

Nymph Falls Access Route

Project Background **February 2019**

Nymph Falls Park has high all-season use, and sees up to 300 visitors in the vicinity at one time during the busy months.

To reduce health impacts, an outhouse required replacement with one that was better for the environment, with less impact on the ecosystem as waste is managed. Also, access for emergency vehicles and those with mobility challenges was considered in this upgrade project.

Project Timeline:

2017

Parks staff explored installing a composting toilet at the falls. This was ruled out as an option mainly because it still required the handling and removal of solids. Large holes were required for holding tanks which proved costly, experimental and unsightly. Volume of use is too high for it to be effective and services to pump the existing outhouse wasn't feasible due to the width and grade of the trail to provide access. Contractors were sought to remove manually but no local labour providers were interested.

Parks staff toured the park with Plateau Road Residents Association members to identify a way to get a service truck to the existing toilet. A number of route options were considered.

2018

March - further engagement was conducted. The CVRD's Parks Manager attended an annual meeting of the Plateau Road Residents Association about a proposal for an accessible trail to the falls.

Parks staff toured the park with interested park users and residents to outline a proposal for an accessible trail to the falls. A meeting notice was posted on the CVRD's social media pages, as well, posters were put up at the park and distributed to residents

July - an environmental assessment was undertaken by Baynes Sound Environmental and Youth Ecological Restoration, including a public tour by the environmental team. The tour was advertised in the local newspaper via a press release, on social media and posters in the park.

August - the CVRD's Parks Technician met with members of the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee to review plans for an accessible trail to the falls. The Parks Technician also met with two members of the Plateau Road Residents Association to review plans for an accessible trail to the falls.

October - Parks staff walked the park with two members of the Strathcona Sunrise Rotary Club to outline a proposal for an accessible trail to the falls as the organization is providing a financial contribution.

November – the project webpage was published on the CVRD website and a new brochure was updated to include a notice of the proposed accessible trail on the brochure map. The CVRD hosted an evening meeting in the CVRD boardroom with interested park users and residents to outline a proposal for an accessible trail to the falls Meeting notices were posted at the park and distributed to residents through the Plateau Road Residents Association.

December - the CVRD Parks Technician spoke at the Strathcona Sunrise Rotary Club's breakfast meeting to review plans for an accessible trail to the falls. An RFQ (Request for Quotes) was issued and a December site meeting was held with interested bidders.

2019

In January 2019: quotes were received, reviewed and a contract awarded. The Plateau Road Residents Association was advised January 25 that work would commence January 28. The general public was advised via a news release, social media, print advertising and also notices posted at the park.

Project considerations:

Surveying

- extra money was spent on the alignment to avoid large trees as much as possible

Tree falling

- the environmental consultant's recommendation was that this is conducted outside of nesting season

Trampled path- trail located on widest path in park with trampled vegetation. Approximately 70% of widened trail width is on existing path

Width of trail

- similar to some of Seal Park trails and the entrance to Nymph Falls Park; this is not an uncommon natural width in popular parks
- users often walk with coolers and in large groups to falls, resulting in significant trail braiding and widening

Accessibility

- rare opportunity to create a more accessible trail to significant viewing feature
- allows for emergency access; fire concerns in neighborhood and with user type at Nymph Falls
- a gazebo was requested by park users for shelter as people with mobility challenges often have difficulty regulating temperature and sometimes require additional protection from the elements. Purposely designed to be small in size and minimize impact using existing look-out.

Plantings afterwards

- 800 plants are going to be planted afterwards; this far exceeds any plant removal.

Canopy Cover

- the canopy cover of the forest was to be maintained at 100% with a 10% allowance in certain areas.

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