

# Interpretive Plan



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for

## The Elsie King Trail

in Francis/King  
Regional Park



Capital Regional District

**PARKS**

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**1998**  
submitted to  
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## Executive Summary

The Elsie King Trail in Francis/King Regional Park is Capital Regional District Parks' first Universal Access trail. A boardwalk trail was built in 1981 to provide access for people with limited mobility. In the winter of 1997/98, the trail was closed because sections were rotting and unsafe. As part of a trail redesign and upgrading to current Universal Access standards, EcoLeaders Nature Interpretation was contracted to develop an interpretive plan for the trail. This report presents the interpretive plan and corresponding sign plan for the Elsie King Trail.

Interpretation is a key service provided by Capital Regional District Parks. At Francis/King Regional Park, interpretive programs feature local natural and cultural history with the aim of raising the awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the park's resources in the eyes of park visitors. The interpretive plan will be used by CRD Parks interpretive planners and staff to develop and integrate interpretive programming on the Elsie King Trail. Interpretive trail signs are additional components to the interpretive program in the park.

## Part 1: General Interpretive Plan

The General Interpretive Plan documents and analyzes what is known about the people who visit the park – how many come, when, how often they visit, how long they stay, why they come, and what they are interested in. The plan presents an inventory, itemizes and maps of the features along the trail. These features were interpreted, and analyzed in terms of interpretive value and risk of resource damage by visitors. Finally, a series of interpretive themes is identified that can be used by interpreters to develop programs that bring park visitors and park resources together.

### Visitors

The Elsie King Trail is used steadily throughout the year. Most users are local people who return to the trail often, sometimes bringing first-time visitors with them (neighbours, out of town friends and relatives etc.).

The largest group of users is extended families, including parents, children and grand parents. Another smaller but significant group includes people with disabilities, especially those with limited mobility or vision.

Direct data on the number of people using the Elsie King Trail is not available. However, visitation statistics for the Nature House and traffic counts for the parking lot suggest that the Elsie King Trail receive as many as 28,000 visitors in a year.

### Resources

Interpretive facilities include the following major facilities: the Nature House, Foresters Cabin, Information Kiosk, and the Elsie King Trail.

Ten programming methods were identified as effective interpretive tools for these facilities. These range from guided walks to trail signs and self-guided trail brochures.

An inventory of the cultural and natural history resources of the area identified 36 features that could be interpreted, including:

- The formation of Francis/King Regional Park and the people involved with the park – Thomas Francis, Freeman King, and Elsie King.
- The First Nations who used this site up to and well past the time of first contact with Europeans. The trail has no known cultural sites.

# Interpretive Plan

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- Natural History – four forest communities and twenty-one special features were identified and mapped.
- Resource/Visitor Management – five issues were identified along the trail: wildflower picking, mushroom picking, unofficial trails and off-trail walking, potential increase in use of trail by cyclists, and dogs running off leash.

The identified resources were evaluated based on subject suitability for visitors, safety and comfort of visitors, and the safety and sustainability of the resource. Twenty resources were rated as having a high potential for use in interpretive signs along the Elsie King Trail.

Eleven themes were suggested as possible means of interpreting the site resources to the trail users.

## Part 2: Interpretive Signs

Part 2 of the Plan focuses on developing a series of interpretive signs along the Elsie King Trail. Recommendations include:

### Trail Design

- The loop section of the Elsie King Trail, through skillful sign placement, be one-way - counter-clockwise - to reduce congestion during high visitation.
- Trail width be approximately 1.5 to 1.7 meters to accommodate two wheelchairs travelling side-by-side.

### Interpretive Nodes

- Eight Interpretive Nodes be located along the trail.
- Interpretive Nodes be boardwalk and set slightly off to the side of the main trail.
- Interpretive signs be located on the edges of boardwalk.
- Interpretive Nodes be large enough to accommodate two wheelchairs, or one wheelchair and a bench.
- Some Interpretive Nodes have a bench on one edge for visitors to rest and have a clear view of forest features.
- Whenever possible, Interpretive Nodes allow visitors the opportunity to interact with the forest using their senses.
- When possible, Interpretive Nodes have an entrance and exit back to the main trail to direct visitors further down the trail.

### Sign Design

- Sign Panels be approximately 30 inches wide by 18 inches high
- Panels be sloped at approximately 30 – 45° to shed leaf fall, rain and snow.
- Panels be supported by two 8x8” cedar posts.
- Sign posts be firmly attached. The CRD Parks standard of bolting sign posts to metal plates imbedded in concrete is ideal.
- Panels be mounted on steel brackets.
- Design of bracket be undertaken by CRD Parks sign staff.
- To meet Universal Access standards, the base of the sign panels be approximately thirty inches above the deck surface of the interpretive node.
- Sign backing be durable –3/4 or 1/2 inch creozone.
- CRD Parks sign staff construct a prototype sign mounting before final sign production. The prototype be tested for accessibility by children and wheelchair users and for shedding of leaf fall and rain water.

## Graphic Design

- Body text fonts be no smaller than 24 point.
- Headline text font design contrast with body text and be significantly larger.

## Sign Media

- the Duratec sign system is recommended.

## Funding Opportunities

Freeman King and Elsie King were key figures in the Scouting and Guiding movements in the Capital Region. Local Scout and Guide groups should be approached to assist in raising funds for fabrication and installation of the Elsie King Trail interpretive signs. The same groups could assist with volunteer warden duties.

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## Introduction

### Who Is This Interpretive Plan For?

This plan is aimed at Capital Regional District interpretive planners and field interpreters who develop services and facilities featuring the Elsie King Trail.

### What Is In This Plan?

Part 1: the Elsie King Trail General Interpretive Plan contains background including:

- information on the people who use the trail
- information on resources of the Elsie King Trail
- an analysis of site visitors and resources
- suggested interpretive themes for the Elsie King Trail

Part 2: Interpretive Signs contains details ideas for the development of an interpretive sign system for the Elsie King Trail. The plan consists of ideas and recommendations for:

- storylines that join the signs together
- interpretive themes
- communication objectives for trail signs
- main points for each sign
- trail design
- design of interpretive nodes
- location of interpretive nodes
- design of signs
- graphic design of sign panels
- funding and maintenance

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### How Can This Interpretive Plan Be Used?

It is hoped that this document will aid the integration of interpretive programming and media that feature the Elsie King Trail into a suite of complementary programs that help trail users through the process of awareness, appreciation and understanding of the heritage of the Elsie King Trail. This document can be used in developing and presenting interpretive programs, including personal programs such as guided hikes, roving naturalists, interpretive stations along the trail, and presentations at the Nature House or Foresters Cabin, and non-personal programs, such as trail signs, self-guiding trail brochures and exhibits at the Nature House.

Interpretive planning is an on-going process. As time passes, new information and trends develop in visitation, and more information on the nature and history of the site becomes available. It is hoped that this interpretive plan will be a working document where interpreters and interpretive planners can add new information as it becomes available.

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## Interpretation: What is it?

Interpretation is a key activity of CRD Parks. Freeman Tilden, the godfather of interpretation in North America, defines interpretation as:

*“... an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information.” (Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage. 1957)*

Here, Tilden has identified the key points that we hope to follow in interpretation:

- interpretation reveals meaning
- interpretation requires people to interact with real objects, plants, animals and habitats
- interpretation is more than the simple communication of facts

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## Part 1

# Elsie King Trail General Interpretive Plan

## Goals of the Interpretive Plan

1. Integrate interpretation with the redesign and renovation plan for the Elsie King Trail.
2. Identify and analyze
  - the visitors using the site in the past and trends for the future
  - the site resources available for interpretation
3. Using the information gathered, develop a suite of interpretive themes that provoke, relate and reveal interpretive messages about the natural and cultural heritage of the Elsie King Trail.
4. Assist interpretive planners and field interpreters to ensure that interpretation of the Elsie King Trail follows universal access standards.

## Universal Access

The Elsie King Trail is designed to meet current Universal Access standards. Facilities, including interpretive media, must be accessible to all – people with disabilities, children, the elderly, and everyone else. Universal design is based on the principles that the product must:

- be useful and accessible to any group of users
- accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
- be easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience and knowledge
- be able to communicate information effectively to the user
- be efficient and comfortable, resulting in a minimum of fatigue
- be appropriately sized and spaced to provide room for approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of body size, posture or mobility

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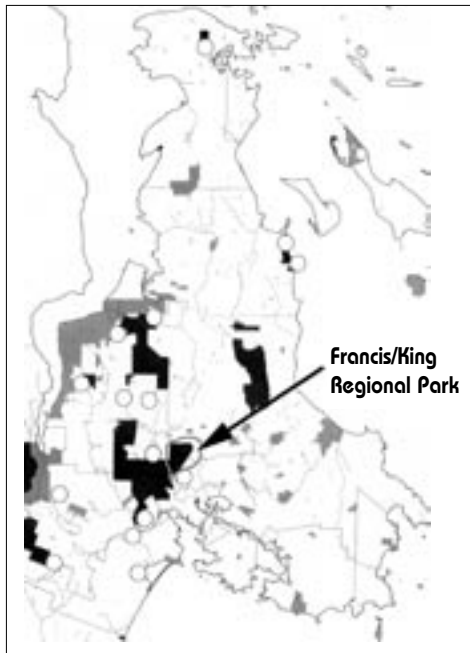


Figure 1. Location of Francis/King Regional Park on the Saanich Peninsula of Vancouver Island, B.C.

