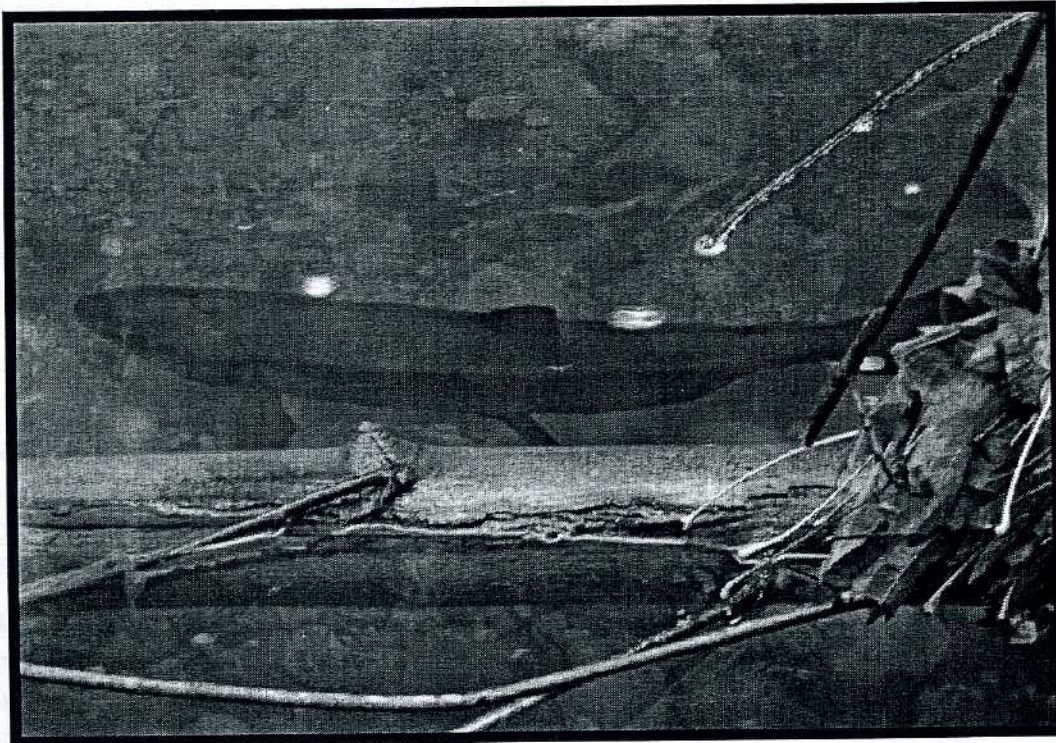


FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK



'04 Rankin
Mr./Mrs. K.W.
4285 Cedar Hill Rd.
Victoria V8N 3C7 B.C.

December 2004

Our future

One thing has become particularly plain over the 15 years of our Society's existence. If the Park is no longer under one kind of threat (and there are several that persist) then with regularity it comes under another. Hence there is unlikely to be any time for the foreseeable future when its integrity as a wilderness Park need not be jealously guarded.

How then, in the years ahead, should the interests of all who enjoy the Park's natural amenities be protected? The answer depends in part on how long our Society can keep going. That in turn depends on how long it can depend on the willingness and ability of enough of its members to serve as directors on the executive.

Over the past 15 years the turnover in our executive's membership has been rather sluggish. All in all only 4 replacements for directors who have dropped out come to mind. Up to a point this has been a good thing. An element of continuity in the executive's composition ensures that the Society's policies are consistently promoted. However, there remains the problem of whether the turnover can be fast enough to replace long-serving directors who perhaps in the not-so-distant future may, for reasons of age or health or other commitments, not put themselves up for renewal when their statutory term of office is over

One solution is to have a certain number of ordinary members of the Society present in an *ex officio* capacity at executive meetings on a fairly regular basis. That could ensure a sufficient familiarity outside the narrow circle of directors with ongoing business, and also provide a pool from which replacements for retiring directors could be drawn.

Also it could be combined with retired directors attending the meetings in a consultative capacity, and even sharing some of the tasks of those that replace them for as long as that is needed. To a certain extent we have already experimented with the first part of this idea, but so far the hoped-for pool of replacements has shown a tendency to drain away before properly filling.

There is another solution of a more radical kind: that the Park should be taken over as a nature conservancy. Swan Lake could, presumably, be the model for this sort of set up. The Park would then be in charge of a manager hired with pay and under the supervision of some sort of board. One advantage apart from that of stability: it would provide a permanent solution for the management of the creek. The latter requires all the dedication and technological savvy that now resides in the person of Bob Bridgeman, who

consequently is practically irreplaceable as a director. Qualifications that match Bob's could be required of any conservancy manager.

