

# PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy

## Park Plan



### The Park Needs a Voice

By its distinctive blend of topography, trees and other vegetation, by the views it commands from its slopes and its beach, by the quiet that can still be found, and finally as a wildlife habitat and wilderness preserve, PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park) ranks among those special lands that have inherent value for what they are in themselves, not just for what we can get out of them.

Like a work of art and, indeed, like each individual human being, the Park's value does not lie in how it can be exploited. This value does not imply that people should be excluded any more than the insects, flora and fauna that inhabit the Park. Nor does it mean that our activities within it should be purely those of aesthetic or other forms of contemplation or investigation.

People, however, have a greater capacity than other species to destroy the Park's harmony and ecological integrity and threaten its natural state. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility to formulate, and commit to checks upon our activities that will respect the animate and inanimate features in the Park upon which its intrinsic values so critically depends.

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# Mount Douglas Park 1889-2022

## A Brief History

Mount Douglas Park, the topography of which survives from the Ice Age, currently comprises 188 hectares of floral and fauna wealth in Saanich. First Nations paddlers traveling from the San Juan Islands to Vancouver Island pulled their canoes up on Mount Douglas Beach. The “hill of cedars” was also a stopping place for the Songhees Nation on their way to and from Fort Victoria. In 1843, cedar trees cut to build the fort at Victoria, were hauled along what is now Cedar Hill Road.

James Tod, son of Hudson Bay Company chief trader John Tod, bought land near the mountain in 1853 and farmed there for 52 years.

On September 30, 1889, thanks to Sir James Douglas, the Province of British Columbia granted Mount Douglas to the Corporation of the City of Victoria “upon trust to maintain and preserve the same as a public park or pleasure ground for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the public”. Many trails in the Park were named after early settlers in Gordon Head before the Park came to Saanich. Several owe their course to the tracks made by James Tod’s sheep over a hundred years ago. In the 1880s a wagon road was built to connect Cedar Hill Road to Cordova Bay through the Park following the long established First Nations trails. By the early 1900s a road had been completed along the shoreline of the Park through the site of the present picnic area. Even in the very early days, despite the distance, the people of Victoria came to the Park to enjoy the tree shade and sunny beach. By 1902 one could walk to the Park from the Royal Oak station of the V & S Railway, a distance of three kilometres. Late in 1915 a bus route through the Park was established.

A Royal Commission was issued to O.C. Bass K.C. in 1930, “to inquire into the management, regulation, protection and control of...Mount Douglas Park.” This was in response to a storm of complaints from concerned citizens about gravel excavation, garbage dumping, tree-cutting and goat grazing, as well as the construction of an alternative route to Cordova Bay.

A restaurant, and then a tearoom in the Park attracted many visitors during the 20s and into the 50s. During the 30s improvements to the Park gave employment to victims of the Depression. The huts built for these men in the Park picnic area were later, and up to the early 50s, used as a youth hostel. Churchill Drive, the road to the summit and its 360° panorama, was constructed in 1939. During WWII, the military had a radio direction finding installation at the summit built on an octagonal concrete base which provides the foundation of the existing summit lookout.

On September 30, 1989, Mount Douglas Park celebrated its 100th anniversary. This seemed an appropriate time to form The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, to work at keeping the Park in its natural state so all might enjoy the

treasures it provides for this generation and all to come. On November 22, 1992, after lengthy controversy concerning a new road through the Park and a proposed building on top of the East Summit, Saanich Council met on the summit of Mount Douglas and enacted a renewal of the original Trust. This charter can be seen inscribed on a bronze plaque at the summit parking area and on the "Charter Rock" in the lower Churchill parking lot.

First Nations historically referred to this mountain as PKOLS. It was and continues to be an important place for many First Nations communities with cultural, spiritual and historical significance.

In October 2022 Saanich Council renamed the park PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park). At the same time, there is a request for the Federal Government to rename the mountain PKOLS. In response, our Society changed our web site name to PKOLS-MountDouglas.ca (note that parenthesis are not permitted in web site names) and our society name to PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy. In this document PKOLS-Mount Douglas, depending upon the context, refers to the mountain or the park.

**Document Structure:** This Park Plan sections includes a goal, policies and implementation actions. The goal is meant to express a desired ideal. Policies are statements that will assist in achieving the goal. The implementation section describes actions consistent with policies and goals. The goals and policies should remain constant over time, whereas implementation actions will be removed when effected and replaced by new ones if needed. Some sections might not contain all three components.

**Note:** In addition to a Dogs Section 15 in this Park Plan, there are several old references to dogs that have not yet been removed, waiting for a Saanich Council determination of a dog policy.

# 1 Mount Douglas Park Charter

**The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity to the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.**

**This land has been transferred by the Province of British Columbia to the Corporation of the District of Saanich on the condition that it be maintained and preserved as a public park.**

**With this charter, the spirit and intent of the original crown grant of 1889 is maintained while its scope is expanded to include within Mount Douglas Park all adjacent municipal parkland present and future, so that the whole will continue as a wilderness preserve for generations to come.**

**Proclaimed this 22nd. day of November 1992 by the council of the Corporation of the District of Saanich on behalf of the citizens of Saanich.**

## 2 Society Goals

The goals of the PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy, *formalized in its 1990 constitution*, are:

- to safeguard the welfare of Mount Douglas Park, now PKOLS-Mount Douglas;
- to protect, and enhance the natural values of the Park;
- to encourage expansion of the boundaries of the Park;
- to encourage and participate with Saanich in the preparation of a long-term plan for the Park, designed to maintain it in its natural state in perpetuity.

The following sections expand on these overall goals.

## 3 Acquisition

**Goal:** Where suitable, to acquire land adjacent to the Park for inclusion in its boundaries.

While PKOLS-Mount Douglas, as the major Saanich natural park, must be maintained with care and integrity, it should not be considered in isolation, but as an intrinsic part of the broader neighbourhood and region of the municipality.

Lands suitable for acquisition would include adjacent dominant geographical features and also those that would provide improved, safe and convenient access.

### **Policies:**

1. The District of Saanich should be prepared to act when opportunities arise to acquire additional land for the Park.
2. Extend the park boundaries to provide buffering between natural areas, agricultural and urban uses.
3. PKOLS-Mount Douglas is an important node on a greenway network connecting Gordon Head with Blenkinsop Valley. Encourage and support acquisition of linkages between the Park and this greenway.
4. Ensure that the enhancement of greenways and entrances with a natural setting are part of any plan for development on the fringes of the Park.
5. Create an urban to natural park transition zone on all road approaches to the Park.

### **Implementation:**

1. Provide a safe connection between the Mercer & Blenkinsop Trailheads. Consider a trail, separated from the road, on the east side of Blenkinsop Road. This likely requires some acquisition.

## 4 Ecosystems

The Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Strategy indicates that only 5% of Douglas-fir ecosystems remain within the Coastal Douglas-fir Biogeoclimatic zone, which makes the Douglas-fir ecosystems extremely important to preserve in the best possible condition, as PKOLS-Mount Douglas contributes significantly to this 5%.

The following quotations are excerpts from this Conservation Strategy:

*“The Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone (CDF zone) is the smallest and most at-risk zone in British Columbia (B.C.). As home to the highest number of species and ecosystems at risk in B.C., many of which are ranked globally as imperilled or critically imperilled, it is of great conservation concern.”*

*“Less than 1% of the CDF remains in old growth forests and 49% of the land base has been permanently converted by human activities. The trend of deforestation and urbanization continues and has resulted in a natural area that is highly fragmented with continuing threats to remaining natural systems. Approximately 11% of the CDF zone is currently protected in conservation areas.”*

*“Ecosystem degradation. Less than 1% of the CDF zone currently remains as old growth forest (over 250 years in age), and forests over 100 years in age now occupy only 4% of their former extent.”*

*“Deforestation in a land base that was once predominantly forested has consequences for the small patch ecosystems, specialized habitats and at-risk species that were previously buffered and supported by the ecological processes of the surrounding forests. Remaining forests are predominantly younger, less diverse and bisected by roads. These changes affect hydrological patterns and the ability to filter and store water; destabilizes forest soils and reduces capacity to regenerate soils; alters the resistance to the invasion of alien species; alters prey-predator relationships; alters carbon and nutrient cycles, including the release of carbon to the atmosphere; and removes specialized habitat features for wildlife foraging, shelter and breeding.”*

**All ecosystems in PKOLS-Mount Douglas are considered ecosystems at risk**, also known as Sensitive Ecosystems – includes all forested, riparian, Garry oak woodland, Arbutus – Douglas-fir woodland Terrestrial Herbaceous and Old Forest (over 100 years) Sensitive Ecosystems. The whole park is mapped by the BC Conservation Data Center as ecosystems at risk and are either red-listed or blue-listed ecosystems.

