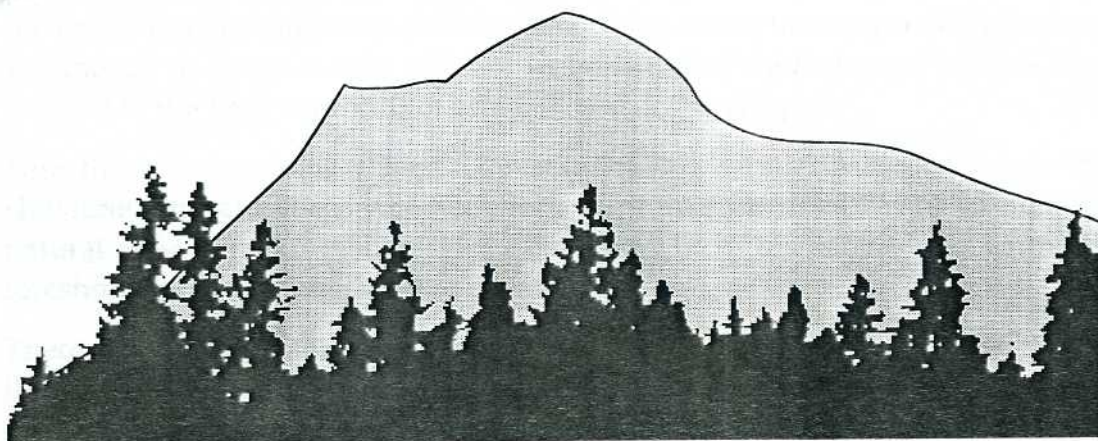

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Newsletter

February 2001

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



Annual General Meeting

7:30 Tuesday April 10 2001

McMorran's Seaview Room, 5109 Cordova Bay Road

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

*Plan to come and hear local historian
Valerie Green*

"Pioneer Neighbours of Mount Douglas Park"

President's Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

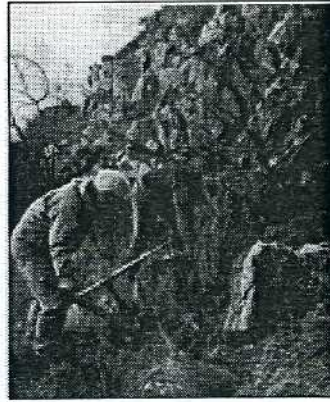
The Friends of Mount Douglas Park have received certificates of recognition from the Victoria Foundation for these projects.

Bob Bridgeman Scores Again

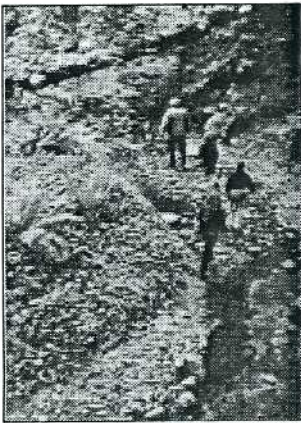
Our Director of Streams, Bob Bridgeman, has had his article, "Urban Issues in Watershed Restoration," printed in the December 2000 issue of the Society for Ecological Restoration News, which publishes from Tucson, Arizona.

Broom Bashing

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



The Stream

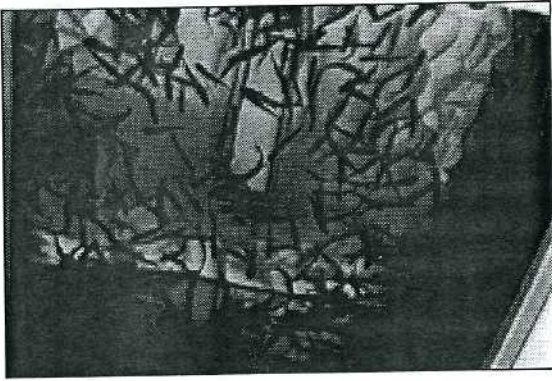


To date there have been no reports of salmon spawning in the Creek. Nevertheless, possibilities for the future are undiminished. Many factors influence salmon escapement and for now we will carry on transplanting fish and improving the available rearing habitat.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Millennium Projects

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

Tree Planting

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



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

Stormwater Committee

January 26th 2001 saw the first meeting of the Stormwater Committee at Saanich Municipal Hall. Organized by the Friends, it has representatives from Saanich Planning, Engineering and Parks departments, from the Stormwater Quality Branch of the Capital Regional District, from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, from the provincial Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and from South Islands Aquatic Stewardship Society, as well as two members of our executive.