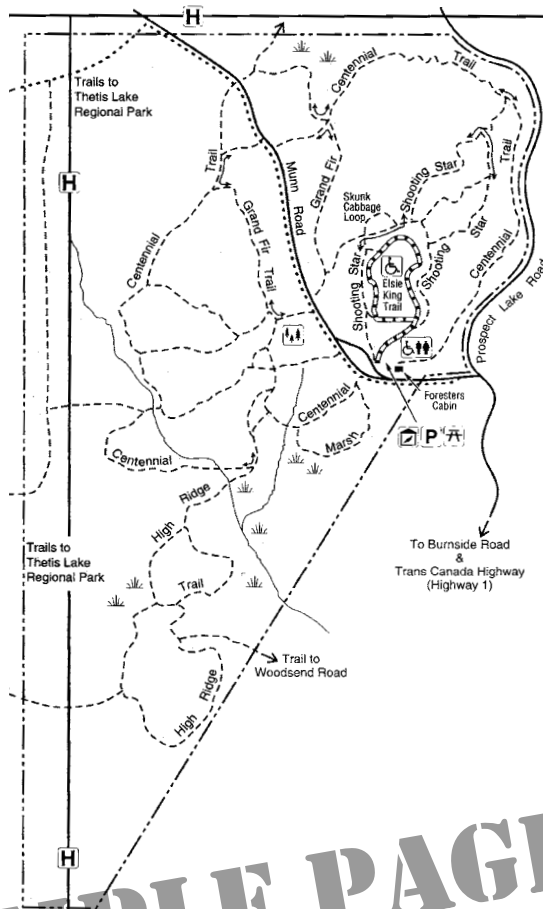


Figure 2. Trails in Francis/King Regional Park

## The Study Area

The Elsie King Trail is a 750 metre loop trail named after a well known and respected Victoria Girl Guide leader. The trail circles a natural rocky highland and passes through several forest types typical of the Coastal Douglas-fir bioclimatic unit on the Saanich Peninsula of southern Vancouver Island.

The Elsie King Trail was built in 1981 as a boardwalk to provide access to the forest for people with limited mobility, including wheelchair users. Over time, many parts of the original boardwalk deteriorated and the trail was closed in the winter of 1997. It was redesigned in 1998 and renovation work began in September 1998.

This interpretive plan covers only the lands that the Elsie King Trail passes through. However, for context, many aspects of Francis/King Regional Park and the region were considered.

## Significance

### Park Significance: Francis/King Regional Park

The park, along with Thetis Lake and Mill Hill regional parks, makes up a large block of natural land that is less likely to suffer the effects of ecosystem fragmentation and eventual loss of species typical of smaller parks isolated in a region of urban development.

### Biological Importance

The Capital Regional District is one of the most biologically rich and diverse areas in Canada. Most of the vegetation in Francis/King Regional Park, including the Elsie King Trail, is dry rain shadow forest growing on a series of low rocky hilltops. This landscape supports dry and warm climate species and communities. Many are at the northern extent of their range and are classified as provincially or nationally rare.

The Capital Regional District also has one of the nation's fastest growing human populations. Development of land for human use in the region threatens to eliminate many species and biological communities and turn park lands into biological islands surrounded by a sea of urban sprawl. Regional parks, including Francis/King, will play an increasingly important role as conservation lands for many rare species and biological communities and may become important components of wildlife corridors linking natural areas.

## Section 1

### Visitor Analysis: Who Is This Trail For?

#### Introduction

For an interpretive trail, it is vital to know who the users are and to identify their needs and interests. A visitor analysis identifies:

- Who will use interpretive products?
- What are they doing while on the trail?
- What are their interests?
- How often do they use the trail?

#### Methods

Existing information on park and trail users was gathered from:

- talks with park field staff including: Visitor Services, Operation Services, and Planning and Conservation Services
- park visitation statistics gathered by a car counter at the entrance to the park parking lot
- Nature House visitation statistics
- a summary of a visitor questionnaire developed by LeFrank Landscape Architecture Limited for use in the redesign of the Elsie King Trail

#### Results

Most of the information gathered on visitor characteristics has come from relatively unscientific sources. Talks with park field staff provided anecdotal accounts, and because of time constraints, LeFrank's visitor questionnaire was distributed in a non-random manner to a small sample of visitors. These two sources could not be analyzed statistically. However, both have provided good evidence of user characteristics and trends.

#### 1. Who Uses The Elsie King Trail?

The following list of users is based on discussions with CRD Parks staff:

- extended families, usually including children, parents and grandparents
- parents with children, often at least one child in a stroller
- dog walkers
- seniors – individuals and small groups
- people with limited mobility
  - wheel chair users
  - people with walkers
  - people on stretchers
- individuals and groups with disabilities, with care givers
- local and visiting naturalists
- registered school groups
- seniors walking groups

Of the groups identified here, extended families and parents with children were by far the heaviest users of the trail. The trail is also important to people with disabilities and to many seniors because it is one of the few accessible trails

in the Capital Region. At present, there is not enough information to rank the other user groups, except that seniors walking groups use the Elsie King Trail less often than most other groups. These hikers are interested in the longer, more challenging trails in the park.

### 2. Who Does Not Use The Elsie King Trail?

Teens are the largest and most conspicuously absent group on the Elsie King Trail. Nearby Thetis Lake is where this group tends to congregate for recreation such as swimming and bicycling.

Another, much smaller group includes severely disabled people who only visit the picnic area near the Nature House. This group may not be willing or able to face even the short length of the Elsie King Trail.

### 3. How Long Do They Stay?

Most visitors surveyed stay at the park for one and one-half to four hours. The longer stays often include a stop at the Nature House before and after a hike on the Elsie King Trail or on one of the other park trails.

### 4. Return Visitors/New Visitors?

Many visitors return to Francis/King Regional Park again and again. They often bring new visitors with them.

### 5. Where Do They Come From?

The majority of visitors are neighbours who live near the park. In order of numbers, most people are from

- Saanich
- Victoria
- Sidney, Oak Bay, and Colwood

There are small numbers of visitors from outside the region.

In most cases, the decision to visit Elsie King Trail is made the day of the visit, and few preparations are needed except perhaps packing a picnic lunch.

### 6. Why Do They Come?

Park staff suggest that the reasons visitors come to the park are to:

- exercise
- study nature
- escape heat in summer - visit a cool forest
- visit the Nature House
- participate in park interpretive programs

Many visitors are introduced to the park through interpretive programs. They enjoy a program and return to see more of the park. Similarly, children who attend a school program or summer children's program often return with their families to explore trails and visit the Nature House.

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# Interpretive Plan

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## 7. What Are They Interested In?

Many visitors are interested in the short, easy walk provided by the Elsie King Trail. In the LeFrank questionnaire, respondents ranked the Elsie King Trail the second most popular trail behind the Centennial Trail and ahead of the Shooting Star Trail.

LeFrank asked trail users if they liked the services provided by the park. All responses were positive. Services most often complemented were:

- the washrooms
- trails
- maps
- a place to lock bicycles
- parking
- signs
- the Nature House

LeFrank asked trail users to identify additional recreational opportunities that they would like to use. Two key needs were identified:

- more guided hikes
- interpretive programs available at more flexible times

## 8. What Do They Do?

Walk Trails

Trail walking is a key component of most visitors' activities, according to park staff. All respondents to the LeFrank questionnaire indicated that they planned to walk at least one of the trails during their visit.

Attend Interpretive Programs

CRD Parks offers an appealing array of interpretive programs that attract a large following.

Picnic

Some visitors never leave the parking lot area. The small, comfortable picnic area and perhaps a visit to the Nature House are all these visitors are interested in or able to access.

Relax/Sleep

Some visitors come to relax in the cool, green comfort of the picnic area or at quiet points along the trails.

## 9. Do They Know Much About the Site?

Visitor knowledge about the natural and cultural history of the area varies greatly. While some know very little, others were *Skipper's Kids*, students of Freeman (Skipper) King's children's nature education program in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Skipper was an inspirational nature interpreter who instilled a life long interest in nature in most of his students. Skipper's Kids and their families are likely to be extremely knowledgeable about the park and natural history.

## 10. Other Details About Visitor Groups

**Age Ranges**

Park staff indicate that the range of ages for visitors is very broad, from newborns to grandparents and great grand parents.

