

How We Got Here

In the summer of 2017, a Nanoose Bay family presented a request to the Nanoose Bay Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee for a natural playground in the Timberstone Estates/Madrona area of Nanoose Bay. Parks staff investigated potential site options and at their next meeting, the Committee recommended that Stone Lake Drive Community Park be pursued as a pilot project for a natural playground and for staff to begin community engagement. The idea of a Focus Group to help facilitate the design of the natural playground was recommended by the Committee at their next meeting in the spring. The RDN Board approved both recommendations in October 2017 and in March 2018.

Some area residents in close proximity to the Park contacted the RDN with concerns about the idea of a playground in the park and requested that the RDN look at Claudet Road Community Park instead. As a result, the development of a Master Plan for Claudet Road Community Park was added to the Nanoose Bay park projects work plan for consideration in the future. The Parks and Open Spaces Committee and the RDN Board continued to support moving forward with the creation of concept plans for a natural play space at Stone Lake Drive Community Park, with the assistance of a Focus Group.

What We Know

About the Site:

- Natural park, nearly 3 acres in size, with paths around stormwater infiltration ponds that were constructed with the residential neighbourhood in 2006.
- About 200 addresses are within 500m of the park and about 400 are within 1km of the park.
- An Environmental Study was completed, with no major limitations to the project idea.

About the Project:

- Budget: ~ \$40,000 (for design and build)
- Timeline: complete 2019-2020
- Small-scale, natural play space(s), easy to walk or bike to, "pilot" project
- Safety a priority

Things we've heard so far...

We have heard some positive feedback for the project, as well as several concerns raised by nearby residents, including:

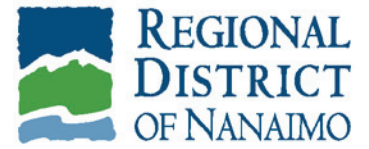
- loss of vegetation (including blackberries)
- safety threat of ponds to children
- traffic speeds on the road
- impacts to wildlife in the park
- impacts to water quality (nearby RDN wells)

The project is not...

- a large or unnatural playground project
- creating a major community destination
- meant to negatively impact the community or park environment

STONE LAKE DRIVE COMMUNITY PARK NATURAL PLAY SPACE PROJECT

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



Who, What, Why, When and Where

A group of local area residents including seven adults and three children came together in a Focus Group setting to:

- ~ share ideas about introducing natural play space(s) at Stone Lake Drive Community Park.
- ~ represent their community and consider what will make this a successful project for all.
- ~ discuss the project vision and identify natural play elements suitable for the park.

Two representatives from the Nanoose Bay Parks and Open Spaces Advisory Committee also attended, along with the RDN Parks Planner for Area E.

The session was held from 9:00am - 12:00pm on Sunday, December 9th at Nanoose Place.

Key Questions that were considered and the responses noted at the session:

1) What would success for this project be for you, for your community?

- Encourages a friendly neighbourhood atmosphere.
- Provides a meeting place for families.
- Is more visually interesting.
- Serves a multi-generational purpose.
- Creates a healthy, active space for kids to play.
- Uses natural elements in line with “Nurtured By Nature.”
- Is properly maintained.



STONE LAKE DRIVE COMMUNITY PARK NATURAL PLAY SPACE PROJECT

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



Key questions and responses ...continued:

2) What are the opportunities and constraints for this site? How should these be considered in the design?

- Ponds:

- Some people would like to see wire added to the fences around the ponds for safety reasons, but this may not be needed as the risks are there now. It is supposed to be natural.
- Perhaps just enhance the fencing at the park entrance near the play space area.
- The overgrowth around the ponds is more the concern. Open up some areas of plant/tree/bush growth to allow safer viewing of the ponds, which will allow people to watch frogs, ducks and other creatures in the habitat.
- Keep pond buffer removal to a minimum, as the vegetation is good for the pond ecosystem.

- Waste and Litter:

- People are not cleaning up after their dogs, or are throwing poop bags into the bushes.
- Have a toilet near the entrance. Provide hand sanitizer.
- Put in a toilet, which will accommodate all ages. Accessibility could be a consideration as there are seniors in the neighbourhood.
- Put in a garbage can.

