

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Spring 2012



Volunteers Transplanted 150 Chum and Coho Carcasses from Goldstream Hatchery to Douglas Creek along with 500 Coho Paar (see inset).

Annual General Meeting

7:30pm Tuesday, May 1, 2012

Gordon Head Recreation Centre

Topic: Urban Forest and Land Cover Mapping for Saanich

Guest Speaker: Cory Manton,

Manager of Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas

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2012 Projects, Upcoming Events in the Park

- Trail Usage Counters Installation
- Camosun Capstone Project
New Interpretive Trail Signs
- Park Trail Map
- 20th Anniversary Plans
- Invasive Pulls
- Creek Work: Study, Egg Box
- Trails – New Blenkinsop Trail, Trail Repairs, Next Way-Finding Sign Project
- Events: Saanich Family Cycling Festival, Rivers Day, Tree Appreciation Day, Fry Release, Carcass Transplant, Churchill Drive Gateway Dedication,

Douglas Creek Carcass & Parr Transplant

A combined carcass transplant, along with a Parr transplant was held in January. There were 150 frozen chum and Coho carcasses transferred from the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream to Douglas Creek. Peter McCully, from



Coho Parr released at the weir.



Peter McCully from Goldstream Hatchery presents entertaining and educational information about the carcass and Parr transplants.

the hatchery, gave an excellent overview of this process, explaining that, contrary to the view of some that the death of Pacific Salmon after spawning is a waste, in fact, their carcasses remaining in the streams and creeks, is an essential component for the entire ecosystem. For Douglas Creek, this is an extremely important rehabilitation step, providing essential nutrients, habitat and food

for the insects necessary for the salmon fry, as well as food for the animals that live around this riparian zone.

At the same time, 500 coho were outplanted from the Hatchery to Douglas Creek. These were pre-smolts, (Parr), the product of eggs taken in



A carcass expertly placed behind woody debris.

November of 2010. They will stay in Douglas Creek until May or June when they will migrate to the ocean. People (and especially dogs) should not be in the Creek during this time. A very special thanks to all those at the Howard English Hatchery. Without their help, this would not have been possible. Their continued and long term support has been invaluable for Douglas Creek.



Coho Paar now in Douglas Creek

Douglas Creek Work & Plans

- Riffles and spawning beds have now been constructed from the Creek mouth to Ash Road. Much of this excellent work is visible from the interpretive trail above the Creek. Prior to the restoration, the Creek was a clay slough channelling stormwater at high speed with no habitat. Now we have a beautiful sequence of pools connected with

small riffles navigable in both directions by the small salmon.

- The next phase is the Creek section above Ash Road up to the weir. This is a much easier section to restore as it is relatively level, offering more opportunities for good spawning pools.
- PSF has changed the requirements for grant recipients; they now require Saanich to assume all liability including personal liability, destruction of habitat liability, damage to infrastructure, as well as volunteer liability.
 - In order to accept this responsibility, Saanich now requires a Registered Professional Biologist along with a Professional Engineer to review and approve the project and all work. A Request for Proposal is ready to be published so that this review and approval process can be completed and the next planning stage begun well in advance of the time-line for the actual work..
- Currently we and Parks are examining the best access routes and methods to deliver material to the Creek. Similar to the way the lower section was accessed, equipment will move along the determined access route and when the project is finished, the route will be restored as an interpretive walk with viewing points.
- The in-creek work will be similar to the lower Creek, except that the pools will be much larger with “leaky” dams. These dams will cause storm surges to back up, filling flood planes, then slowly release the water as the storm surge subsides.
- A new approach for Douglas Creek will be the burying of an egg box in the



Bob Bridgeman reviews double pool and riffle structures completed last September – the best yet!

Creek. Chum eggs from the Howard English Hatchery will be placed in the box allowing these salmon to hatch in the Creek instead of hatching elsewhere and then being transplanted. We suspect that, in the past, some of the transplanted fry have returned to their original stream. Hopefully allowing them to hatch in Douglas Creek will improve their imprint and we will see even better returns.

