

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society



Spring 2018

New Churchill Drive Entrance Gate

Annual General Meeting April 24, 2018

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Annual General Meeting

Tuesday April 24, 7:30 pm Feltham Room, Gordon Head Recreation Centre
Speaker: Barri Rudolph, CRD Environmental Science Officer for Storm Water
Nominations: Contact Claude Maurice at 250-598-7407 before April 23.

Notice of Special Resolution Motion: Changes to the BC Societies Act requires several changes to our constitution. Back in 1989 we used a community association constitution as a model, but now many of those clauses are outdated. We have now significantly updated our constitution to reflect the current operation of our Society. The motion will be to approve this new constitution http://MountDouglasPark.ca/FMDPS_Constitution_2018.

New Churchill Drive Entrance Gate

Have you seen the new gate at the Churchill Drive entrance? We hear many very positive comments from walkers as they pass through the centre gap left for pedestrians. Back in 2012, Saanich Council met for the unveiling of the Charter Rock and announcement of the Churchill Drive Entrance Project. An important component of the project plan was to replace the industrial gate with one more suitable to Saanich's premier Park (no bias on our part!) and we congratulate the Saanich Planning and Design section for their creation.

The final missing component of the Entrance Project is three circular thresholds, one at the entrance rock, one at the kiosk centred on the Churchill Challenge kilometre zero stone and the third at the new gate. The gate threshold will be in the shape of two semi-circles, one under each gate arm. The circular thresholds will be reddish paving stones very similar to those on the Galloping Goose or Lochside Trails at road crossings. The slightly rough stone surface will provide a bit of rumble to alert drivers coming off the Shelbourne speedway that they are entering a Park with walkers.

Park Ambassador Program

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, in conjunction with Saanich Parks, has initiated a Park Ambassador Program for May to September of this year. The volunteer ambassadors will greet visitors, offer information and answer questions about the park and trails to educate visitors about their role in preserving the park. Saanich Parks is developing information packages for the ambassadors and will start recruiting in April. Watch either our web site or Saanich's site for updates.

New Douglas Creek Viewpoint

One of the heavy machinery routes used to access Douglas Creek during last summer's creek restoration has been converted into a Creek Viewpoint. The route has received restoration planting by the 10th Garry Oak Scouts based out of St. Dunstan's Church on Tyndall. Saanich Parks has since installed split rail fencing to define the viewpoint.



10th Garry Oak Scouts planted new viewpoint area

Pending Projects for 2018

Upper Glendenning Trail:
The upper Glendenning Trail between Harrop Trail and the summit is scheduled for major restoration this year. The lower half of this trail section is composed of loose sand and has suffered from very serious erosion. In the last newsletter, an article detailed the successful repair of a similarly eroded section of the South Ridge Trail. The techniques and

experience with those repairs will be applied to this lower half of the Glendenning Trail.

The upper half of this Glendenning Trail section winds through rock with a lot of water seepage keeping the rock wet and slippery. The general plan is to divert the water at several locations. Where the natural rock steps are awkward, steps will be cut in the rock. When the



Trail to new creek viewpoint

main trail has been repaired, the numerous side trails will be closed and restored.

Trail Erosion: Perhaps half of the Park trails are suffering from water issues. The significant increase in park walkers along these trails has caused slight depressions along the trail centre lines along with loosening of the earth from the many footsteps. Subsequent rains have washed away the loose earth, making the trail centre depression even deeper, resulting in a perfect water channel flowing down the trail. Parks staff have performed a trail condition survey and the individual problem areas are currently being prioritized. These will be repaired in priority order this year.

Summit Restoration: The summit area between the parking lot and the lookout is covered with invasive Scotch Broom. The broom does tend to keep visitors on the trail, but as soon as the broom is removed to allow recovery of native plants, visitors no longer stay on the trails. Too few walkers see the small native plants emerging as they walk across and trample these newly cleared areas, defeating the purpose of removing the broom. Restoration likely will require fencing to define these special areas. The task will be to define the areas to be restored, how to protect the areas and to define areas where visitors should walk.