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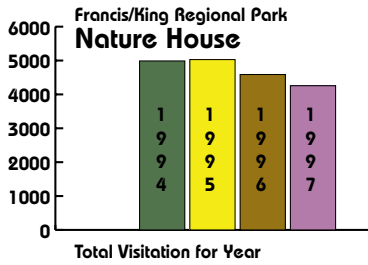


Figure 4. Annual Nature House Visitation

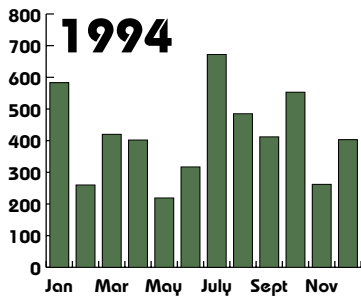
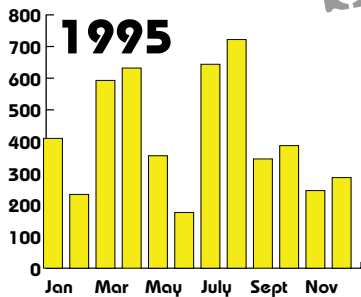
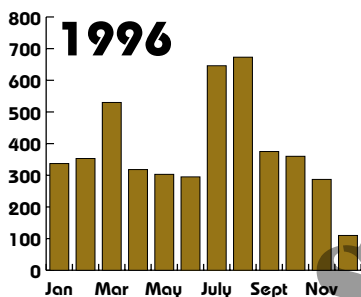
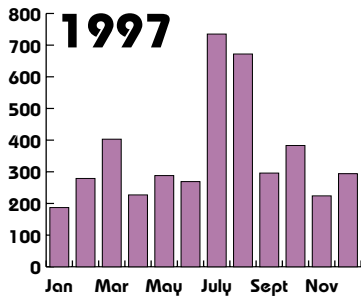


Figure 5. Monthly Nature House Visitation

Interpretive Media below for hours of operation). Total Nature House visitation can only represent a small subset of the number of trail users. However, Nature House statistics may reflect trends in trail use.

The monthly number of people visiting the Nature house from 1994 to 1998 range from a high of 5,028 in 1995 to a low of 4,257 in 1997 (see figure 4).

## Evaluation

### Vehicle Visits

The number of vehicles using the Nature House parking lot from 1995 to 1997 ranges from 9,171 to 11,102 vehicles per year. Using the CRD Parks factor of 2.5 people per vehicle, it can be estimated that between 23,000 and 28,000 people per year enter the parking lot and possibly walk the Elsie King Trail. This number is conservative since many buses and multi-person vehicles enter the parking lot each year.

### Recommendations

There is a significant difference between the numbers of trail users suggested by Nature House Statistics and those suggested by vehicle visitation – the vehicle visitation statistics suggest that more than five times as many people could be using the Elsie King Trail. Annual visitation was somewhere between 4,257 and 27,755. More accurate trail use statistics could assist with trail management. A counter could be placed along the trail past the junction.

## When Do People Use the Trail?

### Daily Use

According to park staff, there is fairly steady use of the trail throughout the day, with slight increases at noon, late afternoon and evening.

### Weekly Use

According to park staff, trail use increases on weekends and holidays.

### Monthly/Seasonal Use

Even when taking into account the decline in winter visitation due to trail closures discussed on the previous page, seasonal traffic count information shows a fairly steady use of the park throughout the year. However, when the same data is broken up into monthly segments, high and low periods begin to appear. Peaks usually occur in June and July. Lowest visitation in the four years shown occurs in winter (November, December and January).

Statistics from the Nature House (see figure 5) do not fully support this conclusion. Peak visitation occurs in July and August when the Nature House is open three additional days per week.

April, May and June are the Nature House's quietest months.

### Year to Year Use

Both the Vehicle Visit data and the Nature House Visitation data show a slow decrease in visitation up to 1996/97. These data go against the stated perception of several park staff that use of the trail has been increasing. This decline may be linked with the deterioration and closures of the Elsie King Trail.

### Evaluation

The visitation to the park and use of the Elsie King Trail seems to be spread fairly evenly throughout the year. Small peaks occur in summer and lows in winter.

There appears to be no season or month that the trail is not used.

## 12. Universal Access Issues

The issues of trail access have been ably addressed by LeFrank Landscape Architecture Ltd. (see *Redevelopment Plan for Visitor Area and Elsie King Trail of Francis/King Regional Park*). This section of the interpretive plan will deal with identifying user groups with special needs that use the Elsie King Trail.

### People With Reduced Mobility

People with reduced mobility include those of all ages who have mobility disabilities, those who are recovering from injuries and surgery, and those with chronic conditions. They may find walking difficult or painful. Some need assistance from canes, walkers, wheelchairs and other devices. Some need the help of care givers.

Park staff have identified various groups of mobility impaired people that use the park.

### Family Groups

A person with reduced mobility are often accompanied by one or several family members or friends. According to park staff, extended families with grand parents or great grand parents touring the trail on weekends and holidays is the largest group of users.

### Organized Outings

Other user groups include those from care facilities ranging from nursing homes for the elderly to facilities for people with mental or developmental disabilities. These groups usually consist of small numbers of patients accompanied by care givers. They often use the picnic area and Nature House during their visit, but they may not use the trail.

### People With Reduced Vision

Park staff indicate that small numbers of people with various levels of vision impairment use the trails. They visit either as organized outings from a care facility or accompanied by family and friends.

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## Section 2

# Facilities and Interpretive Media Inventory

The Elsie King Trail has the unusual benefit of being associated with other interpretive facilities and programs in Francis/King Regional Park.

### Support Facilities

The Elsie King Trail is adjacent to several park facilities that could provide complementary interpretation programs to the trail sign interpretation.



#### Nature House

The Nature House is located immediately beside the trailhead of the Elsie King Trail. At present, the Nature House is open and staffed by CRD Park Naturalists or volunteers:

- 10 AM – 4 PM Wednesday to Sunday, July 1 – Labour Day
- noon – 4 PM Saturday, Sunday, and holidays, Labour Day – July 1

Park staff have indicated that many people visit the Nature House before or after walking the Elsie King Trail or other park trails.

The location of the Nature House adjacent to the trail provides a great opportunity to provide pre-walk orientation and preparation and post-walk debriefing.

Pre-walk orientation/preparation could include:

- seasonal and daily information on what to look for along the trails
  - this could include a trail map display showing recent wildlife and wildflower sightings
- tips on wildlife watching
- returnable activity packs including observation tools such as magnifying glasses, binoculars etc. plus activity sheets or guide books to help visitors discover seasonal features along the trail

Post-walk debriefing could include:

- aids to identify creatures and plants encountered along the trail\*
- aids in understanding animal behaviour\*
- opportunities to share discoveries
  - a wildlife and wildflower sighting map
  - observation log book
- take home materials
  - wildflower colouring sheet sheet or craft for children
  - guides to wildlife watching for future visits to the trails

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\* could include exhibits, displays, brochures, and live presentations

## Section 3

### Site Inventory: What is There to Interpret?

#### Introduction

A site inventory identifies issues and resources that may be interpreted. These resources consist of:

- Human History Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Natural History Resources
- Resource/Visitor Management Concerns

The features identified in the site inventory need not all be interpreted in any one interpretive project. Rather, the items described herein can be considered as a catalogue of features that the interpreter can choose from to make an effective interpretive package.

#### Methods

Information was gathered from documents on the park resources and regional studies as well as from conversations with CRD Parks staff. In the case of natural history resources, on-site surveys of the Elsie King Trail were conducted by EcoLeaders Nature Interpretation. Francis/King Regional Park does not have a biophysical inventory. An extensive study by CRD Parks staff is ongoing and will be completed by December 1998. This information could be added to this document at a later date.

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#### Results

##### A. Human History

Recent history surrounding the creation of Francis/King Regional Park is rich in colourful, well documented characters. Their stories are connected by love of nature and the current park land, their love and caring for each other, and their love of sharing their joy of nature with children. Four people — Thomas Francis, Freeman King, Elsie King and Percy Dumbelton — were friends who acted on their strong love for the land that became the park. Of these four, Thomas Francis and Freeman King are considered major players while Elsie King and Percy Dumbelton played a more minor role.

##### Freeman King

We know most about naturalist and nature lover, Freeman King. His nickname was Skipper. King was instrumental in having the park set aside as a natural area. He met landowner Thomas Francis in the 1940s, when King was an active Boy Scout leader. King asked Francis for permission to take his scouts on nature rambles on the Francis farm. King's knowledge, love for nature and the low impact visits impressed the reclusive Francis. Soon the two men became friends united in their reverence for this natural landscape.



Freeman King with internationally renowned Ethnobotanist, Nancy Turner, a former Skipper's Kid

## B. Cultural History

### First Nations

There is little information available about the cultural history of the Elsie King Trail site. Archaeological surveys of the park have uncovered sites used by First Peoples. No sites were found near the Elsie King Trail. Interpretation of such features as a First Peoples burial site will be best done at the archeological site or at the Nature House.

Native peoples used many of the plants and animals identified in the site inventory. Unfortunately, no physical signs of these uses have been observed along the Elsie King Trail. General information about First Peoples use of forest resources may be better featured in other parks in the region.

### European History

The historic legacy of past euro-Canadian activity can be observed along the trail. These features include introduced shrubs, vines, flowering plants and grasses, and tree's knees - the remains of Douglas-firs felled by Thomas Francis.

## C. Natural History

### Geology

#### Bedrock

When researching topics for consideration for interpretation on the Elsie King Trail, the main focus has been on features that visitors can experience first hand. With some notable exceptions, most of the site's bedrock is covered by soil and vegetation. The geological history of Francis/King Regional Park is common to all parks in the CRD system. Since several of these parks have fine exposures of key rock formations where a fuller story of the geological history of the region is exposed for the telling, this document does not cover geological history in detail.

A clear and readable account of the formation of the rocks of southern BC can be found in *The Naturalist's Guide to The Victoria Region* (Jim Weston and David Stirling, Victoria Natural History Society, 1986).

