



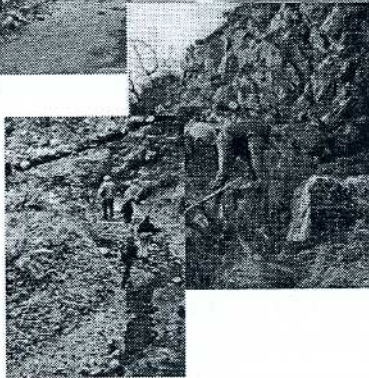
*The Friends of Mount Douglas  
Park Society*



**Newsletter**



*January 2002*



## **The Next Stretch ( 2001-2101 AD)**

Currently our vision for the Park suffers from a foreshortened time-line. To fend against the dangers of a limited perspective we would like to have your thoughts on what the Park should be like in 100 years, in 2101.

Between now and then many changes outside the Park borders are likely to have had an impact on what lies within. Due to an earthquake or one or more violent winter storms, the already unstable bank supporting Cordova Bay Road in the Park may have collapsed onto the foreshore. Traffic patterns may have shifted due to a greater reliance on public transport and/or to the further urban development that seems inevitable. Improvements in technology may remove the need for the radio tower and the building that serves it. Increases in population may increase the use of Park trails. The spread of impervious areas may adversely affect the water table and the control of storm water with associated pollutants that drains into the creek. Not least to be reckoned with is a likely shift in public attitudes reflecting an increasing sensitivity towards environmental issues—for instance, by the year 2101 several generations of students will have graduated from courses like The Restoration of Natural Systems, currently offered by the University of Victoria and similar courses available at Camosun. Hence proposals for the Park that might seem radical in today's climate of opinion are likely by then to seem merely prudent.

With these sorts of consideration in mind please give free rein to your imagination and convey the results to our Secretary, Sheilagh Ogilvie, by letter to 515 Carnation Place, V8Z 6G6, or e-mail to [sso@pinc.com](mailto:sso@pinc.com)

### **Grants**

We have received a further instalment of \$1750.00 towards a total grant of \$7000 from South Islands Aquatic Stewardship Society. This will enable us to run a hydrometric survey and complete the PISCES water sampling project.

We have also received a grant of \$5,100 from the Public Conservation Assistance Fund in support of the Mount Douglas Creek Stormwater Management Project. This is to enable us to continue long-term water quality trend monitoring of the Creek, to investigate problems associated with urban development, and to identify and change bylaws to ensure the Creek's protection.

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## Douglas Creek

On September 16 we picked up the minnow traps we had set the previous evening. There were no fish in the traps but two were seen behind a large boulder just upstream of the Ash Road Bridge. The few that we have seen in the creek are fry that hatched from eggs (the eyed-egg transplant) and survived the grim circumstances of the summer. Impossible to say how many fish made it through—more than the few we are certain of, but no glut.

On November 18, two thousand coho fry (supplied by volunteers from Goldstream Hatchery) were released into the creek. These fry were brood year 2000, 60 to 70 mm long, weighing about 9 grams each. The adipose fins were clipped to show the fry were hatchery-raised. As in previous years, conditions were good: an ample flow of clear cool water, healthy fish, and a group of interested people. The job was done in two hours, calling forth good cheer and good memories for years to come.

### Volunteers and Supporters

Peter McCully (Goldstream Hatchery)  
Tom Rutherford (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)  
Judy Ackinclose  
Richard Kristinson  
Rob Getner (Shaw Cable)  
Bob, Cass and Raina McDonald  
Kevin Travland  
Melanie and Jacquie Quenneville  
(15th Pathfinders)  
Petra Eng  
Tracy and Shannon Hill  
(52nd Victoria Guides)  
Bob, Laura and Robyn Bridgeman

We had hoped for a few days of moderate flows but, as luck would have it, Monday and the days that followed brought rain and elevated flows in the Creek. A walk upstream on November 21 discovered dead fry in pools the length of the creek. The dead totalled 26 fry—13 with clipped adipose fins, 4 unclipped, and 9 inaccessible and not countable as clipped or unclipped. Why there were dead fish is hard to explain. Perhaps they didn't have time to settle into a suitable piece of habitat, perhaps the turbidity was more than hatchery-raised fish were used to, or maybe a slug of pollution came down with the increased flow. Not one live fish was seen, but making allowances for tea-coloured water and increased flows this is only mildly surprising. Analysis of a PISCES sample may shed light on organic conditions at that time.

