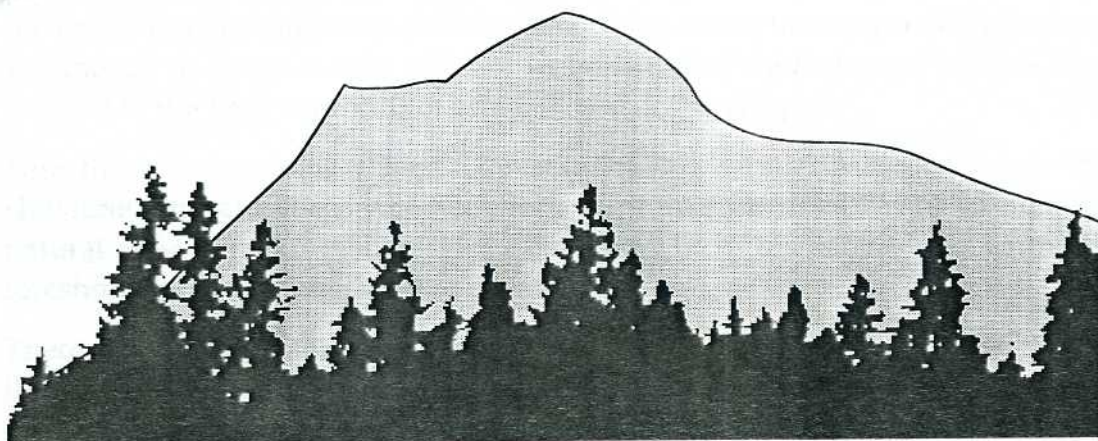

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Newsletter

February 2001

'04 Maurice Claude
2200 Lorne Tce
Victoria V8S 2H8 B.C.



Annual General Meeting

7:30 Tuesday April 10 2001

McMorran's Seaview Room, 5109 Cordova Bay Road

*Reports on achievements of the year
Three to be elected to the executive board
(if you wish to nominate someone for election, please call
Kay Porter at 658-5792)*

*Plan to come and hear local historian
Valerie Green*

"Pioneer Neighbours of Mount Douglas Park"

President's Report

By one reckoning we are now in the first year of the true third millennium. However that may be, we start with one major bonus for our Society. By now, with some very minor exceptions, the municipality has purchased for addition to the Park all the privately-owned land intervening between the original area designated as Park and the natural treeline in the Blenkinsop Valley. This averts the danger of our one day waking up to discover large tracts of woodland that we had come to think of as integral to the Park in process of being logged or "developed."

Now the only remaining territorial threat to the Park's integrity lies to the east—the shoreline. Still at issue is whether efforts to protect Cordova Bay Road from the natural erosion that is nibbling at the bank on which it is perched will harm the foreshore and the marine life that it fosters.

There are, however, threats of other kinds. The encroachment of invasive species (broom, ivy, holly, and daphne) must be stemmed. At the time of writing, a large contingent of students organized by the Kiwanis Club and under the supervision of

Saanich staff is busy clearing ivy from trees in some of the most densely affected areas. It is cheering to find that organizations other than ours are beginning to address the problem. We continue to besiege granting bodies for funds to hire the labour to fight invasive species more systematically. In the meantime, when you next take a walk in the park, and on all such occasions in the future, please feel moved to cut or tear ivy down from a tree or two, and also to uproot it from the tree's base.

Yet another form of invasion is from industrial and chemical pollutants, infiltrating Douglas Creek from the adjacent residential watershed. They continue to threaten our efforts to establish the creek as a fish-bearing stream. We have, however, good reason (see later in the newsletter) to believe our efforts will ultimately prove successful.

We are also concerned to ensure that surrounding development will not seal off the Park entirely from wildlife. The genetic health of fauna within the Park is at stake. Accordingly, we have been taking an interest in recent proposals for the development of properties on Braefoot Road and Mount Douglas Cross Road. In particular, we have been advocating that the density of development should not preclude wildlife corridors through these properties.

Returning to the subject of the millennium, our broom-bashing and fish restoration activities during the last year have been included in the Victoria Foundation record of projects undertaken in celebration of the millennium in B.C. This list of millennium projects can be accessed on the internet at www.ourmillennium.ca.

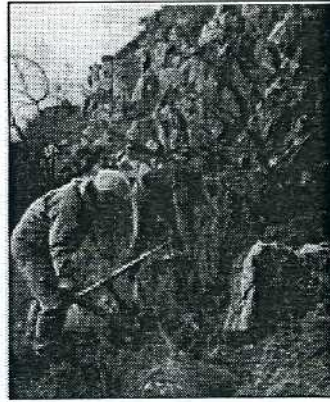
The Friends of Mount Douglas Park have received certificates of recognition from the Victoria Foundation for these projects.

Bob Bridgeman Scores Again

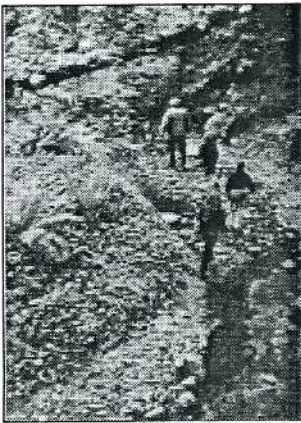
Our Director of Streams, Bob Bridgeman, has had his article, "Urban Issues in Watershed Restoration," printed in the December 2000 issue of the Society for Ecological Restoration News, which publishes from Tucson, Arizona.