Trail Work

The Norn Trail heading south from the Churchill gate was a huge quagmire, with walkers forced to make wide detours around the large mud holes, creating an even bigger mess. The



Norn Trail mud quagmires fixed near Churchill gate.

area was kept wet by a large water flow that spread out over a 20-30 m area as it crossed the trail. The solution that allowed for proper drainage was to install a short boardwalk and channel the water under it. The rest of the section required drainage rock

covered with gravel. At the half-finished review, the resulting trail was a poor visual match for the natural setting, but Parks quickly filled the trail edges with compost, resulting in a vastly improved trail esthetic. The trail width is a half meter wider than what our Park Plan as well as Saanich's plan suggests, but was necessary to accommodate the machine width

for the material delivery. We continue to urge Parks to find a narrower machine, but they haven't been able to find one that is narrow, can move relatively quickly and has sufficient capacity.

Trail Closure: In conjunction with the Norn repairs, the first trail closure was initiated. It is the trail (in reality, a small creek bed) that connected the Norn with the Whittaker Trails, about 100m south of Churchill.

Whittaker Trail repairs near the motel: Another quagmire is on the Whittaker Trail as it heads up from behind the motel. The first 100 m or so is in good condition, then there are a couple of big, deep mud holes. Some will be filled with gravel over drain rock. Where water crosses the trail, a couple of short boardwalks will be constructed. There is good natural surface trail between the mud holes that won't be touched.



More aftermath from high winds. The large number of downed trees blocking trails kept Parks crews busy.

On windy days, walk the Park at your own risk!!

Irvine Trail way-finding signs review: Last year Parks installed two types of way-finding signs along the Irvine Trail. On the section below where the trail crosses Churchill Drive, plastic posts with small direction signs were installed at trail crossing points. These posts resemble wood, but won't rot like the old wood posts. On the upper section, more frequent small cube signs were installed to mark the correct trail.

Whittaker Trail way-finding signs: The successful Irvine Trail way-finding signs will be extended to the Whittaker Trail as it goes around the Park. Many walkers comment about getting lost in the depths of the Park – one more step to help them find their way home!

Blenkinsop Trail with Parking Area: Parks will be constructing a small parking lot on

the latest Park addition just north of where Lohbrunner meets Blenkinsop Road. Park access from this new lot will be restricted until the new trail can be constructed later in the summer. It will be a steep trail, but with spectacular views. The current challenge is to determine a route that avoids the many endangered plants, hence the temporary access restrictions.

New Trail Names: Parks, along with our Society, has reviewed the Park trail names. This review was initiated because of new trails, unnamed trails and some inconsistency with existing names. As a quick summary, the new or changed names are (see the map on our web site to locate these trails – they are currently unnamed on the map):

- **Douglas Trail** parallels the north and west side of Douglas Creek upstream from the washroom area.
- **Beach Trail** connects the beach parking lot with the beach.
- **Churchill Trail** becomes an extension of Churchill Drive, crossing Cedar Hill Road, past the weir, parallels Edgemont Road to Ash Road, then parallels the east side of the Creek to the bluff above the ocean where it turns and ends at Durling.
- **Blenkinsop Trail** will be the new trail connecting Blenkinsop Road with the Todd Trail.

Visitor Counters: The first trail user counters will be installed this spring. The CRD has collected very useful usage counts with the same style counters; we hope to gain a better insight into the number of trail walkers, where and when they walk.