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We have just received the permit for a salmonid carcass transplant for the Creek. Usually permits are required for live transplants, to avoid the transfer of pathogens from stream to stream: however, we are already transplanting pathogens with the fry from Goldstream River, the same place the carcasses are coming from. Since there is no chance of infecting a native population of fish and since Douglas Creek does not flow into any other freshwater body, the chance of cross-contamination is remote, if in fact possible.

There is much literature suggesting that fertilizing the water increases fish production. Carcass transplants in Washington and Oregon have shown interesting results, and the positive results of chemical fertilization in Vancouver Island streams are well documented. Benthic invertebrate studies have shown that insect communities develop around, on and in decomposing salmonid carcasses. Research at UVic shows the profound importance of seasonal input of phosphorous and nitrogen into riparian/aquatic ecosystems. Historic cannery records detail the staggering number of salmonids that used to spawn in Pacific Northwest coastal streams and rivers. As the number of spawning salmon declined so, too, have the spawned-out carcasses that are such an important feature of the complete natural system. Hence the importance of managing the fishery for abundance.

Our management of the creek for abundance is more modest, but the tools are the same. We plan to transplant 100 carcasses in burlap bags of 5 fish of 8 pounds each. We'll tie the bags into and under the large woody debris in the creek, in such a way that they won't be blown out with the first heavy rainfall. The transplanted fry may use the carcasses as sustenance and we'll be especially interested to monitor the benthic population to see if it changes in response to a different nutrient regime.

Nutrient enrichment can't do much for other problems—out-of-control hydrology or the periodic flushing of polluted water through the system—but it may restore missing ecosystem components. It will take a few tries to work out the BUGS, to streamline techniques, and to learn what to look for and how to measure nutrient-derived changes in the ecosystem.





## **The Salmon Return**

This has been a wonderful fall for salmonid returns—Goldstream is a notable example, but the same holds true for most of the streams around us. Reports of extraordinary returns have come in from all quarters, a refreshing change from past years' crashing populations and trends towards extinction. One good year does not a success story make but the numbers are going the right way. Not surprising that fishing practices managed under the precautionary principle, decent ocean conditions, and the early (if small) successes of habitat restoration are bringing salmonid numbers up. The challenge will be to manage for abundance and to forego the harvesting mistakes of previous years. We would like to leave a few fish in the water and we would like a few of those fish to swim up Douglas Creek and renew the cultural and ecological history of the Park.

## **Nominations for Executive Board – 2002/2003**

The Friends' Annual General Meeting takes place sometime this spring, but the Nominating Committee has already been set up. It consists of

Kay Porter—658-5792   Jane Owen—477-8963   Celia Esmonde—721-2796

If you're interested in serving on the Board, or if you know someone who might be, please call any one of the above and let them know.

## **A Very Good Idea**

When you get those pre-approved letters in the mail for everything from credit cards to second mortgages and junk like that, they mostly come with postage-paid return envelopes, right?

Well, why not put some of the rest of your junk mail into these cool little envelopes and send them back? An ad for your local chimney cleaner to American Express. Or a pizza coupon to Citibank. Or just send them their application back, making sure your name isn't on it. You can even send it back empty, to keep them guessing.

Once they start getting their own junk back—and paying for it twice—they'll truly understand the concept of junk mail. Economically and environmentally pleasing.

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## **Pesticide Alert**

A National Cancer Institute survey in the U.S. indicates that children are six times more likely to get childhood leukemia when pesticides are used in the home and garden.