The geological history of coastal British Columbia is complex. Most of the bedrock originated from two sources:

- ancient rock, part of microcontinents that formed thousands of miles away in the Pacific Ocean, that have travelled long distances due to continental drift and have slammed into the west coast of the North America plate in recent geological time
- recent volcanic and metamorphic rock, formed as magma flowed up fissures resulting from the above collisions

The resulting geology is a complex mixture of sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks jumbled together.

# Interpretive Plan



## Forest Communities

### Douglas-fir – Maple Forest

On entering the forest along the Elsie King Trail, this is the first community encountered, and the most common forest type seen along the trail (see the special features map on page 22). This forest is characterized by widely spaced, mature Douglas-fir and numerous bigleaf maple saplings. Some Garry oak (large and small) are scattered near the trail head close to the Nature House. Also present are young grand fir.

The shrub layer includes indian plum, snowberry and a few daphne-laurel.

The understory includes feather mosses, star flower, trailing blackberry, Oregon-grape,

grasses, bracken fern, and some patches of indian-pipe.

Exotic species seen include daphne-laurel, ivy and holly.

Tree's knees (see special feature 2, page 23) are present throughout.

Wildlife: Limited wildlife were noted during our site visits. Species encountered include red squirrel, raven, nuthatch, cicada, and hairy woodpeckers (tapping trees, and fresh work on snags and stumps). Very prominent wildlife features in this part of the forest are several large, active thatching ant nests and columns of thatching ants using the edges of the boardwalk as foraging trails.

A striking feature of this forest is that the large, older Douglas-fir and Garry oaks are fire resistant species while the smaller, younger trees are almost entirely bigleaf maple, with a few grand fir. These are fire intolerant species. This suggests a long period without fire. A fire would clean out the young maples, and open up the understory, providing more direct sunlight to the ground for growth of Douglas-fir seedlings.

The natural ecology of forests in the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone includes periodic fires at a frequency that ensures the dominance of Douglas-fir. However, since European colonization, fires in the region have been actively suppressed. This forest habitat with its large number of young, fire-susceptible trees is a result of fire suppression.



### Douglas-fir – Salal Forest

This forest dominates the north facing slope of the rocky hill that the Elsie King Trail circles. It is the second most common forest type associated with the trail.

Douglas-fir is the dominant tree associated, with a few arbutus.

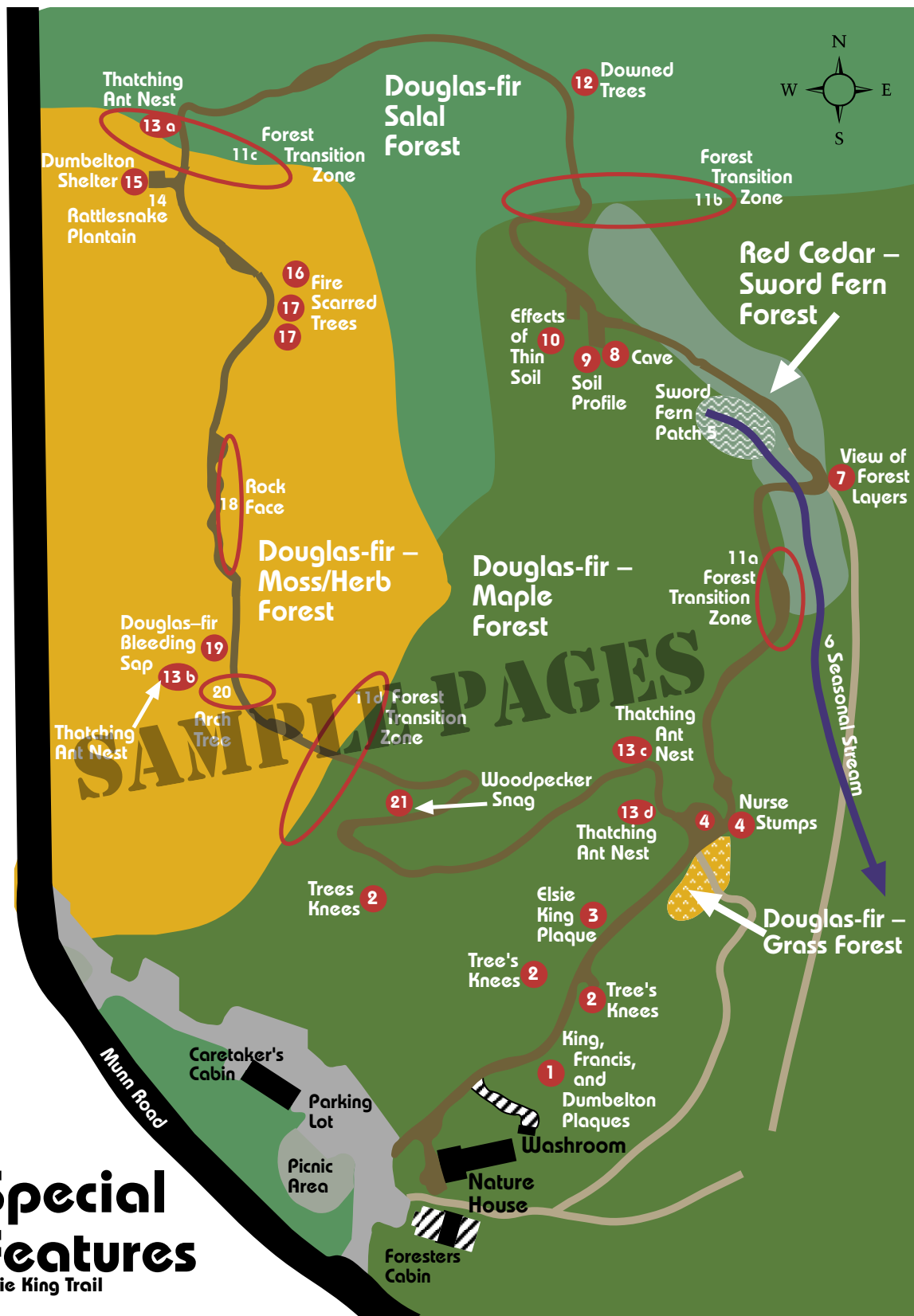
The shrub layer consists of huckleberry and oceanspray standing above a very dense, lush growth of salal.

Understory plants are often obscured by the dense salal; however, large patches of twinflower can be seen from the trail.

Wildlife: The wildlife observed in this segment

of the forest was similar to that encountered in the Douglas-fir-Maple forest. An especially large and vigorous ant nest is located adjacent to the trail.

# Interpretive Plan



## Special Features Elsie King Trail

# Interpretive Plan

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## 7. View of Forest Layers

A great view of forest canopy layers can be seen when looking upslope (toward the east) from the junction of the Elsie King Trail and the Shooting Star Trail, just east of the seasonal stream bed. This view affords a chance to clearly see the forest canopy, shrub layer, and understory.

An understanding of the forest structure – canopy, shrub layer and understory – could be a key tool for distinguishing forest communities, and comparing and contrasting the communities encountered on the trail.

**SAMPLE PAGES**



## 8. Cave

There is a small cave at the base of the rockface near the upper end of the seasonal stream bed. The shallow depression is cool in hot weather. It is the kind of location wildlife would seek for relief from the heat of summer afternoons.



## 12. Downed Trees

This is one of the first places along the trail that plentiful fallen woody debris can be seen. Standing and fallen trees are important to wildlife and plant communities in the forest. Insects, centipedes, millipedes, slugs and salamanders make use of the shelter provided as well, and many depend on the log's stored nutrients and water for survival.



## 13. Thatching Ant Nest

The forest communities along the Elsie King Trail are home to many species of ant. However, there is one species that has produced several large nests that can be seen along the trail. These are nests of a red and black thatching ant – most likely *Formica obscuripes* or possibly *Formica integroides*. Large nests, consisting of mounded soil mixed with dry Douglas-fir needles, are up to 1.25 metres across at the base and may stand nearly as high as an adult's hip (75 cm). These nests are very noticeable landmarks in the forest communities along the trail. Locations of one nest in the Douglas-fir – Salal forest (13a), one nest in the Douglas-fir – Herb/Moss forest (13b), and two nests in the Douglas-fir – Maple forest (13c. and 13d.) are shown on the Special features map (page 22). These ant colonies are long lived. Nest 13a. has been in the same location since at least 1983.

During field inspections of the site in the fall of 1998, before trail reconstruction, the ants were very active and used the foot plates of the old boardwalk as foraging highways. As well, cleared foraging trails could be seen leading outward from some nests. Ants were observed on many sections of the boardwalk, which may indicate that there are several more nests in the area.

These ants show interesting behaviours. Observing them is easy for people who can bend or crouch down to watch the foraging columns. Ants can be seen carrying food, mostly insects, that they have scavenged or killed in forays either on the forest floor or up on the trunks and leaves of adjacent trees.



The nests themselves are interesting in that they are mounds of soil and fir needles that the ants pile up, usually in a sunny location. The ants keep the nest and surrounding area free of plants that may shade the nest. The covering of dry Douglas-fir needles acts as a mulch, preventing the sprouting of seedlings in the aerated soil, enriched by the feces and organic debris discarded by the ants. Some researchers have found that decomposition of the thatch heats the nests. Ants prune and mulch to ensure that as much direct sunlight as possible hits the nest and warms the brood chambers just below the nest surface where the ant's larvae and pupae are housed. The heat speeds the development of the cold blooded young.