Broom Bashing

Turnout during the winter months for the removal of broom seedlings near the summit has not been particularly good. Hence we have been unable to take full advantage of the period when the ground is at its softest and the spring flowers have yet to start stirring. Most of the new growth of broom at this location has still to be dealt with. Further pulling will now have to be delayed to late summer.



The Stream

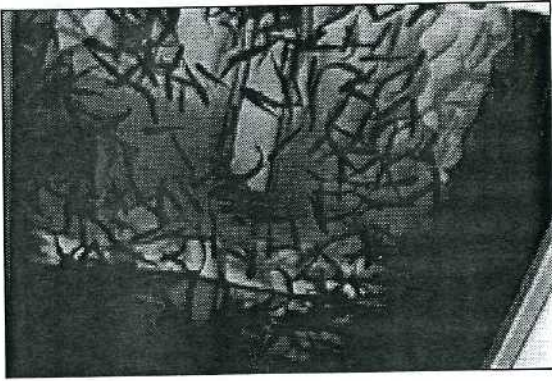


To date there have been no reports of salmon spawning in the Creek. Nevertheless, possibilities for the future are undiminished. Many factors influence salmon escapement and for now we will carry on transplanting fish and improving the available rearing habitat.

Our application to transplant chum into the stream has been approved, but we do not have the eggs for the transplant—normally some 55,000 adult chum return annually to Goldstream in recent years, but the number dwindled to 7,000 this year. This drastic change in numbers is not unusual for chum stocks and is not a certain indicator

of escapement in years to come. It does mean that we will have to wait another year before we can vary our transplant program to include a different species.

We do have coho available. Goldstream Hatchery is once again supplying us with approximately 2200 eyed-eggs in "Scotty Condominiums" for transplant into the gravel and cobble of the streambed. The egg-to-fry ratio last year, virtually 100%, was so successful that we hope for the same results this year. As you recall, the fry from the egg transplant last year suddenly disappeared last summer. We can't be sure why, but we'll hope to do better this year.



We all can be stream-watchers. I can show anyone interested where to watch for the young fry come March and April—but by then many of you may have your favourite spots already picked out. If you want to report what you see, good or bad, call me, Bob Bridgeman, at 477-7464.

The chum carcass transplant has been put on hold—apparently transplant regulators are wrestling with details of

protocol. Even if these details are worked out, likely all available carcasses are needed at Goldstream this year. However, I will keep working on both concept and application. Definitely be back on track next year.

The hydrometric survey is proceeding nicely. Gordon Clarke (Clarke Hydrological Services) and I have been out measuring flows. Gordon has been analyzing the data and has prepared a draft hydrograph. This is a work in progress but well in hand. Measuring flows gives interesting snapshots of conditions in the creek. On August 10 a flow of 4 litres/second was recorded—a very low flow that registered 0.158 on the staff gauge. In marked contrast, on December 16 a flow of 1,028 litres/ second was recorded, showing 0.6 meters on the staff gauge. A series of similar flow measurements at different staff heights, hence different flows, plotted on a graph form the hydrograph. So any event on the stream can be correlated with discharge of water (which is often the controlling factor in events) by simply reading the staff gauge and referring to the hydrograph. The current phase, funded by the Urban Salmon Habitat Program and the South Islands Aquatic Stewardship Society, will see the field work finished in May, with reports to follow shortly after.

The PISCES (Passive In Situ Concentration–Extraction Sampler) was installed December 30, 2000, adjacent to the hydrometric station. This sampler is based on semipermeable membrane technology—stay with me now—which is being developed as a water quality monitoring tool that replaces other practices such as bio assays, hence the nickname—the virtual fish. The technology allows us to sample

base flows as well as storm events cheaply, to store the samples indefinitely, and to choose samples associated with significant biological events (fish kills) for the expensive laboratory analysis. Samples can be analyzed for organic substances that are often hazardous to fish and humans. All this is an attempt to find the substances or conditions that are killing fish and other living organisms in the creek.

Millennium Projects

The October 22nd 2000 coho fry transplant and the November 5th 2000 tree planting have been registered as Millennium Projects by Faith Magwood, working for the Victoria Foundation. Her husband Jon, who volunteered at both events, took a series of photographs some of which we have used in Society displays. Thanks to the work of these people, the Victoria Foundation, volunteers at the events, Goldstream Hatchery, and Saanich's Significant Tree Committee, the Society's work is now registered in Ottawa, as one of perhaps 5000 Canadian millennium projects

Tree Planting

The November 5th 2000 tree planting coincided with and was supported by Significant Tree Day in Saanich. Sixteen adults and nine children planted 60 cedars and 40 grand firs along the stream bank adjacent to the areas where some trees were cut down. The trees and a light snack were provided the Beautiful BC



Foundation and by Thrifty's.. With such a good turnout of volunteers, a few hours made short work of the planting. The trees seem to be doing fine but of course ivy is starting to invade that part of the park and will, I believe, overwhelm trees and shrubs if left alone to do so. Whenever I am down there I always pull up a bit of ivy. I found last winter that after clearing a spot of ivy whatever is pulled up can be piled on the clear spot. It does not seem to re-sprout but rather seems to rot back into humus.
