



FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday April 16 2008 7:30 p.m.
McMorran's Seaview Room
5109 Cordova Bay Road

Agenda

Reports from Committees

Election of Officers

(The chairman of the nominating committee is Kay Porter: her phone number is 658-5792. If you should wish to propose yourself or someone else as a candidate for the Executive Board, please call her or make your proposal at the appropriate point during the meeting.)

Speaker: Angela Evans

"Healthy Watersheds:

Actively linking human and watershed health"

Angela Evans is a community planner passionate about sustainability issues. Through her company, Local Solutions Consulting Services, she hopes to inspire many small actions that will make a positive difference. Most recently—for 8 years—she was an Environmental Planner with the District of Saanich. She has visited permaculture farms, innovative sewage treatment plants, alternative technology centres, eco-villages, new towns and co-housing looking for planning inspiration. Her volunteer exploits on Clare St. in Victoria have been profiled in Focus on Women, Canadian Parent, the Times Colonist and the Victoria Community Green Story Book. Her illustrations of buildings and landscapes, and her articles on sustainability topics, have appeared in topical journals.

Summit plans

Saanich Parks will be improving the trail to the southeast summit this spring. They will be creating a well-defined trail following a natural depression and route over the rock bluff where everyone is currently having to scramble. The trail portion leading from the summit parking lot will be repaired. Along with this trail work, they will be closing the many ad-hoc scramble trails over the rock bluff below the transmitter tower and then doing general restoration work.

In conjunction with this work, we would like to define the trail on this lower summit plateau to help preserve the natural vegetation. Also the trail that leads south and down from this summit is a myriad of different paths; we hope to select and mark one and allow the other impromptu alternatives to grow over.

We are also discussing the general summit parking area and looking at possible changes that would improve its operation and general appearance. We would like to see a better orientation of the main summit parking lot, which is likely the preferred destination for tourists arriving by car. Some of the other thoughts include replacing the parking restriction and warning signs with a kiosk that would include a trail map and other information of interest.

Churchill Drive

In 2000 Churchill Drive was first closed to cars on Sunday mornings until noon. This has been a resounding success; the number of walkers on Churchill Drive has increased dramatically. It has become the "Grouse Grind" of Victoria, but for all ages and fitness levels.

One really sees all ages, from the youngest in baby strollers to the quite elderly, walking slowly but still making the climb!

We recently repeated a "traffic" count that we originally did in 2000. In one hour more walkers were counted than were counted in the entire morning in 2000.

As a response to this success and the popularity of Churchill Drive for walkers, we will make a request this spring to leave the gate at the bottom of Churchill closed until noon every day. This will still provide the majority of the day for those who wish to drive to the top, but reserves the cooler morning hours for walkers who prefer not to dodge cars or smell exhaust fumes. We also feel a consistent daily opening hour will be better remembered than having different hours on different days.

The shoreline

Well, after more than five years of waiting, there has been a little progress: the tests on the scale model are now complete and the consultants remain convinced that the headland control system will work in this area. They are preparing their report for Council, while a team of archeologists are examining the area near the old quarry to see if there are any aboriginal artifacts in the ground that need protecting.

In addition, the engineers have obtained permission in principle to carry out the work on the foreshore, provided they can convince the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that their actions are benign. In practical terms, this means a plan must be prepared that creates the minimum of disturbance while the work is in progress and a remediation plan for the site after the work is complete.

If they hold to the usual window for work of this type then the earliest start would be August this year, but given the backlog of work throughout the municipality it is more likely to happen in summer 2009.

In the meantime, if you would like to refresh your memory of the scope and nature of the problem, take a walk along the edge of the

road from the old quarry towards the motel. Stay close to the road edge – the drop is more than 100 feet (30 m) – but you do not have to go far to see the problem. The cliff face is scalloped, tree roots are exposed and the edge of the cliff is extremely close to the road and the traveling public.

The motel

Since the last newsletter, there have been several developments; firstly, a fresh Open House was held at the end of 2007, with far greater participation from the people in the immediate neighbourhood. That was followed in January by a presentation to the Cordova Bay Association, which has taken a major role in this issue because the proposed changes contradict the Local Area Plan.

The underlying dynamics are that the motel is no longer commercially viable; the owners claim that they have had an annual occupancy rate of about 40% since September 11, 2001 and thus must make a change. However, the economics are secondary to the potential threat of indiscriminate apartment-style development along the Park boundary, using this development as a precedent. Fortunately, the owner has stated publicly that the overall footprint of the buildings on the land would remain the same and the height of the buildings, including replacement structures, would also remain the same: both of these restrictions are easy to incorporate into a development permit.

Less easy are the problems of shared use of Park land and ensuring that this type of activity is confined to this site alone. When the sewer enterprise was expanded into this part of Cordova Bay a few years ago, it was made possible by an agreement between a developer and Saanich. Much smaller lot sizes were permitted on condition that the site also housed the pump station and provided access for municipal maintenance crews. Using this model, it should not be too hard to forge a similar agreement around Park access, fire roads etc. The latest word from planners and developers show they are pursuing this

suggestion, and we look forward to its adoption. For the long term, the best option would probably be to scrap the idea entirely, incorporate the motel site with the adjacent lots and create a bare land strata development based on RS-12 residential lots. Judging by the scale of development in the immediate vicinity, it seems to be an extremely profitable means of development and it would allow everyone a say in resolving the issues of Park land, public viewing sites, access to the premises, suitable sidewalks and safe crossings. A letter making this case has gone to the planning department.