## **Biodiversity 2000**

### **Building a Bridge Between the Scientific Community and Schools**

In the summer of 1999, I initiated a millennium project called Biodiversity 2000. The idea for this project was born while I was doing a report in grade five on British Columbia's Most Valuable Living Resource—Biodiversity. My intent was to involve schools in the Greater Victoria area in discovering, documenting and identifying stewardship projects through their research, which would contribute to an overall raised awareness of the biodiversity in our community.

The pilot project site was in Mount Douglas Park and involved discovering flora and fauna from the mountaintop, down through forested communities to the intertidal zone at Mount Douglas Beach. Mr. Buttons' class of 30 grade 4/5 students from Torquay Elementary went out on field trips into different ecosystems throughout the seasons, accompanied by Mark Bazett, our principal Ian MacLean, and myself. We identified, mapped and described some of the flora and fauna we found.





Back in the classroom we examined life under the microscope, did corresponding illustrations and further researched and compared our findings with guidebooks. Guest speakers came into the classroom, and into the field to help us prepare and assist us there.

A valuable tool in the field, which enabled students and teachers to easily identify the flora and fauna were laminated photo I.D. cards, which I made up from photos taken in the park. These were placed on rings attached to a clipboard along with a description sheet and map. To date, over 4000 photos have been taken of the flora and fauna in the park.

I am now in the process of putting together 5 booklets to be utilized by locals and tourists:

*Wildflowers of the Garry Oak Meadow* (84 pages)

*Wildflowers of the Douglas Fir/Bigleaf Maple Ecosystem* (90 pages)

*Trees of Mt. Douglas Park* (17 pages)

*Shrubs of Mt. Douglas Park* (35 pages)

*A Guide to the Intertidal Zone of Mt. Douglas Park* (79 pages).



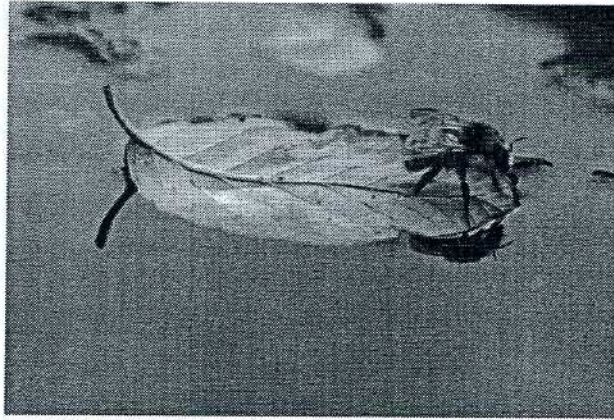
With the exception of the Intertidal Zone booklet, the flora is shown in various stages, (e.g.. bud, flower, seed pod) throughout the seasons and in some cases, is accompanied by illustrations and descriptions done by the students.

In addition to these booklets, a simple guide to the park is also being worked on. Recording of the main trails as well as some secondary trails is being done with the aid of a GPS, and relevant information in these areas is also being recorded. Saanich Parks will review results from this work before it is published. This information will be used to create an informative, easy to use trail map for the area.

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The Provincial Capital Commission has given us a small grant for this project in the form of partial funding of software, hardware, and approximately \$300 for production costs. My family has paid for the remaining costs.

I presented Biodiversity 2000 at the Society of Northwestern Vertebrate Biologists' Annual General Meeting this past spring. This project was one of four featured at the Community Celebration 2001. An article was written for NatureWild, a Young Naturalist's Magazine on Garry Oak Ecosystems featuring some of the students' illustrations done in Mount Douglas Park.



On behalf of the students and myself, we would like to invite you to a display at Saanich Municipal Hall featuring photos, student illustrations, descriptions, etc.

March 18 to April 5, 2002.

We would like to thank Laura Friis, Arlene Bethune, the Ceskas', the Ministry of Environment, Kerrie Post from Wild B.C., Briony Penn, Nathalie from the CRD, Hal Gibbard from GORP, the Royal B.C. Museum, Saanich Parks, the Provincial Capital Commission, Torquay Elementary, OPUS and everyone who has helped us in our efforts.

