



NEWSLETTER July 2002

2002 Summer Concerts
Pacific Salmon Festival
event on July 21

INSIDE

Page No.

Don't Miss July 20— Stormwater and Salmon: The Underground Story	1
President's Overview	2
Children's Conference Scott Keesey	3
GOMPS, GOERT, GORP!!!	6
Stormwater and Downspouts	8
The Beach and the Road	8
Developments Around the Park Sewers and Pump Stations	9
Expansion at UVic	10
Changes at Sayward and Pat Bay Highway	10
Native Plants and Urban Environments Workshop	11
UVic Plans	11
Biodiversity Report	12
Douglas Creek	13
Watercolours: Kristi Bridgeman	16

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park

Stormwater and Salmon: The Underground Story

With Mount Douglas Creek as the focal point, the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society are joining with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Municipality of Saanich and the Pacific Salmon Foundation to present a one-day family event on July 20. Entitled "Stormwater and Salmon—The Underground Story, it's geared to increasing public awareness of the critical need for everyone to contribute to clean streams and waterways.

Though people with an interest in the environment are familiar with the issue of storm drains, most local residents are not. Through activities, field trips and displays, participants in the event will learn about curtailing water pollution that results from urban runoff, about their place in the watershed and ways to keep litter, gas, oil and chemicals, among other pollutants, out of storm drains. Mount Douglas Park provides an outstanding backdrop for the event, providing an opportunity to view both a riparian and shoreline environment first-hand. The interactive nature of many of the activities and displays ensures that both children and adults will be engaged. These include:

- Watershed Model—Opening Minds with Water
- Dr. Drip—Arenaria Research and Interpretation
- Adopt-an-Outfall/Watershed Walk—Veins of Life Watershed Society
- Storm drain marking—BC Hydro Youth Team
- Storm water display—Capital Regional District
- Electronic watershed model—Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society
- Cecelia Creek Project—Burnside/Gorge Community Association
- Watershed Map—Municipality of Saanich

The aim of the event is to foster ownership of the watershed and a greater understanding of the life that lurks beneath the storm drain grates. Presented in an informative and enjoyable manner, the event is likely to encourage residents to find alternatives to washing paintbrushes over storm drains, draining hot tubs into them, or letting automobile fluids wash into them. The happy outcome will be cleaner streams and thriving salmon populations.

THE HISTORY

Mount Douglas Park

Height: 222 metres

Extent: 435 acres (1992)

A survivor of the Ice Age, Mount Douglas is what is known as a "monadnock,"—that is, its material is harder than the surrounding ground.

Indians paddling over from the San Juans to Vancouver Island pulled their canoes up on Mount Douglas beach. The beach was also a stopping place for the Songhees on their way down-island to Fort Victoria. It was called the "hill of the cedars."

1843

When Fort Victoria was being built, the Songhees Indians cut 22-foot cedar pickets from Mount Douglas for the palisade and carried them in to the site, travelling back and forth along present Cedar Hill Road. They were paid a blanket for every 600 cedar poles.

1845

In this year, Captain John Gordon, visiting brother of the Foreign Secretary, was taken to hunt on the "hill of cedars." He did not catch his deer. It is said that later Gordon claimed he "would not give the most barren hills in the Highlands of Scotland for all I see around me."

President's Overview

1852

The first settler in the Mount Douglas area was James Tod (son of the HBC chief trader, John Tod). He purchased land near the mountain in 1853 and called it Spring Farm. He built his first house in 1857 and his second one in 1869. He farmed there for 52 years.

1858

In 1858, James Douglas reserved the mountain and some surrounding land "for military, school and church purposes."

1859

In March, 1859, a Captain G.H. Richards, charged with mapping the region, wrote to the Hydrographer of the Royal Navy explaining how "Cedar Hill," though small and insignificant, would feature on the maps as Mount Douglas:

".....it has been much the fashion here to give the term *mountain* to elevations which are by no means entitled to that description. I have taken the liberty of reducing all under 1000 feet to Hills, except for Mount Douglas, which I have retained as a mountain although only 690 feet, partly from not wishing to lower the Governor [James Douglas] and partly because Douglas *Hill* does not sound well..."

We now are well into the second decade of our Society's existence. Initially, in the earlier parts of the first, our major concerns were with issues affecting what fell within the boundaries of the Park. We had to oppose proposals to subdivide chunks of land out of it, to build a service building that would have marred the skyline at the mountain top, to festoon the radio mast with larger aerials and wider dishes than it holds today, and to buttress the steep bank that carries Cordova Bay Road through the Park with rip rap that would have destroyed the amenity and ecology of the foreshore. We also had more proactive concerns. Major among these was the restoration of fish habitat in the Creek. Another was with the siting, design and maintenance of trails.

Some of these issues are still with us. Others are in at least temporary abeyance. As well, however, we now are faced by issues of a different kind. They affect what goes on outside as well as what falls within the Park, for the latter does not exist in isolation from the rest of Saanich and Greater Victoria.

One of these issues lies in traffic routing and traffic density. Cordova Bay Road is now in danger of becoming a major artery for traffic with final destinations in diverse parts of the city. Plans for an intersection on the Pat Bay Highway at Sayward to give better access for the western to the eastern parts of the Saanich Peninsula are calculated to aggravate the situation. Add to that the further plans to site as many as 19 new buildings on the UVic campus to cope with a projected increase in the student and faculty populations. Not only is this a recipe for general gridlock and chaos unless reliance on individual cars is radically reduced, it would also imperil further the stability of the bank that carries Cordova Bay Road within the Park, unless traffic along that particular route is somehow curtailed.

A further issue is posed by the built-up nature of the Douglas Creek watershed. A high percentage of that urban area consists of impervious surface. As a consequence, too much of the rain that falls in the watershed is channelled through storm drains into the Creek, sometimes in the form of sudden bank-eroding surges, and too often laced with harmful pollutants. Our recent downspout disconnection project began to address this problem. Measures of this sort,

if applied over sufficiently wide areas, would not only benefit fish habitat in urban streams, it would reverse the lowering of the water table, the depletion of the aquifers below the city, and the effects of the loss of atmospheric humidity on the local climate. Likewise it could cut into the amount of water drawn from the mains to keep our gardens in good health. So far, however, our disconnection campaign has met partly with indifference, and in some cases with downright hostility, within the initial target areas in Gordon Head.

Hence the next phase of the campaign will place more emphasis on education. As one step in that direction, the Stormwater Event at Mount Douglas on July 20 consists of a general environmental display in conjunction with other ecological groups, to demonstrate best management practises for the control of stormwater and the protection of fish habitat.