There is significant degradation of Garry oak ecosystems, especially by invasive grasses. A recent study shows that over 95% of the Garry oak ecosystems within the park are in poor ecological condition. Overuse by trampling for many decades has removed the native moss, lichen, and herb cover from the

Terrestrial Herbaceous Sensitive Ecosystems, due to a lack of restrictive access to these areas.

Significant recovery of Douglas-fir forests in the park has occurred by volunteer removal of large amounts of invasive shrubs, trees, and herbs, which had allowed the native understory to recover and be in remarkably good condition. Much of the south areas of the park, in these Douglas-fir forests have been degraded by overuse by dogs and humans over the last five years –see Section 15 Dogs & Cats.

**Goal:** Restore and protect all of PKOLS-Mount Douglas as a wilderness preserve within an urban setting for generations to come.

**Policies:**

1. Develop a strategic plan to provide protection and actions to recover the ecosystems of PKOLS-Mount Douglas in terms of keeping people and dogs, on main, designated trails and recovering natural areas where Covid response have created widening of the trails.
2. Collect detailed inventory information for all natural areas within the park to determine location of areas of old growth, age of forested stands, mapped distribution of all terrestrial ecosystems (using the Madrone Consultants Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping as a starting point), assess and map ecological condition of plant communities, including amount of remaining native understory, present day degradation by overuse by humans, dogs, and other factors etc.
3. Determine priority areas for restoration by both volunteers and by the District of Saanich. Develop a restoration plan to determine what areas are restorable with what amount of effort and cost to restore to natural condition or a desired condition. There is a need for assessment of all ecosystems within the park – prioritize for Garry oak ecosystems and Terrestrial Herbaceous – ecological condition, threats, damage, amount of native understory remaining.
4. Map invasive species concentrations that volunteers have not dealt with and native species concentrations. Determine methods for removal of these invasive species, in conjunction with experts on such species as invasive grass species.
5. Determine funding sources for funding restoration in PKOLS-Mount Douglas and other Saanich Parks.
6. Determine actions for protection of species at risk and the potential for population enhancement of these species.
7. Determine the potential, feasibility, and costs for re-introducing species at risk that are extirpated or were present in local ecosystems at other locations. Develop a plan, in conjunction with species at risk Recovery Teams to assess habitat for these species to see if areas still exist that could support them.

# Species and Ecosystems at Risk

All of the present day species at risk and areas with Ecosystems at Risk in the park are considered Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs), also known as Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

## Present Day Species at Risk

Purple sanicle, *Sanicula bipinnatifida* – provincially red listed; federally Threatened. 2-plants 2021, 1-plant 2022 – poor viability – federally mapped Critical Habitat in the Recovery Strategy - [https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/virtual\\_sara/files/plans/RS\\_Maritime\\_Meadows\\_CH\\_amend\\_VProposed\\_e.pdf](https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/virtual_sara/files/plans/RS_Maritime_Meadows_CH_amend_VProposed_e.pdf)

Fern-leaved desert-parsley, *Lomatium dissectum* - Provincially red-listed. Twisted oak moss *Syntrichia laevipila* – Provincially blue-listed.

**Historical Species at Risk** –last seen - status

Sanich could re-establish the below species at risk in PKOLS-Mount Douglas and could encourage landowners to do the same.

Yellow Montane Violet – 1887 – Provincially red-listed; Federally Threatened

Howell's Violet – 1950 – Provincially red-listed

Poverty Clover – 1961 – Provincially blue-listed – near summit

White Meconella 1952 – Provincially red-listed; Federally endangered

Properius Duskywing butterfly 1995 – Provincially red-listed

**Present Day Ecosystems at Risk** – present – condition – from the provincial BC Conservation Data Center information

Western redcedar / Osoberry - Provincially red-listed east of picnic ground and creek – North of Ash Road

Douglas-fir / Arbutus – Provincially red-listed – east of Blenkinsop Road – significant area north side of mountain on steeper slopes

Red Alder / Slough Sedge (Black Cottonwood) – Provincially red-listed east of picnic ground and creek – North of Ash Road

Douglas-fir / Dull Oregon-grape – Provincially red-listed – extensive in Park

Western redcedar / Vanilla-leaf – Provincially red-listed – east of Shelbourne, south of Ash Road

Garry oak/California brome – Provincially red-listed

Garry oak/Oceanspray – Provincially red-listed

Wallace's selaginella / reindeer lichens – Provincially blue-listed – intermixed with Garry oak ecosystems

Western redcedar/Sword fern - Skunk cabbage – Provincially blue-listed

Saanich Council could put forward a motion to assess Garry oak ecosystems on public lands for the potential to restore them, including full costing of these actions and then provide funding to begin this process.

## References

Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Strategy - [https://www.cdfcp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CDFCP\\_Con\\_Strategy\\_2020-25\\_Final\\_Dec\\_2021\\_com.pdf](https://www.cdfcp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CDFCP_Con_Strategy_2020-25_Final_Dec_2021_com.pdf)

BC Conservation Data Center – Species and Ecosystem Explorer - <https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>







CDC I-Map for locations of species and ecosystems at risk - <http://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/cdc/>

# 5 Park vs Natural Park

Many visitors to PKOLS-Mount Douglas Park think of it as no different than any other park or recreational field. But this park does have a special protective zoning that makes it different than, say, a groomed park.

PKOLS-Mount Douglas Park is zoned as a Natural Park with special Saanich zone designation P-4N. The relevant section of the Saanich Zoning Bylaw P-4N states that uses permitted within this zone are Natural Park and Nature Centre.

The bylaw also provides the definition: **Natural Park** means a park devoted to the retention, preservation, and enhancement of natural, historic or landscape features and is used primarily for informal or passive recreation purposes.

Park	Natural Park
<b>Purpose</b>	
 <p>Purchased for development of an active recreation purpose such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ball fields</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Water parks</li> <li>• Playgrounds</li> <li>• Off-leash Dog Park</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and manage natural features</li> <li>• Conserve a watershed</li> <li>• Enhance water quality</li> <li>• Provide habitat for endangered species</li> <li>• Preserve a historic place or landform</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	
 <p>Active recreation such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Softball</li> <li>• Soccer</li> <li>• Skateboarding</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Dog walking</li> </ul>	 <p>Passive recreation such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Birdwatching</li> <li>• Nature awareness</li> <li>• Nature education</li> </ul>
<b>Our Goals</b>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide after school programs</li> <li>• Manage adult sports leagues</li> <li>• Instruct swim lessons</li> <li>• Yoga classes</li> <li>• Maintenance of green space</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove invasive plants</li> <li>• Restore native habitats</li> <li>• Provide nature-based programs</li> <li>• Build and maintain natural surface trails</li> </ul>

## 6 Park Vegetation

Not all Park visitors adhere to the true spirit of the “Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints” philosophy. Even leaving nothing but footprints can be problematic. It only takes a few off-trail footprints to trample sensitive plants and make a new trail. This problem is addressed in Section 12 Trails.

Friendly reminders of the relevant by-laws have had limited success, as some people continue harvesting mushrooms or fiddlehead ferns even when informed.

**Goal:** To preserve and enhance the existing natural ecosystems.

### **Implementation:**

1. Provide an official park personnel (staff) presence at random hours on random days to further educate the public and better monitor Park conditions.
2. Saanich Parks to take action to enforce prohibitions on illegal collection of native plants in the Park.
3. Provide municipal enforcement to directly interact with those illegally collecting plants. This enforcement must be available on weekends and evenings and supported by citations and the court system.

### 6.1 Plantings

PKOLS-Mount Douglas' old growth forest has some of the biggest Douglas firs on the South Island providing an important component of the Park's natural setting. The preservation of dying and decaying trees forms an integral part of this ecosystem. It is also recognized that some plantings in the Park are desirable for restoration of the natural ecosystems.