*Michael VanInsberghe*  
*Grade 9, Arbutus Jr. Secondary*  
*vanins@island.net*

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# Celebrating Significant Tree Day in Saanich November 04, 2001.

On November 4 the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society assisted both the 32nd and the 52nd Victoria Guides (and their friends and parents) to celebrate Significant Tree Day in Saanich (thanks to the Significant Tree Committee for organizing the event).

We chose a planting site upstream of the Ash Road Bridge with the object of stabilizing a streambank that was eroding on both sides. Planting stock was of excellent quality—40 alder (*Alnus rubra*) a metre tall, and 45 western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), 0.3 metres tall. The planting crew—25 all told—consisted of Guide leaders, Guides and parents.

We hope to carry out a more extensive planting program next year, stabilizing streambanks and using a wider variety of trees species—alder (*Alnus rubra*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), Scouler (*Salix scouleriana*) and Hooker (*Salix hookeriana*) willows and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)—if we can find offers of planting stock.

An hour and a half of tree planting in the rain furthered the goals of the Significant Tree Committee, of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society and of local area guiding groups and promises many years of interesting observation as the trees grow and restore the riparian area of the Park

## Volunteers and Supporters

Luiz, Carla, and Ingrid Vargass

Tamara and Maura Dewey

Michelle Cheimak

Andrea Byrd

David and Megan Paul

Laura Chambers

Kindal Sinclair

Melanie Quenneville

Corinne, Charlayne, and

Chantelle Phillips

Elizabeth and Gail Webber

Teresa Lin

Leigh-Anne Soles

Pam, Mary and David Luco

Leanne, Deb and Rod Saxby

Laura and Bob Bridgeman represented the  
Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society.

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## Churchill Drive on Sunday Mornings

As those of you who walk up this road to the summit know, it has been free of motor traffic for a year on Sunday mornings. When Saanich Council agreed to delay the opening of the gate until noon, they wanted to see some research concerning the effect it would have on the public's use of the park and they wanted to review the results after a one-year trial period. Well, the year is up and we have the data from the Thanksgiving weekend to compare with last year's results.

It is interesting and highly relevant that in the course of the last year, the Parks Department has received no complaints about the delayed opening from the public directly, nor from the police as result of an incident. The results of our weekend snapshot are summarized in the following table.

Total number of walkers( up + down)	114
Total number of walkers with dogs	23
Total number of cyclists	13
Total number of cars**	28

\*\* 15 cars stopped and people walked; 13 turned round and went away. Eight of the cars that turned and went away came in the last hour ( between 11-00 a.m. and noon)

The figures do not include two SUVs that stopped and from which ten people alighted. They walked along the Whittaker trail for their weekend exercise program near Little Mount Douglas.

- Most of the walkers were over 40 years old and, based on the amount of gray hair, a significant minority were over 50 years old.
  - The car park was close to capacity most of the time but the traffic did not overflow onto Shelbourne or Cedar Hill Road.
  - From the anecdotal comments from walkers, cyclists and the motorists who stopped, they use the park in this way on a regular basis.
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### Year-to-Year Comparison

	Year 2001	Year 2000
Total number of walkers	114	73
Total number of walkers with dogs	23	12
Total number of cyclists	13	3
Total number of strollers	none	1
Total number of cars	28	16 (25 people)

The weather this year it was dry but overcast the whole time; last year it was overcast with the occasional light showers.

Based on these results and Parks Department recommendations, the Parks and Recreation Committee voted to make this policy of opening the gate at noon on Sundays permanent: the recommendation will now go to Council for approval.

In coming to this decision, the committee felt that more data should be collected at different times of the year, to ensure that no major disruption is caused to other park users by the delay. We agreed to do this and will monitor the traffic on other holiday weekends when the pressure is greatest. Also, if we want to expand the concept to say, Monday morning, we will need to go through the same process again. The committee was quite receptive to the idea, but the members need data before they can support any extension of this mode of operation. Over the next six months, we will collect the data.