Etiquette Pictographs: Many Park visitors are unaware of the Saanich Parks bylaws and voluntary etiquette necessary to preserve a natural park. Many have a sense that they are just one person picking mushrooms or fiddle heads or salal for their flower arrangement, or believe a single person walking off trail could never be an issue, not realizing there are ten, twenty or a hundred of the annual 400,000 visitors right behind them with the same idea. With the philosophy that a picture can be worth a thousand words, and that pictures are multi-lingual, the parks planning department is developing a pictograph sign plan.



Steps over muddy trail section

Marking Rogue Trails: Whether you call them rogue trails, ad-hoc trails or impromptu trails, these unofficial trails are growing in number as they crisscross many areas. A few need to be converted to official named trails, but most are simply braiding of existing trails and need to be closed and restored. Trail way-finding posts, 90 in total, have been installed at all official trail intersections, but there is nothing marking intersections with rogue trails. Saanich Parks along with our Society are looking at some way to distinguish official from rogue trails. Nobody wants huge signs everywhere, but one thought might be small signs similar to the trail way-finding markers currently used on the Irvine Trail and the South Ridge Trail. It might simply use the universal do not enter sign.



No Entry
Not a Trail

Bridge Across Douglas Creek:

Last summer two very large trees, including root system, toppled into the creek about mid-way between Ash Road and the weir, blocking the creek. An excavator was required to move one to the side. The other was too big to move, so the creek channel was moved to bypass the blockage. Access was obtained by reopening a restored access used in 2015, connecting to Cedar Hill Road mid-way between Ash Road and



Urban Forest Crews remove another downed tree.

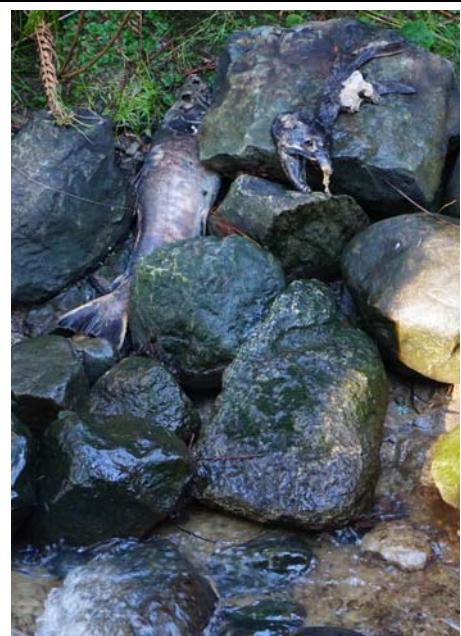
Churchill Drive. Since this is the only access to this part of the creek, it was decided to keep it open and use it as a trail. But this created a new problem as it was a dead-end at the creek. The wide trail is inviting, an open invitation to walk down it, but with no official trail at the creek end, visitors are now making numerous rogue trails. If only there was a bridge, there would be an excellent trail connection from the Churchill Trail, across the bridge, and all the way up the existing trail connecting with the Norn and Irvine Trails. This year's goal is to determine possible bridge construction options with the idea of constructing the bridge next year.

Salmon Carcass Transplant

Over 100 frozen salmon carcasses were brought to Douglas Creek in January by the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream volunteers. Perhaps thirty young and young at heart helped throw the very cold carcasses into the creek. This transplant mimics the results of a large return of salmon to Douglas Creek. The carcasses will decompose into the aquatic ecosystem delivering marine derived nutrients to riparian vegetation and invertebrate populations thus setting up the system for productive trophic webs. Checking a couple weeks after the transplant, and after several rains with accompanying storm surges, carcasses were still scattered in the creek held in place against a rock or tree root balls. There were also carcasses that some animals had dragged up onto the creek banks, all part of the natural process.



Throwing carcass between rocks



Two carcasses after two weeks

Park Plan

Did you receive a copy of our 32 page Society's Park Plan, 3rd edition? It was distributed along with the previous newsletter (Winter 2017-2018) to current members. If you didn't receive a copy you may need to renew your membership using the membership renewal form on the last page of this newsletter. Your support through your membership is truly appreciated. See the Park Plan and the full colour version of this newsletter at <http://MountDouglasPark.ca>

In Memory of Sheilagh Ogilvie

Sheilagh Ogilvie, together with Pam Lewis and Kay Porter, founded the Friends of Mount Douglas Park in 1989. Sheilagh continued to be a very active board member writing our newsletter and handling much of the communication. Her prior experience with the Cordova Bay Association made her a very valuable resource concerning the ways of Saanich. After relinquishing her role as newsletter editor, she continued as a proof reader (She had an eagle eye for every detail!). Sheilagh passed away in Cap-Pelé, NB, on February 2, 2018.



