

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2015



### **Old Baldy Mountain Acquired as Park for Shawnigan Lake Community**

**Shawnigan Lake, BC** - With the generous support of financial donations raised through an active community-led fundraising campaign, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is very pleased to announce the acquisition of a major community park for the Shawnigan Lake community. Over 100 hectares (247 acres) of the top and western slopes of Old Baldy Mountain was purchased with the donations raised, in addition to funding through the Electoral Area B - Shawnigan Lake Community Parks function administered by the CVRD.

“Over the years Old Baldy Mountain has been subjected to logging, along with threats of resort and housing development proposals”, notes Shawnigan Lake Electoral Area Director Sonia Furstenau, “The community of Shawnigan Lake can celebrate knowing that this beautiful backdrop to the lake captured in the works of renowned artist E. J. Hughes will be protected in perpetuity. Conservation of Old Baldy Mountain as a local natural park also contributes to the overall watershed protection objectives for Shawnigan Lake, and signifies the true direction the Shawnigan community wants for its future.”

The properties were acquired upon understanding that the CVRD intends to maintain the lands as a natural park with trails for the use and enjoyment of local residents and visitors to Shawnigan Lake. Work is planned with the Shawnigan Lake Parks Commission, and local trail advocates, to assess and map out opportunities to formalize accessible trails on Old Baldy Mountain, including a focus on environmental enhancement work to restore areas impacted by past activities.

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## Backgrounder

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### **Old Baldy Mountain Acquired as Park for Shawnigan Lake Community**

Where is Old Baldy Mountain?

Old Baldy Mountain is located to the immediate southeast of Shawnigan Lake Village on the east side of Shawnigan Lake. The mountain's summit rises to 458 metres (1,500 feet), offering 360 degree panoramic views of Shawnigan Lake, the upper Koksilah River watershed, Sidney, Saltspring Island and other southern Gulf Islands. A prominent and important geographic feature overlooking Shawnigan Lake, the mountain is visible from numerous vantage points around the lake.

Why Acquire Old Baldy Mountain as a Community Park in Shawnigan Lake?

The passive outdoor recreation values and environmental features of Old Baldy Mountain have long been recognized by local residents as being important to protect. Official community plans for Shawnigan Lake dating back to the 1980's include such references for the mountain. The Shawnigan Lake Community Parks and Trails Master Plan, adopted by the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board in 2010 following broad community consultation in preparing the plan, notes as a high priority the securing of areas of Old Baldy Mountain as a nature park in order to ensure protection of sensitive slopes and outdoor recreational resources.

What are the Outdoor Recreation Opportunities on Old Baldy Mountain?

For decades community members and visitors have informally hiked on Old Baldy Mountain along a network of passive trails and historical logging skidder roads to access the summit. The acquisition by the CVRD of over 100 hectares (247 acres) encompassing the summit, the western slope and portions of the northern slope, provides the opportunity to formalize a network of accessible hiking/walking trails for residents and visitors to Shawnigan Lake to enjoy and experience into the future.

What are the Key Environmental Features of Old Baldy Mountain?

The slopes of Old Baldy Mountain include terrestrial herbaceous plant communities on the exposed rocky outcrops along the western and southern slopes and Older Second Growth Forest on the northern slopes, as identified through the Provincial Sensitive Environmental Inventory Mapping for southeastern Vancouver Island. Protection of these ecologically important features will be a priority in managing these lands as a nature park. The forested slopes of Old Baldy Mountain play an important watershed management role for the health of Shawnigan Lake.

How were the Old Baldy Mountain Properties Acquired?

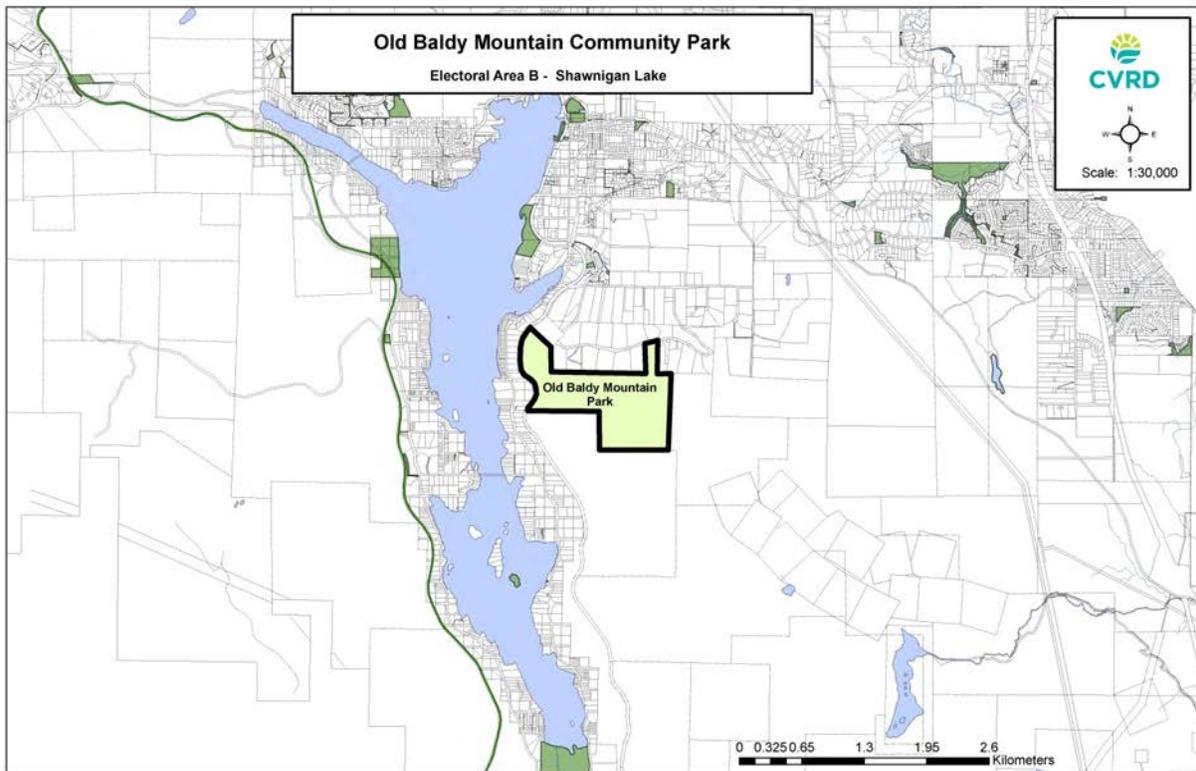
The two properties totalling over 100 hectares (247 acres) in size were acquired by the CVRD from a numbered company for a purchase price of \$1.5 million. The purchase was completed through community donations of close to \$75,000 raised to date, reserve funds from the Shawnigan Lake Community Parks function administered by the Regional District and a short term loan to be paid back over the next five years. Funds to pay off the loan will be through the Shawnigan Lake Community Parks Budget annually approved by the Regional Board; proceeds of sale from lands deemed surplus to community park needs within Shawnigan Lake; and through financial contribution requirements of planned developments within Shawnigan Lake.



*View of Old Baldy Mountain from Shawnigan Lake  
(CVRD Photo)*



*Near the summit of Old Baldy Mountain, looking down on Shawnigan Lake  
and the upper Koksilah River watershed (CVRD Photo)*



*Location map of Old Baldy Mountain in Shawnigan Lake*

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