NEWS RELEASE

Distributed November 12, 2026

City of Nanaimo Welcomes Electric Sauna Pilot at Westwood Lake Park

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is excited to announce that residents will have the opportunity to try out a new park amenity this winter with a new pop-up sauna experience being launched at Westwood Lake Park starting this month.

The Sauna pilot program will run from November through June 30, 2027, providing residents and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy a sauna experience in one of Nanaimo's most popular destination parks. The fully electric sauna will be located near First Beach and will have views of the lake offering users the opportunity for a true hot and cold dip experience. This initiative provides an opportunity to enhance the park experience by introducing an additional recreation amenity that complements the recent improvements at Westwood Lake Park.

The pilot will help the City evaluate how privately operated services can work alongside existing park amenities to expand recreation opportunities and inform future recreation initiatives in parks.

Bookings for the Westwood Lake Park mobile sauna can be made directly through the operator's online booking system.Link: https://www.gatherwell.ca/locations

Strategic Link: The Westwood Lake Park sauna pilot aligns with Council's Strategic Plan; maintaining and growing current services by testing an innovative recreation amenity that enhances park user experiences.

Key Points

- A temporary, fully electric mobile sauna will operate at Westwood Lake Park from November 2026 to June 30, 2027, as part of a City Council-approved pilot program.
- The pilot will help the City evaluate how privately operated recreation services can enhance park amenities and inform future recreation opportunities in Nanaimo parks.
- Gatherwell is a private business and has entered into a Licence of Use agreement with the City that includes provisions for revenue sharing with the City and the supply of free access passes to City LEAP clients.

Quotes

"We're excited to introduce this pilot program at Westwood Lake Park and offer residents and visitors a new way to enjoy one of Nanaimo's most popular parks. The pilot will help us better understand interest in these types of recreation amenities and their potential role in our parks."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"We're thrilled to be bringing Gatherwell to Nanaimo. Sauna and cold plunge have a long tradition of bringing people together, and there's no better place for it than Westwood Lake. We're grateful to the City for the opportunity and can't wait to welcome the community this November."

Jonathan Chawla
Owner
Gatherwell

Quick Facts

- The City has partnered with a private operator to introduce a fully electric mobile sauna at Westwood Lake Park as part of a Council-approved pilot program.
- The sauna will be located near First Beach and will operate from November 2026 through June 30, 2027.
- The Sauna will be fully staffed and Bookings for the Westwood Lake Park mobile sauna can be made directly through the operator's online booking system. Link: https://www.gatherwell.ca/locations
- The pilot is intended to complement recent park improvements while helping the City evaluate opportunities for future privately operated recreation amenities in Nanaimo parks.

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View the online edition for more information -
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