



**GARRY OAK MEADOW
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

To Mayor and Council

Re: Draft People, Pets and Parks Strategy

On behalf of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society Board of Directors, I would like to express our support for the recommendations proposed in the draft strategy. We strongly encourage the strategy's adoption. The GOMPS Board believes the strategy will lead to a more accommodating experience for all park users recognizing the many ways residents and visitors interact with Saanich Parks. We anticipate more people will feel comfortable accessing Saanich Parks as the actions proposed are implemented. The improved distribution and construction of leash-optional facilities to improve access for pet owners and the improvement of pet waste facilities are also propositions we welcome.

The benefits of the strategy's implementation to Parks staff, Pulling Together volunteers, and non-profit groups' restoration efforts are anticipated to be substantial -- we believe biodiversity will quickly benefit from reduced pet pressure in natural areas, streams, and shoreline areas if this strategy is enacted and resourced appropriately. For leash-optional trails (e.g., PKOLS loop), we hope that split-rail or other fencing might be considered to keep pets out of sensitive ecosystems, and to avoid trampling areas that are being restored.

A People, Pets and Parks strategy that prioritizes education and outreach and improving facilities for pet owners is the right approach, and we hope to see the strategy implemented as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Ryan Senechal
Saanich

Board President – Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society