Mount Douglas Park Hosts Children's Conference Field Trip: Gently Down the Watershed

Wednesday May 22 was a very special day at Mount Douglas Park. *Opening Minds with Water* was very pleased to host a field trip for the 4th International Children's Conference on the Environment. The United Nations Conference brought about 400 ten to twelve year-old delegates from 80 countries together at the University of Victoria.

When considering a location for our '*Gently Down the Watershed*' Field Trip, Mount Douglas Park was our natural first choice. Its close proximity to UVic and beautiful forest, creek and shoreline environments made the Park an incredible venue for an afternoon of watershed explorations!

After mistakenly being dropped by the bus at the top of Mount Douglas, the delegates and their entourage (with a little guidance from our volunteers) made their way down to the main parking lot near the creek. A quick rest in the sun and a bite to eat (which was appreciated most by the adults) was all that was needed by this keen group before beginning the activities.

1862

E.B. Jackson, who had a farm on the mountain, wrote to the Colonial Secretary asking if he might fence in and lease some extra acres of land there (at a suggested rent of ten pounds a year). His request was turned down "principally because it has long been a place of habitual resort to the citizens of Victoria in holiday times."

1863

Pioneer farmers James Tod and Samuel Norn had both misjudged the bounds of their properties and were using, respectively, 13 acres and 32 acres of government reserve land. Norn had even erected a house and farm buildings on them. In this year the matter was finally settled by farmers and government trading acres.

1870

At the intersection of Harrop and Whittaker trails on the west slope of the mountain, a mine shaft was dug, in an attempt to extract copper ore. It was not a success. However, the headline of the September 2, 1870 issue of the Colonist newspaper, read "Is Mount Douglas a Mountain of Gold?" Apparently, flakes of gold had been found in a piece of quartz there. The headline created great excitement, but the hoped-for gold rush never did happen.

1880

The Colonist of September 22 reported, under the headline "Marine Monster," that "a fish wherewith the piscatorial savantes of this city appeared indifferently acquainted was caught Monday off Cedar Hill...Its unusual proportions and strange appearance attracted a large number of spectators." It was said to be "six feet two inches in length", with a "head that resembled a panther." Its species was never definitely identified, although "wolf-fish" and "herring king" were suggested.

1889

On September 30 of this year, the Province of British Columbia granted Mount Douglas to the Corporation of the City of Victoria "upon trust to maintain and preserve the same as a public park or pleasure ground for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the public."

1900s

At this time it was called "Hyde Park" and was a popular site for outings.

1902

This year the Park is said to be "only a two-mile walk from the Royal Oak Station of the Sidney Railway."

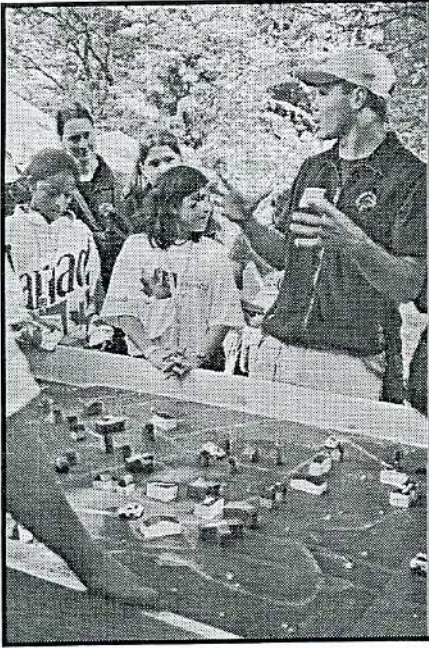
We began by welcoming the group to Victoria and to Mount Douglas Park and then—with the paint still drying—introduced the Douglas Creek Watershed with our new Watershed Model of the area. This interactive tabletop display shows the entire watershed—complete with hills, houses, parks, beach, etc.—and with working storm drains and watering cans shows how pollution and runoff affect the stream and near-shore marine environments. The mini-experiment was then repeated with sponge wetlands covering the storm drains, showing the difference in flow and contamination entering the creek! Many of the delegates did not speak English, but this display wasn't hindered by the language barrier—we think they got the picture!

After the model presentation, the delegates were divided into three groups, each group spending 25 minutes at each of our three stations: The Forest, The Stream, and the Beach. Each station introduced the delegates to the natural components of the site, and with hands-on activities explored simple ways to test the health of the ecosystem.

The Forest Station introduced the participants to plants and trees, both native and invasive, to be found in the Douglas Fir Temperate Forest. Simple observations were supplemented with neat facts about traditional First Nations uses for these plants and with discussion of the importance of each to the forest ecosystem.

The Stream Station took the groups to the stream's edge to assess the health of the stream with respect to fish habitat. Is there enough plant cover? Is the stream bottom the right substrate? Are there places for fry to hide from predators?





These observations, coupled with simple tests for water clarity, dissolved oxygen and pH levels, showed Douglas Creek to be a great place for salmon to grow up and spawn. To add to the excitement, a small pool near this site hosted about fifteen Coho fry! We reminded the participants of the problems these fish face during rain events, shown by the model presentation earlier.

At the Beach Station, the groups investigated the health of the beach and near-shore marine environments by examining the kelps and beach critters strewn and crawling amongst the rocks and sand. Marine invertebrates collected by divers earlier in the day were placed in an aquarium on the beach for the delegates to examine. Who lives here? What are some of the stresses this environment faces? Where do these problems originate? Can we think of any solutions?

These activities were aimed at showing how different components of watersheds—both natural and constructed—are inextricably linked. They gave the delegates simple skills to use in assessing the health of their own watersheds. The afternoon was concluded with a discussion of problems facing the participants' home watersheds and ways to prevent impacts to those systems.

Many thanks to Bob Bridgeman for his background information and for his generosity with his time! This was the only time the delegates spent away from the University campus, and the afternoon was a great success, as evidenced by a comment from a young boy from Malaysia, "This field trip rocked!"