One disadvantage: depending on the composition of the supervisory board, the interests of the Park as a natural park and of those who frequent it as such might be subordinated to those of car traffic or development in one form or another. (As a parallel, the disquieting closure of the Crystal Gardens by the present Provincial Capital Commission suggests a danger of this sort)

We would be very happy to have your thoughts on the issues here raised.

Finally, to turn very briefly from the future to the past: for all of these years the executive has held regular meetings in the pleasant surroundings of the Shorthill's' sitting room. This has done much to give ease to our deliberations. We are deeply grateful to Graham and his wife for their seemingly termless hospitality

Displays

In the run-up to the Saanich Parks Day event at Mount Douglas Park in September, we finally bit the bullet and bought three display panels so we could show different aspects of the Park to the general public in a clearer and more immediate fashion. Until now, it has been difficult and time-consuming to prepare posters and to display them—the results were fine if you were preaching to the converted, but totally inadequate if you wanted to grab people's attention and enlist their energies.

These three panels are intended to stand on tables, and each is slightly curved so as to present a stand-alone subject or, with the others, related aspects of the Park and/or Park programs. They will work very effectively: no one will be obliged to get down on hands and knees to ensure they miss nothing!

Now that we have this new opportunity to show the Park in all its diversity to a wider public in different settings (malls, conference halls, open air events etc.), we need people to produce displays to keep our presentations fresh and engaging. So if you have a theme you would like to show or some ideas about a montage of print and text you would like to create, we want to hear from you.

We are always looking for people to get involved. Watching trees and shrubs flower – many have interesting flowers—watching the seeds for ripeness and then finally collecting them gives a perspective on what is in the park, the cycles under which vegetation works and how all the cycles fit together. If you are interested, there are opportunities to participate. We have enough seeds gathered for next year but we may want to look at softwood cuttings this spring.

Significant Tree Day in Saanich—and onward!

The plantings of trees and shrubs along the Creek took place as planned on Sunday, November 7 and there were two further plantings on November 12 and 19.

Local plant experts Mary Steele and Ian Bruce and two gardeners from Saanich were on hand to help with plant and site selection. These plantings are part of the longer-term plan to return salmon to Douglas Creek.

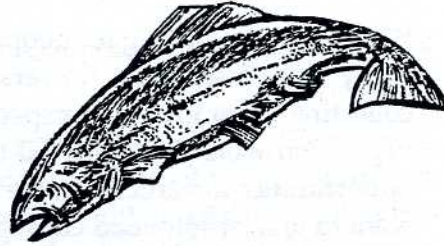
As we carry out this long-term plan, we are trying to expand the planting zone by offering a range of species that have different growing requirements. Our choices are native riparian species whose genes have been proved in this environment, so we hope we've expanded the opportunities for establishment to the maximum.

Other factors that need to be considered are the amount of light reaching the micro sites and whether soil is being eroded or deposited streamside. We want sufficient light for the species chosen for the micro site and we want to plant the areas that are collecting silt. Vegetation near the Creek edge will comb silt out of the water—this is another interesting example of how all species (humans for sure) modify their environments for short term gain: short term is a period that allows reproduction. Streamside vegetation also helps to reduce erosive forces by holding water back and by forcing that water up onto small flood planes. These actions reduce the erosive force of the impervious area stormwater driven flows that so heavily impact the Creek and the beach.

The short-term hydrology fix may lie partly with revegetating the banks and also partly with the woody debris that Parks has been putting into the Creek. What is not addressed is the water quality that is associated with those same impervious areas and the flows that come off them. We have a long-term strategy to deal with water quality and hydrology – a subject that we are working on while the revegetation, woody debris placement, fish transplants and carcass transplants continue.

Retrofitting the watershed

As you may recall, we worked with Royal Roads University to develop the data required to examine the watershed and to lay out options for retrofitting stormwater control.



One group of students also developed a monitoring system to measure watershed improvements by examining the species changes in the aquatic invertebrates (bugs) that live out their life cycles in the Creek. This is cheap monitoring but not easy. It is knowledge-dependent and requires people to do some work in the Creek.

