

## NEWS RELEASE

Distributed March 14, 2014

### **May Richards Bennett Pioneer Park Opening Event**

*Celebrating the 7.5 acre addition to the existing park site*

#### **Summary**

Today, the City of Nanaimo celebrated the expansion of one of north Nanaimo's most popular parks. May Richards Bennett Pioneer Park increased in size by 7.5 acres to make it 27.5 acres as part of a land exchange deal with Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. The Mayor, members of Council, representatives from Nanaimo/Ladysmith Public Schools and Friends of Pioneer Forest, an advocate group for the park, were on site at the park to observe this milestone.

Formalized on March 12, 2013, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools entered into a process to exchange select parcels of land. The exchange also includes additional land added to Oliver Woods Park, as well as Harewood Sports Field along Fifth Street.

*Strategic Link:* This land exchange was a result of a partnership with Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools; Building Community Partnerships has been identified as one of the strategic priorities in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

#### **Key Points**

- May Richards Bennett Pioneer Park is located at 6700 Dover Road.
- The park is home to the Rotary Skate park, tennis courts, walking trails, a playground, soccer and ball fields.
- A dog off-leash area has been established as part of the newly added parkland development.
- This natural treed area (sometimes referred to as Pioneer Forest) has been the site of neighbourhood volunteer work parties focusing on vegetation health and invasive plant removal.

#### **Quotes**

"Today's celebration is a great example of how the City of Nanaimo and School District #68 can partner to achieve positive outcomes for the community. This additional land will greatly improve recreation opportunities at this park that will benefit our citizens"

John Ruttan  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

"This is truly an example of how two public bodies can work together for the good of the community at large."

Phil Turin  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools

Continued... May Richards Bennett Pioneer Park Opening Event

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