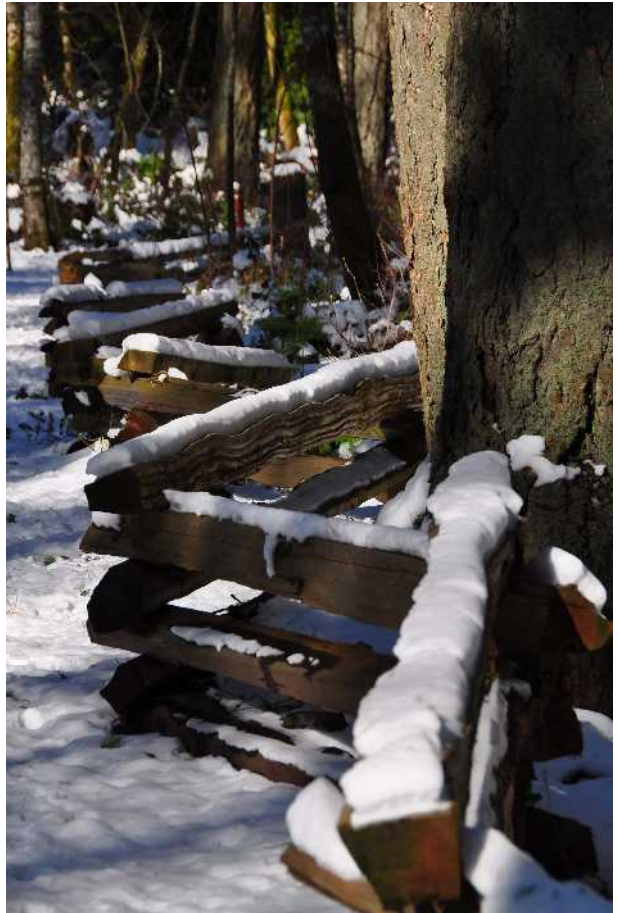
New Trail Map

Did you receive one of our laminated pocket sized trail maps? We have some left over and will bring them to the upcoming AGM. It is still accurate, but some trails were not included. We have recently made GPS plots of virtually all of the Park trails, including many of the “impromptu” or shortcut trails, and are working on a new map. We are working with Parks to see which trails should be recognized, which should be closed and the area restored, or simply ignored for now. Parks, for maintenance and liability reasons, prefers to show only trails that they will maintain. These are the four categories on the existing map (Fire Road, Easy=Green, Moderate=Blue, Difficult=Black). Our current thoughts are that all trails should be recognized, either under an existing category, or under one of two additional categories; “exists, but not maintained”, and “to be closed”.

Early Park History

Do you know what was mined in Mount Douglas Park? We keep hearing rumours about past events in Mount Douglas Park, but would like more information. Can you help with information about any of these history questions, or provide other interesting historical information?

- What was mined? When?
- Any information about the military base or lookout at the main summit. We know telephone/power poles made a connection there and there are concrete block anchors for something. What was there? When?
- Who first built Churchill Drive to the summit? And when?
- When was the first radio installation on the east summit prior to the current tower? We know BC Tel with local emergency services had a radio telephone tower and building there until the current tower was installed.



Winter Snow

- When was the fire water line installed? It starts near the old quarry and runs straight up the side to an interconnection point about 2/3 of the way up Churchill, then under the road to the summit water tank.
- What about the tea house and worker quarters that used to be in the area of the beach parking lot children's play area?

Summer Internship

A student from the Technical University of Munich will be joining us this summer for an eight week internship in Mount Douglas Park. As part of his requirements for Bachelor of Science in Forest Science and Resource Management anticipated at the end of the summer, he needs to complete this practicum. We are organizing a variety of tasks to provide him with a wide experience for his work here from mid-July until mid-September. He is looking for accommodation; if you know of an available room, let us know (darrell@mountdouglaspark.ca) and we will put you in contact with him.

Mobile Watershed Boundary Sign

Have you seen this sign? Do you know where it is now? No, it's not missing – it just keeps moving! Saanich Environmental Services, as part of their effort to improve the Douglas Creek watershed, obtained two “Entering Douglas Creek Watershed” signs. They felt that a new sign in a new location is noticed – but soon becomes stale and ignored. So they are regularly moving these two watershed boundary signs to a different entry point, alerting the public to the boundary locations.



UVic Environmental Law Clinic Report

The FMDPS contacted the UVic Environmental Law Clinic, under legal direction of Calvin Sandborn, and asked them to provide information about whether or not the stormwater management practices of the District of Saanich may be violating the federal Fisheries Act and/or the provincial Environmental Management Act. Student lawyer Katrina Andres was assigned investigator and produced an excellent report which is available on our web site. It was her conclusion that Saanich may be violating sections of the Fisheries Act. She presented her findings at a special meeting with Saanich department managers. It should be noted that our Society never entertained any thoughts of legal action, our purpose was only to explore an additional avenue towards improving the stormwater environment, and hence the sources for Douglas Creek. It should also be pointed out that most likely virtually every municipality in British Columbia employs similar, or perhaps worse, stormwater management practices.

