



# Regional Board Report

## Request for Decision

**To:** Regional Board

**From:** Manager, Parks Services

**Date:** February 2, 2023

**Subject:** Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society – Annual Funding Reinstatement Request

**Voting Entitlement:** *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s.208)*

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**Purpose:** To present information to the board, as requested, regarding the funding request for the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society.

### **Executive Summary:**

In September 2022, the Board received a request from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society to reinstate a \$40,000 annual operating grant. The Friends of Fintry have received an annual operating grant from RDCO and Regional Parks for 19 years beginning in 2004. A 2019-2020 Regional Parks program service review proposed a repurposing of these tax requisition funds to support “Friends of” organizations that directly support Regional Parks. To provide the Friends of Fintry with time to adapt their operations and find alternate funding sources, the RDCO annual operating grant was phased out over 3 years from 2020 - 2022.

At the October 13, 2022 meeting, the Board considered the correspondence from the Friends of Fintry, along with an accompanying Parks Service memo, and requested additional information. This supplemental report from Parks Services, with information from the Friends of Fintry Society outlining their efforts to seek additional provincial funding, is provided for Board consideration.

### **Recommendation(s):**

**THAT** the Regional Board receive the supplemental report from the Manager, Park Services regarding the funding request from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society, dated February 2, 2023, for information;

**AND THAT** the Regional Board deny the request to reinstate a \$40,000 annual operating grant for the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society.

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*Respectfully submitted by: James Chester, Parks Partnership Liaison – Parks Services*

Approved by:



Wayne Darlington, Manager – Parks Services

Attachment(s):

1. Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society's letter to RDCO Chair received on September 26, 2022, requesting the RDCO Board provide \$40,000 annual funding for 2023.
2. Memorandum to the RDCO Board – Friends of Fintry – Funding Support Request from October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
3. Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society's response received January 9, 2023, to a request for information pertaining to their attempts to secure other operational funding sources.
4. Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society's brief history of the acquisition of Fintry Provincial Park received January 9, 2023.
5. PowerPoint presentation

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### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Priorities: Environment, Choose an item.

Values: Relationships, Collaboration

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### **Background:**

#### HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS OF FINTRY PROVINCIAL PARK SOCIETY FUNDING

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) entered into a partnership with the Province of BC in 1995 that supported the acquisition of Fintry Provincial Park. The park was purchased for \$7,680,000 by the province with the Regional District contributing \$2,000,000.

Through a Grant in Aid program request in 2004, the RDCO Board supported the allocation of \$30,000 in funding in support of the Friends of Fintry Provincial Parks Society so that they could employ a full-time executive director to aid the Society to work with the Province of BC in securing additional public benefits for the Fintry Provincial Park site. The RDCO financial support increased annually to \$39,000 in 2008, at which point in time the RDCO Board decided to shift from a Grant in Aid to funding through annual operating expenses for the Regional Park Service program. Friends of Fintry support remained at the \$39,000 annual funding level as part of the RDCO Regional Parks Service program operating expenses until 2020.

The RDCO made a very significant financial contribution of \$2 million dollars to support the acquisition of Fintry Provincial Park and then subsequently invested more than \$500,000 over a 15-year period supporting the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society.

### HISTORY OF THE PHASING OUT OF THE FRIENDS OF FINTRY PROVINCIAL PARK SOCIETY FUNDING

As a result of a comprehensive 2019 - 2020 Regional Parks Service Review process, the Regional Board decided to refocus tax requisition funds from Central Okanagan residents that had been provided to the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park to better support the various non-profit “Friends of Regional Parks” partner organizations that are linked directly with the RDCO regional parks service program.

At its regular Board meeting on September 10, 2020, the Regional Board adopted the following resolution:

*“**THAT** the Regional Board approves ending the annual funding of \$39,000 to the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society in 2022;*

***AND FURTHER THAT** the end in funding be phased: \$26,000 in 2021 and \$13,000 in 2022.”*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OCTOBER 2022 MEMO AND SUBSEQUENT REGIONAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the RDCO Chair and Corporate Services received correspondence from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park requesting \$40,000 in funding support to be used towards a half-time curator and a half-time business manager.