Scott Keesey

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1910

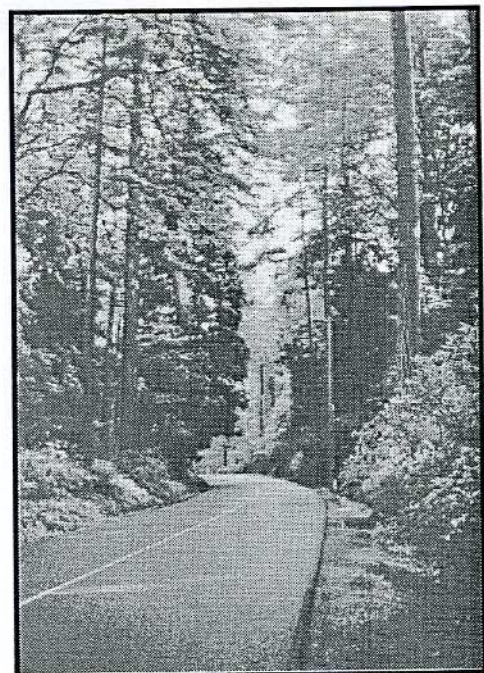
One-time mayor of Victoria Bert Todd proposed that a winding road be run to the top of Mount Douglas, and "a few totem poles and relics" should be scattered around, to attract automobiling tourists.

1915

By 1915, there was a bus route between Gordon Head and Cordova Bay.

1920s

By this time, there was a "refreshment place" near the Park entrance, run by Maude Hunter. Even in 1976 (from an essay by Pete Schoepter, Claremont School) one could still see the stone fireplace of the original restaurant (which pre-dated the tearoom that was later established there).



1922

Bylaw 270 made an addition to the Park that brought it west to Blenkinsop Road.

1924

The SPCA claimed the spring at Mount Douglas "is acting as a trap for squirrels." The Treasurer at Royal Oak wrote to John Irvine saying, "I would be obliged if you would look into this matter and if possible remedy same, as dead squirrels and drinking water would not appear to be a good mixture."

1930

A Royal Commission was issued to O.C. Bass, K.C. "to inquire into the management, regulation, protection and control of...Mount Douglas Park," due to many complaints from concerned citizens about gravel excavation, garbage dumping, tree-cutting, goat grazing, as well as the construction of an alternate section of Cordova Bay Road. Hearings took place in early 1931. One official claimed that "the [gravel] pit at present may be unsightly, but a short time ago we fenced this off with a high painted board fence and are planting climbing roses up the same." Another claimed the gravel was taken solely to create an amphitheatre in the Park. Mr. Bass declined to accept this statement and others like it. His report was highly critical of the local governments of the day.

GOMPS, GOERT, GORP!!!

Are these the utterances of a lovelorn frog? Not really, they are acronyms for three groups that desire and intend to preserve and restore Garry oak meadows.

They exist because Garry oak meadows are found in Canada only on southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and a couple of small patches in the lower Fraser Valley area of British Columbia. They are geographically, genetically and ecologically important because they occur at the extreme northern limits of their North American distribution, the only continent on which they are found. The Garry oak ecosystem is one of the three most endangered ecosystems in Canada, with less than one percent of its original area remaining in a nature condition.

Over twenty percent of the remaining area is likely to be lost in the next decade, mostly to urban development, despite its spectacular spring wildflower displays and ancient oaks. It supports more than a hundred rare and endangered plant and animal species within Canada. Some species have already been lost from it. An aspect of cultural heritage is also involved—First Nations people tended the meadows with fire and cultivation and depended on the bulbs of the camas flower as a staple food. In the future it is likely that drought-tolerant Garry oak trees and other plants of the Garry oak ecosystem may become increasingly important within the landscape of British Columbia, likely colonizing new habitats as they are created by changing climatic conditions.

GOMPS

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society was formed in 1992 because local citizens were concerned that woodland and meadows were rapidly disappearing as a result of development in the Capital Regional District.

The society is dedicated to the preservation, protection and restoration of Garry oak stands and their ecosystem. It engages in educational activities, lobbies all levels of government through letter-writing and attending council meetings and public hearings, and works on habitat restoration (mostly invasive alien plant removal). The society is authorized to hold conservation covenants.

Members (currently about one hundred) come from all walks of life, with some expertise among the directors.

GOERT

The Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team was formed in 1999, following a resolution passed at a seminar held by GOMPS. It is a group of concerned scientists, land and resource managers and planners and others, dedicated to producing a comprehensive Recovery Strategy aimed at saving Garry oak and associated ecosystems, and helping individual species at risk to survive and thrive. The strategy is now composed and in the process of being approved by governments, particularly the federal government. Meanwhile, subgroups of people are working on various aspects of recovery action plans for species at risk. There are two permanent positions hired to lead the overall attack on the problems of formulating and having the strategy and plans accepted by all levels of government and the general public. Unlike GOMPS, GOERT does not lobby for the preservation of trees or sites under imminent threat of development.

GORP

The Garry Oak Recovery Project was also formed in 1999, as an initiative of the Municipality of Saanich. Currently six people form the core of this group; three of them Saanich employees.

GORP is a public education program designed to educate the residents of Saanich about the value of Garry oak ecosystems and ecological restoration. Following a "living laboratory" approach, parcels of local Garry oak ecosystems owned by the Municipality of Saanich are selected to develop and maintain restoration demonstration sites. All the sites are highly visible and accessible to the public, and the involvement of as many community and school groups as possible is encouraged.

There are now ten sites established in Saanich (two in Mount Douglas Park) and three partnerships are in place: Camosun College, Royal Oak Middle School and Campus View Elementary School. Inventories of all these sites are well underway and restoration plans are being drafted. Some invasive species removal has taken place.

At least one other municipality is showing interest in joining GORP and it is hoped the interest will spread.

GOMPS, GOERT, GORP may still sound like a frog, but it is hoped you now have some understanding of their common theme but different approaches.

1930s

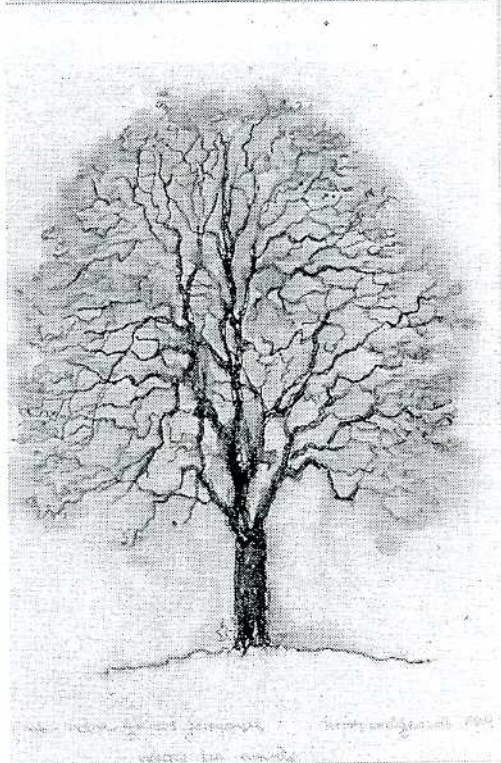
Depression make-work crews built Churchill Road to the summit. The huts constructed to house these crews were on what is now the washroom side of the Park entrance. By the end of the 30s they were being used as youth hostel accommodation, with straw-filled mats for beds.

