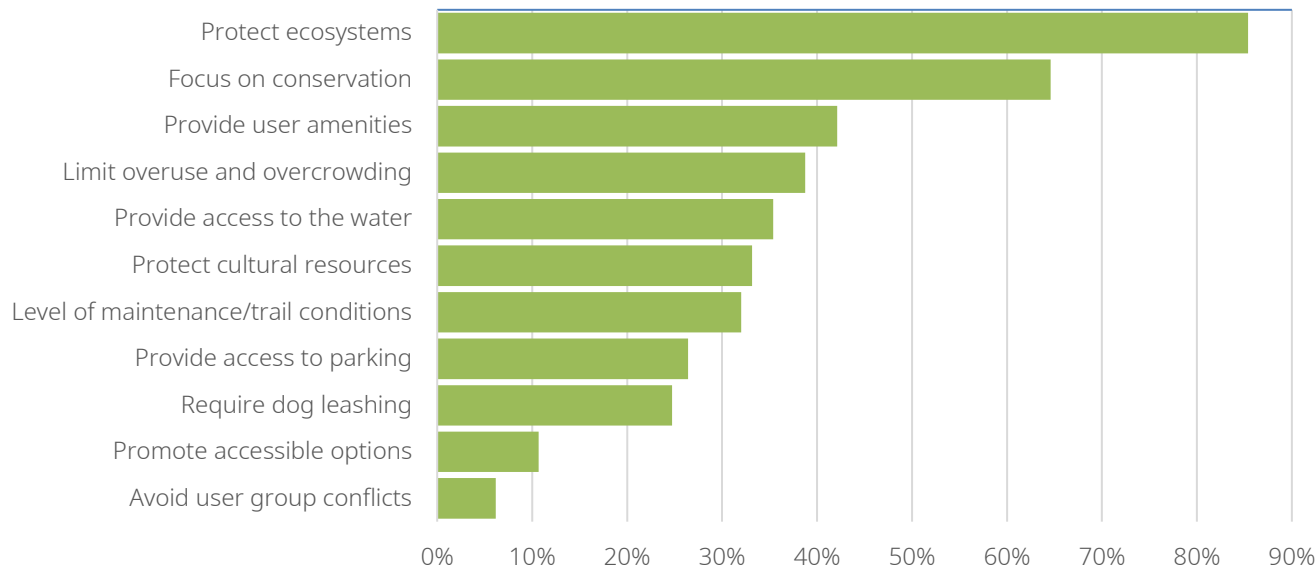
A blue-outlined speech bubble containing the text: 

*What's important to you?  
"Educating users on the local First Nation history and land use"*

## What We Heard | Priorities

What priorities should be considered when developing the park management plan?

Survey respondents expressed a strong preference for preserving the Park’s natural state and protecting biodiversity, native species, and ecosystems. Nearly 90 percent (160) of respondents listed either ‘**focus on conservation**’ or ‘**protect ecosystems**’ among their top priorities. Sixty percent (106) listed one of these as their top priority for the Park.



### Other priority activities

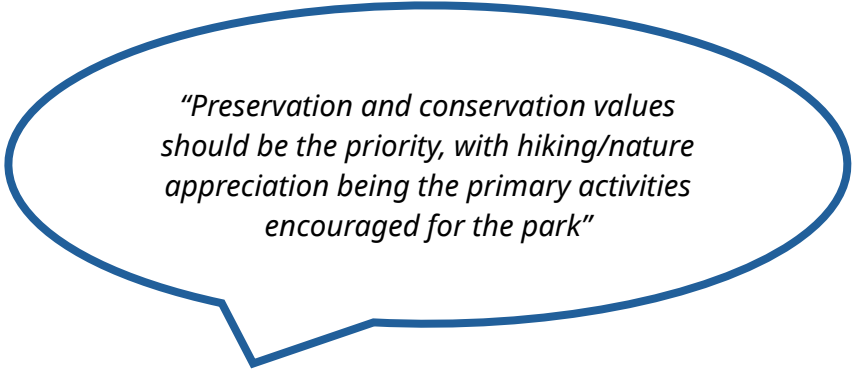
- Amenities like **trails and benches** (42%) and **access to the ocean** (34%) were priorities for some respondents.
- Some respondents (39%) and open house participants expressed concern about **overcrowding** in the park.
- Thirty-three percent of respondents felt that **protection of cultural values** was a priority.

## What We Heard | Activities

### What activities would you like to see Maris Nature Park?

Most open house participants and survey respondents expressed enthusiasm for conservation-oriented activities like nature walks, bird watching, photography, and ocean viewing.

Many survey respondents (64%) prioritized connecting the Park to other nearby parks, green spaces, and trail networks, though motivations varied with some focused on recreational connections and others on ecosystem connectivity.


A blue speech bubble containing a quote.

*"Preservation and conservation values should be the priority, with hiking/nature appreciation being the primary activities encouraged for the park"*

A dark teal circle containing the text 'Nature appreciation' and '(80% of respondents)'.

**Nature appreciation**

(80% of respondents)

A dark teal circle containing the text 'Walk, jog or wheel' and '(79% of respondents)'.