# Elsie King Trail

## Section 3: Site Inventory

### 18. Rock Face

The most extensive rock face along the trail is located past the fire scarred trees. Much of the surface of the rock face is covered by mosses, ferns and stonecrop. It is likely that this will be a significant spring wildflower site, featuring monkey flower and other rock-loving species.

### 19. Douglas-fir Bleeding Pitch

A very fine example of a cascade of sap oozing down the trunk of a mature Douglas-fir tree can be found right beside the trail. It begins well above adult head-height and flows down to the soil surface.

One of the Douglas-fir's best defenses against invasion by insects is its sticky, resinous sap. On attack, the tree responds, pitching the insect out or gluing it harmlessly inside. As well, the turpentine-like chemicals contained in the sap can act like antibiotics, preventing infection through the open wound by wood-rot fungi and bacteria.



SAMPLE PAGE

### 20. Arch Tree

This is a large Douglas-fir blow down whose roots and trunk form an arch approximately eight feet high.

The arch spans the trail just before it begins its decent to the junction of the trail's loop and access sections.



The trunk above the boardwalk supports at least two Douglas-fir seedlings (see picture below) as well as maple saplings, and many other plants.



### D. Management Concerns

Interpretation can be a powerful management tool. Visitors are much more willing to comply with regulations when they understand the need for and the effects of non-compliance. Although pointing out the minor importance of the concerns, CRD Parks staff have indicated the following management issues related to the Elsie King Trail.

#### Wildflower Picking

The Elsie King Trail, as well the other trails in Francis/King Regional Park, afford some very good spring wildflower viewing. Staff indicate that flower picking is a problem that requires education and enforcement.

#### Mushroom Picking

The abundance and diversity of fall mushrooms can be spectacular in Francis/King Regional Park. Staff indicate that large-scale picking has occurred at the park.

#### Unofficial Trails and Off-Trail Walking

Development of unofficial trails and general habitat damage caused by park visitors is a potential problem for the Elsie King Trail. Until now, the raised boardwalk and its strong delineation of trail edge has kept this problem to a minimum. However, the new design of the trail will involve a large percentage of gravel-based trail. It is much easier to physically and psychologically leave this type of trail. The level of off-trail excursions and the resulting habitat damage may increase.

#### Bicycles

Bicycles are incompatible with other users of the Elsie King Trail. The narrow, boardwalk-only construction of the original trail probably discouraged bicycle riders. Accessing the boardwalk from other trails would be difficult. The potential widening and use of ground level gravel-based screenings for a major part of the trail may encourage more cyclists to ride the Elsie King Trail.

#### Off-Leash Dogs

Free running dogs are inappropriate on the Elsie King Trail. Dogs trampling flora and ant nests, chasing wildlife and roaming free are incompatible with the site's mandate to conserve natural features and communities.

SAMPLE PAGES

## Section 4

### Site Analysis

The key features identified in the Site Inventory (Section 3 of this document) were assessed for potential for interpretation using interpretive signs, personal programs on the trail, personal programs in the Nature House or Foresters Cabin, and as exhibits in the Nature House. The assessment criteria were based on

- subject suitability for visitors
- safety and comfort of visitors
- safety and sustainability of the special feature

Ratings for potential for interpretation are as follows:

#### High

- messages related to this feature fit interests of one or more major visitor groups
- interpretation of this feature would be safe for visitors and resource
- message fits the interpretive media (e.g., trail signs)

#### Moderate

- message is not best presented through this interpretive medium
- message related to site fits one or more major visitor groups
- interpretation of this feature would be safe for visitors and resource

#### Low

- message does not fit site visitors
- message does not fit the site or interpretation at another site may be more appropriate
- interpretation of this feature would not be safe for visitors
- interpretation may damage or eliminate this resource
- message does not fit this interpretive medium

SAMPLE PAGES

## Method of Interpretation Potential For Interpretation

Feature	Trail Signs	On-Trail Programs Led by an Interpreter	Presentation at Nature House/ Foresters Cabin	Nature House Exhibit or Brochure	Comments
<b>Forest Communities</b> <b>Douglas-fir – Maple Forest</b>  <b>Douglas-fir – Salal Forest</b>  <b>Douglas-fir – Herb/ Moss Forest</b>  <b>Western Red Cedar – Sword Fern Forest</b>  <b>Douglas-fir – Grass Forest</b>	High	High	High	High	<p>There are many opportunities to provoke visitors into making discoveries and observations throughout the year and over many repeat visits. Transitions between forest types can be featured. A combination of complimentary trail signs, guided programs, presentations and exhibits could encourage multiple trail visits and enrich park visits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs could feature tips on observation, helping visitors use their senses to observe the features of this habitat many times throughout the seasons.</li> <li>• Special features such as seasonal wildflowers and mushrooms could be featured on guided walks or at interpretive stations along the trail.</li> <li>• Nature House staff could feature mini-presentations on wildlife watching; techniques to use to help you quickly remember characteristics of flowers and birds seen along the trail.</li> <li>• Naturalists and staff could send visitors out on the trail to find signs of spring, map where the thatching ants can be seen today etc.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special seasonal exhibits could feature wildflowers, mushrooms and other seasonal phenomena.</li> <li>• Trail users could visit Nature House before using the Elsie King Trail, to learn location of recent wildlife and flower sightings, pick up family activity packs (e.g., a bird watching kit). Trail users could return to the Nature House to report sightings, describe observations, ask questions</li> </ul>

## Method of Interpretation Potential For Interpretation

Feature	Trail Signs	On-Trail Programs Led by an Interpreter	Presentation at Nature House/ Foresters Cabin	Nature House Exhibit or Brochure	Comments
4. Nurse Stumps	High	High	Moderate.	High	Nurse stumps and nurse logs are important parts of the forest regeneration story. Their absence in some parts of the forest may tell some of the site's fire history. A detailed version of the nurse stump story could be presented in an exhibit, trail sign or brochure, or as part of a guided hike.
5. Sword Fern Patch		High	Moderate.	Moderate	Sword fern is one of the dominant plants in the red-listed red cedar – sword fern community.
6. Seasonal Stream Bed	High	High	Moderate	High	The seasonal stream tells part of the climate story (dry summers, wet winters) and it could be used in any type of interpretive program.
7. View of Forest Layers	High		Moderate	Moderate.	Care must be taken to prevent trampling of this site. It could be visited through the seasons to observe changes in forest layers.
8. Cave	High	High	Moderate.	Moderate.	This is an eye catching component of this section of the trail. It is shallow and quite safe for exploration by children and flexible adults. The interpretation should not encourage exploration, but neither should it forbid it. This site could be a place where part of the area's geology story could be told.

## Method of Interpretation Potential For Interpretation

Feature	Trail Signs	On-Trail Programs Led by an Interpreter	Presentation at Nature House/ Foresters Cabin	Nature House/ Exhibit or Brochure	Comments
<b>13. Ant Nests.</b>	High	High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	<p>Thatching ants and their nests are highly visible at many points along the Elsie King Trail. They play an important role in the ecology of the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The activities of the foraging ant columns are fascinating - it may be possible to construct a raised ant trail beside a boardwalk stand, bringing ants closer to eye level for observation by visitors, perhaps with the aid of magnifying lenses.</li> <li>Interpreters can assess the visitors and situation to determine what level of involvement is best for each particular group.</li> <li>An exhibit or brochure could assist people with poor close-up vision or ant phobia to reach new levels of awareness, appreciation and understanding to the ecological role of ants in this forest community.</li> </ul> <p>Ants and visitors must be kept separate (see 13. Ants Nests Several Notes of Caution in Part 4. Site Inventory).</p>
<b>14. Dumbelton Shelter</b>	High	High	Low	Low	<p>The shelter itself has a minor interpretive story; however, the location is one where trail users are likely to pause or rest.</p> <p>This site feels like a destination or half-way stop. It could be a location where visitors are encouraged to review their nature discoveries, contemplate the still quiet of the forest or learn about the other trails that connect to the Elsie King Trail.</p> <p>Site could house a staff naturalist or volunteer with guide books, observation equipment and specimens during special events such a Wildflower Week or Mushroom Madness Days.</p>

### **Interpretive Themes:** *The Big Ideas*

Themes are used as a guideline for selecting the messages to be communicated at a given site. They can be considered as the big ideas or key concepts that visitors should understand after participating in an interpretive program or visiting an interpretive site. Themes are the conceptual outline for the topics that will be interpreted. Themes are developed before the interpretive locations and key points to be communicated are selected for a trail sign system.

Using themes helps avoid the problem of diverting a visitor's attention here and there with no big insights or ideas to reward and support them. Themes provide the big picture needed to make all the messages and activities meaningful. With all the components of an interpretive program, exhibit or sign package working together on the same set of themes, the interpretation is afforded a cohesive, powerful punch.

Themes that could be used in interpreting the Elsie King Trail are listed below. Again, this list is a catalogue of potential themes that could be used as part of a trail sign system, on-trail programs led by a park naturalist, interpreter-led programs at the Nature House, an exhibit at the Nature House, a brochure or any other personal or non-personal program developed by park staff and volunteers. More may be developed and added to this list.

Some of the themes will cover similar facts and features of the site, but each gives interpreters a chance to emphasize different aspects of the site's story and to answer the question "What is special about this place?"

#### **Roots and Wings**

Thomas Francis, Freeman King, and Elsie King loved this landscape, shared their love with others and worked to protect and preserve it for future generations.