**Goal:** To ensure that all restorative planting is consistent with the Park's natural ecosystem.

### **Policies:**

1. Plant only indigenous species, recognizing that climate change might alter the choice.
2. Trees that must be topped or cut down must be left in situ (see bylaw) as Wildlife Trees unless they are actually blocking a designated (named) trail.
3. Decisions to remove native trees should only be made in consultation between Saanich and the PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy .
4. Maintain a species inventory (endangered and otherwise).
5. Prohibit specific recognition, especially plaques, for donated trees however allow for tree donations through Saanich parks with the understanding there will be no on-site recognition.

## 6.2 Garry Oak

**Goal:** To support the restoration, health and retention of the Garry Oak ecosystem.

This would include significant removal of invasive grass species and replanting of native species. Much of this area used to support significant wildflower meadows, but much has been turned over to invasive species and damaged by people accessing all areas of these ecosystems by going off trail. There appears to be no plan by the Parks Department to restore these special ecosystems, despite their high priority and biodiversity values.

### Invasive Species

Non-native or introduced species thrive in our local climate, displacing native vegetation, damaging the natural ecosystems, and depriving native wildlife of food sources. Invasive species in the Park include English Ivy, Scotch Broom, Himalayan Blackberry, Garlic Mustard, Daphne, English Holly, thirty known invasive grass species, known from Garry oak meadows and numerous non-native garden escapees.

Serious threats to the Park's natural environment come from invasive plant species grown on neighbouring private properties and from illegal dumping of garden waste. Such waste often contains bulbs, seeds, and root remnants of non-native plants that germinate and spread from the original dump site and simply cannot be completely removed from the Park. These invasives are some of the biggest threats to the Park's natural environment.

Control of certain invasive species can be beyond the manual methods used by volunteers. Where these manual methods are ineffective in controlling a particular invasive species, then best practices may dictate the careful application of a treatment by trained staff. We support this approach by Saanich or CRD staff.

**Goal:** To remove all invasive species in the Park.

### Implementation:

1. Maintain an invasive species report card indicating the extent and nature of the problem.
2. Maintain an on-going record of success in areas cleared of invasives.
3. Take action to eliminate dumping of garden waste in the Park by informing adjacent lands owners and providing contact numbers if such dumping is observed.
4. There needs to be detailed mapping of invasive species within the Park.

## 7 Park Fauna

The Park fauna includes mammals (deer, raccoons, squirrels, otters and other small mammals), bats, birds (Eagles, Turkey Vultures, woodpeckers, seagulls,

ducks, ravens, crows, herons and many others) and aquatic life (salmon, cutthroat trout and invertebrates) to name a few.

Not included are non feral animals such as released domestic rabbits and cats.

**Goal:** To preserve and protect natural fauna inhabiting the Park.

**Policy:**

1. Monitor, protect and preserve habitat for birds, animals and aquatic life.
2. Take action to prevent threats to inhabitant survival, including intrusions by visitors or pets.
3. Seasonally protect area around heron rookeries.

There are several varieties of ground nesting birds in the Park that are vulnerable to disturbance. The months from April through July are the most common nesting months and the most critical times for bird survival. Visitors off-trail can disturb these nests, but off-leash dogs are a greater threat.

Quail and pheasants used to be seen on the Park neighbourhood boundaries, but free roaming pet and feral cats seem to have eradicated them.

The natural hunting instincts of many dogs is also a threat to the Park animals. Dogs will pick up and follow a scent to the detriment of the source animal.

**Implementation:**

1. Develop an inventory of Park fauna. For birds, this might consist of a viewer's guide to where in the Park to best view the birds and at what time of year is optimal for viewing.
2. Educate the public about how to protect animals and their habitats in the Park.
3. Require dog owners to keep their pets on a 2 m non-extending leash (See Section 15 Dogs and Cats).
4. Require the control of free roaming cats.
5. In 2022 nesting herons were first spotted mid-March. Protect the area well in advance and monitor for arrival in subsequent years.

## 8 Creeks, Ponds and Wetlands

Several water features scattered throughout the Park significantly contribute to the natural environment. These features include Douglas Creek, tributaries, ponds, marshes, wetlands and seeps. If properly protected and preserved, these water features will contribute to the welfare of birds and animals and enjoyment of the public.

**Goal:** To preserve and enhance Douglas Creek, tributaries, ponds, marshes, wetlands and seeps as an integral component of the wilderness preserve.

**Policies:**

1. Prohibit entry to ponds, wetlands and seeps by people or dogs.

2. Include protection and preservation enhancements of Park water features that would improve their natural function and their visual appeal. (Note that this has been successfully completed with the weir pond, with tributaries one, two and three and with the tributary one pond.)

### **Implementation:**

1. Establish an inventory identifying, mapping and describing ponds and wetlands.
2. In addition to entry prohibition, provide physical mechanisms such as boardwalks, fencing and signage to protect tributaries, ponds, wetlands and seeps where people or dogs might illegally enter them.
3. Modify Saanich bylaws to prohibit dogs from entering creeks, tributaries, ponds, marshes and wetlands in the Park.

## **8.1 Douglas Creek**

Restoration of Douglas Creek has enhanced its ecological value to the Park as a successful salmon spawning creek, and also as a beautiful Park natural feature to be enjoyed by the public. The creek riparian area and creek banks need protection from off-trail people and dogs. Controlled methods of viewing and enjoying the creek need to be provided.

**Goal:** To maintain and enhance Douglas Creek as a salmon spawning stream and as a beautiful Park asset.

### **Policy:**

1. Continue creek restoration, introduction of fry, parr and carcasses until there are self-sustaining stocks of salmonids using the creek.
2. Provide ample viewing locations along the trail for the public to appreciate and enjoy the creek.
3. Protect the creek riparian zone vegetation from off-trail people and dogs.
4. Protect the creek banks from erosion, often caused by loss of stabilizing vegetation or by off-trail dogs or walkers descending towards the creek.

Many Saanich residents and Park visitors are unaware that Douglas Creek is a successful salmon spawning stream containing cutthroat trout along with young salmon at various stages of development during most of the year.

### **Implementation:**

1. Install more interpretive signs providing information about the creek, the fish and threats to this ecological feature.

### **8.1.1 Douglas Creek Bridge**

The Douglas Creek Bridge provides a connection from the Churchill Trail to the creek and to the rest of the Park. It allows visitors to experience the creek and its

riparian area up close. In conjunction with interpretive signs it also provides access to the Salmon carcass transplant area and a safe location for release of school incubation salmon fry in the Outdoor Classroom.

### **8.1.2 Douglas Creek Habitat**

Past municipal engineering practices have made Douglas Creek part of the municipal drainage system, with altered hydrology and degraded water quality. Recent efforts to restore the Creek to its natural functioning state requires the following policies:

#### **Policies:**

1. Consider altering the watershed storm water pipe system to reduce storm water surges by constructing an overflow bypass system or systems. It is possible to divert a portion of the storm water so it does not enter Douglas Creek.
2. Ensure that the quality and quantity of the water reaching the creek from the watershed is controlled to ensure the salmon spawning habitat is sustained.
3. Take steps to require residents to reduce or eliminate storm water leaving their property. This can be achieved with water discharge levy techniques, by taxing non-permeable surfaces, by utilizing dry wells, by disconnecting gutter downspouts, by installing rain gardens or other reduction techniques.
4. Actively support efforts to protect creek spawning beds and creek banks from storm surge damage, including watershed management actions that reduce storm surge volumes.
5. Actively pursue opportunities to daylight the Creek upstream of the Park.
6. Research has established that road runoff is toxic for salmon, but simple filtering through sand and earth mixtures reduces this toxicity. There are now filter technologies suitable for catch basins or for filtering water from several basins. Work with Saanich engineering to implement a storm water filter system.
7. Whenever development or roadwork is planned in the watershed, install catch basins, rain gardens and swales to ensure naturally-functioning water flow, so that water of good quality enters the Creek. Addressing storm water quality that is destined for Douglas Creek must be a priority.
8. Involve the community in watershed restoration and stewardship of the Creek and the adjacent riparian ecosystem
9. Ensure Park management priorities support a fully functioning riparian and aquatic ecosystem.