**Walk, jog or wheel**

(79% of respondents)

A dark teal circle containing the text 'Connection to other parks' and '(64% of respondents)'.

**Connection to other parks**

(64% of respondents)

### Other activities

- **Cultural and nature education** was among the top priorities for a majority of survey respondents.
- **Dog walking** was a bit more contentious with some expressing support for leashing and others for off-leash areas; a few felt that dogs should not be allowed in the park.
- Just 25% of survey respondents felt that **cycling** should be prioritized within the park.

## What We Heard | Amenities

### What park amenities would you like to see considered in the management plan?

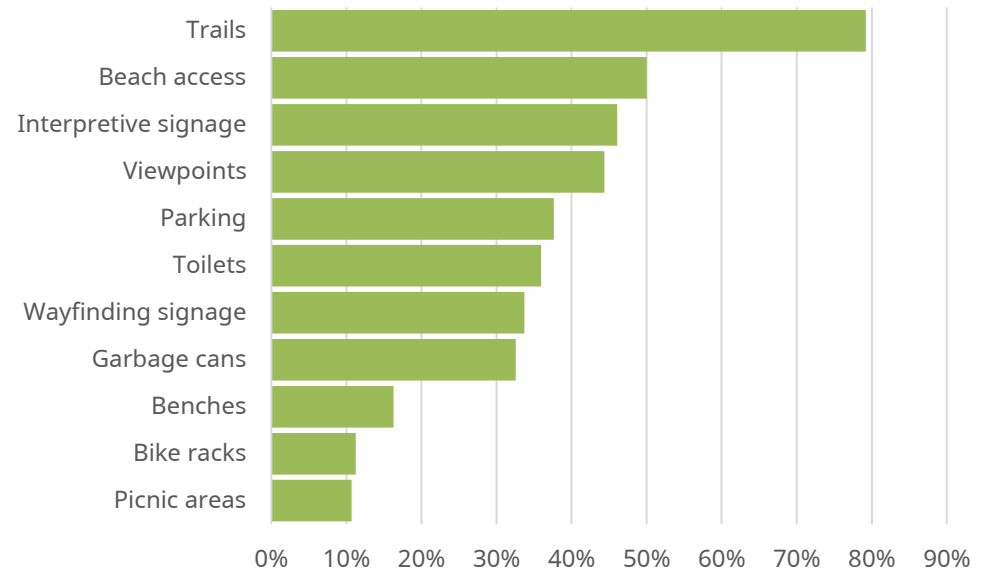
The public supports adding new trails and/or improving existing trails in the Park. While there was a general preference for pedestrian-only trails, some in the community support multi-use trails for walking, cycling, and horseback riding.

Nearby residents noted the possibility of upgrading existing trails within the Park and using trails within the neighbouring Sarah and Brian McLoughlin Park to access the beach and reach viewpoints.

Educational and wayfinding signage will accompany trail improvements in the park.

Most respondents (67%) said they would drive to get to the park and 38% listed parking as a priority. Several Eagles Drive residents expressed a preference for directing traffic to the north end of the park.

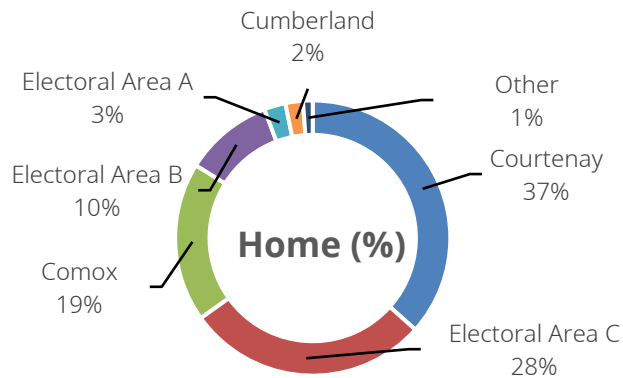
Some respondents advocated for toilets and garbage cans at main access points to reduce ecological damage. Others preferred to avoid such amenities, fearing they might invite overuse and impact the character of the Park.



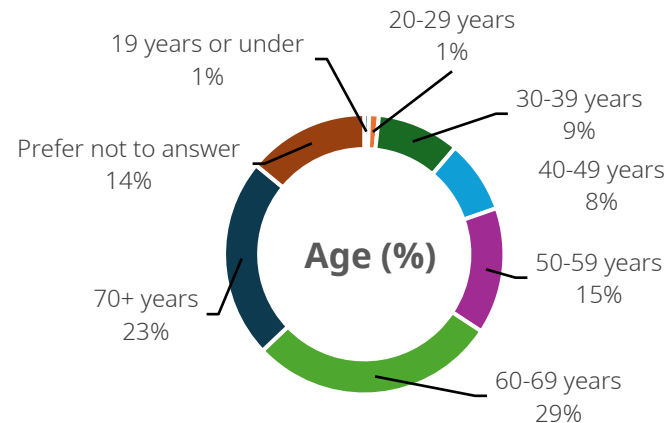
## What We Heard | Who We Heard From

Where do you live and what is your age?

The majority of survey respondents were from the City of Courtenay and Electoral Area C.



Over half (52%) of survey respondents were over the age of 60 and just 2% of respondents were under the age of 30.



## Maris Nature Park