The committee was formed to find practical solutions to the damaging biological effects of stormwater. The Friends first concern is the watershed of Douglas Creek, now almost completely developed and with much impermeable area. However, findings can be extrapolated to all other urban creeks in the community south of the Malahat. There are solutions, both large and small, many of which have as much to do with the way we live as they do with the structures that we can create.

Applications for Funding

Well, it is proposal time again and we have a couple on the go. What we want to do between April 1 2001 and March 31st 2002 is to install a hydrolab multi-probe adjacent to the hydrometric station and the PISCES device. We are asking the Urban Salmonid Habitat Program to finance the hydrolab and South Island Aquatic Stewardship Society to finance the continuance of the hydrometric station as well as the costs of the PISCES sample analysis. If we can run all three initiatives together, we can knit the resultant data together to obtain a comprehensive picture of the water quality / hydrology integration in real time. Thus we can learn what is killing fish and destroying the biodiversity of the aquatic insect community.

Fish!

Last but not least we still have fish in the creek. These are the fish that were transplanted on October 22 2000, although there is an outside chance that some fish from the eyed-egg transplant of March 11 2000 survived the summer. How will we know?—the hatchery fry have clipped adipose fins and the fry from the eggs, of course, don't.

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

6th annual Gardening for Wildlife

Saturday and Sunday
April 21-22 2001

Admission :
\$3.00 per day
\$5.00 for the weekend

Major Theme

Gardening with native plants
Sale of books plants birdfeeders etc.

For more information:

call 479-0211 or visit www.swanlake.bc.ca

We have been trying to remove broom and ivy for so long we may have lost sight of the pleasures derived from planting things we want to see grow. Here is an opportunity to promote home-grown and indigenous species at the expense of invasive ones. Learn the important points from demonstrations the Sanctuary plans to offer and then enjoy spring planting with the added anticipation that you are helping to restore, in part at least, the natural habitat of the region.

Saanich Fire Department

With the continued development around and within the forested areas of the municipality the risk of serious damage from fire becomes greater every year. The Fire Department has identified these areas as "rural/urban interface areas" and has been asked by individuals and groups about the best methods to adopt for fire prevention and for minimizing damage should a fire occur. In response, they plan to offer seminars on either Wednesday evenings or Saturday mornings after 16th April 2001, and you can contact the Fire Prevention Division office at 475-5500 for further details.

The Friends could act as host for the event (lasting about two hours) if there is sufficient interest. We must know, with reasonable accuracy, how many people would attend; if you would like to learn about fire prevention in forested areas contact Graham Shorthill at 658-5873.

Winter Notebook

A group of Friends went on a walk with Dave Deshane a month or so ago, to see what is planned for the coming year. The list is quite impressive.

Firstly, there is the problem of the junction of Ash, Cedar hill and Cordova Bay roads. The plan is to remove quagmire that has developed between the junction and the Ash Road bridge by filling it with topsoil, planting native species there, and lining the edge so that parking will be impossible along this short but important stretch of road. Similarly, the crude and garish concrete barriers on the opposite side around the tall, vertical Mount Douglas Park sign will be replaced with a less obtrusive curb, and some native plants will be added to the enclosure. The trick here is to provide a visible road edge for drivers, while preserving the park atmosphere.