## **Implementation:**

1. Require any development in the watershed to have zero storm water release. The current policy states only that there must not be an increase in storm water release from a property with new development. Other communities have achieved zero storm water release.
2. Identify sources of water to maintain summer creek flow. Anecdotally there are three springs in the watershed, one has been located. Take action to preserve these sources.

### **8.1.3 Hydrometric Stations**

There are two hydrometric stations along Douglas Creek that continuously measure and record water flow levels, water temperature and water pH.

The hydrometric station at Ash Road was established by the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society in 1998 and has functioned continuously since then. It is an important installation, because it records the changes in hydrology in the Creek over time. These parameters are critical because they record baseline measurements as well as the results of changes in the watershed.

A second hydrometric station at the creek weir was established in 2016 by the CRD in conjunction with our Society. This station measures water flow volumes, temperature and pH.

**Goal:** To maintain the hydrometric collection stations as a primary source of objective data related to the salmon habitat.

### **8.1.4 Weir, Pollutant Separator**

**Goal:** To support the weir concept as an interceptor for floating pollutants and its storage pond as a creek enhancement that also provides for settlement of suspended sediments.

## **Implementation:**

The weir and pond are significant man-made features in the Park. The pond slows water velocity so that suspended material has a chance to settle instead of flowing into the creek itself. The weir is intended as an oil interceptor, but it only works during low water flow times and fails during overflow surges.

1. Address the extreme and damaging high storm water flows. Consider a bypass storm water pipe to take water in excess of 30 cm weir pond height.
2. Redesign and reconstruct the weir to meet those purposes, specifically to address when the water and pollutants simply flow over the weir.
3. Trap rubbish so that it is not continually littering the Creek, the beach, and the marine environment.

4. Monitor with a system of data sheets (so that weekly inspections will represent conditions over time) and a spill recording system created so that spills can be tracked.

## 9 Beach, Shoreline, Foreshore

Besides serving as a sandy, walkable connecting link (of a kind unique in Saanich) between Gordon Head and Cordova Bay, the beach is an outstanding example of a functioning coastal ecosystem. The eroding cliff face, the dynamic beach, the intertidal zone, and the sub-tidal zone complete an outstanding suite of interrelated systems in the Park.

**Goal:** To maintain the beach in a natural state as a major community asset with connectivity to the Cordova Bay Beach.

### **Policies:**

1. Vigorously support the conservation of this ecosystem.
2. Manage the beach with a ‘nature knows best’ philosophy. Management initiatives that are deemed necessary must be based on solid ecosystem management principles
3. Halt the homogenization and simplification of marine ecosystems associated with the beach. Therefore:
  - reduce effluent in the Creek
  - establish and enforce a “no-take zone” so that shellfish, seaweed, plants, rocks and souvenirs are not removed from the beach.

### **Implementation:**

1. Install the new Saanich interpretive sign called “Natural Shoreline, Natural Treasure”.
2. Catalogue the rich biodiversity of the intertidal and sub-tidal zones.

## 10 The Summits

**Goal:** To preserve the natural character of the summits.

### 10.1 Main Summit

**Goal:** To preserve its status as the primary tourist summit destination.

This summit trail is paved and has a 360 degree panorama at the summit. This area is the first and only view of the park for many casual visitors. It should be a positive memorable experience reflecting the natural park, not invasive plants and denuded areas.

## **Policies:**

1. Support a summit area plan that restores and preserves natural areas while providing well defined access trails to rock bluffs enjoyed by visitors.

## **Implementation:**

1. Remove invasive grasses and broom, restore camas, other wildflower species and native grass species in these zones.
2. Make this summit the obvious destination for casual arrivals.
3. Repair existing asphalt path to summit, specifically the broken steps.
4. Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones on summit.
5. Consolidate the parking, warning signs and other signs near trail start.

## **10.2 East Summit**

Despite the intrusion of the transmitter tower, the east summit is quiet and relatively untouched and is more rugged and isolated. It requires attention to reduce environmental damage caused by careless visitors.

**Goal:** To maintain and preserve as a more natural, rugged and secluded summit.

## **Implementation:**

1. Restore the east summit, as far as possible, to its original natural state by removing old communication building and tower intrusions.
2. Remove invasive grasses and broom, restore camas, other wildflower species and native grass species in these zones.
3. The trail from the summit parking area across the rocks to this summit has been damaged by ad hoc trails, as has the summit plateau. These areas need restoration.
  - Improve the trail from the summit parking lot to the east summit.
  - Create a well defined trail on the summit.
  - Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones on summit.

## **10.3 Summit Parking Area**

**Goal:** Provide limited visitor parking along with an entrance to the observation deck and summits.

## **Policies:**

1. Support measures that enhance the summit parking area as a more park-like natural environment with restoration planting.
2. Ensure the continued health of adjacent trees; plant additional large trees and vegetation.

## **Implementation:**

The main summit has a paved trail while the east summit trail is in the rugged category. Configure summit parking lot and observation deck to make the Main Summit Lookout the primary destination for casual visitors while discouraging them from accessing the east summit.

1. Provide an information kiosk near main summit trail start that is consistent with the kiosk at bottom of Churchill Drive.
2. Create a trail along the west side of the parking area that connects the observation deck with the new kiosk and the summit trail. Consider cutting a new access in the deck wall.
3. Create a trail that connects the observation deck at the southwest corner of the parking area with the main summit trail.
4. Protect roadside vegetation by prohibiting overflow parking along the Churchill Drive shoulders.

## **10.4 Minor Summits**

There are two minor summit areas in the Park. Little Mount Douglas and Camas Knoll, the large, but less pronounced summit area bounded by the Tod and Mercer Trails.

**Goal:** Protect these minor summit areas and their natural environment as special places in the Park.

### **Implementation – Little Mt. Doug:**

1. Monitor summit area and be proactive in preserving its natural state.
2. Improve the southern trail only to make it safe, control erosion and stop trail spread.
3. Control water erosion on northern trail. Cut steps in slippery rock sections.
4. Protect the lone Arbutus at the summit. Plant new (replacement?) trees.
5. Remove invasive grasses and broom, restore camas, other wildflower species and native grass species in these zones.

### **Implementation – Camas Knoll**

This is a large open Garry Oak area with many beautiful moss covered rocks covering the higher sections. Many years ago the eastern section was cleared of broom at considerable expense, including hiring a helicopter for chipper transport. Subsequently the western area has been cleared of invasives resulting in a beautiful area with natural vegetation and ground nesting birds. Many ad hoc trails are evidence that people and dogs roam anywhere.

1. Create and protect defined natural area preservation zones for this entire area.
2. Restore camas, other wildflower species and native grass species in these zone, actively remove invasive grasses and broom.

3. Determine appropriate access trails, by enhancing existing trails or creating entirely new trails.
4. Close ad hoc trails.

## 11 Soundscape

There are several areas in the Park where automotive and other urban sounds are not heard, the largest area being the plateau on the north side of the Park. These might well be the only such areas in Saanich.

**Goal:** Protect the unique Park soundscape from urban noise.

**Policy:**

1. Improve awareness of the soundscape and inform people about its value, especially the areas free of urban noise.
2. Actively oppose any changes to Cordova Bay Road or surroundings that might degrade the soundscape quiet sections on the north side that are free of traffic noise.

## 12 Trails

Attractive, well-defined trails in the Park enhance visitor experience and prevent proliferation of opportunistic trails that damage natural features. Trails that the public should use all have names. New trail names should preferably favour a geographic reference and attempt to provide a memorable meaning to the name. Names for historical First Nations trails should be selected in consultation to acknowledge SENĆOŦEN and lək'wəŋən languages. Unnamed trails are opportunistic trails that should not be used. The proliferation of these rogue unnamed trails represents a threat to the Park natural environment.

**Goal:** To provide passage in the park in a way that allows visitors to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment as a wilderness preserve while carefully preserving it for generations to come by minimizing adverse effects of trails and trail use on the Park's natural character.

**Policies:**

1. Different sections of the Park have different characteristics, ranging from the picnic area to the remote wilderness areas. Require trails to reflect these different characteristics.
2. The Park soundscape and lack of urban noise is a significant positive feature of this Urban Forest. Gravel trail surfaces, especially when compared to natural tread trails, create significant walking noise seriously eroding this ambiance and connection to nature.
3. Take steps to keep walkers on named trails. Close rogue trails with fencing and restore the understory vegetation. Reduce the width of

trails that greatly expanded through Covid times, consider post & rope or cable on the ground.