#### **Reading The Landscape**

By observing and using the five senses, anyone can learn how the landscape was formed and how and why the forest communities of the Elsie King Trail reflect the area's physical conditions.

#### **Cycles**

The landscape along the Elsie King Trail reflects the cycles: time, seasons and life.

#### **Tools For Observing Nature**

Using some simple observational techniques, anyone can increase their awareness, appreciation and understanding of the natural world of the Elsie King Trail.

#### **Peace and Change**

The Elsie King Trail is a place of peace and tranquility that hides a past of violent, though often slow paced, changes.

#### **An Introduction To Capital Regional District Parks**

The Elsie King Trail is a short easy trail that introduces visitors to many of the forest communities of the Capital Regional District's parks.

#### **Diversity of Forest Communities**

The Elsie King Trail takes visitors through five distinct yet common forest communities.

#### **The Importance of Water**

The region's Mediterranean climate results in a water shortage in summer that

SAMPLE PAGES

## Part 2

## Elsie King Trail

## Interpretive Signs

**SAMPLE PAGES**

## Trail Signs

### Interpretive Signs and Interpretive Nodes

The interpretive sign system for the Elsie King Trail system will consist of no less than eight signs located at eight interpretive nodes adjacent to the trail.

### Goal of the Elsie King Trail

#### Interpretive Sign System

The Elsie King Trail interpretive signs will provide site visitors with the opportunity to:

1. Develop the skills to read the landscape and recognize changes and differences in the forest along the trail and through the seasons, using all available senses.
2. Understand and perhaps develop their own love for this landscape, similar to the love felt by Freeman and Elsie King and Thomas Francis and others who enjoyed this landscape and who worked hard to protect it.
3. Obtain information necessary to navigate and interact with the forest in ways that are safe for them and for the plants animals and natural communities they encounter.

Keeping these three goals in mind, the following storyline ideas are suggested.

#### Storyline Selection

*Weaving a coherent story that joins the signs together*

##### Recommendation:

The storyline for the trails signs will focus on a visitor who explores the Elsie King Trail, learning and growing over many visits.

A key feature of the users of the Elsie King Trail is that a large percent of these people are repeat visitors who live close to the site. To be attractive to this group as well as first-time visitors, the trail signs must tell more than just facts of the special features along the trail. The signs must provoke new discoveries, new ways of looking at familiar experiences and repeat visits to the trail. The signs should relate and reveal ways that VISITORS can observe the plants and animals they encounter along the trail and promote good practices in interacting with the park resources that are safe for visitors and the forest.

One key way to communicate these interpretive principles is to model them. EcoLeaders recommends that the trail signs be written in a narrative format - in the form of the pages of a nature diary or notebook. The diary writer could exhibit good practices in trail etiquette, pose questions and make discoveries that lead trail users through discovery activities.

SAMPLE PAGES

## Recommended Themes for the Elsie King Trail Signs

The following themes were selected for the trail sign system from the themes identified in Section 5 of the General Interpretive Plan:

- A. Reading The Landscape
- B. Tools for Observing Nature
- C. Cycles
- D. Diversity of Forest Communities
- E. Partnerships and Alliances

The above themes were chosen to fit the major visitor groups, most of whom use the trail several times a year. The goal of the sign system will be to provide visitors with the tools to make observations and discoveries every time they visit the trail. It is hoped that visitors will come to look at the Elsie King Trail's plants, animals and natural communities in the same way Elsie King, Thomas Francis and Freeman King must have looked upon them – as neighbours you like to drop in on just to see how they are getting along.

## Objectives of the Sign System

### What Will the Trail User Learn?

The objectives for the trail signs were developed at the same time as the sites for the signs were selected. The setting of objectives is important in developing an effective product. Through objectives, the developer decides what the visitor should get from using the product. Each objective is written from the point of view of the visitor.

Objectives are used as tools for developing and evaluating interpretive signs. These objectives will be used by the writer as a guide to the emphasis of the messages.

CRD Parks staff can use the sign objectives to evaluate the interpretive signs at each site. Questionnaires can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of signs, i.e., if a site objective was to teach the names of at least three common trees, did the visitor really learn the names?

### Objectives

#### 1. Knowledge Objectives

- After interacting with the interpretive signs, visitors will:
- a. recognize the three main characters responsible in the history of Francis/ King Regional Park
  - b. be able to explain that the three characters loved this landscape and shared their love with hundreds of local children
  - c. understand that the trail is short and easy
  - d. develop observational skills that will assist their awareness, appreciation and understanding of the plants, animals, communities and natural

# Elsie King Trail

## Main Points for Locations

- processes that are taking place along the Elsie King Trail
- recognize the main forest communities encountered along the trail

### 2. Behavioral Objectives

After interacting with the interpretive signs, visitors will:

- return often to visit the plants, animals and forest communities they will encounter along the trail
- share their nature discoveries with others in their group, with park naturalists and volunteers at the Nature House, and with other visitors
- refrain from picking wildflowers and mushrooms
- stay on trails

### 3. Emotional Objectives

After interacting with the interpretive signs, visitors will:

- feel that they are following in the footsteps of Elsie and Freeman King and their students on a voyage of nature discovery
- develop a love and respect for the plants, animals and communities that they encounter along the trail

## Main Points for Each Location

The following are main points that will be used as guidelines for the content of the interpretive signs. Note that all points listed may not be included in the final sign text/illustration components of the signs.

SAMPLE PAGES

### Orientation

The most common trail orientation device is a map. EcoLeaders has developed a simple line map of the trail (see example to right) oriented to line up with the features on the ground. This map will be featured at the trailhead of the Elsie King Trail.



# Interpretive Plan

Interpretive Node	Trail Objectives Covered	Main Points That May Be Included
<p><b>I Trail Head</b>  <b>Themes Covered</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Reading the Landscape</li> <li>B. Tools for Observing Nature</li> <li>C. Cycles</li> <li>D. Diversity of Forest Communities</li> <li>E. Partnerships and Alliances</li> </ul>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. recognize main characters in the history of Francis/King Regional Park</li> <li>b. explain that the three characters loved this landscape and shared their love with hundreds of local children</li> <li>c. understand that the trail is short and easy</li> </ul> <p><b>Behavioral</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. refrain from picking wildflowers and mushrooms</li> <li>d. stay on trails</li> </ul> <p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. feel that they are following in the footsteps of the Elsie and Freeman King</li> </ul>	<p>The trail head sign is one of the most important signs in a trail sign series. It introduces visitors to the trail and sets the mood for the visit to the forest by introducing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trail parameters               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- physical conditions (length, trail composition etc.)</li> <li>- accessibility and ease of use (wheel chair compatible, slope, width, cross grade etc.)</li> <li>• orientation                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where the trail goes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• special restrictions and rules related to the Elsie King Trail – e.g., no bicycles</li> <li>• the storyline and interpretive themes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Trail Parameters</b></p> <p>The trailhead sign will briefly describe the parameters of the trail including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• length</li> <li>• wheelchair accessibility               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suitable width, slope and base (boardwalk and compacted gravel screenings)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction of Storyline and Interpretive Themes</b></p> <p>The trail head sign should introduce the storyline of the trail, introduce key characters, if appropriate, and set the mood for the activities that will be encouraged along the trail. The storyline will be discussed in detail later. EcoLeaders recommends the following content:</p> <p>Short Introduction to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Francis</li> <li>• Freeman King</li> <li>• Elsie King</li> </ul> <p>Introduction to Trail Story            (What the trail signs will tell visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a nature discovery trail               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- asking questions</li> <li>- where to get answers                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature House</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• tips on watching the pageant of wildlife, flowers, forest changes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- through the seasons</li> <li>- through the years</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Interpretive Plan

Interpretive Node	Trail Objectives Covered	Main Points That May Be Included
<p><b>VI. Ants</b></p> <p><b>Themes Covered</b></p> <p>A. Reading the Landscape</p> <p>B. Tools for Observing Nature</p> <p>C. Cycles</p> <p>D. Diversity of Forest Communities</p> <p>E. Partnerships and Alliances</p>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <p>d. develop observational skills</p> <p>e. recognize the main forest communities</p> <p><b>Behavioral*</b></p> <p>a. return often</p> <p>b. share nature discoveries</p> <p>c. refrain from picking wildflowers and mushrooms</p> <p>d. stay on trails</p> <p><b>Emotional*</b></p> <p>a. follow in the footsteps of the Elsie and Freeman King</p> <p>b. develop a love and respect for the plants, animals, and communities</p> <p><b>* Note:</b> Behavioral and emotional objective are often achieved through skilled presentation, images and writing style rather than through factual information contained in the main points in the next column of this table.</p>	<p><b>Asking Questions</b></p> <p>What is it and what is it doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• these questions are key to a naturalist's enjoyment and understanding</li> </ul> <p><b>Ant Watching</b></p> <p>Ant watching can be a model for watching other wildlife.</p> <p>Thatching Ants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• these ants are all over this forest</li> <li>• easy to find their homes</li> <li>• many daily, seasonal and yearly events to watch             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- food gathering</li> <li>- nest thatching</li> <li>- clearing ant highways of debris</li> <li>- flight of queens and males</li> </ul> </li> <li>• use your senses to observe             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nests often have strong 'salt and vinegar' odor especially when disturbed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Wildlife Viewing Tips</b></p> <p>Watching wildlife and observing the seasonal pageant of wildflowers is a fun and rewarding pastime</p> <p>Often we have questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what was that creature doing?</li> <li>• why is it found in that location?</li> <li>• was that a rare observation?</li> <li>• what was that?</li> </ul> <p>The more you observe, the more you know and understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for many, identification of a plant or animal is a first step to understanding one's observations</li> <li>• a great place to share observations and ask questions about what you saw is the Nature House</li> <li>• don't stop at learning the name</li> <li>• when you know the name of a plant and animal, you can record where and when you saw it and what it was doing</li> <li>- you start to recognize plant and animal communities and homes</li> <li>- you have a handle to discuss your observations with others</li> </ul>