Mid-30s

A small cedar coffee shop was built not far in from the Park gates. It was run by Mr. and Mrs. George Libby. Mr. Libby built it from cedars cut down in the Park.

1935

Erosion of the banks was already a concern.



1942

Emily Carr, 71, already unwell, is reported to have said "The forest still has something to say to me." She spent ten days in August in Mount Douglas Park, living in one of the Depression huts and being fed three meals a day by Mrs. Edwards. She produced 15 large sketches and a number of small ones at this time. "Cedar", now in the Vancouver Art Gallery, was painted among the trees by the "gully," about 75 yards from the Park entrance.

Her opinion about the Park? "It is a happy, comfortable little park, used by plain people."

1971—FIRE!

In August fire blazed through 10 acres on the west slope of the mountain. Victoria CB Radio Club set up a fire patrol for Mount Douglas and Mount Tolmie. By October, they had carried out 180 patrols over 3027 miles and located 7 fires.

1972—FIRE!

Out of control on Mount Douglas, this fire consumed 50 acres, and took 6 days to put out.

1975

The first riprap was put on the beach in hope of holding the bank. A program was also established to encourage growth on the clay banks.

Storm water and Downspout Disconnections Program

The most optimistic spin we can put on the results from last year's pilot project is that it was a very limited success. For the people who joined the program, the disconnections have been overwhelmingly successful: what is disappointing is that so few chose to join. Several factors contributed to the poor response; some concerned misunderstandings about how the perimeter drain around a house actually works, some about the technology employed, but the most important factor, was the sense that this was low priority item in the personal agenda of many busy people. So the fall-back position is to encourage individuals to carry out their own disconnections and for us to provide information and sources of expertise so this can be done efficiently and inexpensively. The single most important factor working for us is that most people in the Douglas Creek water shed are keen gardeners and they want to water their plants in the summer. The cost of water and the restrictions on its use will only increase over time and we have several demonstration installations that clearly show that year round watering is possible, safe and economic for the home owner as well as beneficial for the water in the Creek. So we live to fight another day. Fortunately, other watersheds and areas of the municipality want to go ahead with this alternative and the lessons we have learnt can be used to make their task easier.

The Beach and the Road

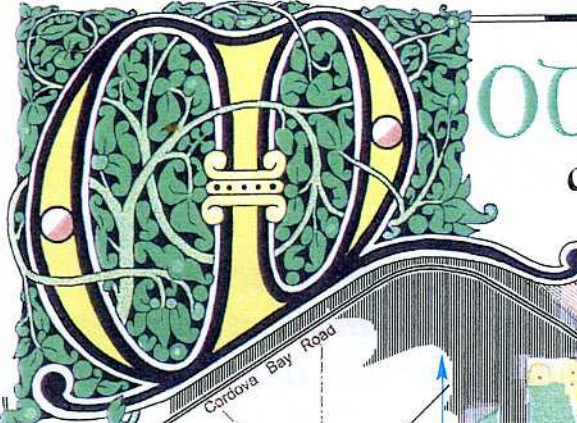
Since the last newsletter, Saanich's Director of Engineering, Hugh McKay, has sent out invitations to the various stakeholders to join the advisory committee looking at methods of protecting the cliff through the Park. The primary objective is to make the road safer for the travelling public, but the way in which this is done will have a profound effect on the beach below. We have been looking for an impartial geoscientist to help in the discussions; it's proving more difficult than we imagined. However, the good news is that during discussions with faculty members of the Earth and Oceans Centre at UVic., we learned that there is increasing worldwide interest in using active reefs rather than rip rap to protect cliffs. This trend is mirrored locally by the City of Victoria as they try to repair Holland

MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

ORIENTEERING & RECREATION MAP

CONTOURS, 5 m

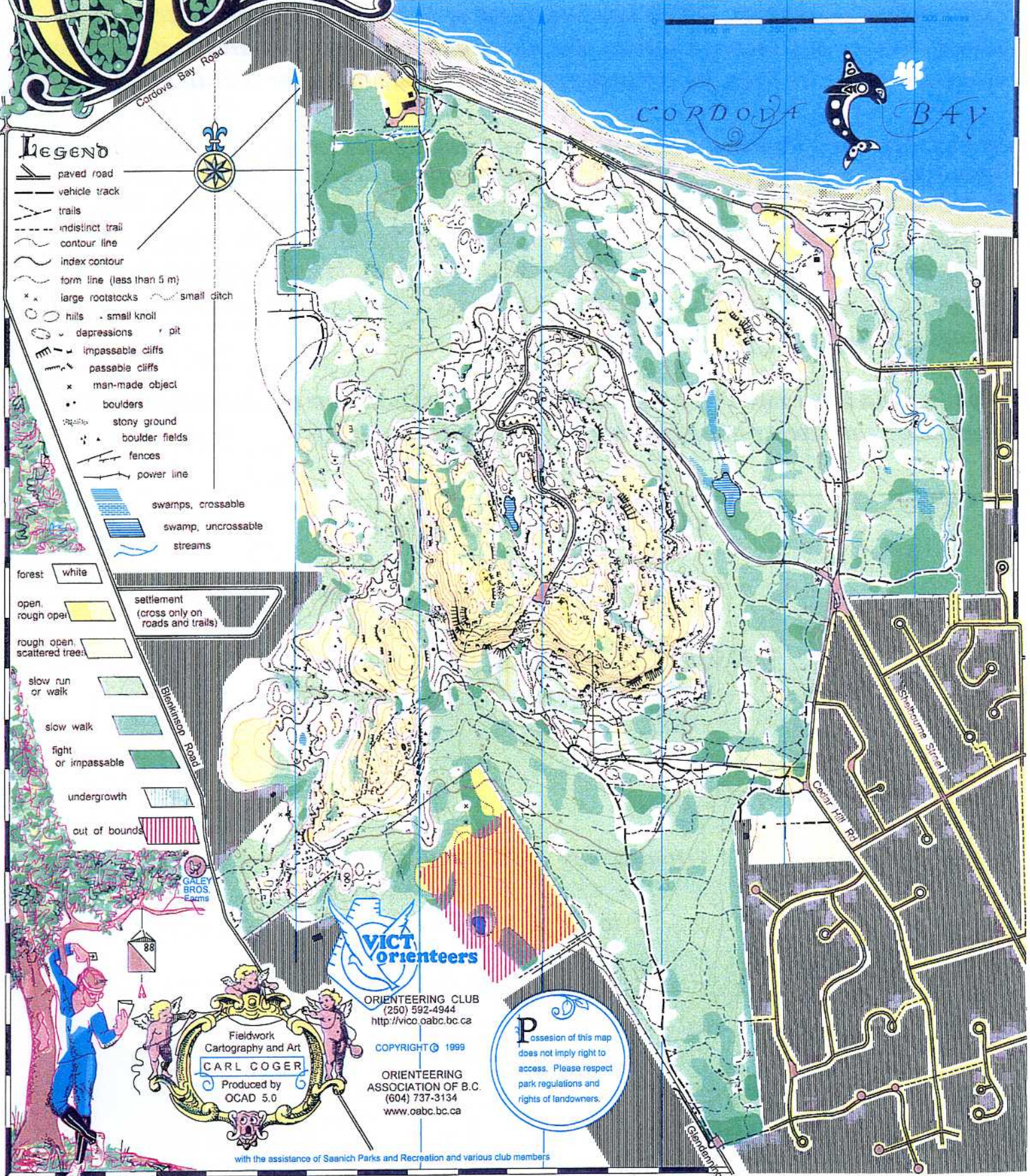
SCALE 1:10,000



Legend

- paved road
- vehicle track
- trails
- indistinct trail
- contour line
- index contour
- form line (less than 5 m)
- large rootstocks
- small ditch
- hills
- small knoll
- depressions
- pit
- impassable cliffs
- passable cliffs
- man-made object
- boulders
- stony ground
- boulder fields
- fences
- power line
- swamps, crossable
- swamp, uncrossable
- streams

- forest: white
- open, rough open
- rough open, scattered trees
- slow run or walk
- slow walk
- flight or impassable
- undergrowth
- out of bounds
- settlement (cross only on roads and trails)



Fieldwork
Cartography and Art
CARL COGER
Produced by
OCAD 5.0



ORIENTEERING CLUB
(250) 592-4944
<http://vico.oabc.bc.ca>

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ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION OF B.C.
(604) 737-3134
www.oabc.bc.ca

Posession of this map does not imply right to access. Please respect park regulations and rights of landowners.

with the assistance of Saanich Parks and Recreation and various club members

Orienteering

This international sport, which has its origins in Scandinavia, involves travelling across country and through forests. Because each participant in an event requires a detailed map of the area, local clubs produce accurate maps for the sites they use.

In Victoria, the Victorienteers have produced and updated maps for many sites including: Camp Barnard, Ruckle Park on Saltspring, Thetis Lake and parts of East Sooke Park as well as the one shown here for Mount Douglas Park. The Friends of Mt. Douglas Park who have used earlier versions of this map found it to be the most accurate and conveniently scaled map available. Please note that the boundary on the west side of the park has changed over the last ten years and is still changing today.

If you would like more information about the sport and how to obtain additional maps, here are some phone numbers and web sites to help you

Locally:

Victorienteers Orienteering Club

phone (250) 592-4944 Carl Coger

or

(250) 477-7624 Diana Hocking (maps)

For a provincial perspective:

Orienteering Association of B.C.

Phone (604) 737-3134

Visit: www.oabc.bc.ca

Walk and Fonyo Beach in Beacon Hill Park. It's early days yet, but it looks as if we have moved away from the sterile debate of "rip-rap or nothing" into a more imaginative and promising era where we can think in terms of how to preserve the road *and* gain more beach for the public. The great unknown is what the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans will allow in the water. Expect to see more about this topic in the fall.

Developments Around the Park

Sewers and Pump Stations

The road from the motel to Royal Oak Drive contains most of the remaining homes in Cordova Bay not connected to the sewer system. For several years the residents have wanted to make that connection but problems of rights-of-way and the location of the pumping station have delayed the process. The decision at a recent Saanich council meeting to send an application for subdivision to Public Hearing is the key that will unlock many changes affecting the Park. Those of you with long memories will recall that we asked for a simple crushed gravel footpath laid close to the road. The engineers wanted to combine the path with the installation of sewers. That time has come and, similarly, cyclists want a continuous bicycle lane to join the one going through the Park. We need to make sure these additions are incorporated into the action plan that should emerge from the public hearing. As well, this will be the last chance for the community to influence the overall character of the road. To this end, we have recommended the work done by the City of Victoria along Finlayson Road between Cook and Quadra. It is a good example of how you can have cars, cyclists, pedestrians and buses all using a small space adjacent to single family homes and a school. Take a look and see if you agree.

An uncertain aspect in all of this change concerns the urban containment boundary. At the moment it lies about 60 metres to the south of Cordova Bay Road, and when the sewer line goes in the land can be subdivided to Sunnymead densities. Moreover, it would be possible to move the urban containment boundary to the edge of the ten large properties it now crosses. This would transform the area and we could have the same Sunnymead-style development all the way to the park boundary. So vigilance will be the watchword for the next part of the saga.

1975

Fire raged for 5 hours on the Cordova Bay/Blenkinsop side of Park in grass and bushland.

1977

The Sierra Club protested the presence of riprap on the beach. "Improving the Park, not merely halting erosion, should be the primary criterion in evaluating courses of action."

1978

The last motorcycle hill climb took place (the first was in 1919). This same year a rock concert at Mount Douglas drew 8000 people

1980

Woodcutting is allowed in the Park.

1989

Tons of riprap are deposited on Mount Douglas beach.

There are 10,000 vehicles a day taking the route through Mount Douglas Park.

Widespread community concern is raised over plans by the Engineering Department of Saanich to carve out a new route through the Park for Cordova Bay Road.

October 1989

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society is founded.

1991

Serious opposition continues to the proposed relocation of Cordova Bay Road 30 metres further into the Park.

There is an agreement that the transmitter site building will be buried beneath the parking lot.

1992—FIRE!

Set accidentally by three young people, it took 24 hours to get under control and consumed 4 hectares of the park.

1992

Bikes are banned from the Park to reduce further deterioration of the trails

1992

On November 22nd, after lengthy controversy, Saanich Council met on the summit of Mount Douglas and enacted a renewal of the original Trust.

The terms were essentially the same as in the original Trust, except that the road was subdivided out, but given its own unique surveyed lines beyond which it may not go. The transmitter site was given special designation but kept as part of the Park.

On that same day, the Charter was proclaimed and control of the Park was passed over permanently to the Municipality of Saanich.