In the picnic area, the departmental plan is to extend the seating around the fireplace and to add a BBQ pit. Across the road, at the baseball diamond, they want to erect a simple shelter. Both additions would be in keeping with the present ambiance and would greatly enhance the pleasure of those visitors who come for a short stay. We

hope that when they see what the park has to offer they will return to enjoy its many other attractions.

The trip to the quarry was a sorry affair. The pond is dry, even though it had been raining fairly consistently for several days. The weeds have taken over large portions of the flat, clay-capped open space. And, unfortunately, mountain bikers had found another place to construct yet another unofficial trail—from the cliff overlooking the quarry down to the graveled walking trail near the road.

In contrast, the trip to the summit was light relief; the purpose was to suggest ways of creating a better pathway to the transmitter tower side of the summit and to find a way clearly directing people from the car park to the lookout.

However the highlight of the trip was the sight of a group of people armed with golf clubs and a bucketful of fluorescent yellow golf balls standing on the rocky outcrop near the lookout. With graceful swings they drove the balls with fearless abandon over the edge and down to the trail between the main summit and Little Mount Douglas. Had you been hiking in this region and happened upon one of these yellow balls, your first thought might have been that some superhuman giant in the Blenkinsop driving range below had found his groove and lofted a mighty drive which stopped just short of the summit. The dominant emotion in such circumstances would probably have been incredulity. Knowing the truth, it's hard to say what emotion would dominate, but disbelief would be high on the list.

Churchill Drive on Sunday Mornings

Thanks to the fine weather we enjoyed from the beginning of December to the end of January, business has been brisk along Churchill Drive. It's a pleasure to see more and more people leaving their cars and SUV's for a hike in the woods. Of course we hope that it is the fact that the road is closed and that the immediate surroundings are quiet for a few precious hours that draws people to the park at this particular time.

There does seem to be a shortage of parking at the gate area, especially when the gate is closed. The Parks Department will be moving the gate about 35 metres further

into the park, and once that's done the road edge, now in poor shape, can be brought into proper repair to provide more parking.

As you know, postponing the opening of the road until noon is part of a year-long trial. We need all the feedback we can get in order to make a really strong case for retaining this new option for park users. Please send your comments to any member of the executive or to the Parks Department and, when the time comes, to Council.

Ivy control

This is a topic that has received much attention over the last few years, but the current state of play is that ivy is winning and the native plants are losing.

There is a systematic attempt to control ivy in the woods adjacent to Durling place and we have asked for support for demonstration projects near the picnic area. However, the main part of the park has been left to the mercy of this invasive species. From the research and discussions that have taken place to date, it seems that pulling out the plant does hold it in check but it does not eliminate the problem.

The executive have grappled with the problem of which method to use and have reluctantly concluded that chemical treatment of new shoots offers the best return.

A small isolated area has been identified as suitable for an exploratory test. The procedure would be to pull the ivy from the trees and the surrounding undergrowth, wait until the new green shoots appear and paint (not spray) these shoots with a chemical such as RoundUp—on a dry and windless day to minimize evaporation and killing of surrounding vegetation.

This is the proposal we are taking to the parks department for action in the spring but we want to be sure that the membership is in agreement. Please make your voice heard.

Contact the executive and let them know your point of view or write to the address on the last page of the newsletter.

Mountain Bikes

And here is another old problem come back to haunt us!

Cyclists who use road bikes reckon the best rush in Victoria is the trip from the summit to Shelbourne Street down Churchill Drive, and that presents no problem at all.

However, for a small fraction of the people who ride mountain bikes, a bigger rush is to plunge off the summit of Mount Douglas, down any steep rocky slope, the steeper the better, and skid to the bottom. In doing so, in a few minutes of frenzied activity they take with them soil, plants and complex habitat that has taken centuries to accumulate. This does present a problem.

You may have noticed that the police have been in the park more frequently recently. Part of the reason for that is to try to combat the destruction that is taking place and to enforce the bylaw which prohibits riding bikes anywhere except on the blacktop.