Sheilagh Ogilvie

Mystery: Where is the water coming from?

Do you know about any springs along Shelbourne, perhaps in the area where the greenhouses were located several decades ago? If so, please let us know. They are likely the summer water source for Douglas Creek.

There are two storm water pipes terminating at the weir pond. One goes east and brings storm water from Majestic Park and the further east area of Gordon Head. The other pipe heads south, more-or-less along Shelbourne. The Majestic pipe is dry in the summer and all of the creek water comes from the Shelbourne pipe. What's the difference? There are stories that there are three springs along Shelbourne and, if true, would explain the difference. Can you help?

Another Mystery: Where Did the Sand Come From?

The Douglas Creek salmon spawning beds are composed of round, not sharp, mixed size gravel. But during the winter of 2015-2016, we noticed that the spawning bed gravel was covered with sand. But where did this sand come from? Dave Clough, the professional biologist leading the creek restoration work said the sand was not consistent with the creek banks, it must be coming from somewhere else. Was it from road sanding? Saanich Public Works doesn't sand the roads. Was it from some construction site or a water line break

causing erosion and sending sand into the storm drains? Public Works reported no such breaks. Fortunately the spawning bed gravel slowly reappeared over the next year or two as the sand steadily disappeared.

It wasn't until this past winter that a very likely culprit was found or perhaps it's simply a coincidence. In November 2015, about the time the sand appeared in the spawning beds, there was an extremely heavy rain that caused very severe erosion at the South Ridge and Harrop Trail junction. Perhaps you've seen the 2-3 m deep washout there bringing enormous amounts of sand down to the Whittaker Trail. This washout was so far away from the creek, almost on the other side of Mt. Douglas, that we didn't make any connection at the time. We know the heavy water flows carried the sand down the Whittaker Trail and onto Cedar Hill Road where it entered the storm drains with their efficient delivery system to Douglas Creek. The sand covering the spawning beds was consistent with the South Ridge Trail washout, quite a distance away!

Pacific Salmon Foundation Conference

Did you know spawning salmon recognize their siblings thus avoiding inbreeding? Did you know that to track salmon fry as they migrated in the Salish Sea, Pacific Salmon Foundation researchers inserted RFID tags into the fry at a couple of hatcheries (RFID tags have no battery, are activated by radio waves and respond with an identifying signal.). Using a radio antenna strung across the river outlet to activate the tags, they could count how many fry actually left the river and entered the Salish Sea. Did you know that to learn how many salmon fry are eaten by seals, they glued an RFID sensor on seal heads so that when a seal ate one of these fry, it could be counted. This information was just some of the information shared at a recent Pacific Salmon Foundation conference in Victoria with attendees from restoration rivers and creeks on the Southern Island.

Beware what goes down the drain!

Anything entering the street catch basins (and the basement floor drain by your washing machine) ends up in Douglas Creek. Because we are concerned that some Gordon Head residents still might not realize this, we are initiating a storm drain marking project in conjunction with Don Lowen, who coordinates DFO's Stream to Sea education program (including classroom incubation). Department of Fisheries & Oceans supplies a marking kit and Don will work with volunteer school groups to paint a salmon next to the storm drain

catch basins. Others in the school group will deliver door knob information sheets about the program while the basins are being marked on each street.



Repaired section of South Ridge Trail

Mt. Douglas Pulls Together Against Invasive Species

English Ivy, English Holly, Scotch Broom, Daphne Laureola, Himalayan Blackberry, Garlic Mustard, Bur Chervil; these are the most common, pervasive non-native, invasive plant species in Mt Douglas Park.

Some species can be controlled by manual removal, a few others may require special treatment depending on the growth habits or the extent and location of an infestation. Not so many years ago, all of these species were widespread in Mt Douglas Park. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of caring local citizens, supported by community and youth groups, we

can report that a good percentage of parkland has been cleared of the bulk of invasive species. However, vigilance is always the key to control so previously cleared areas are checked regularly for regrowth and a need to revisit.