4. Avoid a long straight corridor perspective by making trail alignment meander following natural contours.
5. Where invasive plant removal has significantly removed understory, use natural/windfall/debris where possible, and split rails where not, to limit trail width and consequent habitat destruction. Split rail fencing has the positive benefit of not only protecting sensitive areas, but also highlights the special nature of what is being protected. In some areas, post and rope might work.
6. Limit trail maintenance for the most part to removal of obvious hazards and the repair of damaged areas by:
  - cutting through blockages caused by fallen trees; keeping cut sections large to discourage firewood collection. Clear fallen trees on trails back to just outside trail edge to provide natural constraint on trail widening.
  - removing overhanging dead timber.
  - filling in wet or muddy patches and providing water control.
  - protecting against erosion, braiding, ballooning or lateral sprawl, and delta formations at trail intersections.
  - trimming trail bordering vegetation and overgrowth to allow clear passage without widening trail corridor.
7. Support wheelchair access in parking areas, the old road (from the beach parking lot north end), the picnic area, Churchill Drive and the summit parking area observation deck. Park trail surfaces are not suitable for access by wheelchair or scooter, especially not in all seasons.
8. Designate as horse trails, those to which horses can do little or no damage and are sufficiently wide so that walkers and horses can safely pass when they meet. Restrict horses to these designated trails. Horse manure contains weed seeds. Consider waste catchers for horses.

## **Trail Categories:**

The following categories differentiate trail sections by the trail construction and character. A primary characteristic is the trail surface. Is it compacted gravel, a natural tread, or is it merely a marked route over rock? As one travels a trail, its category might well change to reflect the number of users and the trail location.

- **Fire Roads**
  - Surface: Permeable, suitable to support occasional vehicles, such as service trucks to Weir, fire access.
  - Width: No wider than necessary for fire access.
  - Signage: Consistent with Developed Trails.

- **Developed Trails**

- Rating: Easy. Expect occasional obstacles such as roots or rocks and very steep grades in some locations. Generally not suitable for strollers or buggies, but some isolated section might be passable.
- Natural tread as much as possible. Minimize occasional pathway blend (6 mm minus crushed gravel aggregate) solid base surface limited to severely wet areas. Gravel compared to natural tread is noisy and inflexible under foot.
- Width: maximum 2 m, normally less.
- Signs: Sign posts show a green circle with a walker on relatively level ground.



- **Natural Trails**

- Rating: Moderate. The natural earth tread enhances the feeling of the natural settings.
- Alignment: Follows natural contours around land humps, trees and other small obstacles.
- Width: Varying 0.75 to 1.5 m
- Signage: Sign posts show a blue square with a walker on rolling ground.



- **Rugged Trails**

- Rating: Difficult. Generally steep, traversing loose rock surfaces with exposed heights. Sturdy hiking shoes recommended. These trails are unimproved providing the maximum natural park experience.
- Width: Narrow single tread.
- Signage: Sign posts show a black diamond with a walker on a steep slope.



## **Implementation:**

1. Acquire a narrow machine that can be used on Natural Trails.
2. Refer to Pedestrian Crossings Section 17.4 for trail crossings of roads.
3. Actively address trail water issues. Lack of water control has led to serious erosion. It also is the cause of significant trail spread and also side trails.
4. Protect exposed tree roots along trails
5. Review overall trail strategy to reduce the proliferation of ad hoc unnamed trails including a determination of trails that should be recognized and those that should be closed.
6. Recognize the North Ridge Trail in conjunction with improvements over rock sections.
7. Cut steps into areas where trails traverse large rocks. Acquire necessary tools.

## 13 Access (and Accessibility)

**Goal:** To provide public access to the Park while preserving the natural state of the Park.

**Policies:**

1. Prioritize non-motorized access and transit modes.
2. Prohibit unauthorized vehicles anywhere in the Park except on paved roads.
3. Permit cycling only in paved areas, specifically Churchill Drive and parking lots

**Implementation:**

1. Provide information on park access based on varying mobility capabilities.

### 13.1 Parking

PKOLS-Mount Douglas serves the region, not just the local community; therefore many visitors will arrive by modes other than walking.

**Goal:** To provide adequate parking for cars recognizing that peak parking demands will exceed available capacity.

**Policies:**

1. Do not convert any additional park land for parking.
2. Permit parking only in designated locations.
3. Prohibit parking along road edges that are wholly in the Park, specifically Churchill Drive, Ash, Cedar Hill and Cordova Bay roads.

**Implementation:**

1. Provide improved access to the Mercer Trail, most likely with a Blenkinsop Road marked crosswalk at the Mercer trailhead.
2. The Beach Parking lot normally has ample parking when other lots are full during peak times, hence visitors are encouraged to access the main Park from this lot. This presents a dilemma as dogs are prohibited in the area surrounding this parking lot during the summer months. Provide a clear route for walkers with on-leash dogs to access the main Park.

### 13.2 Bicycle and Walking Access

**Goal:** Encourage Park access using human power.

**Policy:**

1. Provide bicycle racks at all Park trail access points.

2. Provide safe road crossing at all trail access points.
3. Support cycling on Churchill Drive.

### **Implementation:**

1. Construct an access from Westbank Street.

## **13.3 Public Transit**

**Goal:** Provide convenient Park access using public transit.

### **Policy:**

1. Provide conveniently located transit stops for Park access in safe locations near the Churchill entrance, near the beach parking entrance and at the Cordova Bay Road entrance.
2. Recognize transit stops are not only used to access the Park, but are also used by nearby residents.

### **Implementation:**

1. Provide a transit stop closer to the Churchill Drive Park entrance.
2. Move the Cordova Bay Road stop closer to the beach parking lot entrance. Note that there is no trail access nor off-road waiting area at the current stop. This stop is used by Park visitors but also by nearby residents from Gordon Head.

## **14 Fire**

**Goal:** To take precautions to protect the Park from fire.

### **Policies:**

1. Maintain necessary fire access roads in the Park.
2. During periods of extreme fire hazard in the Park, restrict vehicle and/or pedestrian access to any or all sections of the Park.
3. Actively enforce the prohibition of building fires in the Park, including beach fires.
4. Actively enforce the prohibition of smoking in the Park, including in parking lots.

## **15 Dogs & Cats**

Since Mount Douglas Park was granted to Saanich by the Province in 1992, the number of visitors with dogs to the park has vastly increased. With increases in population projected here, there is no reason not to expect these numbers will accelerate in the coming years. In parallel with the increases in dogs, there has been a corresponding degradation of the natural environment attributable to dogs and, an increase in human-dog conflicts.

Saanich Council recognized the unique values of PKOLS-Mount Douglas by creating a special new Natural Park zone, P-4N, expressly for the Park to emphasize its distinction from other park zones and the need for preservation. (other parks such as Mt. Tolmie, Cuthbert Holmes, Knockan are also now P-4N) Saanich Council also declared the Mt Douglas Park Charter in 1992 and later reaffirmed the Charter on the Park's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the unveiling of the Charter Rock in 2012. An extraction from the Charter is pertinent:

**The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity to the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.**

**With this charter, the spirit and intent of the original crown grant of 1889 is maintained ... so that the whole will continue as a wilderness preserve for generations to come.**

Over the years several activities initially considered acceptable within the Park, were later banned as the numbers of participants increased along with the natural environment damage. In the 1920's, Glendenning Trail to Whittaker Trail to Cedar Hill Road was a one-way car road before being stopped. Up through the 1970's, annual motorcycle hill climbs were a huge and popular annual event, again stopped. The damage is still visible. In the 1990's mountain biking came on strong with bike trails occurring all over the summit visible from air photos, again stopped. It's like the straw that broke the camel's back, the Park is eroding by a thousand cuts. Similar to these other activities that had to be banned because of the cumulative damage by the increased numbers, the number of dogs in the Park has exceeded the Parks capacity to cope. This is evident with the environmental, social and safety risks associated with the number of dogs in the park whether the dogs are off or on leash.

