

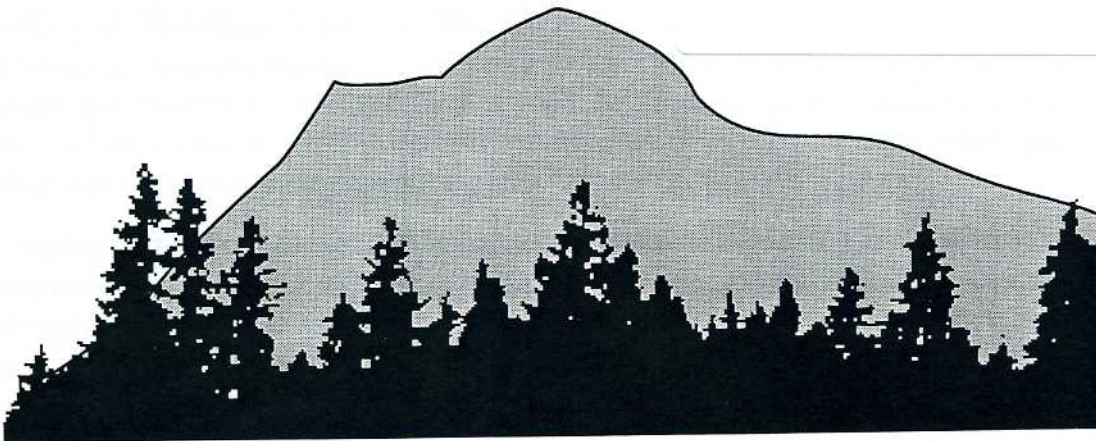
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*The Friends of Mount Douglas Park  
Society*

*Newsletter*

*September 2001*

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## The Proposed Gordon Head Trail Connector

You may have read in either the Times/Colonist or the Saanich News that the Municipality plans to create a connecting trail between Gordon Head and the Lochside Trail. The thinking is that it would be a quick and convenient route for cyclists and pedestrians moving between the east part of Saanich and the Peninsula spur of the Galloping Goose Trail.

As presently proposed, the connector would run most of the way along existing streets such as San Juan, Elnido, Cedar Hill Road (in part), and Parkside Crescent, through to Glendenning, down Mount Douglas Cross Road to Blenkinsop and thus via Lohbrunner Road to the Galloping Goose. On reaching Cedar Hill, westward-bound pedestrians (but, we have been assured, definitely not cyclists) would have the option of going through the Park down to Blenkinsop instead of the longer way through Parkside Crescent. Alternatively, they could enter the Park at the end of Glendenning.

Asked by the Planning Department for the Friends opinion of the project, we replied that we welcome the prospect of more people using the Park, and commend the initiative as a major step forward in providing people with alternatives to the car. At the same time we recommended that provision be made for an information display and secure bicycle racks at the Glendenning entrance, so that people are aware that bicycling is not permitted in the Park. These measures will lessen the danger of cyclists entering the Park and damaging the fragile systems that exist within it. We also pointed out that certain arrows on the map submitted by the Planning Department might be taken to suggest that cyclists would be allowed to enter the Park at the Cedar Hill fire road, at Blenkinsop, and at Glendenning. Accordingly, we requested that these arrows be removed from subsequent diagrammatic presentations of the plan.

We also pointed out that a number of residents in the Parkside Crescent area have expressed concern about the proposal. Two members of the Friends executive attended a meeting of residents there, to present the position we have taken, and to suggest that they approach the Planning Department directly with their reservations or objections. This, we learned, they are very actively in process of doing.

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## Memorial Benches

In earlier days, the City of Victoria intended to locate a cemetery in the Park. Fortunately, the distance of the Park from the city limits at that time led to a cancellation of the plan. In recent years, however, Saanich Parks Department has been receiving applications for permission to place memorial benches in the Park, at points that their donors deem suitable. To keep ahead of this development the Department has sought to identify places where the siting of benches might be sanctioned, and have submitted their proposals to us for consideration.

Our conclusions coincided closely with the Department's proposals. In brief, they were to the effect that, to avoid affecting the ambience of a natural park, benches should only be sited in locations where human construction is already in evidence. More specifically, we are not opposed to the siting of one bench on the path from the main parking lot down to the beach (in replacement of a bench already there), three others at suitably scenic points on Churchill Drive (the road to the summit), and two on the viewing platform at the summit parking lot.

In this connection, it should also be mentioned that we are opposed to memorial plantings of tree species that are not native to the Park. An example of one such, an aspiring redwood, can be found in the main parking lot near the picnic area.

