

*Special Report*

# The Nature Legacy and Regional Parks

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*Breathtaking addition to Iona Beach Regional Park on the North Arm of the Fraser River was achieved in part by a generous \$1 million land gift from Canadian Forest Products Ltd. The firm also made a \$1 million land gift toward Douglas Island Regional Park.*

*Vancouver's world-famous Stanley Park is a precious gem. A pearl.*

*With the recent addition of lands from the Lower Mainland Nature Legacy the GVRD's parks system has grown in size to the equivalent of 28 Stanley Parks. A string of pearls adorning The Livable Region.*

*Over time, some treasures diminish. Not these.  
Their wonder will last forever.*

# Greater Vancouver the Big Winner in Nature Legacy Program

GVRD residents already proud of their spectacular outdoor setting have even more reason to rejoice. As of June, their amount of dedicated parkland almost quadrupled, from about 21,000 hectares to more than 80,000 hectares.

In addition to the creation of two new large provincial parks in the Indian Arm and Pinecone-Burke Mountain areas, new regional parkland secures key pieces of the GVRD'S Green Zone, a critical building block of its *Livable Region Strategic Plan*.

One thousand, eight hundred and ninety-two hectares, including five new regional parks, and extensions to six existing parks, brings the total size of the impressive GVRD park system to 11,320 hectares spread among 25 parks.

The new parkland is part of the \$71.4 million Lower Mainland Nature Legacy, a program financed by the Province of B.C., GVRD, the Federal Government and several municipalities.

There are many benefits to GVRD residents. New parkland has been secured in high growth areas so that increasing recreation demands can be better met. Public access to waterfronts can be improved, and threatened regional features and habitats conserved.

In 1994, the GVRD created the Heritage Parkland Acquisition Fund in response to strong public support for acquiring and protecting regional wildlife and recreation lands while affordable and still available. When the Province of B.C. initiated Nature Legacy discussions, GVRD was ready, willing and able to join in and help determine which critical parkland sites should be purchased.

The properties were acquired through contributions of land and money from the Province of B.C. (49,150 hectares), Delta, Surrey, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Langley Township, and Environment Canada. GVRD contributed \$12.8 million, and also transferred its lands at Granite Falls Regional Park to the new provincial park in Indian Arm.

In addition, two major land gifts each worth \$1 million — one at Iona Beach and one on Douglas Island — were received from Canadian Forest Products.

A look at the map tells the story: from Richmond to Abbotsford, from Belcarra to Delta, the new sites go a long way to enhancing our recreational opportunities, protecting wildlife and creating a heritage waterway.

The Fraser River component of the Nature Legacy is particularly impressive. Lands were acquired at Surrey Bend, Douglas Island, Barnston Island, Don and Lion Islands, Poplar Island, Brae Island, and Colony Farm. New lands were added to Derby Reach, Glen Valley and Iona Beach.

Combined with provincial wildlife reserves along the Fraser, there will now be more than 80 kilometres of riverfront for residents to explore!

## **Iona Beach Expansion (Richmond)**

One hundred and thirty-three hectares of

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*“...the new sites go a long way to enhancing our recreational opportunities and protecting wildlife...”*

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land at Iona Island were added to the existing Iona Beach Regional Park. Iona Beach is already a birders' paradise and offers walkers a dramatic four kilometre walk on the north arm jetty out into the Strait of Georgia. The new land will increase swimming, picnicking, cycling and nature study opportunities.

## **Surrey Bend (Surrey)**

A new 334-hectare regional park will be created at the narrowing of the river between Barnston and Douglas Islands. Its significant bog, marsh and forested areas will provide for passive recreation trails and nature study. Because of its significance, the City of Surrey contributed \$8 million toward the cost.

## **Barnston Island (Electoral Area C)**

A new 10-hectare day use site will be created on Barnston Island, a favourite with cyclists. Basic park services will be provided, and recreation activities expanded to include shoreline fishing and picnicking.

## **Colony Farm (Coquitlam)**

This 236-hectare parcel of land on both sides of the Coquitlam River features dyke

trails and wildlife viewing. This park will provide scenic trails in the growing north-east sector of the region. Specialized agricultural activities will be a part of the new park as well. Coquitlam has contributed 24 hectares of riverside lands to the park.

## **Douglas Park (Port Coquitlam)**

As part of the Colony Farm/Douglas Island regional park complex, this 187-hectare island will protect important foreshore marsh and riverine habitat. It will be retained as a natural area for nature appreciation and walking.

