

# Report to Council



**Date:** September 30, 2015  
**File:** 1840-20  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** B. Davidson, Park Planner  
**Subject:** 2015 Knox Mountain Park Update

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Park Planner dated September 30, 2015, with respect to the 2015 Knox Mountain Park Update.

## **Purpose:**

Council requested staff to report back on the status of the trails in Knox Mountain Park, specifically on the history of trail development and what is planned for the future.

## **Background:**

Knox Mountain Park is the City's largest Natural Area Park at 310 ha (766 acres). The summit of Knox Mountain is 646 metres above sea level and approximately 300 metres above lake level. The park contains almost 1400 meters of Okanagan Lake shoreline. It is home to several representative Okanagan ecosystems as the park transitions from lakeshore to mountain top including riparian, wetland, ponderosa pine/bunch grass and dry interior douglas-fir. The size, height, central location and natural amenities make this park a landmark that is a highly desirable destination for residents and tourists alike.

There are a wide range of key issues affecting Knox Mountain Park, many of which relate directly to the impact of users on the park's environmentally significant areas and the conflict among various activities (hiking, dog-walking, mountain biking, vehicles, etc.). These issues have intensified over the past decade as the number of park users continues to increase over time.

In concert with a biophysical inventory and environmental overview, a major update to the park management plan was initiated in 2009. Formal consultation with internal and external stakeholders as well as the general public occurred over a two year period, with completion of the Plan in 2011.

External stakeholders that participated in the planning process included:

- The Park Caretaker;
- Friends of Knox Mountain Park;
- Central Okanagan Naturalist Club;
- Central Okanagan Hiking Club;
- Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan;
- And the Kelowna Disc Golf Association.

Internal stakeholders included:

- Parks Services;
- Communications;
- Recreation and Cultural Services;
- Land Use Management;
- and the Kelowna Fire Department.

The management plan's main premise was based on sustaining and improving the environmental health of the park for future generations while enhancing visitors' experiences within the park. Three categories of strategic goals were identified:

- A Place for Nature,
- A Place for People, and
- A Place for Stewardship.

City Council endorsed the Knox Mountain Management Plan on November 14, 2011, directing staff to use it as a guide and policy document to follow future planning for the park, and directing staff to consider that appropriate priority be given to the management of Knox Mountain Park in the development of the long-term capital plan, (see <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page2063.aspx>).

With input from stakeholder groups, the management plan identified and prioritized 22 capital projects for implementation in Knox Mountain Park over the next fifteen years. The total investment of all capital projects was estimated at \$3.0M (in \$2011). Due to affordability and to ensure that projects were being implemented in the park yearly, the plan recommended budgeting for an average capital expenditure of \$200k each year. The Plan also recommended a further 14 operations and maintenance tasks, many of which were recommended to occur annually.

Projects identified in the management plan will maintain and improve existing infrastructure, reduce conflict between user groups, increase capacity within the park for recreation opportunities, and minimize human impact on sensitive and vulnerable areas.

Table 1 below lists the capital projects proposed in the Management Plan out to the year 2026 and indicates their status. Projects highlighted in green have been completed. Projects highlighted in yellow are behind schedule. Table 2 lists the Operating and Maintenance Projects recommended for the same period.

**Table 1: Capital Projects proposed within Knox Mountain Park Management Plan**

Phase	Priority Number	Capital Project	Year (s) Scheduled in Management Plan	Status
Phase 1 2012 to 2015	1	Apex Trail Restoration	2012 to 2015	Completed Ahead of schedule in 2013
	2	Rezone all Park parcels to P3	2012	Completed on schedule in 2012
	3	Pauls Tomb Realignment	2012	Behind schedule
	4	Pauls Tomb Interpretive Signage	2012	Behind schedule
	5	Install Vehicle Gate above Crown Lookout	2012	Completed on schedule in 2012
	6	Establish designated downhill and cross country mountain bike trails	2013 / 2014	In progress, behind schedule by two years. Accessible cycle trail completed; downhill trails to be completed in 2015; XC trail loop yet to be established
	7	Kathleen Lake Trail Improvements	2013 to 2015	Behind schedule
	21	Ellis St. Dog off-leash area	2015	Behind schedule
All Phases	8	Annual Park Perimeter Fencing	2013 to 2026	Behind schedule, one installment completed in 2012
Phase 2 2016 to 2018	9	Remove playground & parking area	2016	Playground removed in 2013; parking area still remaining
	10	Install fencing & signage around Nature Reserve zones	2017 / 2018 / 2019	
	11	Ogopogo and Pavilion Trail Restoration	2016	
	12	Install info kiosk & entry signage at Ellis St.	2017	
Phase 3 2019 to 2021	13	Signage installation on remaining trails	2019 / 2020	
	14	Crown (lower) Lookout staging area improvements	2019	
	15	Apex (upper) Lookout staging area improvements	2020	
	16	New Kathleen Lake staging / parking area	2020	
	17	Public washroom construction Crown (lower) lookout	2021	
	18	Saddle Trail Loop Development (Grainger Road Parcel)	2022	
Phase 4 2022 to 2026	19	New Grainger Road staging / parking area	2023	
	20	Realignment of Ellis St / Poplar Point Drive	2023 / 2024	Pending land acquisition
	22	Universally accessible trail development to Apex (upper) Lookout	2025	

