



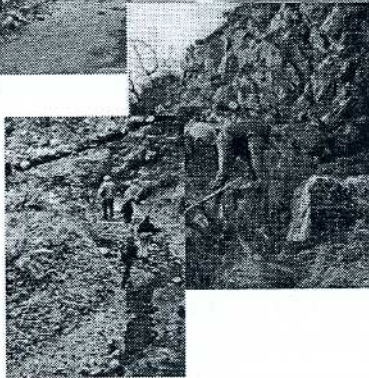
*The Friends of Mount Douglas  
Park Society*



**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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