An interesting result of the monitoring project was the fecal coliform sampling that was carried out. The Creek, and hence the beach, is always over the CRD limits. This is an issue that is being ducked and I always cringe when I see people working or playing around the Creek—if you're one of the people who do, always wash your hands: there is potable water available in the washrooms at the picnic area.

Some years ago we received a grant from the Public Conservation Assistance Fund to hire a research group to find methods of retrofitting stormwater controls into developed areas of the Douglas Creek watershed (most of it with high percentages of impervious areas—wide roads, rooftops, driveways, and such like).

This research (to propose a set of projects to improve water quality and hydrology in the Creek) is now beginning. We hope it will be completed by March 2005 or not long after.

Once the research is done, our hope (and intention) is to take the proposals to the Saanich Environmental Advisory Committee for its consideration and approval, and thence to Municipal Council to ask that the proposals be implemented.

We are looking at municipally-owned land and a timetable that meshes with public works projects to keep the costs minimal or nonexistent. We will choose the projects carefully, so that they can be seen as an improvement by the local residents. We want shining examples that people can go and look at while they consider options for their own neighbourhoods as we expand the management of stormwater into other areas in the watershed.

Road name

There have been some inquiries about the name "Mount Douglas Park Way" that appears on the simple but substantial new stone markers on Shelbourne Street and at the Royal Oak/Cordova Bay Road junction.

No, the individual street names have not been removed—this new title is all-embracing and is an attempt to characterize a large and distinct area as an integrated whole: Saanich has done something similar along the Gorge.

For historical accuracy, Cedar Hill Road carries right up to the totem pole, passing the junction with Shelbourne Street and Ash Road. From th totem pole, Cordova Bay Road takes one north through the rest of the Park. None of these names have changed.

Memberships

It's that time again! Please check the label on this newsletter: if the number in the top left hand corner is less than '05 then your membership expires in January 2005. We hope you have enjoyed these newsletters and will continue to support the work of the Society for another year by sending your cheque to

Graham Shorthill, Treasurer,
4623 Cordova Bay Road, Victoria B.C. V8X 3V6

The cost is \$5.00 per person per year and you can renew for more than one year.

Trails

Earlier this fall the Saanich Parks Department hired the consultant firm of Judith Cullington & Associates to "develop a simple set of trail standards that will help determine the appropriate construction standard for new and existing trails in Saanich."

It was not clear from the general description of the project that the special nature of trails in natural parks would be appreciated and considered, so we sent to Judith Cullington a copy of the Society's Trails Policy, intensively researched by Ken Rankin before we had approved it. It makes the strong point that specifications for trails have to be appropriate to the location and nature of the terrain through which they pass.

The project consultants have recently made a questionnaire available to the general public. Without wishing to be unfair at this point, sensitivity to the concerns we have expressed seems to be missing from the questionnaire. For your interest, the Society's Trails Policy follows below:

Trails

We have categorized all trails in the Park as either "corridor" or "exploratory."

- Corridor trails are those with a definite point of departure and a definite destination. They do not give access to the Park's inner recesses or to many of its features of special interest and can support varying kinds of traffic. The width can be quite generous throughout their length. These include all fire roads and the trail parallel to Cordova Bay Road.
- Exploratory trails are those that give access to the Park's inner recesses and points of interest. Upon these depend the main appreciation of the wilderness character of the Park. These trails include all but those specifically mentioned as corridor trails. Their widths should be allowed to remain 1 metre or less or, in cases where heavy traffic has already widened them they should be no more than 1-1/2 metres wide.

Formal, well-defined trails provide access to the Park and prevent proliferation of opportunistic trails that damage the natural ambience. Therefore:

1. Any new trails will be created in Mount Douglas Park only after consultation.
2. A trail should be created parallel to Ash Road, from the bridge to the Cedar Hill Road intersection.
3. Existing exploratory trails should remain narrow and winding, as appropriate in a natural park.
4. Trail width/tread shall not be dictated by available machines.
5. Trail maintenance should be limited to removal of obvious hazards and the repair of damaged areas:
 - cutting through blockages caused by fallen trees
 - removing overhanging dead timber
 - filling in quaggy patches
 - protecting against erosion, braiding, ballooning or lateral sprawl, and delta formations at trail intersections

Such maintenance must be undertaken only when the need for it is extreme.