Expansion at UVic

If you are following the burst of correspondence that started to appear in June, you will know by now that UVic is set to grow by 6000+ students in the next fifteen years. This means a new building program at the Gordon Head campus equal in scope to the one that built the original campus in the sixties. Many community organizations, including ours, have expressed concerns over this development. Understandably, the problems of increased traffic lie at the base of most people's fears about this new program of growth. You have only to stand at the corner of Royal Oak Drive and Cordova Bay Road just before and just after Labour Day to see the impact the university already has on the Park and communities far from the campus. The first observation is that the traffic volume rises dramatically in the space of a week, the second is that the proportion of cars carrying the UVic parking sticker on the windshield soars and many of the cars have only the driver on board. The unfortunate part of UVic's present proposals is that no real attempt has been made to create an alternate traffic management plan to address the problems of additional traffic through residential areas. Unless an alternative is found, we can look forward to a significant fraction of those 6000 students and the additional staff using the road through the Park to get to and from UVic. If this development worries you, write to the university and let them know. Based on the response to the university's presentation at Saanich Council, the only effective way of changing their minds is through many different voices saying the same thing. Good Luck!

Changes at Sayward and Pat Bay Highway

In a similar vein, the Ministry of Transport and Highways has released the latest version of its plans for the Pat. Bay Highway and it includes a major intersection at the Sayward Road junction and the closure of the dangerous left turn to Keating X Road. The traffic from Keating would join the highway either at Island View Road or at Sayward. In the latter case it would approach the highway along the edge of Bear Hill.

If you have been through Central Saanich lately, it's clear that a real estate transformation is underway, similar in style to the one that hit Saanich a generation ago. Seen in this light, the changes at UVic and on the Highway make the

road linking the two through Cordova Bay, the Park and Gordon Head particularly attractive to commuters.

It is for this reason that we have been advocating a policy of using the Highway and Mackenzie Avenue as the main traffic corridors for commuters. Now that Saanich east of the highway is urbanized, using the other roads for the local community traffic would be a substitute for the former commuter traffic and would have an overall calming effect without denying anyone access to an area they wish to visit. This issue won't go away and it is important for all the communities in the area to understand what an impact all of the changes, taken together, will have on the people and the Park.

Native Plants and Urban Environments

The Restoration of Natural Systems Program at UVic is hosting a four-day professional development workshop from August 23-26. The topic is the selection and propagation of native plants for ecological restoration. The two instructors are John Dick and Brenda Costanzo who, between them, have a wealth of experience in landscaping with native plants.

Course code number is: ASSC2062002K1W01 and the contact person is Donna Bracke, 721-7797. If you attend, please let us have a summary for the next newsletter

UVic Plans

The University of Victoria's May '02 Draft Campus Plan that is currently making the public process rounds, has direct and indirect impact on the Park, and on its Friends. The 10,000 students foreseen in 1961 are now 14,400 full-time equivalents or 18,000 actual bodies, and a 25,000 total is probable by 2030. Parking alone will take 20 more acres before 2020.

Do we care?

Narrowly, the major issue affecting Mount Douglas Park is the traffic to the campus. The original fifties California shopping centre model—squandering “cheap” suburban land on a sprawl of buildings and parking lots while all the costs of a distorted regional infrastructure are borne by others—has been slightly modified, at least on campus, to accommodate the view from a more eco-aware 2002. But there are many more students and cars getting there via our powerless neighbourhoods. And our Park.

The University says “meeting academic and research needs will be primary,” but its Spirit of Place image statement makes it pretty clear that means mainly continuing to be spread out and bland. What is truly “academic” in the current plan is how one would handle the students, classrooms, labs, and access, if treading lightly and economically were primary. Saving money, or the planet (except, we are assured, in identified “unique” areas) has little priority. **Bold** this plan is not.

If UVic's plans matter to you, or if you think they matter to this Park, please look into it further by contacting the Campus Development Committee or logging on to the website

www.uvic.ca/draftcampusplan)

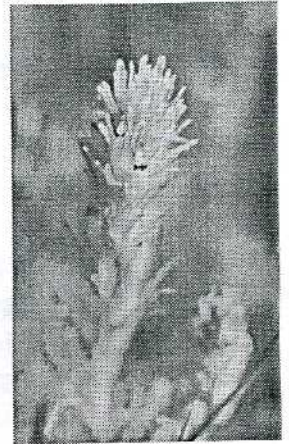
Biodiversity Report

A Find!

Narrow-leaved Owl-clover

Orthocarpus attenuatus

This past spring, Narrow-leaved Owl-clover was spotted for the first time in Mount Douglas Park. This plant is normally found in the Sooke hills. It is an annual herb and the white flowers are narrow, with purple spots. *Michael VanInsberghe*

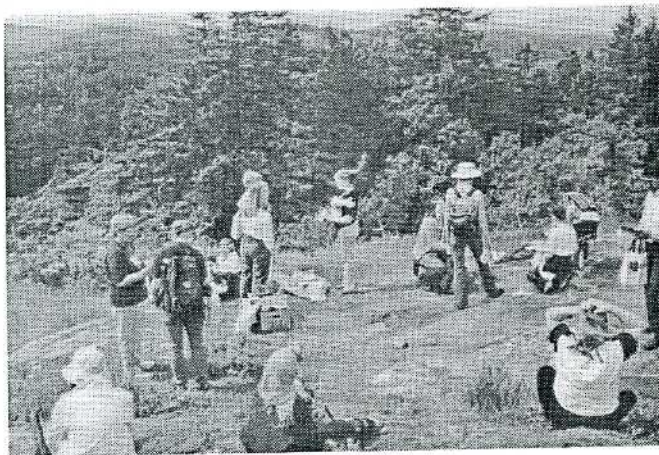


ICC Fieldtrip in Mount Douglas Park

In the spring, Mount Douglas Park comes alive with a variety of wildflowers and their pollinators. It is a time of wonder and of opportunities to discover worlds that are often overlooked. I presented a fieldtrip entitled Spring Biodiversity in Mount Douglas Park for delegates participating in the International Children's Conference on the Environment.

My goal was to inspire participants to look closely into the forest community and to observe a diverse array of species and notice their similarities and differences. We kept an eye out for variations in genetic diversity, and observed the contrasts in the ecosystems that we traveled through.