No one can really deny that mountain biking is fun and healthy. What is at stake is where can it take place with as little damage as possible. Anyone who has been out to Mount Work, near the Hartland Road Centre, has seen what can be accomplished when the need is recognized and positive steps are taken to provide the means of enjoying the sport.

According to the people at the Museum, Mount Douglas is home to a number of plant species that are on the endangered list, thus there is an inherent conflict between the activities of mountain biking and preserving and restoring natural habitat in a large natural park.

However, there is a glimmer of hope in the new greenways initiative. With its corridors and links to various sites, it does provide a means of accommodating the need to get from point to point over rugged terrain. What must be added now are special sections designed to test the skill of the rider.

We hope that the designers of this new concept will provide such sites and so remove the atmosphere of conflict and confrontation which prevails all too often when hikers and tourists encounter mountain bikers in our natural parks.

Garry Oak Preservation

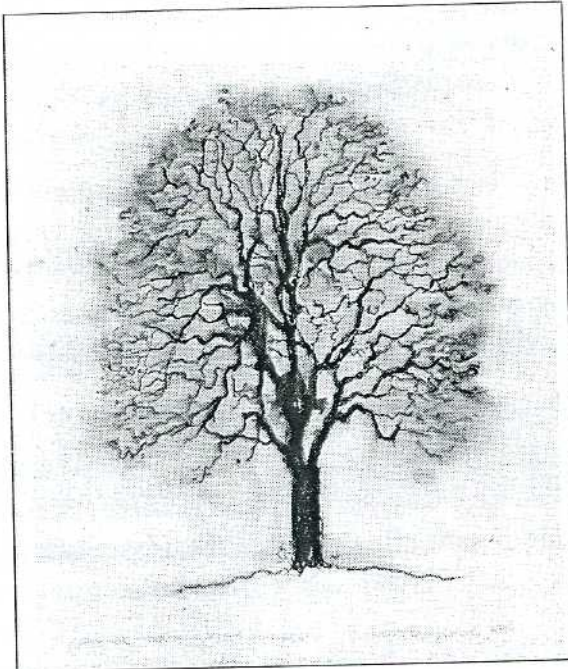
Much is being done to preserve Garry Oak in Greater Victoria and in the region at large.

The next issue of the newsletter will discuss the status of Garry Oak and particularly in Mount Douglas Park, and the achievements of the dedicated people who are working to preserve the species.

Should you wish any specific information before then, please don't hesitate to call

Hal Gibbard

477-2986.



During the next month or so, those of you who have supported the Friends of Mount Douglas Park but who have not renewed your membership recently will be called by someone on our telephone committee.

You will be asked to renew your membership, and also to consider volunteering for some of the many projects we have underway.

Please say yes!



"Trillium"

from a watercolour by

Kristi Bridgeman

another talented member of The Friends of Mount Douglas Park.

Board of Directors 2000/2001

President	Kenneth Rankin	4285 Cedar Hill Road	V8N 3C7	477-8007
Vice President	Darrell Wick	1491 Edgemont Road	V8N 4P7	477-9291
Treasurer	Graham Shorthill	4623 Cordova Bay Road	V8X 3V6	658-5873
Secretary	Sheilagh Ogilvie	515 Carnation Place	V8Z6G6	479-4281
Streams	Robert Bridgeman	1481 Elnido Road	V8N 4Z7	477-7464
At-large	Hal Gibbard	1439 Wende Road	V8P 3T7	477-2986
At-large	Kay Porter	5041 Wesley Road	V8Y 1Z5	658-5792

Historian: Pam Lewis

Telephone Volunteers: Jane Owen—477-8963; Celia Esmond—721-2796

Membership

Please check the label on the cover of this newsletter; if it reads '99 or earlier, your renewal time has come. We hope you will continue to support the work of the Society for another year by sending \$5 for one one-year membership to the address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone No. _____

Individual membership fee is \$5.00 per year

Membership 1 year 2 year 3 year

Send or deliver to: Graham Shorthill, Treasurer
4623 Cordova Bay Road
Victoria B.C. V8X 3V6