6. The parking area and the old road are passable for wheelchairs, and the path along Cordova Bay Road from the motel to the main parking lot might be kept suitably level and firm throughout all but the worst weather conditions. However, most trail surfaces are not suitable for access by wheelchair or scooter, especially not in all seasons.
7. There are certain trails that are more suitable than others for horses.
 - Designated trails shall be those to which horses can do little or no damage.
 - These trails shall be selected and their designation clearly indicated by the Park Manager.
8. Trail signs shall be limited to intersections and entrances of major trails.
9. Trail maps shall be erected at the main parking lot, at the foot of Churchill Drive, and at the trail at the north end of Glendenning Road.
10. New trails, or old trails re-named, should be given the names of early settlers.

Douglas Creek

Fish in the Creek!

You may have heard the news, but in case you haven't there have been numerous sightings of both coho and chum salmon in the Creek this fall. People have reported as many as ten. We have seen a coho female with an immature male and some large fry, as well as several male and female chum. These are being scavenged by racoons or other animals.

The fish have been coming over the beach at high tides and when we have been getting some precipitation. What we are waiting for now are heavy rainfalls, so that the fish can move upstream to the entire habitat that we have been working on.

We haven't seen any spawners yet but we found one female chum carcass that had spawned – not an egg left. We are watching and waiting for more of those as the forecast promises more rain.

We are engaged in the age old game of wait-and-see—when the rains come so do the fish, pushing upstream through the turbid waters, renewing the salmon cycle, tied to the mysterious rhythms of nature.

The Creek Calendar

- 20 June We continued picking seeds in preparation for our Significant Tree Day in Saanich planting November 2005. We picked:
- 110 Indian Plum;
 - 10 racemes of red elderberry each carrying 150 seeds; and
 - 166 dull Oregon grape.
- 27 July We were in the park previewing the planned walk for participants attending the Restoration Conference at the University of Victoria.
- 25 August We walked the Creek and discussed restoration issues with an international group organized by Marlyn Lambert. It poured with rain and we were soaked. Even though we weren't all speaking the same language, there were smiles all around. Many people came from very different landscapes and were happy to view the Douglas fir forest and riparian zone. From the group we received the gift of a cheque, which we will apply to the costs of the riparian planting this November.
- 29 August We collected 200 red osier dogwood seeds.
- 03 September We delivered the seeds we had collected to Rob Hagel at the Pacific Forestry Centre.
- 25 September We put down four minnow traps baited with salmon roe in the usual spots in the Creek. We picked them up on the 26th. We didn't see any fish while setting or picking up and none were in the traps.
- 05 October We were in the Park with Ian Bruce and Mary Steele looking at sites for the Significant Tree day plantings. We think we can plant out the cultivated seedlings in three plantings so we were looking at areas and considering how many of what species where - more later.
- 15 October We were in the Park picking seeds for next years tree/shrub planting We picked 226 big leafed maple.
- 18 October Again we were picking seeds. Picked 100 snowberries, many hundreds of ocean spray, and 400 Douglas maple seeds (there are 3 Douglas maple in the park that we know about—one of them set no seeds and one of the others was loaded).
-

The fall event featuring the Park

Saanich Parks Department hosts an annual event to highlight a particular location in its domain. This year, it was the turn of Mount Douglas Park. The day dawned cloudy but dry, improving as the day went on. As a result, there was a good turn out: the sound of the music, the smell of the barbecue and the sight of the signs at the entrance attracted the casual visitor, and the improving weather was an incentive to many who had seen the prior publicity. They were treated to a new and relocated playground for small children, the ever-popular hay rides, and numerous displays including some from ourselves.

To help them in the future, the parks personnel were test marketing their new trail map. It has many excellent features and we will put copies of it in a later newsletter. There was a point in the afternoon when it looked as if it could have been used immediately. One of scheduled walks along the creek lasted so long we sent out search parties but all was well; it was just interest that had delayed them.

While it did not have the scope or variety of the Saanich Fair, it did share with that longstanding event the same sense of a summer coming to an end. For those of us who went down to the beach, a classic west coast scene of blue water and sky, distant mountains and islands opened up before us as we scrambled from the shade of trees to the sand and sun at the mouth of the creek. The thought did occur; what will this look like next time the Parks Department hosts its annual event here?

Walking to the summit

During this cold, wet fall, it was heartwarming to read the story in the local paper of Margaret Morris, a long time member of the Society and how she uses the park and specifically Churchill Drive for regular exercise. She is one of a growing band of walkers, many of them retired, who use the park in this way several times a week.

Some time ago, our efforts led to the closing of Churchill Drive to motor traffic on Sunday morning until noon. This has been a great success with walkers and has generated essentially no criticism from the motoring public. The thought was to extend the idea to Monday morning as well, but during the discussion following Saanich Parks Day, it was suggested that a better way would be to delay opening the gate until 10:00 a.m. each morning and keep the noon opening for Sunday only.