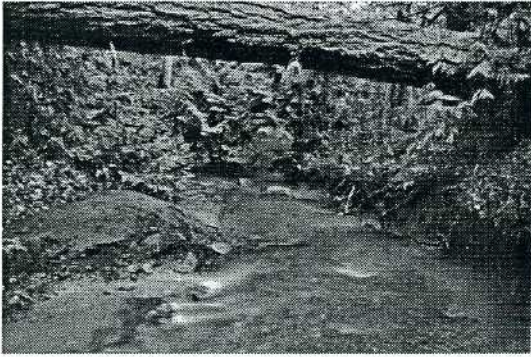
### Restoration of Natural Systems

The Restoration of Natural Systems diploma/certificate has been developed to disseminate information about environmental restoration and to provide practical background knowledge, training, and skill development for those working or planning to work in areas related to restoration of natural systems.

Courses are offered in a variety of formats and schedules in order to meet the needs of busy people living in and outside the Victoria area.

For more information, call 250-721-8463 or e-mail [pfaulds@uvics.uvic.ca](mailto:pfaulds@uvics.uvic.ca)

## The Creek

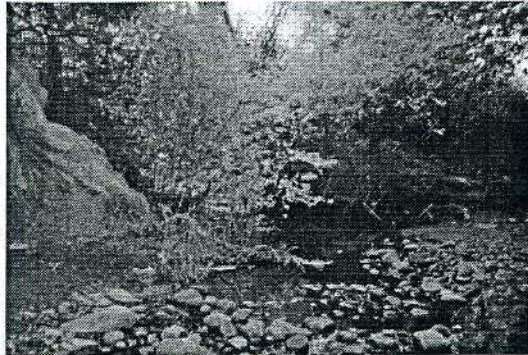


On May 31, 2001 we were given a field trip to a number of local stream restoration sites by Patrick Lucey and two of his graduate students. He uses engineered wetlands to improve storm water quality and to naturalize the drainage hydrology. One of these projects is on the Douglas Creek watershed—the large infill development at Tyndall is planned to have an engineered wetland to detain and

treat stormwater from the new development and, as well, from some of the adjacent existing developments.

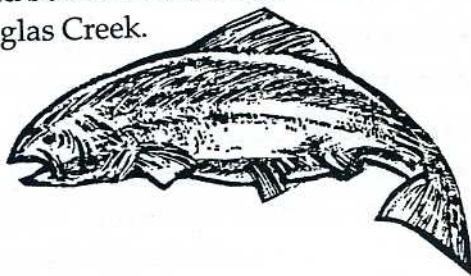
Unfortunately, the more stormwater that is treated in a detaining system, the more surface area is required for the treatment, and surface area costs a lot of money on the Douglas Creek watershed. In the Tyndall development, creativity has prevailed and we look forward to improved water quality/hydrology in the Creek.

Previous development in Saanich, as in most municipalities, did not include any environmental considerations for stormwater management: the municipality simply supplied a means of conveying water off the landscape— a network of pipes that eventually drain into some low-lying natural system, be it stream, lake or ocean. The result has been disastrous—the extirpation of salmon stocks in waterbodies adjacent to urban and agricultural areas, and on our beaches. Thanks to a Chief Engineer who takes the long view, Saanich is one of the communities in the Pacific Northwest that is moving toward stormwater management that does not destroy the environment. We like that, and applaud the direction he is taking.



In July, Saanich Engineering proposed changes to the Subdivision Bylaw to cover the discharge of water from new developments. The intent is to improve the quality of water discharged and to slow down the discharge so the pipes are not subjected to massive pulses of water after a storm: excellent news for the Creek! Unfortunately, the initial wording of the bylaw would have relegated Douglas Creek to some second tier of streams in the municipality. After some discussion, it was agreed to change the wording so that the highest standards contained in the bylaw can be (arguably) applied to any new subdivision which discharges water into a creek. It is important to see how this provision will be interpreted in the "real world."

The Capital Regional District has just come out with an Enhanced Model Storm Sewer bylaw which provides a framework of Best Management Practices for municipalities. Copies have been sent out to all municipalities, and the CRD has asked each to provide a planner and an engineer to sit on a working group that will define how the bylaw works. A municipality can adopt the bylaw fairly early, with certain gaps, and then work to fill those gaps according to individual municipal choices. Adopted and applied well, there could be room for alternatives that would support salmon-bearing streams such as Douglas Creek.



### **Meanwhile back at the stream . . .**

After we had finished up the field trip with Patrick, Tom Rutherford and I picked up the egg cassettes that still remained in the creek. We didn't have the same spectacular egg-to-fry results that we had last year, but they were still okay. Out of 2000 coho eggs in the eyed stage, transplanted in egg cassettes, 236 did not hatch out of the eggs and 21 hatched but did not leave the cassettes. Eighty-seven percent (1743) hatched out and moved out into the stream.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we first saw the emergent fry on March 23, 2001. Brood-year-2000 fry were regularly seen in the creek up to and beyond the first fish kill on May 6. I set fish traps at the regular spot on May 20 and picked them up on May 21. I picked up the first brood-year-2000 fry at 59 mm nose-to-fork length.

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