At the October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, RDCO Board meeting, a delegation from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park was received, as a result the board adopted the following resolution:

*“**THAT** the Regional Board receives the correspondence from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society for information;*

***AND THAT** the Regional Board requests that the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society provide additional information regarding their efforts/experience to secure funding support from the Province of BC;*

***AND THAT** the Regional Board requests staff investigate and provide additional information regarding how similar “Friends of” other Provincial park organizations secure operational funding (i.e. Friends of Manning Provincial Park, Friends of Strathcona Provincial Park, BC Parks Foundation);*

***AND THAT** the Regional Board requests staff explore options with the Okanagan Nation for partnerships and funding for the ongoing support of the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society;*

***AND FURTHER THAT** the requested additional information be provided to the Regional Board for consideration as part of the budget 2023 discussions.”*

## RESPONSES AND INFORMATION ADDRESSING THE OCTOBER 13<sup>th</sup> RDCO BOARD RESOLUTION

**1. THAT** the Regional Board receives the correspondence from the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society for Information;

RDCO Board received September 22, 2022, letter for information (*attached to this report*).

**2. AND THAT** the Regional Board requests that the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society provide additional information regarding their efforts / experience to secure funding support from the Province of BC;

In an email response, received on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Friends of Fintry have applied for additional 2023 funding sources and grants. These sources are Canada Summer Jobs and BC Gaming grant. The response also highlighted the challenges that the Friends of Fintry anticipate due to the lack of funding.

The email response from the Friends of Fintry, received on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, included a letter outlining potential funding sources and anticipated challenges, as well as a brief history of the acquisition of Fintry Provincial Park. Both documents are attached to this report.

**3. AND THAT** the Regional Board requests staff to investigate and provide additional information regarding how similar "Friends of" other Provincial Park organizations secure operational funding (i.e. Friends of Manning Provincial Park, Friends of Strathcona Provincial Park, BC Parks Foundation);

Regional Parks' staff met with BC Parks area supervisors for the South Okanagan and Kootenay Lake regions to inquire how "Friends of" organizations can secure operational funding.

BC Parks has an established program to partner with volunteer non-profit organizations. In the Kootenay and Okanagan regions, there are fifteen (15) non-profit "Friends of" groups identified as partners on the BC Parks Volunteer website, including local organizations, the Friends of the South Slopes and Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan.

Each of these "Friends of" groups have entered into a 5-year partnership agreement with BC Parks to provide specific volunteer tasks and services in identified provincial parks. Each of these agreements is based on a template, and customized to the unique requirements for each provincial park and the capacities and interests of each non-profit organization. The partnership agreement provides liability insurance and accident benefit insurance to the non-profit organization but does not provide operational funding.

There are three funding opportunities through BC Parks, that are available to "Friends of" organizations, depending on the funding requirements, project specifications and capacity of the non-profit organization.

- 1) BC Parks provides financial support to these groups through the Park Enhancement Fund grants. These grants have a maximum value of \$5,000 annually.
- 2) License plate funding is an additional source of funding for project-based requests.

- 3) Commercial recreation permits can be acquired by service providers. An example of a Friends group with a commercial recreation permit is the Kokanee Creek Nature Centre Society. They provide visitor programming and concession from April 1 – Oct 15 annually. A non-profit concession (coffee/gifts) provides funding for interpretative programming.

Operational expenses are not eligible for funding through the Park Enhancement Fund grants nor the License Plate funding program.

**4. AND THAT** the Regional Board requests staff explore options with the Okanagan Nation for partnerships and funding for the ongoing support of the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society;

Through consultation with our Indigenous Advisor, should the Friends of Fintry approach Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) for funding it should be done directly with that Nation with no involvement of the RDCO, and only if there is already an established relationship/partnership between the Friends of Fintry and Okanagan Indian Band.

**5. AND FURTHER THAT** the requested information be provided to the Regional Board for consideration as part of the budget 2023 discussions.

In conclusion, staff recommend that the RDCO Board does not support the reinstatement of annual funding for the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society.

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**Considerations:**

Financial:

The RDCO financial support that had been provided to the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society, has been reallocated to support the Friends Capacity Building Grant program, which provides grants of up to \$5,000 to our “Friends of” partner organizations, who support Regional Parks. We work with ten “Friends of” groups, such as the Friends of Mission Creek and the Gellatly Nut farm Society.

The Regional Board approved the Friends of Regional Parks Partnership Program, including the Friends Capacity Building Grant on February 22, 2021.

Alternate Recommendation:

THAT the Regional Board receive the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society – Annual Funding Reinstatement Request report as information from the Manager, Parks Services dated February 2, 2023 for information.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority
- Organizational/External

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**Approved for Agenda**



**Brian Reardon, CAO**