## **Derby Reach Expansion (Langley Township)**

One hundred and fourteen hectares, including a pine bog forest, were added to the existing Derby Reach Regional Park. Park visitors can look forward to expanded fishing, hiking, picnicking and boating opportunities and an expanded waterfront trail.

## **Brae Island (Langley Township)**

Seventy-nine hectare Brae Island, a potential camping area near Fort Langley, was also added to the Legacy program this summer.

## **Don and Lion Islands (Richmond)**

Twenty-four hectares of low-lying floodplain islands, downstream from Annacis Island and New Westminster — also a new regional park — will protect fish and wildlife habitat, and provide passive recreation.

## **Poplar Island (New Westminster)**

Another 14 hectares of marsh and floodplain forest has been added to the network of parks along the river. Poplar Island in New Westminster will be a passive nature park and conservation area.

## **Glen Valley Expansion (Abbotsford)**

Nine-one hectares (including 57-hectare Crescent Island, 13-hectare Poplar Bar, 21 hectares of escarpment and other riverfront lands) were added to the existing Glen Valley Regional Park. Crescent Island's acquisition will preserve waterfowl habitat and provide limited boat-in recreation. Polar Bar plans call for additional access to the Fraser to enhance foreshore fishing.

Imagine a time in the future when kayakers, boaters, outdoor classroom students, and public tour participants enjoy a series

# The Nature Legacy and GVRD Parks

- how much land
- the cost
- who contributed

(One ha - hectare - equals just under 2-1/2 acres.  
Stanley Park = 405 ha)

**Brae Island** 79 ha \$3.2 million  
(Langley Township)

(final acquisition of this site is still pending)

- Funds for private purchase would come from the GVRD and the Province.

## NEW REGIONAL PARKS

<u>Site</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Cost</u>
<b>Surrey Bend</b> (Surrey)	<b>334 ha</b>	<b>\$13.1 million</b>

- Most of the land was acquired through private purchases.
- The City of Surrey contributed \$8 million and 5 ha of land.
- The GVRD contributed \$3 million and 70 ha of land.
- The Province contributed \$2.1 million and arranged a key land exchange.

<b>Barnston Island</b> (Electoral Area C)	<b>10 ha</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>
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- The GVRD contributed \$225,000.
- The Province contributed \$225,000.

<b>Douglas Island</b> (Port Coquitlam)	<b>187 ha</b>	<b>\$5.6 million</b>
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- Canadian Forest Products Ltd., the Island's owner, contributed a land gift of \$1 million.
- The GVRD contributed \$2 million.
- The Province contributed \$2 million.
- The Federal Government contributed \$530,000.
- The City of Port Coquitlam contributed \$100,000.

<b>Colony Farm</b> (Coquitlam)	<b>260 ha</b>	—
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- The Province contributed 236 ha of land.
- The City of Coquitlam contributed 24 ha of land.

<b>Poplar Island</b> (New Westminster)	<b>14 ha</b>	—
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- The Province arranged a land exchange with the Island's owners.

<b>Don and Lion Islands</b> (Richmond)	<b>24 ha</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>
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- The Province and the Federal Government each contributed \$400,000 toward the private purchase.



*Free ferry ride take cyclists to Barnston Island, where there is a new regional park.*



*Delta Air Park in Delta is now part of Boundary Bay Regional Park.*



*In Abbotsford, 91 ha were added to Glen Valley Regional Park, including 57 ha Crescent Island (in background) and Poplar Bar (foreground).*

of landing places along the Fraser River for recreation, wildlife viewing and heritage appreciation.

Other Nature Legacy sites include:

### **Boundary Bay Regional Park Expansion (Delta)**

New lands at this internationally known birding site were added to the existing Boundary Bay Regional Park: 89 hectares known as the Spetifore lands (at the east end of 12th Avenue in Tsawwassen), the 29-hectare Delta Airpark lands, a 16-hectare parcel known as East Delta Flats, and an eight-hectare parcel of Crown land at the foot of 72nd Street. The properties will be connected by the 16-kilometre dyke that runs along the north shore of the Bay.

In recognition of the extraordinary wildlife values of Boundary Bay, its 11,000 hectares were designed as a provincial Wildlife Management Area.

### **Belcarra Expansion (Belcarra, Port Moody)**

Four hundred and thirty hectares of Crown land known as Buntzen Ridge were added to the existing Belcarra Regional Park. This heavily forested ridge and mountainside will connect the park with the B.C. Hydro recreation area at Buntzen Lake. Hikers can look forward to spectacular ocean and urban vistas from viewpoints along trails between these popular destinations. Twenty-eight hectares of key Crown land needed for a new scenic access road, Admiralty Drive, were also added to the park.