1. Failure of dog owners to properly bag and dispose of their dog's excrement. This can lead to the damage of native species, health risks for wildlife and for visitors of the parks (particularly children) and is especially problematic for volunteers doing invasive species removal.
2. Too many dog owners allow their dogs to run freely in the park, contrary to bylaws. When these dogs run off the trail, they pose a significant threat to the native species which are red-listed ecosystems at risk and are considered Environmentally Significant/Sensitive Areas. Volunteers have spent tens of thousands of hours removing invasive species allowing the native understory in the forest to return and flourish. Within the last few years dogs and people off trail have damaged and degraded this native understory leaving bare soil and sparse native vegetation. This damage will continue to expand if dogs remain throughout these sensitive areas.
3. Unleashed dogs tend to run through the natural habitats scaring any ground nesting birds and picking up and spreading invasive species. Some dog owners throw balls or sticks into the native understory or in the Garry oak meadows.

4. Dogs also are regularly seen splashing in Douglas Creek during the sensitive salmon spawning season or when fry or smolts are present. As well, dogs wade and dig in the ephemeral ponds jeopardizing native amphibians and soiling water used by native fauna.
5. The issues related to dogs are compounded by commercial dog walkers bringing large groups of dogs into the Park and allowing them to roam off leash without effective control and if on leash, they block the trail.
6. Many birds rest and feed on the beach but are regularly forced to take flight by dogs. This is despite current bylaws prohibiting dogs on the beach, supporting the necessity of more enforcement of the bylaws.
7. Many park users are uncomfortable in the presence of dogs. This is especially true for children, for the elderly and for people with allergies or fears. Since even dogs on leash want to greet and sniff approaching persons, this has caused many people to abandon PKOLS-Mount Douglas walks contrary to it being a public park for all people.
8. Pet cats running free along with some feral cats are known to kill large numbers of birds in the park, especially ground nesters. Long term Park neighbours recall birds such as many quail families that disappeared several years ago.

Additionally, the number of conflicts between people and dogs has also increased. A reader letter provides an excellent description of these issues:

*It's not necessary that your dog be 'friendly'*

TIMES COLONIST, FEBRUARY 26, 2016 12:32 AM

*Recently, a dog ran up and nipped me. The owner did nothing to call her dog, nor did she apologize. This is what I deal with regularly — people thinking their dog has to be "friendly" with me or with my dog. I don't give a hoot if your dog is friendly. I want your dog to be respectful and stay with you. I don't need to be saying hi and acting like a goofball every time I see a dog, and neither does your dog. I would like dogs to be treated as dogs, not glorified, spoiled, out-of-control beings that have unlimited boundaries. Keep your dogs with you. Bouncing ahead to greet other people and other dogs is not friendly, it's rude, disrespectful and can easily lead to aggression. The dog in this instance was likely playing with me, as the owner stated. So that makes it OK to nip me, a total stranger? Why do I have to be your dog's playmate?*

*I get asked so often if my Doberman is "friendly." People are surprised when I say: "No, she's not. She's taught to ignore you." I neither want, nor need, my dog to be an extroverted jerk around others. We need a total re-think about dogs. If a child ran up and hugged a stranger's leg, we might think that is cute once or twice, but repeatedly, it would be a psychosis. Somehow with dogs, it's not seen that way. Why not?*

**Goal:** Follow the Mt Douglas Park Charter and the P-4N natural park zone by protecting and preserving the natural environment as a "wilderness preserve" for generations to come, as agreed to by Saanich Council in 1992.

### **Policies:**

1. Dogs and cats prohibited in PKOLS-Mount Douglas.
2. Dogs and cats prohibited on PKOLS-Mount Douglas Beach.

## **Implementation:**

1. Provide a good education plan.
2. Provide entrance signs clearly stating the bylaw.
3. Provide enforcement along with the public education program. This likely will require trapping feral cats within the park.
4. Provide other parks that are not natural parks, for dogs to be off leash, preferably in enclosed spaces.

Note: There are several references to dogs elsewhere in this Park Plan that have not yet been removed, waiting for Saanich Council determination of dog policy.

## **16 Communication Facility**

The communication facility located near the summit of PKOLS-Mount Douglas exists as a trespass against the Park, the original Crown grant and the Trust. Its existence is inconsistent with the natural park setting. The only benefit to the Park is the “Mount Douglas Transmitter Reserve Fund” revenue, which can contribute to the expansion and enhancement of the Park. This fund was created in 1992 with consultation from our Society and a consolation for the intrusion in the park. The funds are limited to park land acquisition and park improvements, but not maintenance. The fund consists of monies received from operation of the communication facility after facility operational costs.

**Goal:** To preserve the Park in its natural state without human intrusions other than trails.

### **Policies:**

1. To remove the communications facility, along with all visible indications of its existence when technology advances make the facility obsolete.
2. The original trust of 1889 and Park Charter must apply to the entire Park, including the communications site while it remains.
3. Control the current temporary use of the communication facility.
  - Saanich Council has limited the use of the facility to government emergency services and cellular telephone services. There must be no other commercial use of this facility.
  - Minimize the number of microwave disks on the tower by prohibiting the use of the facility as a microwave relay node for any service.
  - Require each user to regularly provide justification for their continued use of the facility.
4. Keep modifications to the communication facility in harmony with the natural setting of the Park.
  - Do not increase the size of the single tower or add new towers.

- Changes to the tower antenna arrays must not increase (and preferably lessen) the visibility of the structure.
  - Visitors to this area expect a natural setting without man-made noise. Ensure there is no noise emanating from the facility building. Muffle air conditioning and fan noise, ensuring levels are below one sone.
  - The facility building must remain hidden as much as possible.
  - Bury service lines for power and communication.
5. Annually meet with Saanich Parks to discuss draws on the Mount Douglas Transmitter Reserve Fund. Annually receive a year's end fund report.

## 17 Roads

The ambiance along the roads in the Park provide many of the motoring public with their initial, and in some cases, only impression of the Park. This can influence their respect and support for the Park.

Experience suggests that roadside litter encourages more litter, whereas a clean roadside tends to stay clean. Similarly, no one wants to be the first to park or drive over natural vegetation growing close to the road edge, but there is less hesitation to be the second.

The urban to natural park transition is exemplified by the "Mount Douglas Park Way", the Cordova Bay Road protected tree canopy, the Glendenning Road approach and prior removal of poles and wires along Ash to allow restoration of the tree canopy.

### Goal:

- To emphasize the natural park setting along all existing road sections in the park.
- Support an urban to natural park transition zone on all road approaches to the Park.

### Policy:

1. All roads in the Park should provide exceptional park-like experiences. Road edge boundaries should be pavement abutting natural vegetation with no intervening bare earth. It must be noted that road sections with curbs achieve excellent road to nature boundaries.

The natural park native vegetation should be as close to the road edge as possible. Wide gravel shoulders to support the asphalt road edge should be kept to a minimum in the Park. Consideration should be given to other alternatives for road edge support that allow vegetation growth. In areas where the vegetation has been damaged, native species should be planted.

2. Protect road overhead tree canopies.

3. Keep road edges free of litter.
4. Prohibit road edge parking along all roads in and adjacent to the Park unless specifically designated as road side parking.

### **Implementation:**

1. Schedule "B" to Tree Preservation bylaw, 2014, No. 9272 protects the Trees forming the canopy over the road for Mt Douglas Corridor Trees (Significant Tree Area from Shelbourne Street to 4550 Cordova Bay Road). Extend section 9272 to include Ash Road and Glendenning Road.
2. Stop the canopy tree trimming along Cordova Bay Road in contravention of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. Power lines along Cordova Bay Road running north from the beach parking entrance take a circuitous route to serve only the nearby washroom. Remove these lines and replace them with underground lines under the paved parking lot running direct to the washrooms.
3. Stop the canopy tree trimming along Cedar Hill Road in contravention of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. These lines serve only the beach parking lot area and might be buried under Cedar Hill Road or moved to Ash Road, a shorter distance. (See Section 23 Utility and Service Lines)
4. Utilize alternatives to the current one metre shoulder protecting the asphalt road edge, such as different road edge construction that will enhance the road to Park transition, bringing the natural park setting close to the road edge.

## **17.1 Churchill Drive**

PKOLS-Mount Douglas is a natural park and Churchill Drive is a paved intrusion into this natural setting, but it does exist and does satisfy the access needs for some.

During the hours when Churchill Drive is closed to vehicular traffic, it has become an overwhelming success and extremely popular among walkers heading to the summit and back, especially when the trails are wet. One often sees parents with young children along with various types of baby strollers being pushed. During car-free periods, people enjoy healthy exercise, free from motor vehicles.