The Broken Window Theory

Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside. Or consider a sidewalk. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of trash from take-out restaurants there or breaking into cars.

A successful strategy for preventing vandalism is to fix the problems when they are small. Repair the broken windows within a short time and the tendency is that vandals are much less likely to break more windows or do further damage. Clean up the sidewalk and the tendency is for litter not to accumulate. The FMDPS, along with Saanich Parks, recognize this theory and its application to Mount Douglas Park. Saanich Parks immediately attends to reports of dumping and regularly cleans up accessible areas. But, we as Park users, can help. Carry a plastic bag with you, and pick up the debris, the abandoned doggy bags, and drop them off at the supplied trash receptacles when you leave the Park. The theory suggests that a clean trail will stay clean; nobody wants to be the first to make a mess!



FMDPS Director Bob Bridgeman Resigns

It is with great disappointment that we report the resignation of Bob Bridgeman as a FMDPS director. Bob's dedication and endless efforts towards the Park are truly legendary! It's doubtful if even Bob knows how many hours he has worked on restoring the Douglas Creek salmon habitat and the successful return of spawning salmon there. Probably most visible is the step by step spawning pool and riffle construction along the lower Creek, the carcass transplants (thanks to Bob, this was the first to be authorized between watersheds in Canada!), the chum fry releases, the Tree Appreciation planting day and other public participation events. Behind the scenes, he collected native plant seeds to grow for the annual tree planting day. He organized Creek surveys, performed crustacean transplants

(another first!), did water sampling, in-stream fish counts, planned with partners from DFO, PSF, Saanich, Howard English Hatchery, PFR and others for each step of the restoration. He wrote one successful funding proposal after another!

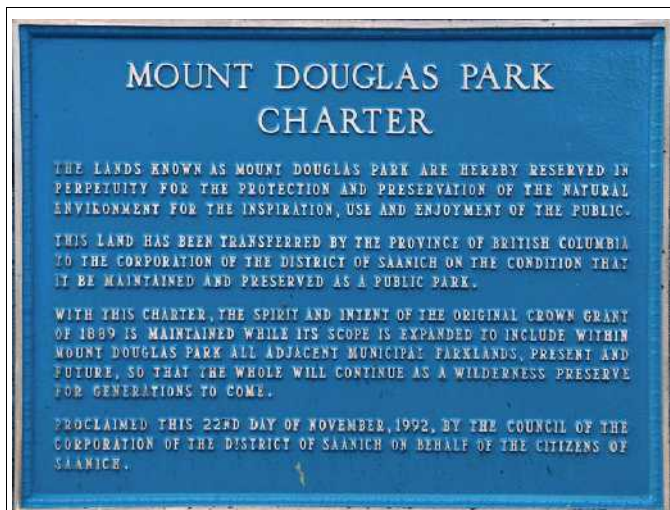
Bob has conveyed a vision for Douglas Creek above Ash Road. No one will ever match his energy and talent, but hopefully his vision will be realized over time. He has indicated, time permitting, that he will help with some selected projects over the next year.

Mount Douglas Park Celebrates 20 Years as a Saanich Park

On November 22, 1992, at a special meeting of Saanich Council held at the Park summit, Council proclaimed the Mount Douglas Park Charter, reserving the lands *in perpetuity to the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the*



Bob Bridgeman takes a break from spawning pool and riffle construction.



Park Charter located at summit parking area.

inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.

In celebration of this proclamation, the FMDPS in conjunction with Saanich Parks, are working on two enhancements of Churchill Drive. The first is a Churchill Drive park entrance “gateway” just past the current gate at the bottom of Churchill. Early thoughts are poles similar to the one at the entrance to the beach parking area. Not only will this enhance this Park entrance and the start of Churchill

Drive, but it, hopefully, will provide a demarcation indicating that beyond is a special Park road, not simply an extension of the Shelbourne speedway. Many afternoon walkers comment on those drivers that don't seem to recognize this distinction and race past; hopefully this will provide a little help.

The second enhancement will be distance and altitude markers along the 1.5 km between the lower and upper parking lots. These will be an attractive stone-engraved marker similar to those placed in sidewalks in the Victoria downtown area for street names.