**Table 2: Operations and Maintenance Tasks recommended within the Knox Mountain Park Management Plan**

Phase	Priority Number	Operations and Maintenance Items	Year (s) Scheduled in Management Plan	Status
All Phases	23	Annual inspections and maintenance of: signage, trails, fencing, parking areas, irrigation portable toilets, snow removal, tennis courts	2012 to 2026	On schedule, completed annually since 2012. No snow removal is done in the park.
	24	Portable washrooms and maintenance (April to October)	2012 to 2026	On schedule, washrooms at Pioneer Pavilion open from April to October; portable toilets provided in fall and winter months.
	25	Park Caretaker	2012 to 2026	On Schedule, 3 year contract will expire at end of 2015. A new RFP will be issued later this fall.
	26	Part time dedicated bylaw officer	2013 to 2026	
	27	3 summer student positions for park ambassadors and noxious weed removal	2103 to 2026	On schedule and provided annually (reduced in 2012 for one year).
	28	Forest Management: hazardous tree removal , fuel modification, replanting	2012 to 2026	On schedule and inspections completed annually.
	33	Semi-annual stakeholder meeting	2012 to 2026	An annual stakeholder meeting has occurred since completion of the Management Plan, typically in early April.
	34	Annual Scorecard Assessment: Measurements include: avian, plant and vehicle counts, number of events, bylaw infractions, water level of Kathleen Lake	2012 to 2026	Annual measurements are conducted in early June by volunteers from the Naturalists Club and City staff.
	35	Dedicated Park Webpage	2012 to 2026	Regularly updated
Phase 1 2012 to 2015	29	Rock Scaling	2013	Behind schedule
	32	Develop urban wildlife management plan	2014	Behind schedule
Phase 2 2016 to 2018	36	Half-time grounds maintenance position	2016 to 2018	
Phase 3 2019 to 2021	30	Update Management Plan and Environmental Status	2020	
	31	Resurfacing of Knox Mountain Drive	2020	
	36	Half-time grounds maintenance position	2019 to 2021	

Phase 4 2022 to 2026	29	Rock Scaling	2023	
	36	Conversion to full time grounds maintenance position	2022 to 2026	

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of management activities and ongoing environmental impacts an annual monitoring program is undertaken each June that follows measurement criteria established by an environmental consultant. Data gathered each year is compared with baseline data established in 2012. Volunteer birders and botanists from the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club are key participants in these annual counts. It is clear from vehicle count data, (average daily number of vehicles in 2012 was 448 and in 2014 was 582), and from the number of events receiving permits, (23 events in 2012 compared with 34 in 2014), that Knox Mountain Park is becoming more popular each year.

Since 2011, Council has approved annual budget submissions totaling \$600,000 that have allowed staff to incrementally move forward with implementing the capital projects identified in the plan; (\$100,000 approved budget in each of 2011, 2012, 2013 and \$150,000 for both 2014 and 2015). The City was the successful recipient of 2013 grant from the Federal Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund for \$100,000 towards restoration of a section of the Apex Trail. In addition, Fortis removed 8 power poles and associated lines on the front face of the park in 2012.

Due to the growing popularity, together with its fragile ecosystems, the park requires a proactive management approach and reliable annual funding over the long term.

**Internal Circulation:**

Parks and Building Planning Manager  
Parks Services Manager  
Urban Forestry Supervisor  
Senior Project Manager Infrastructure Delivery

**Communications Comments:**

In keeping with the recommendations in the Management Plan, early each spring staff hosts an annual stakeholder meeting where information is shared on projects implemented in the park within the past year, and what is planned for the upcoming season. Feedback is solicited and received on successes and areas needing improvement as well stewardship opportunities.

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

A budget request will be included in the 2016 Capital Plan for consideration by Council.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Personnel Implications:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:

B. Davidson, Parks Planner

Approved for inclusion:



A. Newcombe, Infrastructure Divisional Director

Attachments 1: 2015 Knox Mountain Park Update - Presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Infrastructure  
Infrastructure Planning Dept Manager