Over time, the number of walkers has increased and will continue to increase. In response, more time should be reserved to allow people to enjoy the park without motor vehicle noise, fumes and safety concerns.

**Goal:** Enhance the non-motorized user experience.

### **Policies:**

Shift the emphasis on Churchill Drive from serving motor vehicles to one that favours non-motorized use.

1. Increase car-free hours on Churchill Drive beyond mornings and long weekends.
2. Enhance priority for non-motorized users.
3. Enforce 25 kmh speed limit along Churchill Drive.
4. Implement traffic-calming measures, especially near lower parking lot.
5. Prohibit parking anywhere along Churchill Drive except in designated locations.
6. Do not salt Churchill Drive.
7. Do not plow snow on Churchill Drive - Recognize the historical use of this road for sledding and tobogganing after snowfalls.

### **Implementation:**

1. Revisit the hours when walkers can enjoy this car free opportunity versus when motorists can drive to the summit taking into consideration the significant increase of walkers on the road. Specifically, extend the car-free time until 2:00 pm daily.
2. Discourage after dark dumping by changing closure time to daily at dusk (end of civil twilight – when it's too dark to read without artificial light) with monthly closure times.
3. The poor road condition is a built-in traffic-calming measure. Therefore, let the road merely be patched as required
4. Along its route to the summit, Churchill Drive has several steep, curving sections that are shaded during winter months resulting in 2 °C lower temperatures. These areas are subject to black ice or snow accumulation even when lower sections are quite dry. Limit public motor vehicle travel on Churchill Drive during such periods. Because the Parks department cannot monitor road conditions on a daily basis, apply seasonal closures of the road as was the practice prior to as well as the first many years it was a Saanich park.

## **17.2 Cordova Bay Road**

*Cordova Bay Road, like the transmitter site, exists as a trespass against the Park, the original Crown grant and the Trust. Its existence is inconsistent with the natural park setting, which must be preserved. According to the Bass Commission, the original road construction was illegal. The road was fixed in its present location when the park was transferred to Saanich from the Province.*

Viewed in isolation, no road should run through the Park because of the serious and recognized potential for environmental damage, as well as damage to the many natural values of the Park including its unique soundscape, and because it is in conflict with the original Park grant. However, Cordova Bay Road does exist and the Society supports policies that minimize the impact on the

surroundings while providing a safe traveling environment for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Saanich Engineering Services and its consultants have predicted that cliff erosion will cause sections of the road through the Park to collapse without remedial action. In consultation with the interested parties, a plan of action has been developed (the Sandwell report), which the Society supports.

**Goal:** According to the Park Charter, the integrity and the character of the Park has priority, so Cordova Bay Road and any future remedial efforts must support, and not compromise, that character.

**Policy:**

1. Do not move the road from its present location as fixed by the Province when the Park was transferred to Saanich.
2. Support the Sandwell Engineering report for stabilization of the cliffs while enhancing the beach and foreshore.
3. Maintain the current road weight restrictions.

**Implementation:**

1. While the road still exists, institute measures that better support the adjacent natural environment and support the public's enjoyment of the environment through traffic-calming measures to reduce speeds and traffic volumes through the Park (e.g. 30 kph limit through the Park).
2. If and when qualified and objective engineers determine that the road has become unsafe for general traffic and too costly to maintain, it will be closed permanently and the land returned to the park. As an intermediate phase, depending on cliff conditions, the road could be closed to general traffic, the water side lane blocked and the southbound lane limited to one-way alternating emergency vehicles and transit.

## **17.3 Ash Road, Cedar Hill Road**

**Implementation:**

1. Eliminate impromptu pullout and parking areas along these roads.
2. Remove power lines along Cedar Hill Road. Either bury them or possibly bury them under Ash Road (shorter distance).
3. Ash, Cedar Hill, Cordova Bay Roads and Beach Park Entrance Intersection: This intersection involves many conflicting automotive, cycling and pedestrian movements. The large number of “jay-walkers” crossing from the beach area to the upper park highlight the need for a safe crosswalk here. In actuality, most of these are in legal unmarked crosswalks.

**Policy:** Provide a safe crossing area for walkers while improving vehicular movements for motor vehicles and for cyclists.

## **Implementation:**

1. Work with Saanich Engineering to develop a more functional intersection of the three roads and the Park entrance.
2. Include a pedestrian crossing in a redesigned intersection with an adjacent bus stop.

## **17.4 Pedestrian Crossings**

Concerns have been expressed that some pedestrians take dangerous advantage of crosswalks and enter them without due caution. Conversely, some vehicle drivers take dangerous advantage of unmarked but legal crosswalks by not stopping for pedestrians attempting to cross at valid trail crossings. A marked crosswalk provides the additional safety benefit of concentrating road crossing walkers at one safe location, especially where there are many unmarked crosswalk locations.

**Goal:** Provide safe passage to park trail users at all trail – road crossings.

### **Implementation:**

1. Preferred implementation is 30 kmh speed limit in these areas.
2. Construct the following crossings:
  - Douglas Trail at Ash Road (Likely requires pedestrian activated flashing lights)
  - Bridge Trail (Cedar Hill Road halfway between Churchill Drive and Ash Road)
  - Unmarked crosswalk near the beach parking lot entrance for access to the main Park and the transit stop
  - Mercer trailhead across Blenkinsop Road

## **18 Special Events, Permits**

Special events include use of the picnic area by organized groups, bicycle hill climb time trials restricted to Churchill Drive, or other group events.

A permit system provides a mechanism to convey Saanich park expectations to permittees, to obtain feedback, especially from those doing research, to develop a profile of park use and to control usage and access (e.g. reserve picnic area). Currently the permit system is not well-defined and certainly not known by Park users.

**Goal:** To allow Park use for events consistent with the Natural Park setting.

### **Policies:**

Saanich Parks Department should control special events or group events using a permit system with clear policies regarding Park use including provisos such as:

1. The requirement and expectations for a park use permit must be well-defined. The public must be aware of the permit requirement.
2. Any event that might have an impact on the Park natural environment should require a permit, providing an opportunity for education. This includes large groups using trails as they invariably walk two or three abreast causing trail sprawl or stopping and congregating for discussions, again causing trail sprawl.
3. At the conclusion of the event, no trace of the event should remain in the Park.
4. Limit events in the natural areas of the Park to those that are consistent with and support these natural areas.
5. Limit signs advertising or marking the event. Specific advertising locations should be specified at the time of permit issuance.
6. Nothing should be attached to trees, especially nails used to attach signs.
7. Require permits for research, educational and other events in the Park. The permit should require follow-up documentation describing the result for the subsequent use by others.

## 19 Playground

**Goal:** To maintain the recreation area at its present size and location.

## 20 Old Quarry

In 1998, Saanich Council provided a grant to study the restoration of the old quarry in the Park on the edge of Cordova Bay Road. The study, completed in February 1999, calls for sequenced restoration. Some of this restoration has taken place but future work on this plan has been blocked by engineering installation of a drainage system.

**Goal:** To make this site consistent with, and an asset to, the natural park that surrounds it.

### **Implementation:**

1. Restore quarry according to plan.

## 21 4550 Cordova Bay Road (The “Motel”)

Although no longer operating as a motel at 4550 Cordova Bay Road, many of the same issues remain. Specifically, the southern parking area and a portion of the driveway is 100% within the Park.

**Goal:** To reclaim and restore all lands in the park boundary that have been used by the 4550 Cordova Bay Road property owners.

**Implementation:**

The current operation at 4550 Cordova Bay Road encroaches on the Park.

Initial action should include:

1. Since the parking and driveway encroachments remain, there must be provision of some benefit to the Park in exchange for temporary use of the encroached area in addition to rent for that land use. Define a termination date or a renewal date such as three years.  
Temporary use of the parking by 4550 Cordova Bay Road, which is 100% within the Park, might be accomplished by enabling public access to and use of the parking area. For example, remove the “Private Drive” sign, install a “ PKOLS-Mount Douglas public parking” sign at the access from Cordova Bay Road and limit parking to 2 hours.
2. Removal of any and all non park related materials.