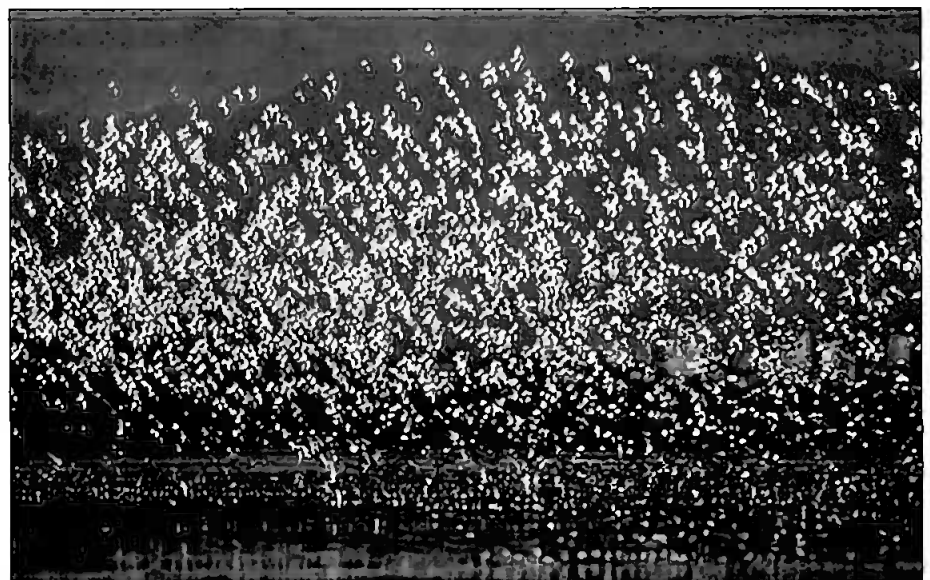
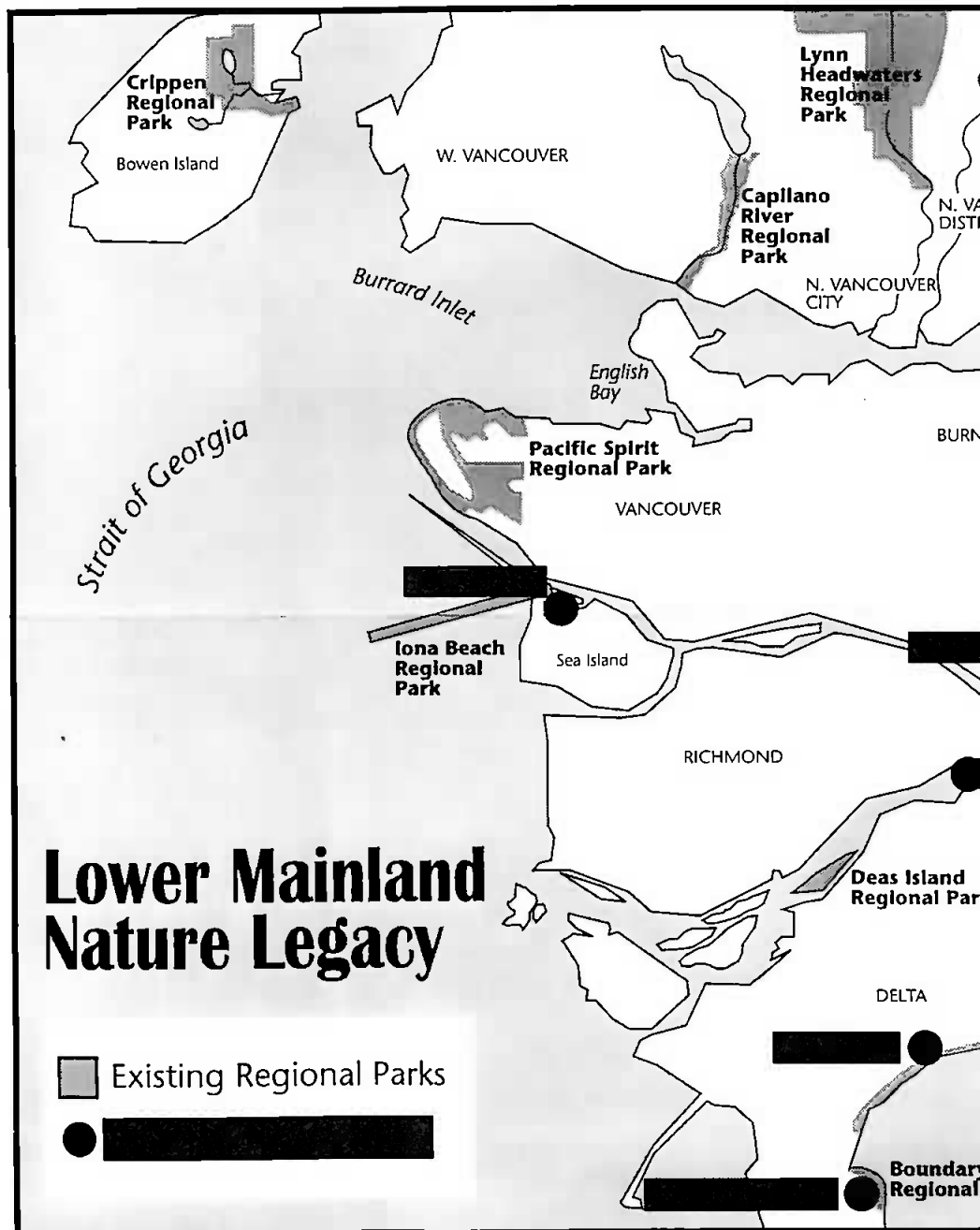
### **Minnehada Expansion (Coquitlam)**

Forty-four hectares of Crown Land known as Minnehada Farm was added to the existing Minnehada Regional Park. This exciting addition will enable GVRD to expand day-use recreation, as well as preserve historic farm features, a retreat of two former B.C. Lieutenant-Governors.

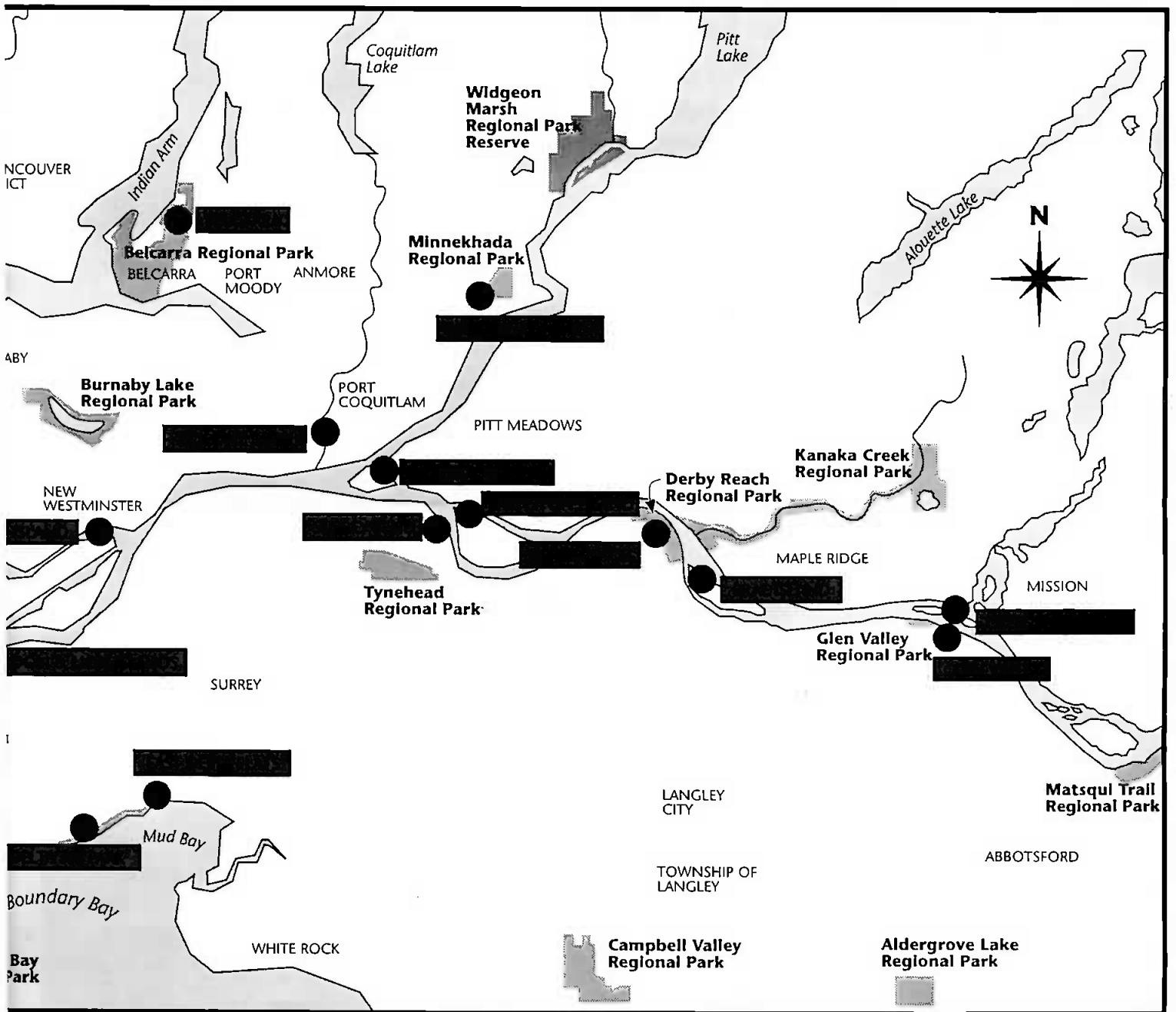
A number of the new sites will not be open to the public until facilities and access are in place. Until then, the GVRD invites individuals, community groups and other agencies to get involved in planning future directions for these park.