# Elsie King Trail

## Main Points for Each Sign

Interpretive Node	Trail Objectives Covered	Main Points That May Be Included
<p><b>VIII. Arch Tree</b></p> <p><b>Themes Covered</b></p> <p>A. Reading the Landscape</p> <p>B. Tools for Observing Nature</p> <p>C. Cycles</p> <p>D. Diversity of Forest Communities</p> <p>E. Partnerships and Alliances</p>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognize the characters in the history of the park</li> <li>explain that the characters loved this landscape and shared their love with children</li> <li>understand that the trail is short and easy</li> <li>develop observational skills</li> <li>recognize the main forest communities</li> </ol> <p><b>Behavioral</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>return often</li> <li>share nature discoveries</li> <li>refrain from picking wildflowers and mushrooms</li> <li>stay on trails</li> </ol> <p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follow in the footsteps of the Elsie and Freeman King</li> <li>develop a love and respect for the plants, animals, and communities</li> </ol>	<p><b>Asking Questions</b></p> <p>For a naturalist, questions never end</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each answer can lead to several new questions</li> <li>some questions don't seem to have a single answer or even an answer at all</li> <li>to answer a question, you may have to return and observe many times over several days, weeks, seasons, or years</li> </ul> <p><b>The Portal to Years of Discovery and Enjoyment</b></p> <p>Thomas Francis, Elsie and Freeman King must have visited this forest many times. Elsie and Freeman shared their love, interest and knowledge with hundreds of young people. These children have grown up but some return to the Elsie King Trail with their families, sharing the love for nature inspired by this special couple. Feel free to share your observations and discoveries with the people you walk the trail and with Nature House staff, and exchange your memories of this most enchanting of trails.</p>



# Trail Design Considerations

### Recommendations:

1. The Access Section be widened to meet current Universal Access standards (1525-1750 mm.).
2. The Loop Section become a one-way trail, with a width sufficient for two persons in wheelchairs to proceed down the trail side by side. The loop trail should have several widened points for fast moving trail users to pass slower travelers.
3. Trail users travel in a counterclockwise direction from the trail junction. The trail design, with placement of signs, should encourage one way travel, but no effort should be made to prevent visitors moving in a clockwise direction.

# Interpretive Nodes

## Design

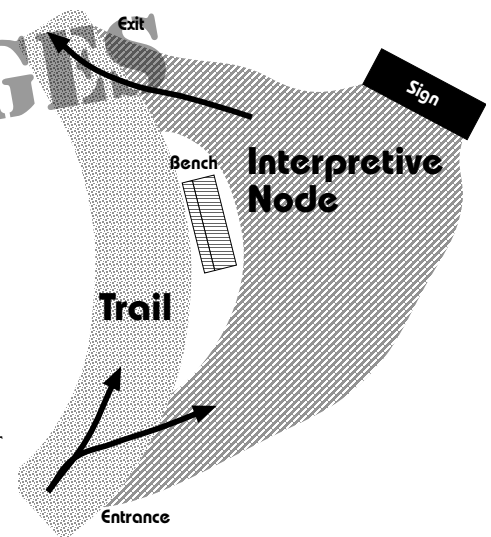
### Background

The document, *Redevelopment Plan for the Visitor Area and Elsie King Trail of Francis/King Regional Park*, produced by LeFrank Landscape Architecture Ltd., recommended that the location of interpretive nodes be distinguishable both visually and tactilely by trail users. The nodes are inviting areas consisting of widened boardwalk structures, an interpretive sign, and seating for people to rest and enjoy the forest. Most of the rest of the trail consists of compressed gravel screenings. This difference in trail material and interpretive nodes will help trail users recognize the nodes by sight, trail texture and even the sound of their feet or wheels on the trail.

### Recommendations:

The trail and nodes are designed to reduce trail congestion and ensure that slower moving visitors do not feel they are being rushed by other, faster moving trail users. The following recommendations should reduce these potential concerns:

1. Interpretive nodes be placed adjacent to the trail so that people stopping to enjoy the interpretive nodes do not block the passage of other trail users.
2. Interpretive nodes be large enough to accommodate groups of two to three wheelchairs.
3. Interpretive signs be placed at the edge of the nodes, allowing several visitors to interact with the signs at one time.
4. Whenever possible, interpretive nodes give visitors an opportunity to interact with (touch, smell, listen, watch) trail resources being interpreted.
5. When possible, seating provided give trail users a clear view of the forest and trail-side features.
6. On the one-way Loop section of the trail, when possible, interpretive nodes have an entrance and an exit that will subtly direct trail users further down the trail.



# Interpretive Plan

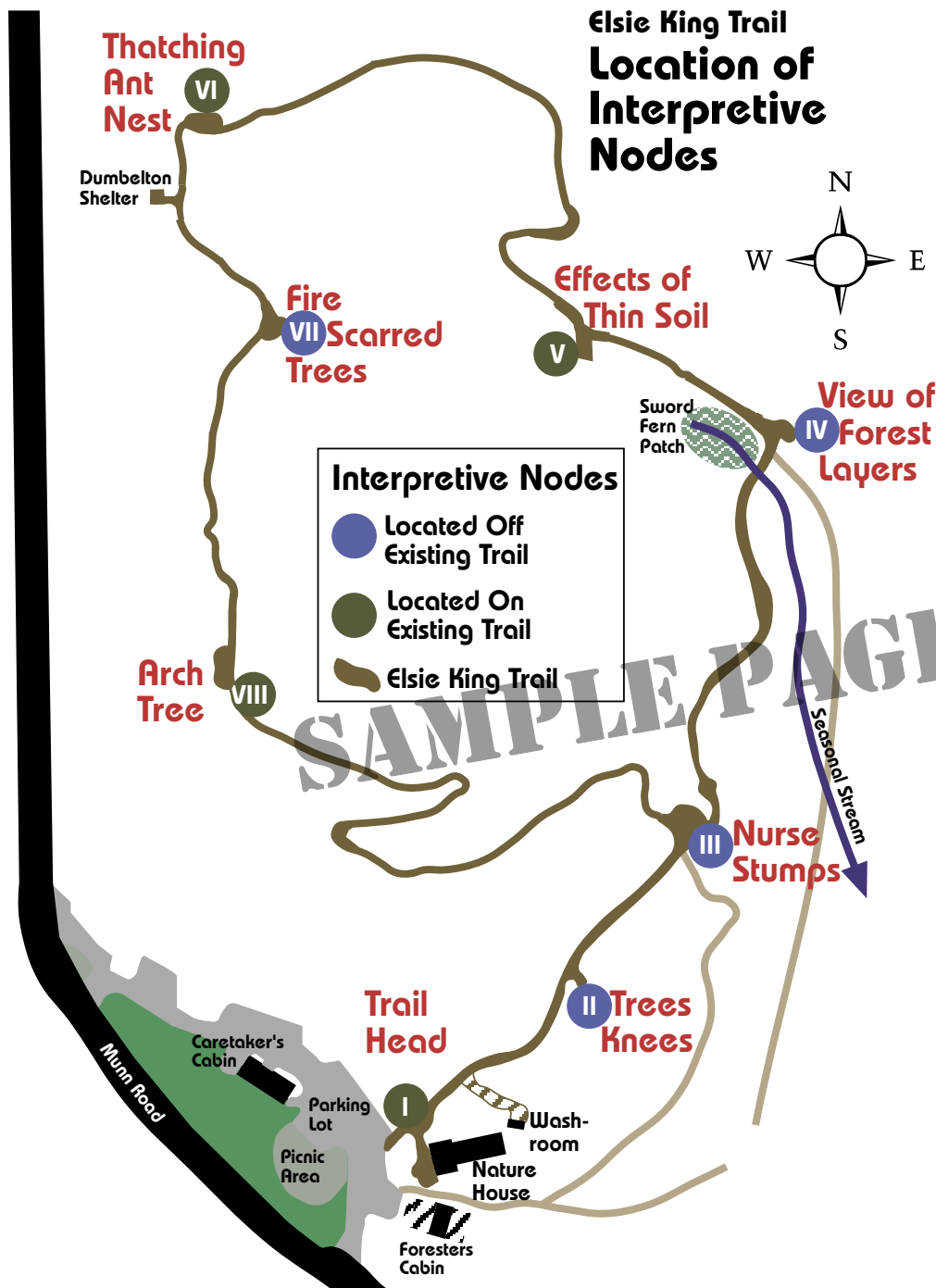
## Interpretive Node Locations

Eight sites were selected for interpretive nodes. One or two interpretive signs will be placed in each node. Node selection criteria consisted of answering the following questions:

- Does the site fit the interpretive themes?
- Is the site accessible?
- Is the site safe for people to visit?
  - are there dangers getting there, or at the site?
- Is the site safe from people?
  - are the plants and animals there sensitive to human interference?