## 22 Information and Recognition

**Goal:** To balance the benefit provided by non-natural man-made features against respect for the natural environment.

### 22.1 Interpretive Signs, Plaques, Cairns & Monuments

Any proposed interpretive sign in PKOLS-Mount Douglas must first be determined to be consistent with the Park Charter, must provide a clear enhancement to the natural park experience, blend in harmoniously with the landscape without detracting from the Park, its ambiance and character and invite reflection about Park values.

Many individuals and groups have deep attachment to the Park, and many of them have made, and will make in future, major contributions to it. However, permanent physical markers describing these contributions other than recognition as part of an interpretive sign, ultimately detract from the Park's core values, original dedication and are not consistent with the Park Charter.

**Policies:**

1. Interpretive signs should be minimized, consolidated and be of current value to park users. Redundant and obsolete signage should be removed.
2. Plaques, other than the Park Charter and the current summit map wheel, should be limited to benches (See Section 22 Information and Recognition) and never used as recognition for donations, events or achievements.

3. Cairns, monuments or memorials are non-natural structures and detract from the natural park setting. The only rationale for them in the Park might be for archaeological/ancestral burial sites.
4. Minimal corporate logos may appear, in special cases, as a footnote on interpretive signs.
5. Signs not installed according to these policies are non-conforming and should be removed.

## 22.2 Park Furniture

Appropriately sited and designed benches can enhance enjoyment of the Park.

It should be noted that the Park capacity for benches with plaques has essentially been reached. If existing bench plaques do not have a defined lifetime or expiry date, there is little or no future opportunity for new dedications.

**Goal:** To provide a limited number of strategically located benches throughout the park.

### **Policies:**

1. Maintain a bench style consistent with the natural setting.
2. Determine the installation location through consultation with PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy.
3. Support the current Park furniture program that includes non-memorial plaque wording.
4. Plaque messages may not be personal epitaphs but convey a general sense of welcome and inclusiveness.
5. The bench will be maintained for ten years, after which it may be renewed once for another ten years. At the completion of its term, an attempt will be made to return the plaque to the donor.

## 22.3 Memorials

Saanich Parks has discontinued the practice of allowing memorials on benches and has replaced that program with a broader Park furniture program. The Park furniture benches are similar to the old memorial program but the plaque inscription is now of a more generic welcome message and is no longer a memorial.

**Goal:** Prohibit memorials in the Park.

Currently there are two categories of memorial Park benches. Those that were donated prior to the 2008 implementation of the Park's 10 year policy ("grandfathered" bench memorials) and those donated after the policy change. Those donated under the 10 year policy will automatically expire 10 years from the donation date, with one possible renewal. For grandfathered bench memorials, since the donation agreement was silent with regards to their

lifetime, there is no reason why an expiration date cannot be set. For a donated tree option, see Section 6.1 Plantings, Policy 5.

**Policies:**

Over time, eliminate existing Park bench memorials

1. Plaques installed prior to the Saanich ten year limit shall have a fixed expiration date with one potential renewal.
2. The only form of commemorative naming in the Park shall be trails already named after early settlers.

## 22.4 Donations

**Goal:** Provide a mechanism for recognizing significant donations that enhance the Park.

**Policies:**

1. Donations or contributions, where recognition is desirable, are best acknowledged by newspaper articles, newsletters or thank you letters. In exceptional cases recognition should be integrated in the interpretive signage program, not through individual signs and never with a plaque, cairn or monument.

## 23 Utility and Service Lines

The power lines in the Park extending from Churchill Drive along Cedar Hill Road to the beach parking lot entrance and then 100 m north along Cordova Bay Road serve only the beach parking area washrooms and overhead street lights. They serve no other purpose or other area.

**Goal:** To bury all utility and service lines that cannot be removed.

**Implementation:**

Actions to bury overhead power and communication lines must recognize that burial must avoid tree root damage. Also see Section 17 Roads.

1. Along Cedar Hill and Cordova Bay Road, remove all overhead lines. This might be accomplished in several phases:
  - Lines serving the beach parking lot building follow a circuitous route from the beach parking entrance overhead for 100 m north along Cordova Bay Road, then into the Park near the children's play area then finally underground back south to the washroom building.Bury lines serving the beach parking lot building and sewer pump station: remove overhead lines along Cordova Bay Road currently serving this facility and replace them with lines buried under the

beach parking lot directly to the washroom building (buried distance is slightly more than 100 m).

- Remove power lines along Cedar Hill Road between Churchill Drive and beach parking lot entrance and replace them with buried lines possibly entering along Ash Road (assuming that this would be less costly than the current route because of the shorter distance).

## **24 Volunteers**

Saanich Parks supports a Pulling Together program, but its scope is invasive plant centric and does not adequately address the wide range of volunteer work in the Park. The most obvious gap is associated with the many facets of creek monitoring and restoration.

We note the current Pulling Together program operates independently and does not function as a partner with our Society on what should be joint efforts.

Volunteers working in conjunction with Saanich on any project in the Park should be afforded the same liability and insurance protection as on a Pulling Together project.

## **25 Park Ambassadors**

Despite kiosks, Park maps and trail sign posts, many visitors would benefit from general Park information (Yes, Salmon return annually to spawn in Douglas Creek; Yes, there is a GPS map of the Park; Yes, a soundscape study has identified many car noise free regions in the Park) or guidance as to which trails are best suited for their desired experience and for their ability.

For some visitors, reminders not to take plants or reasons to stay on the trail instead of breaking a new trail are of value. Or informing cyclists it is OK to ride up Churchill Drive, but is not OK to ride the trails on a bicycle.

An on-site presence of knowledgeable Ambassadors offers value to Park visitors while contributing to the appreciation and preservation of the Park.

**Goal:** Support the Park Ambassador program.

**Implementation:**

1. Consider scheduling a parks staff presence during peak visitor hours.
2. Provide better Park education for Ambassadors as many have insufficient knowledge about the park.. Suggest they read this Park Plan. It is also important to recognize that since Ambassador sign an agreement not to speak to media, they do not represent an independent voice for the park.

## 26 Enforcement

Park Ambassadors along with etiquette and bylaw information should be highlighted in educating the public about the Park, its value, how to preserve it and avoiding threats to the Park. Though education is important, enforcement is also needed. Note that Park Ambassador have no enforcement authority.

**Goal:** Provide by-law and other law enforcement as needed to protect public safety, ecological health of the Park and to comply with Saanich bylaws.

**Policy:** Recognize that Saanich's policy of voluntary bylaw compliance is not sufficient and that active enforcement is required.

## 27 Future Park Preservation, Capacity (Looking at the Future)

CRD and Municipal long range plans project an increase in population and density in the Park “catchment area”. The increased density resulting from a shift from single family homes with yards to large multi-family buildings with minimal or no shared “yards” or garden suites likely will mean a significant decrease in available green space for residents. The combination of population increase coupled with less outdoor green space and no new parks will put considerable additional pressure on the few remaining natural areas like PKOLS-Mount Douglas.

One might envisage two possible diverse futures for the Park. One extreme would accommodate increased visitors with little regard to the preservation of the natural Park environment contrary to the original crown grant of 1889 and of the 1992 Saanich Council Park Charter. Another choice would ensure the Park remains as a wilderness preserve consistent with the crown grant and Council proclamation. The PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy strongly supports this alternative through thoughtful planning and diligent action by Saanich and the community.

The latter of these two choices can be achieved if trails are carefully managed, visitors are kept on designated trails and creation of ad hoc unofficial trails is avoided. This will require better education and a change in enforcement by

Saanich. Also, it is important to recognize that the popularity of other parks in Canada and elsewhere has required introduction of entry controls to maintain the desired park experience. The combination of local population density increases and lack of additional new park space might well result in the necessity for entry controls for this park.

**Goal:** Establish long term polices that directly support the original crown grant of 1889 and the 1992 Council Mount Douglas Park Charter directives that reserves in perpetuity the protection and preservation of the natural environment as a wilderness preserve for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public recognizing potential pressures from increased population.

**Policy:** Encourage Saanich Parks to work with Saanich Planning, engineering, the Capital Regional District, Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy , WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council, the Songhees Nation, Te'mexw Treaty Association and others to effect this goal.

## 28 Board of Directors 2022

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## 29 Membership

For membership or to make donations, see

<https://PKOLS-MountDouglas.ca>

**Donations gratefully accepted with thanks!**

# 30 Trail Map

## PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy

