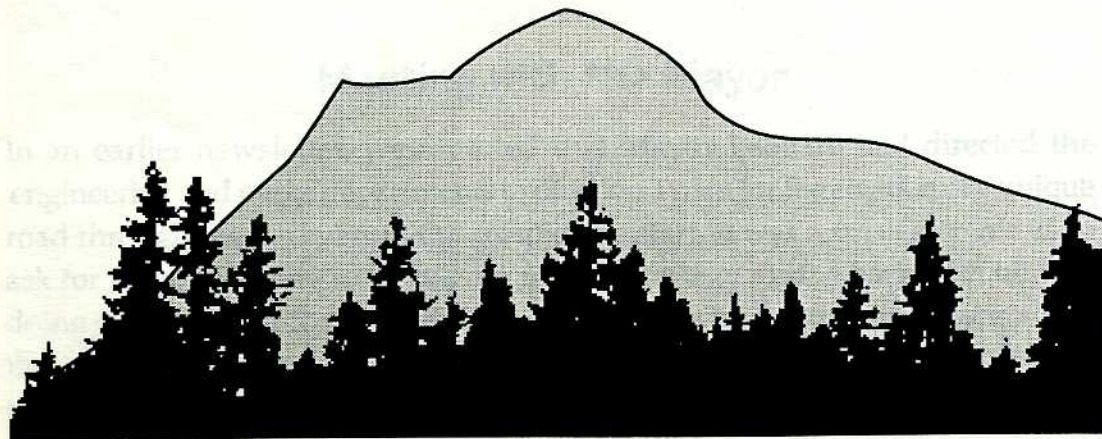

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

NEWSLETTER

June 1997



Minutes of Directors 1997/98

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

As of April this year, The Friends have 106 paid-up members. If you don't belong yet, there's no better time to join, and support a natural park close to home.

Name

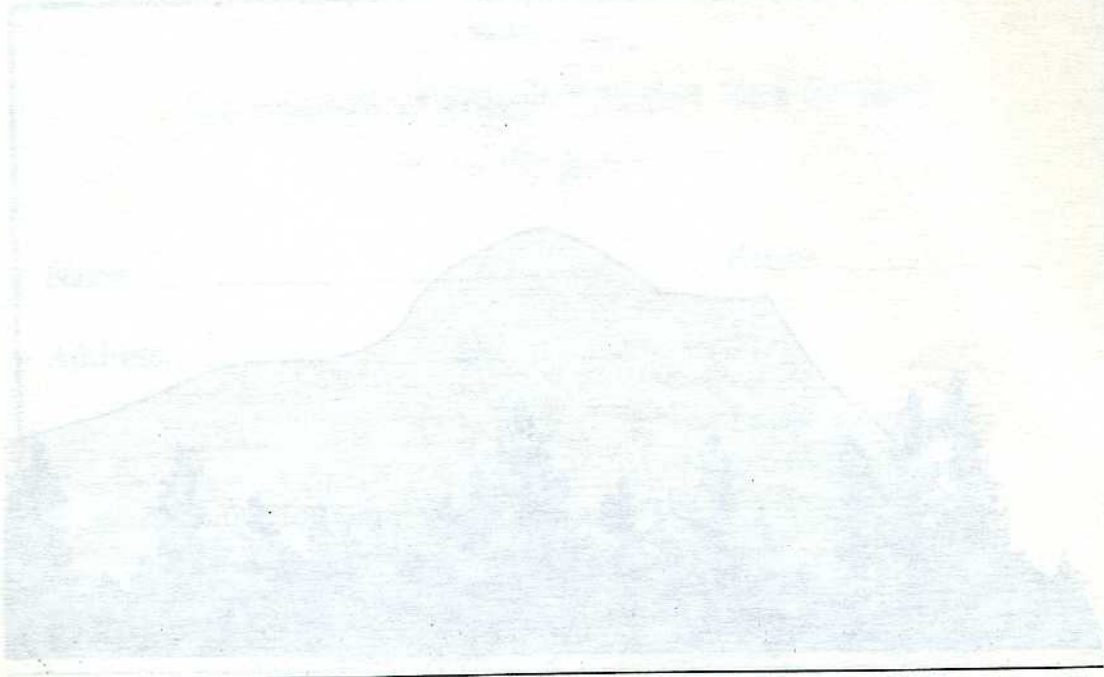
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President's Report

Feedback from members indicates that our newsletters are much appreciated, so from now on we will be issuing them more frequently-four times a year, we hope.

There will always, of course, be more to report about some of our previously-mentioned concerns and initiatives than about others. At the moment, funding for our work is one major issue. On the downside, the Habitat Conservation Fund has rejected our application for money that would go toward preparing Douglas Creek for the introduction of fish. However, an application for the same purpose to the Urban Salmonid Enhancement Fund is, at time of writing, still under consideration. As well, we have had provisional encouragement from the Provincial Capital Commission to apply for funding for the upgrading of the Mercer Trail at the Blenkinsop Road end. This would fit in with the PCC's general plan for greenways throughout the Saanich Peninsula. A report in detail is given in this issue of the newsletter.

Meeting with the Mayor

In an earlier newsletter, we reported that Mayor Leonard had directed the engineering and parks departments to develop a plan for the creation of a unique road through the park. From this auspicious start, it was a small step for us to ask for an opportunity to discuss an overall strategy for the park with him. In doing so, we hoped to repeat the success we have had with acquisitions along the western boundary; a process which began after a similar meeting with former Mayor, Murray Coell.

This time the topics were more complicated, so we started with a review of what had been achieved in terms of new parkland and how this process of acquisition can continue thanks to the clause in the Charter which allows for the addition of any land adjacent to the park once that land has been zoned for park use by the municipality. This discussion tied in nicely with the C.R.D. greenways plan in which the park is scheduled to play a major role as a "node" or regional focal point within the system. The Mayor suggested we look at a C.R.D. management plan for a particular park, for example Witty's Lagoon, and use it as a model for expressing what we want to achieve, in the long term, for Mount Douglas Park.

We then discussed the creek and what it has to offer as a fish-bearing stream and as a recreational walkway. The two problems which stand in the way of achieving the maximum benefits are the occasional oil leak from the storm sewer system and the uncontrolled discharge of water into the creek leading to erosion of the banks and the destruction of the fish habitat. The engineers have several designs they believe would solve the worst of these problems; in the first case, by using a small weir and in the second by using an energy-absorbing system through which the water would pass before it enters the creek. At the time of the meeting, there was a sum of \$50,000 in the budget for the construction of a weir near the storm sewer outfall, but given the constraints all local governments face, this is an item that could be cut. However, all is not lost, there is an application before the federal government for cost-sharing on this project and, in view of their renewed interest in fish, it has a very good chance of success. The second problem will be solved as part of the drainage project now nearing completion.

We then moved on to the topic of access to the park and went over the working definition we have been using for the road: two lanes of traffic with access for pedestrians, cyclists, horses and motorists.

The main issue at that time was the bicycle lane report due to come before Council on the following Monday. We were able to show that the \$600,000 price

tag mentioned in the report was misleading; we believe that figure referred to the total cost of construction of bike lanes from Blenkinsop to Shelbourne on both sides of the road. What we have in mind is very modest and the most expensive part has already been accomplished as part of the drainage project.

At the subsequent council meeting, Mayor Leonard proposed some changes to the wording in the report which cast its recommendations in a much more appealing light.

The Latest on Douglas Creek

Drainage and the weir

The new drainage system for Cordova Bay Road is very nearly complete: introducing stormwater runoff from the road into the creek will finish the job. At present, there is no final plan as to how this will be done. Draining Cordova Bay Road was reported to have cost three hundred thousand dollars.

Status of the construction of the weir is under review, because of budgetary considerations. There is a chance that the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans will match funds with the municipality to see this sixty-thousand-dollar project go ahead. We see the concept plan itself as a positive step.

In this watershed, our stormwater is not treated. Everything that flows into the storm drains goes straight into the creek and then onto the beach and into the ocean. If the weir functions effectively, we can eliminate some major pollutants virtually at source, before they blend into the open aquatic system. The actual construction will be a difficult job. The municipality is forced to work under regulations from Section 7 of the *Water Act*. The creek will have to be pumped around any green cement for seventy-two hours. Silt will also have to be controlled. We are confident that Saanich Department of Engineering will take every precaution in its power to see the job completed properly.