- Traffic:

- Parking is a concern, however the group felt this shouldn't be an issue because it is not a full playground and will likely primarily appeal to neighbours who can walk to the park.
- Speed along Stone Lake Drive was an issue raised. The group felt that the RDN should request playground zone signage to slow drivers down.

- Vegetation and Habitat:

- Limit changes to the habitat. For example, where water pools; perhaps have a log over the area for children to walk across.
- Keep the trees at the entrance. Work around them, but perhaps take out the blackberries. The trees provide shade.
- Consider adding new trees.
- Blackberries are an invasive species; consider removing the blackberries at the entrance of the park. Opening the space will provide more room and may allow other plants to grow better.
- Interpretive signage along the trails can educate visitors about the habitat.

STONE LAKE DRIVE COMMUNITY PARK NATURAL PLAY SPACE PROJECT

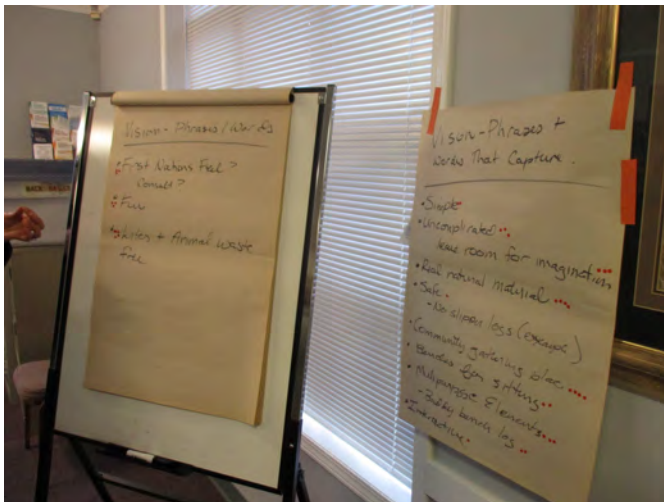
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY



Key questions and responses ...continued:

- Park Use and Design:
 - Add park benches to sit on while kids play or talk with neighbours
 - Walkable distance which allows kids to get together
 - Focus new park elements to one area near the entrance as much as possible rather than dotting play elements throughout the park. This is a pilot project so keep it simple. Also, it will be easier for parents, grandparents and caregivers to watch the children. By grouping the elements near the front of the park it supports the idea of creating a neighbourhood gathering place.
 - Design the park with families in mind - geared towards young children and families.

3) What words or phrases best represent a “vision” for the project in your mind?



- Simple (3)
- Uncomplicated (3)
- Leave room for imagination (4)
- Real natural materials (5)
- Safe (for example, no slippery logs) 2
- Community gathering place (6)
- Benches for sitting (7)
- Multipurpose elements (like a buddy bench which is a log with seat indents) (7)
- Interactive (1)
- First Nations input (5)
- Fun (8)
- Litter and pet-waste free (5)

*Participants were asked to vote on the list that was generated to indicate their priorities for the play space/park enhancements. The numbers in parentheses indicate number of votes.

(Note, participants had the option to place multiple stickers on items they felt strongly about.)



STONE LAKE DRIVE COMMUNITY PARK NATURAL PLAY SPACE PROJECT



FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Getting Creative!

Kids and adults were invited to get creative and have some fun moving pieces around on a scaled 1 to 100 plan of the park's trail network and entrance area.



Kids model



Adults model focusing near park entrance

Images posted up with natural play elements were also voted on. The elements that received the most votes are listed below. (Note, participants had the option to place multiple stickers on items they felt strongly about.)



Play Features:

- tunnel feature (40)
- stepping logs / toadstools (35)
- balancing logs (32)
- table feature (20)
- natural swing (13)
- hollowed logs / stump (10)
- seesaw feature (9)
- rock/wood steps (8)
- stacked rock (1)

In addition, other non-play features including a garbage can, benches and a portable toilet received support from the group.