The following sites were selected (see map below):

- I Trail Head
  - located adjacent to the parking lot at the platform where the boardwalk to the Nature House joins the Elsie King Trail
- II Tree's Knees
  - located at one of the first Tree's Knees along the Elsie King Trail, just past the cluster of memorial plaques
- III Nurse Stumps
  - at the junction of the access and loop trails
- IV Transition Zone/Forest Layers
  - located just past the seasonal stream
- V Thin Soil
  - located at the cave site
- VI Ant Watching
  - located neat the Dumbelton Rest Shelter
- VII Fire Trees
- VIII Arch Tree



Note:

- several trail signs are clustered near the beginning of the trail to engage visitors quickly in the activities of observing and discovering.
- some signs are not located directly adjacent to the existing trail
  - the location of small sections of the trail will have to be altered to make these interpretive sites accessible
  - these locations are marked by a blue circle on the map

### Sign Design Options

Two sign design options were considered. Each is discussed below.

#### Standard Panel Design

A panel of approximately 30 inches wide by 18 inches high could be located at each interpretive node. Panels should be supported by two posts.

#### Advantages

- simple design, easily built, easily maintained

#### Disadvantages

- panels can not be easily changed or updated seasonally



#### Book Design



The book design consists of one or more moveable panels on an angled podium-like base. The moveable panels, representing the loose-leaf pages in a binder, are composed of wooden or plastic sheets with a laminate sign panel on each

surface (size approximately 10 X 14 inches). Visitors can flip through the panels, in the same way they would flip through a book.

The moveable panels are reinforced by two brass grommets. The bindings are two or three muffler clamps that are bolted through the podium base.

A podium could be located at each interpretive node. The podium and movable sign panels could be supported by one post.

#### Advantages

- supports the concept of nature notes from trail users (see storyline)
- more engaging design – visitors can interact with sign on a basic level (flipping pages)
- panels can be changed to feature seasonal themes (e.g., spring flowers)
- individual panels can be replaced if damaged or out of date
- additional panels can be added at later date as funds become available

## Mounting of Sign Panels

### Recommendations:

1. Steel brackets mounted below the sign panels are recommended.

#### Justification:

Steel brackets are durable. Mountings located below the sign panels will reduce chances of damage and removal by vandals.

2. Design of bracket should be undertaken by CRD Parks sign staff.

#### Justification:

The CRD Parks sign crew has wide experience in materials, fabrication and maintenance of signs that will ensure a well crafted, functional design.

## Sign Height and Angle

Sign height and angle should accommodate easy access by all trail users, including children and people in wheelchairs.

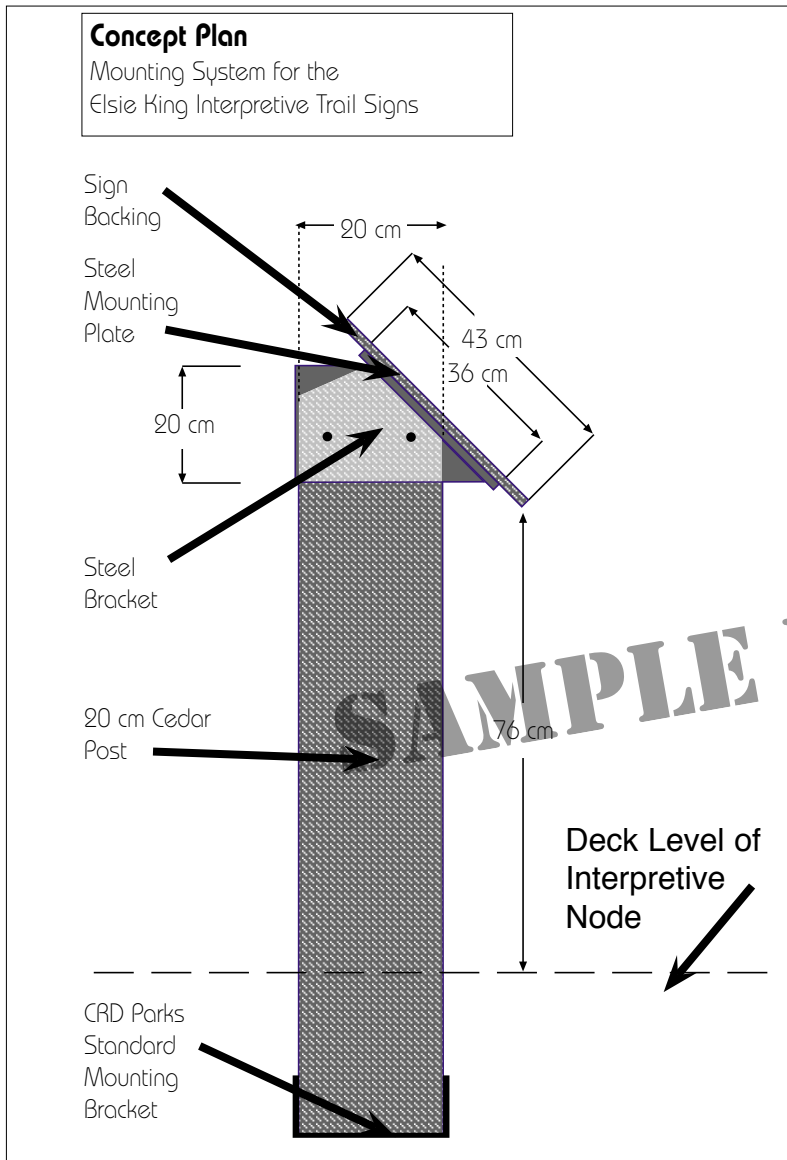
### Recommendations:

1. The base of the sign panels be approximately thirty inches above the deck surface of the interpretive node.
2. Sign panels be tilted at a 30° – 45° angle to accommodate easy viewing by all trail users and to shed leaf fall, rain, and snow.
3. CRD Parks sign staff construct a prototype sign mounting before final sign production. The prototype can be tested for accessibility by children and wheelchair users and for shedding of leaf fall and rain water.

#### Justification:

Design guidelines for height and angling of trail signs for Universal Access are not definitive. Testing the sign mountings at a pre-production stage will identify

inadequacies early, allowing for design changes before installation.



## Sign Backing

### Recommendations:

1. Sign backing should be durable – 3 or 1.25 cm (3/4 or 1/2 inch) creozone.

Justification:

Increased support for signs will reduce chances of damage to signs.

## Sign Media

### Criteria for Assessing Outdoor Sign Media for Outdoor Interpretive Use

Producing signs for outdoor interpretation is a specialized field. Signs must be durable and attractive.

#### Effects of Weathering

Outdoor signs are exposed to nature's fearsome threesome: sunlight, moisture and changes in temperature.

Sunlight bleaches the pigments and dyes, causing colours to fade and text to become blurred. Moisture blisters paint, oxidizes metals, lifts laminations, and fogs transparent sign coverings. Temperature changes cause materials to expand and contract, resulting in cracking and delamination of sign surfaces and support structures.

Sunlight, moisture and temperature change convert mountains into flood plains – all it takes is time. The longer a sign is left outside, the more these three forces work on all parts of a sign. No sign is permanent.

#### Resistance to Use and Abuse

Interpretive signs are designed to be interesting. They attract people to come close, to see and touch the sign and to interact with the natural environment. In the course of normal use, signs are prodded by walking canes, ski poles, sticks and even rocks, scraped by jewelry, watches and belt buckles, and splattered with food, mud and bird droppings.

As well as normal wear, many signs are exposed to intentional abuse. They are pounded by rocks, scraped by knives, burned by cigarettes, cigarette lighters and burning branches, and painted or marked by practically every type of pen and marker on the market.

#### Base Media

Base media are the materials to which the images and text of a sign are applied. Each sign making process has a spectrum of materials it is designed for. Some processes such as porcelain-enamel coatings have a narrow spectrum of base media (steel plate) while others such as Duratec may use several media ranging from woods to plastics.

#### Laminates and Coverings

Many outdoor sign technologies such as silk screen on wood and anodized aluminum have little durability on their own. However, delicate sign materials can be transformed into strong contenders in the durability category by tough laminates or coverings. Laminates adhere directly to the surface of the sign while coverings include

## Graphic Design Considerations

### Look and Feel of Signs

The original design of the Elsie King Trail with its narrow, winding boardwalk and forest vegetation brushing its edge produced a unique, contemplative atmosphere enjoyed by many trail users. The design of the Elsie King Trail signs should reflect this peacefulness. Colours and design should be muted, and not clash with the natural colours of the landscape.

### Fonts

#### Body Type

Body type is the font used for most of the text in a sign. The recommended storyline for the signs is the observations and discoveries of a naturalist who visits the site regularly. A clean, simple font that resembles neat handwriting would support this image.

Tekton - 24 point

#### Headline Type

Headline type is the font that is used for titles, headings and sub headings. Headline type is larger than body type and is usually a font whose style contrasts with the body type, subtly helping readers recognize key points and sections of a sign. Some designers use a larger, heavier version of the body type for headlines.

Kabel Book - 36 point

#### Font Size

Type size and weight should conform with Universal Access standards for signs.

Body type should be no smaller than 24 point (see Tekton sample above)

Headline Type should be larger than body type (see Kabel Book sample above)