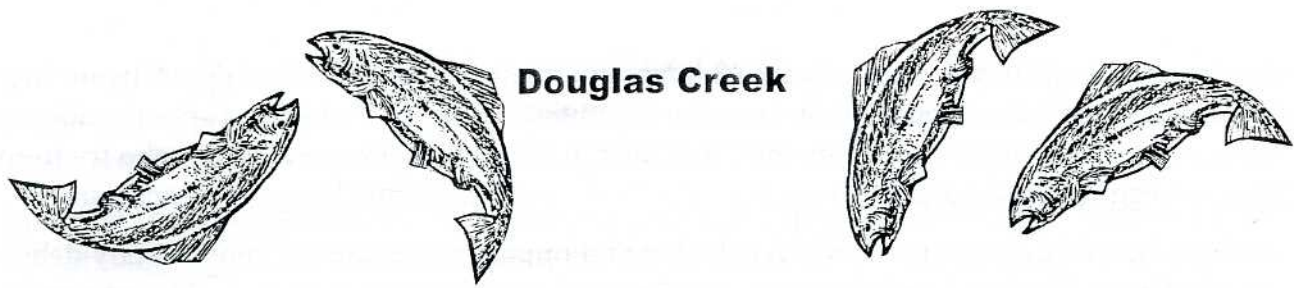
We hiked through the lower Big Leaf Maple/Douglas Fir ecosystem, up into the Garry Oak/Rock Outcrop community, equipped with booklets and corresponding Photo Stickers. When participants found the flora or fauna in their booklet, they placed a corresponding Photo Sticker in the appropriate space.



I found it interesting to see how the diverse cultures interpreted the different areas we walked through.

We are very lucky to live in a community with parkland that provides us with so many educational opportunities.

Michael VanInsberghe
Youth Representative
Friends of Mount Douglas Park



On April 22nd we picked up the fish traps, looking for coho or chum fry from the February 17 eyed-egg transplants. They should have been out of the condos.

Disappointing and perplexing—none seen. Last year the Creek was full of fry at this time.

Planting

As we walked down the Creek we planted (or “stuck,” to use the proper terminology) 36 cottonwood stakes into the ground as we went. Each stake is 2 cm in diameter by 1.2 metres long, and hopefully each will grow into a real tree in time. We used a dibble, borrowed from Saanich Parks, to stick the stakes into the ground, and then cut them in half to make 72 stakes.

We agonized over planting these particular unnatural hybrid cottonwoods. We are committed to maintaining the integrity of the riparian ecosystem over the long term—which means that we need to be careful what vegetation we introduce for short-term gain. Short-term gains in the creek could provide cover, hold together eroding streambanks, provide litterfall to maintain nutrient cycling, and recruit and hold gravels and sediments in the Creek.

We don't want to shift the direction natural regeneration is taking or in future we will have an unnatural riparian ecosystem. However, these particular cottonwoods cannot reproduce by seed, so they are a one-shot deal, providing what we need yet not outliving their usefulness—in the fullness of time they'll be overtaken by big leaf maples and then perhaps by cedars.

The riparian corridor at the Creek is interesting, in that the unnaturally large flows from the impervious area in the watershed constantly disturb the channel over a period of time. This has affected the creek-side vegetation: the riparian ecosystem is a maturing mixed hardwood/softwood forest which is one stage beyond the vegetation regime produced by a major disturbance. However, time cures all things, and in fact we can see early seral vegetation, which is the next stage, taking root alongside the Creek—big leaf maple, alder and willow representing the trees, and red elderberry, Indian plum, and salmonberry shrubs exploiting openings in the forest and streambank.

We are planning more plantings, of appropriate species, to speed up the revegetation and thus help restore the feeding environment for salmonids in the Creek. We would like to have your views on these plans, and if any of you are ardent gardeners of native trees and shrubs we would really like your assistance.

Fish Release

On April 27th a group made up of Peter McCully, Murray Farley and four volunteers from the Goldstream Hatchery, Darrel and Mary Wick, Tom Rutherford from DFO, Laurie VanInsberghe and Bob Bridgeman transplanted 30,000 chum fry into the Creek.

The fry were held behind the weir for 48 hours and then released to travel downstream into Cordova Bay. As we walked downstream after the initial transplant (to look for opportunities to bring some more woody debris into the Creek later in the summer) we saw a few coho fry from the eyed-egg transplant and one very large dead coho pre-smolt from last year's transplant.

On the same walk downstream, we were looking for opportunities to bring more woody debris into the Creek. We found two promising locations and we will contact the Parks Department to see if woody debris can be arranged.

The Monday after the chum transplant the creek was running white. It looked like someone was cleaning out white latex paint from paintbrushes, either into a catch basin or perhaps into the laundry room/garage drain. I could see hundreds of chum fry swimming in the white water with apparently no short-term harm. The slug of pollution fouled the creek and then moved on downstream and onto the beach.

On the 30th there was some discoloration of the water (a greasy oily cast) with chum fry swimming in it. Some of the chum fry had moved downstream and were in pools just shy of the intertidal reaches. On May 5th there were no fry seen above the weir, but some 2000 seen in pools all the way downstream including in the intertidal reaches—all as it should be; with not a dead fish seen. On May 12th fewer chum fry were seen in the Creek because they had been moving into Cordova Bay.

Then on May 19th many coho fry (55-60 mm long) started showing up all over the Creek. It is a mystery where they were all this time! They were/are coho—not chum. It just goes to show how little we really know about what happens in that Creek.

By that day, the cottonwood stakes were already showing new growth, as were the alders and cedars we planted last year on Significant Tree Day. Some of the more obvious cottonwood stakes have been pulled out and deer are browsing a few of them, both reasons why it is prudent to plant lots of them.

On May 26th more chum fry were seen below Ash Road Bridge, with sixteen dead in a pool that filled during a spate and then drained, leaving the fry with no avenue for escape.

On June 1st we set four fish traps, baited with salmon roe and bread, in the usual spots. On June 2nd we picked the traps up and found some of the results that we were looking for. Fourteen coho fry, averaging 50mm in length, were in the first trap. These fry hatched out of eggs in the stream and swam upstream into the pool where they were trapped. Five were in the second trap, none in the third, and there were two in the fourth.

We saw lots of coho fry in the Creek as we walked downstream. At this time we had two age-classes of coho fry/smolt and two species of salmonids, coho and chum, in the Creek at the same time—a first since we started our efforts in the Creek and probably the first in living memory. The gains we are making are incrementally small, tiny at times and hard to appreciate, but occasionally we can stand back and take the measure of some real gains.