Invasive Regrowth

A few of the noted species can be removed and the resulting debris piled up and left to dry and decay, (Ivy and Holly tree trunks, H. Blackberry, Daphne L.). Debris from some species can't be left on the soil surface as chemicals in the plant material may leach out during rainfall and blacken or sterilize the soil, (Scotch Broom, Holly foliage). The flowering and seeding invasive annuals and biennials, (Garlic Mustard and Bur Chervil), can be manually uprooted but the debris can't be left on-site. After a certain stage of growth, these plants can survive lying on the ground, will mature, flower and set viable seed. To prevent this occurring, volunteers bag the debris for pickup and removal by Saanich Parks staff who, in turn, transport all this plant material to a special *hot composting* facility. This plant debris must never be added to regular municipal compost or the resulting seed may be inadvertently spread in the resulting compost.

Invasives: Manual Removal Not Always Effective

Certain invasive species such as large E. Holly, various strains of Knotweed, rampant ground cover (Periwinkle [Vinca], Lamium, Lesser Celandine, St. John's Wort, et al), and extensive infestations of heavily seeding annuals, can become so tenacious and so widespread that manual removal may be deemed unlikely to control them. It may be decided the only way to effectively control a problem is to treat the invasive with a herbicide. The use of such substances is restricted in Saanich with only municipal staff authorized to carefully manage this work. Volunteers alert Parks staff to the presence and location of the offending plants and then Parks manages the problem.

When chemical treatment is deemed necessary Parks staff will always post warnings within the Park at least a week in advance of taking action.

Invasives: Where to Pull Next

Large areas of the Park have been cleared and some cleared more than once. When planning the next place to work seasonality is the key factor. Is an area accessible? Is the soil

dry or is the area too wet to work in without doing damage to the soil and plants? Are there native species of special concern in the area? Are (native) Spring flowers emerging and blooming? Is it a prime nesting location for birds and are those birds ground nesters which precludes working there until nesting is over? Is there a location we can work at this time of the year and do no harm? How will we deal with the removed plant debris based on where we work, proximity to trails and road access, and which invasive species is dominant in an area?

A Little Invasive History

Our Society volunteers, in conjunction with Saanich Parks' Pulling Together program, have been hard at work in Mt Douglas Park for more than 12 years. But long before a Parks program was initiated, Society members were on the job, removing invasive species they knew were becoming an increasing problem in the Park. Thanks to those pioneers and to our current volunteers for their efforts!

The volunteers in Mt Douglas Park hold weekly work parties, 10:00 am to Noon, Thursday mornings, weather permitting. Every member of our group comes with different experiences and levels of plant knowledge (some have almost no experience), we have different physical considerations that dictate how we work and how long we can work. So each of us does what we can, when we can. That's what volunteering is all about. If you think you might enjoy a morning outdoors working as part of a team toward common goals, please consider joining us in the Park.

We also give special acknowledgement to three Society members, John Jungen, Dave Poje, and especially Dick Battles, who volunteer five mornings a week, every week, pulling enormous amounts of invasives. They have also pioneered techniques to address the regrowth issues related to some species.

Information on location of events, nature of work, contact info etc., is available on the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society website under Calendar of Events: <http://mountdouglaspark.ca/calendar.do> or contact Society Director Judy Spearing who leads the Thursday invasive work.

Board of Directors

President	Darrell Wick	1491 Edgemont Road	V8N 4P7	477-9291
Vice President	Claude Maurice	2200 Lorne Terrace	V8S 2H8	598-7407
Treasurer	Nancy Lewthwaite	1559 Mt Douglas X Road	V8N 1Z9	658-0763
Invasives	Judy Spearing	1545 Eric Road	V8N 5Y6	472-0515
Twitter	Ed Wiebe	1628 Longacre Drive	V8N 2N1	721-4483
At-large	Graham Shorthill	4623 Cordova Bay Road	V8X 3V6	658-5873
At-large	Alan Walton	4236 Parkside Pl.	V8N 4V5	477-5003

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: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone No.: _____

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

Send or deliver to: Treasurer, Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

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