If anyone has an interest in helping, please contact any member of the executive listed on the last page of this newsletter

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# Bits and Pieces

## Restorations!

If you have travelled through the junction of Ash Road, Cedar Hill and Cordova Bay Road recently you will have seen some major improvements to the landscape. The hideous yellow highway dividers have been removed and a low profile, concrete curb has been cast in their place. A safer bicycle lane from the picnic area to Ash Road has been constructed and a minor realignment of the main road into the picnic area makes it a little easier to join the main flow of traffic. On Ash road itself, large rocks have been installed and the area behind them has been backfilled with soil and replanted with native plants. Thus this area has been reclaimed as park and spared the fate of deteriorating into a muddy car park.

For all this, the people in the Parks and Engineering departments deserve our thanks. It is a cheering example of what can be achieved when different talents are harnessed to a common effort.

## Ivy

The ivy project is proceeding quite nicely on the side of Churchill Drive. New signs should appear in the next few weeks, outlining the work that has been done and what is planned for the future.

Any doubts about the necessity of this project have been dispelled for this writer by a lucky escape in the high winds of the last month. An ivy-laden tree snapped in my neighbour's yard, crashed over the wall and missed my house by less than two feet. Unlike broom, which is notorious for reseeding and growing back, ivy can be removed from the trunks of the trees by the simple process of cutting out a section of the vine near the base of the tree with a pair of loppers. The leaves above quickly wither and the dead vine can be pulled from the tree trunk by hand. This does not address the more difficult problem of ivy as ground cover but it is a start: it does prevent the growth of masses of vegetation (including berries) high above the ground where it can lever the shallow-rooted trees from the soil in a high wind.

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## **Species at Risk**

Fact sheets about 15 plant species at risk that are found in Garry Oak and associated ecosystems are currently in preparation. The botanical and organizational skills of Brenda Costanzo, Garry Oak botanist at the BC Conservation Data Centre, are being applied to the coordination of this endeavour.

The fact sheets will comprise insert pages for a field manual about species at risk, which will eventually include animal species as well as plants.

Fact sheets and field manuals will be distributed to managers of public and private natural areas to assist them in identification and management of the species. Internet posting of the fact sheets is also planned.

For more information, contact Brenda Costanzo at  
BrendaConstanzo@gems7.gov.bc.c.

## **The Downspout Disconnection Program**

One of the few virtues of procrastination is that some times other people come to your rescue! The Capital Regional District did this last weekend when they published a four page information sheet in the Saanich News about storm water in the region and the changes in regulations that have come into effect and others that will soon be with us.

The article provides an excellent overview of the problems of storm water and puts our efforts in support of disconnecting down spouts in Gordon Head this past summer into a regional context. We surveyed more than 500 homes, asked you to recruit people you felt would be interested and have put on displays at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre to provide information and to encourage the public to volunteer for the program.

Our success has been extremely modest: approximately seventy households have volunteered, mainly from the Majestic area. From unofficial reports after the first storms, the installations have worked well. However, prior to sending a report to Council, Saanich's Engineering Services department is going to contact all the people

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who had their downspouts disconnected this summer under the program, to check on the success of the installation.

Of the seventy households that volunteered, more than twenty decided to do the installation themselves and about 5% of all the households surveyed had already disconnected some downspouts or wanted more done.

When we held the three-day display and information session at the recreation centre in September, hundreds of people came, the children played with the interactive models, the parents reviewed the maps, spent time discussing the problems of storm water and, in some cases, signed up for the program. It took time, but the connection was made between private, domestic actions and the consequences down stream.

If this program is to continue and flourish we will have to do more of this type of activity to raise the public's awareness. The final element is "what's in it for me?" Environmental concerns are all very well but there must be some financial incentive for home owners to change their ways. Two seem to be working

- participating home owners have smaller water bills
- they can water their gardens without restriction in the dry summer months

The conclusion is that we have more work to do if this idea is to have a positive impact on Saanich communities.

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## 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 Esmonde—721-2796

## Membership

Please check the label on the cover of this newsletter; if it reads '01 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 each 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