For information on GVRD Parks, or to get involved, please call 432-6370.

*By Mary Trainer/GVRD*



*Boundary Bay has been designated a Provincial Wildlife Management Area.*



Longhorn Farm Regional Park, Coquitlam, features trails and wildlife viewing.



Waters of the North Arm of the Fraser flow around Poplar Island Regional Park in New Westminster. It will be a passive nature park and conservation area.



*Minnekhada Farm in Coquitlam was added to Minnekhada Regional Park by the Province.*

## ADDITIONS TO EXISTING REGIONAL PARKS

<u>Site</u>	<u>Size of Addition</u>	<u>Cost</u>
<b>Boundary Bay (Delta)</b>	<b>143 ha</b>	<b>\$9.6 million</b>

- Most of the land was acquired through private purchases, including the former Spetifore farm lands and the Delta Air Park.
- The Federal Government contributed \$4.6 million.
- The GVRD contributed \$2.1 million.
- The Province contributed \$2.9 million and 8 ha of land.
- The Municipality of Delta contributed \$130,000 and 1 ha of land.

<b>Iona Beach (Richmond)</b>	<b>133 ha</b>	<b>\$3.8 million</b>
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- Canadian Forest Products contributed a land gift of \$1 million.
- The Federal Government contributed \$1.3 million.
- The GVRD contributed \$950,000.
- The Province contributed \$500,000 and 42 ha of land.
- The North Fraser Harbour Commission provided a lease on 48 ha.

<b>Belcarra (Belcarra/Port Moody)</b>	<b>458 ha</b>	<b>—</b>
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- The Province contributed this land, most of it known as Buntzen Ridge.

<b>Minnekhada (Coquitlam)</b>	<b>44 ha</b>	<b>—</b>
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- The Province contributed this land, which is a farm that adjoins the existing park.

<b>Glen Valley (Abbotsford)</b>	<b>91 ha</b>	<b>\$1.2 million</b>
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- Most of the land was acquired through private purchase, including 57 ha Crescent Island.
- The GVRD contributed \$610,000.
- The Province contributed \$302,500.
- The Federal Government contributed \$307,500.
- The City of Abbotsford contributed 13 ha known as Poplar Bar.

<b>Derby Reach (Langley Township)</b>	<b>114 ha</b>	<b>\$3.7 million</b>
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- The land was acquired through private purchases.
- The GVRD contributed \$1.8 million.
- The Province contributed \$1.8 million.
- The Township of Langley contributed \$120,000.

## NATURE LEGACY PROGRAM — TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO GVRD PARKS SYSTEM

	<u>Financial</u>	<u>Land</u>
GVRD	\$12.8 million	70 ha
Province*	11.2 million	788 ha
Federal	7.1 million	—
City of Surrey	8.0 million	5 ha
Private land gifts	2.0 million	—
Delta/Langley Township/ Port Coquitlam	0.4 million	—
City of Coquitlam		24 ha
City of Abbotsford		13 ha
Delta		1 ha

Total financial contributions to GVRD parks: \$41.5 million

Total land added to GVRD parks (private purchases and government grants): 1,892 ha

\* The Province also created two large Provincial parks within Greater Vancouver, at Indian Arm and Burke Mountain/Pinecone, at a cost of about \$20 million.



*Former Spetifore farmlands in Delta were a major addition to Boundary Bay Regional Park.*