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

13th Annual Gardening for Wildlife

A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

April 19th and 20th 2008

Admission is \$3.00 per day
(includes admission to all workshops and presentations)

or \$5.00 for a weekend pass

For further details, see
www.swanlake.bc.ca

Creek calendar

The carcass transplant went off without a hitch (on a scale of 10) on the 15 of December 2007. We had a good turnout of diverse people, some of whom are regular 'carcass planters'. We installed Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

100 carcasses into woody debris, on stream banks and under rocks in about an hour and a half. We tried to time the native crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus* transplant with the carcass transplant but we couldn't quite get the timing right.

This is our first crayfish transplant. It took time to sort out how and where to get crayfish; how to keep them isolated and for how long; what gender mix; and marking them so that they can be tracked. The Aquatics facility at University of Victoria and the dedicated staff have stepped up and made most of it happen. They captured the crayfish, sent some over to the lab in Vancouver for health checks, and held and marked the 100 or so that are slated for transport. They will be transplanted soon.

We have about 50,000 chum fry being held at the Howard English Hatchery for a release into the Creek in late April. Many thanks to the hard-working volunteers.

We have sent three proposals into the Pacific Salmon Foundation, asking for money to complete projects this year.

The first and largest is a proposal to allow us to continue on with habitat restoration in the Creek. We are looking at 5 or 6 woody debris structures, anchored to boulders and with spawning gravel added behind the weirs. This is a continuation of the very successful project last year. We are working in the same partnerships (Saanich Parks, DFO, The Pacific Salmon Foundation, the University and others)—strengthened from last year, more diverse and complex: a winning team.

The second proposal is to purchase some more mature vegetation for the Tree Appreciation Day plant-out next November. The plugs that Rob Hagel is supplying us are unequalled for quality, it is that we want to be diverse in species and age classes. If we can get a bit of older vegetation we can accomplish that. Rob is now preparing the seeds for next November's plant-out.

The third proposal is to reinstall the hydrometric station we lost 2 years ago. We need to measure the extremes of flows and relate them to habitat and biological responses such as fry health and abundance and the return and spawning of salmonids.

The Creek was surveyed on the 19th and 20th of March. The resulting plans will do much to support the three proposals. Resources come from DFO, thanks to Tom Rutherford.

Some of you may have attended the Open House for the Gordon Head/San Juan Greenway. The proposed plan is a disappointment with respect to storm water management: it wasn't given consideration. We have gone to work to try and change that. We have reviewed the sheets of plans, examined the proposed routes, and made written comments to Saanich Environmental Services. We understand the proposal is going to be re-examined, so stand by.

Another controversial aspect of the Greenway plan is the loss of vegetation. According to the sheets of plans the cost of implementation is 1 ash, 1 maple, 1 arbutus, 1 crab apple, 1 birch, 1 hawthorn, 14 ornamental cherries, 6 firs, 8 unidentified trees, 6 identified shrubs and an unspecified (as to number and species) quantity of shrubs. A total of 34 trees and many shrubs is too high a price to pay.

Check out the cherries on San Juan: this may be the last time they flower (though we hope not!) If you are in the park there is a layer of Indian plum that provides lime green and white flowered strata under the tree canopy. Easter lilies and satin flowers are in their glory now: enjoy.

Invasive plants

It's Garlic Mustard time!! Yes, this rotten species is still in Mount Douglas Park and many, many, many plants are growing, getting ready to set flower stalks in April/May. To get a jump on this alien, invasive plant we'll start Garlic Mustard work parties in March rather than wait until May as was done last year.

We'll be maintaining more work parties for a few months in order to reduce the population as much as we can this year. It will take a few years to get this plant under control, and this year is critical to our success.

For now, work parties will take place on Sundays and Thursdays, but we will fine-tune this as we go. Call me, Judy, at 472-0515 or e-mail me at jandd_spearing@shaw.ca

And if you're not familiar with this nasty, invasive species, here are a few websites you can visit:

<http://lakehuron.ca/index.php?page=garlic-mustard>

http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/PUBLICATIONS/INV/p8_e.cfm

http://www.uoguelph.ca/news/2006/05/weed_using_chem.html

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/>

[prince-edward%20island/](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/prince-edward%20island/)

[story/2007/07/03/garlic-mustard.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/prince-edward%20island/story/2007/07/03/garlic-mustard.html)

Membership

Please check your address label; if it reads less than '07 your renewal time has come. We hope you will continue to support the work of the Society for another year by sending \$5 for each one-year membership to the address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone No. _____

Individual membership fee is \$5.00 per year

Membership 1 year 2 year 3 year

Send or deliver to: Graham Shorthill, Treasurer
4623 Cordova Bay Rd, Victoria B.C. V8X 3V6