The plan is to have a “grand opening” celebration commemorating the Park anniversary and these improvements.

Don't Wait Until You Retire – Volunteer Now!

Mount Douglas Park needs more volunteers. There are several different volunteering opportunities, but removing invasive plants currently needs the most help.

We are slowly winning the battle, but it's a close race! These invasive varieties are the most vigorous growers and they don't live in “suspended animation”. If you enjoy walking in the

park, if you appreciate it's natural beauty, if you value this natural urban park, then you should seriously consider doing something to preserve what you enjoy, appreciate and value!

Helping just one morning this year would make a difference! You might enjoy removing Scotch Broom with a “weed wrench” or cutting English Ivy off of a Douglas Fir.





One man show – this 2005 pile of invasives pulled by Dick Battles filled the cul-de-sac!

There are also other volunteer opportunities. Each year 100 volunteers plant trees and shrubs on Tree Appreciation Day; how about making it 101 volunteers? That would result in 20 more new tree seedlings planted and growing in the Park.

Perhaps you would like to assemble Park history, help with Society news releases or articles, become a Society director, or simply join us at a director's meeting – it's simple, just ask!

Invasives

The work continues! See the web site calendar for up-to-date work parties. Try this QR-code scan for the web page.

Camosun College Capstone Project Park Interpretive Signs

An article in a previous newsletter explained the prototype interpretive signs that include a smart phone readable QR-Code. During the first four months, there were 1600 scans of these prototype interpretive signs!

Students from the Camosun College Computer Technology Program have partnered with FMDPS and Saanich Parks to develop a procedure for Parks staff to develop future interpretive signs, the QR-Codes and the associated smart phone optimized web pages.



Also included with the project, is the downloading of trail maps using QR-Codes on Park kiosks. The project is scheduled to finish in June and we should see the first official signs soon after.

Saanich Family Cycling Festival



FMDPS will display the Douglas Creek watershed model at the Family Cycling Festival

The third annual Saanich Family Cycling Festival will be on Sunday, April 22, 2012, coinciding with Earth Day 2012. This year's Saanich Police-escorted ride will start at the Camosun College main entrance on Foul Bay Road, travel past St. Michael's University School to

Shelbourne, north to McKenzie and on to Gordon Head Road, ending at UVic's lot #10 for the festival, a 5 km ride on police-controlled closed roads. Similar to last year, there will also be a Police-Bike-Squad-escorted kiddie ride (slower young ones, including training



View from fire ladder truck of 2011 police-escorted ride

wheels) starting and ending at UVic's lot #10. It will be 2.5 km long, twice that of last year, touring the inner campus bike paths. The FMDPS will again sponsor a booth at the festival.

Both rides start at 11:00am. For the main ride, use the free parking at UVic lot #6, then cycle Henderson to Camosun.

See <http://saanichcyclingfestival.ca/> for up-to-date details.



Gordon Head from Mount Douglas Park

Board of Directors

President	Darrell Wick	1491 Edgemont Road	V8N 4P7	477-9291
Vice President	Kenneth Rankin	4285 Cedar Hill Road	V8N 3C7	477-8007
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Streams	Robert Bridgeman	1481 Elnido Road	V8N 4Z7	477-7464
Invasives	Judy Spearing	1545 Eric Road	V8N 5Y6	472-0515
At-large	Sheilagh Ogilvie	#402, 1110 Oscar Street	V8V 4W5	479-4281
At-large	Claude Maurice	2200 Lorne Terrace	V8S 2HB	598-7407

Membership Renewal - Gift Membership

Providing information via this newsletter about the Park is an important Society function. We want to reach more Park users and Park neighbours. Why not **give someone you know a gift subscription and include it with your renewal?** A one year membership isn't much more than the price of a good cup of coffee! You provide the gift and we'll send notification to the recipient of your generosity. We hope you will continue to support the work of the Society for another year.

Gift From _____

New Member (or renewal) form:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone No. _____

Email _____

Membership 1 year \$5 2 years \$10 3 years \$15 4 years \$20

Send or deliver to:

Graham Shorthill, Treasurer,
4623 Cordova Bay Road,
Victoria B.C. V8X 3V6

<http://www.mountdouglasspark.ca>