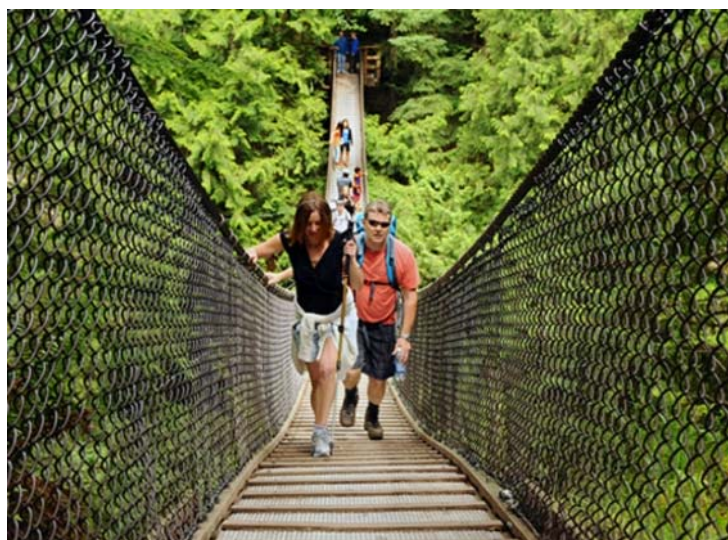


North Vancouver District park use hits record levels

Summer visitor numbers spike prompting call for parking fees

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Vancouver's record-setting hot, dry summer saw unprecedented numbers of visitors flock to District of North Vancouver park attractions including Lynn Canyon's suspension bridge, Quarry Rock and Mount Fromme. file photo Cindy Goodman

It will come as no surprise to first responders and folks living nearby, but **park and trail use** in the District of North Vancouver was through the roof this summer.

Council members were briefed by staff on the **exceptionally busy summer** at Monday's meeting.

"It's two or three times what it was four years ago," said Gavin Joyce, the district's manager of engineering and parks.

The growth has district staff considering expanding the seasonal park ranger program and granting the rangers more power to enforce bylaws to better manage safety and parking. And some on district council say it's time to start recouping revenue through parking or access fees.

On average, there were 60,000 vehicles parked outside Lynn Canyon Park per month this summer, with most staying two to three hours. The Lynn Canyon suspension bridge peaked at 6,622 visitors in one day.

Park rangers reported 13,049 cliff jumpers, compared to 8,861 in 2011. The number of swimmers almost doubled in that time period to 18,705. The number of incidents involving alcohol tripled to more than 1,600.

With the high-risk activity came more injuries. There were 121 minor incidents, including things like sprained ankles, bee stings and cuts and 17 major injuries like broken bones and head injuries, mostly thanks to cliff jumpers at 30- and 90-foot pools. There was also one fatality. On Sept. 11, an international student drowned when he jumped into 90-foot pool and became trapped under a rock ledge.

Beyond the hot, dry weather sending folks in search of a swimming hole to cool off in, staff attribute the growing

popularity of Lynn Canyon to cliff jumpers and “bum sliders” spreading videos of their stunts on social media.

A quarter of visitors to Lynn Canyon park were international visitors, while another 25 per cent came from elsewhere in B.C. and Canada. Only 20 per cent live on the North Shore. The remaining 30 per cent were from elsewhere in the Lower Mainland.

The new 75-stall parking lot on Fromme Mountain opened in July and quickly hit capacity, averaging 10,000 cars per month.

Coun. Lisa Muri suggested the district could raise \$250,000 per year if they would charge just \$2 for parking. Coun. Roger Bassam, however, argued it should remain free.

“I’m glad to see how well that facility is being used. It’s a fantastic public amenity that was built to alleviate the issue of having people parking all over the streets and neighbourhoods and it’s worked,” he said.

Quarry Rock has also ballooned in popularity with approximately 2,000 hikers a day on weekends and holidays (18 of whom required rescues by district firefighters).

The rangers also patrolled and managed approximately 38 “hot spots” known for being homeless camps and bush party sites across district parks

The parks are also increasingly drawing commercial tour buses and eco-tourism companies, which are not licensed and do not pay for access, to the chagrin of some on council.

“If we do it to the dog walkers, why can’t we do it for them?” asked Coun. Jim Hanson.

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