

Overhaul coming for popular Nanaimo disc golf course

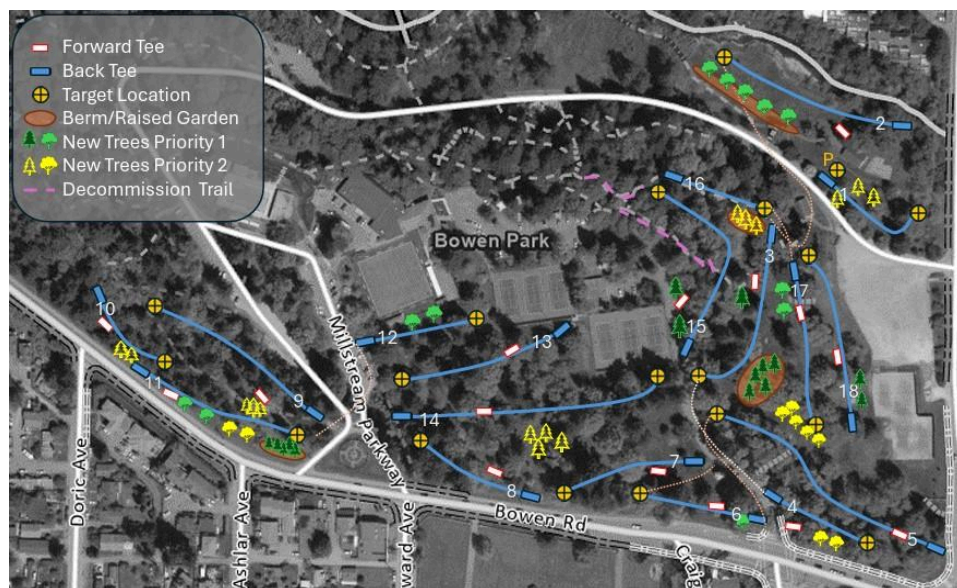
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NANAIMO — Operating in its current form at Bowen Park since the early 1990's, the City of Nanaimo's lone disc golf course will be revived.

The free-to-play, 18-bucket treed course will be reconfigured and refreshed, said Charlotte Davis, the City's deputy director of parks and natural areas.

Describing the course as “very popular,” Davis said the nearly \$190,000 budgeted project will satisfy a wide range of disc golf players.

“This is a big thing to be improving. We estimate there's about 45 thousand rounds played every year at this course. We know it's very, very popular,” Davis told *NanaimoNewsNOW*.



*An overview of pending enhancements to the existing Bowen Park Disc Golf course.
(Image Credit: City of Nanaimo)*

Notable pending changes include lengthening portions of the course, as well as new playing infrastructure.

“We’re renewing the whole course, replacing the tee pads and the baskets and also doing the plantings, so some little bits of restoration here and there as well. We’re removing some larger areas of invasive plants,” Davis said.

With technology advancements over the years, discs now travel much further, which Davis said warranted the need for adjustments to make portions of the Bowen Park Disc Golf Course more challenging.

The City consulted with Nanaimo Disc Golf Club and also hired a special designer with experience in disc golf course design and implementation.

“We’re working very well with the disc golf club. They’re keen and passionate volunteers have great ideas, and we’ve also hired a very well-known disc golf designer to make this course the best it can be.”

An important pending improvement, Davis said, will be addressing known conflicts between disc golfers and volleyball players in the lower portion of Bowen Park above Wall St.

“There’s been a number of incidents and close calls,” Davis said. “We’re completely reworking the course in that area so that we don’t expect to have that conflict in the future.”

Davis expects a contractor to be hired shortly and ideally work to revamp the Bowen Park Disc Golf Course to begin in April.

She added the 45,000 estimated players at Bowen Park Disc Golf course annually is based on the number of users on a popular app who check in, stating based on the metric, the course was the second and sixth busiest in the province and Canada, respectively last year.

Aaron Pottinger, president of Nanaimo Disc Golf Club, said the top priority for redesigning the course is safety, stating the current layout creates excessive crossover resulting in multiple injuries of errant discs.

“Participation at Bowen Park increases each year, bringing more players onto the course. As traffic increases, the crossover between holes has become both more frequent and more hazardous, creating avoidable safety risks,” Pottinger told *NanaimoNewsNOW*.

In addition to increasing safety, Pottinger outlined how Bowen Park Disc Golf course has remained largely unchanged since its inception, while player skill level and equipment have advanced.

“Bowen (Park) hosts approximately ten tournaments each year, including our flagship event, the Hub City Huck, now entering its 13th year. This tournament attracts players from across B.C. and the United States and has helped establish Nanaimo as a respected destination for competitive disc golf.”

Pottinger noted redesigning the Bowen Park course addresses the need to constantly temporarily redesign the layout to comply with sanctioned Professional Disc Association events involving larger fields of 72 or more competitors.

“A permanent redesign would eliminate repeated temporary changes and provide a layout capable of safely hosting events year-round, including winter tournaments and league events,” Pottinger stated.

Original News Article written by Ian Holmes, Nanaimo News Now.