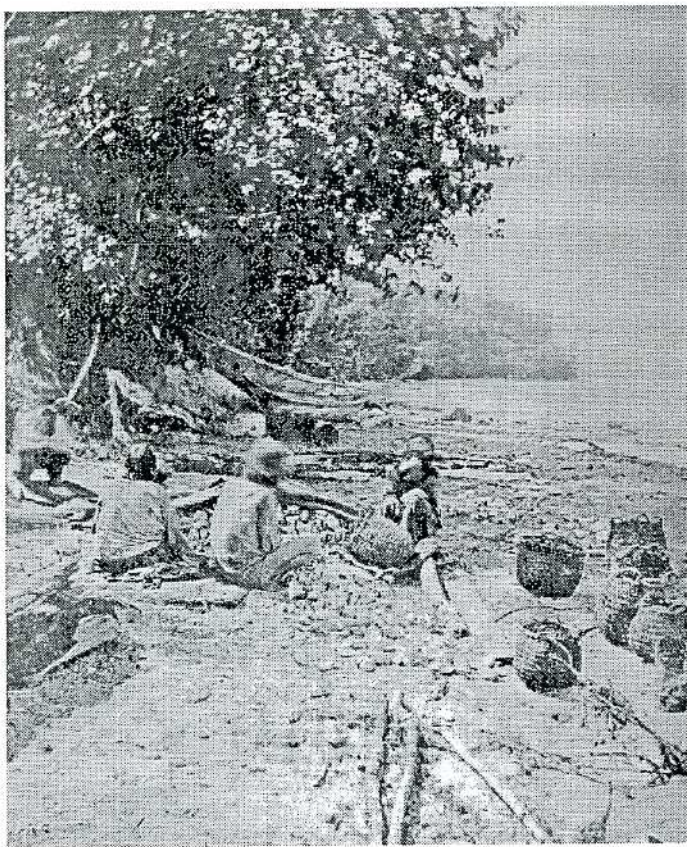
Then on June 23rd we headed down to the Creek, at a point just below the Edgemont walkthrough, to conduct a benthic (bottom-dwelling) invertebrate survey using Streamkeepers' Protocol. We have done this before, as have other groups, and these surveys have given us significant insight into the long-term history of water quality in the Creek.

The Streamkeepers' Protocol sorts benthic invertebrates into three categories—pollution tolerant, partially intolerant, and intolerant. Depending on the taxa found, some broad statements can be made regarding water quality history.

Invertebrates have always shown a history of poor water quality in this Creek. The exact details are difficult to quantify but the trends are clear. This trip out showed the usual results with a few differences. We sampled a total square metre of riffle cobble with three separate samples of one third of a metre. We found no pollution intolerant invertebrates; a few partially intolerant invertebrates: 20 scuds (actually crustaceans) and 9 fish fly larva; the usual assortment of pollution tolerant invertebrates: 181 aquatic worms, 14 black fly larva, 3 leeches, 4 snails and 1 midge fly larva.

These all indicate poor water quality. But the issue is more complicated than is readily apparent. The important point, for now, is that we are going to stick with this sort of sampling and try to make some real sense of it. We have been busy with many other stream restoration tasks for the last couple of years but now perhaps we can get back into the stream itself and work on some ecology issues.

One thing is for sure. The water quality indicators underline the important work of the Stormwater Committee. That committee can make the difference, in fact it must, by implementing water quality improvement strategies on the watershed that can be measured by invertebrate surveys and of course by the health of resident salmonid populations.

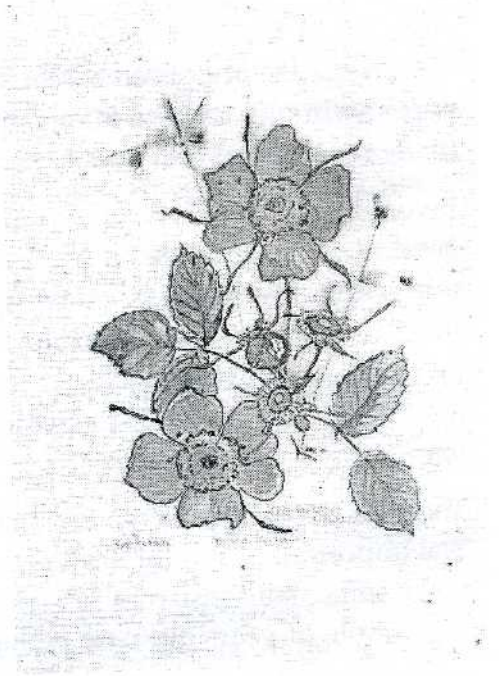
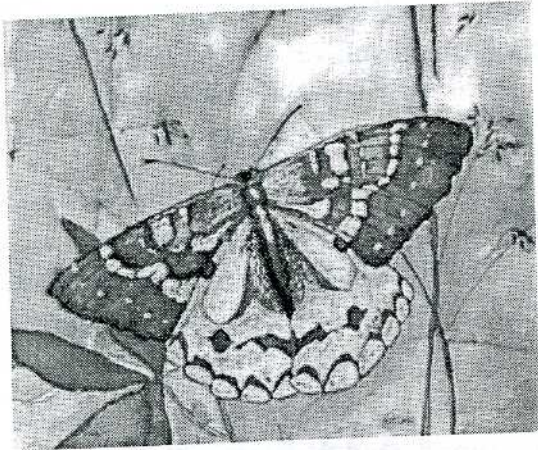


This is a historic photograph from the BC Archives, of native inhabitants of B.C. having a clam bake on Mount Douglas Beach.

Does anyone know how long ago that would be?

And how long has it been since clams could be harvested off Mount Douglas Beach.

Do you have any old photographs of Mount Douglas Park? Any historic information? The Friends would be very pleased to hear from you.



Sorry we can't print in colour!
These are watercolours, painted
by one of our members, Kristi
Bridgeman, who kindly makes
them available to The Friends of
Mount Douglas Park.

Thank you, Kristi!



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Historian: Pam Lewis

Youth Representative: Michael VanInsberghe

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

The purposes of the society are:

1. To safeguard the welfare of Mount Douglas Park.
2. To protect, enhance and encourage expansion of the boundaries of the Park.
3. To encourage preparation of a long-term plan for the Park, designed to maintain it in its natural state in perpetuity.
4. To cooperate with and assist the Corporation of the District of Saanich, or any succeeding authority, in all measures designed to support and confirm the foregoing objectives.
5. To raise and receive funds in order to carry out the above-mentioned objectives, and administer such grants for such purpose and in such manner as is consistent with the objectives of the Society, generally as the donor prescribes.

Membership

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

\$5.00/person

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

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Please fill in this form and mail it to:

Graham Shorthill
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