The catalyst for this idea was the story of the computer scientist from UVic who had walked the park throughout his professional life but now that he is retired the exhaust emissions along Churchill Drive make it physically difficult for him to continue.

What are your thoughts? Would you use the park in this morning time slot if you knew that motor vehicles would not be there?

The beach



One of the reasons for the delay in sending out the fall news letter is the fact that we had hoped to have some hard news and a progress report concerning the project to stabilize the toe of the cliff using a variation on the Australian Sill method.

In talking to the Engineers heading the project, it is clear that the pressure of work within the municipality has risen dramatically in the last year as a result of the booming real estate market. Both they and the consultants are behind schedule, but the next step is the same as before: they plan to make a presentation to Council summarizing the work to date and asking for funds to build and test a scale model. With the model, they can fine-tune the shapes of the sills and their locations.

Elsewhere in this issue there is a report about the return of the fish for the second year running. When this project started, the idea that Douglas Creek would ever see salmon again was greeted with much scepticism. How things change in a short space of time!

Our hopes for the future of the Creek and its salmon

The return of so many salmon to the Creek is reason for hope. But it's far from the end of the struggle.

Engineering practices in Saanich still favour filling in ditches. Ditches are the most primitive stormwater management option, but they are highly successful. They allow the infiltration and slow release of water, as opposed to the piping of water to the local water body—stream or lake—with the disastrous consequences that we are all too familiar with in Douglas Creek.

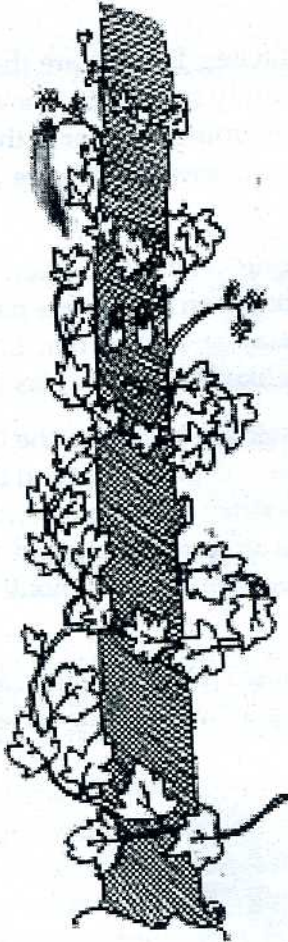
We hope that one day the thinking in Saanich Engineering —and, to be fair, in the general public—will be sophisticated enough to realize that even ditches are part of a sustainable landscape and part of the blueway/greenway strategies that link the ecology of all neighbourhoods to large green/blue nodes like Mount Douglas Park.

It's about eight years since we began working to bring salmon back into the Creek. This is an appropriate time—*any* time is an appropriate time—to give credit and thanks to Bob Bridgeman, our Director of Streams, to his family (they all support and help him, and even, we're told, get a chance to see him from time to time). And to the supporters and volunteers, too numerous to name, that keep coming out, month after month and year after year, with the same aim in mind.

To all of them we dedicate this photograph because it shows that spawning salmon are serious in what they do, and will keep coming as long as we and our society let them.



The ivy pull goes on!



Enclosed with this newsletter you will find the long-awaited (by us!) ivy-pull brochure.

The two major graphics included in the brochure (this is one of them) were the gift of talented (and generous) Kristi Bridgeman, a noted local graphic artist who (as with her husband Bob Bridgeman) has the environmental welfare of Mount Douglas Park very much at heart.

The brochure not only tells all about ivy as an invasive species (and Mount Douglas Park is full of it) but tells how you—all of us—can fight against it, both on our own properties and in the Park (or any other park).

The first-Sunday-of-the-month dates for the ivy-pulling in the Park for the first six months of 2005 are

January 2

February 6

March 6

April 3

May 1

June 5

We meet at the parking lot at 10:00 a.m. those days.

However, pull ivy whenever you find it in the Park (as many unknown friends already do).

Just be sure to drag it out onto the side of a path, where it will dry out (most times of the year) before it can send out new shoots.

Board of Directors 2004/2005

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
Youth Rep.	Mike Vaninsberghe	4585 Bonnieview Place	V8N 3V5	472-6138

Historian: Pam Lewis

Membership

Please check your address label (above); if it reads less than '05, 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