

FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK



Mount Douglas Park Charter

The lands known as Mount Douglas Park are hereby reserved in perpetuity for the protection and preservation of the natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public.

This land has been transferred by the Province of British Columbia to the Corporation of the District of Saanich on the condition that it be maintained and preserved as a public park.

With this charter, the spirit and intent of the original crown grant of 1889 is maintained, while its scope is expanded to include within Mount Douglas park all adjacent municipal parkland present and future, so that the whole will continue as a wilderness preserve for generations to come.

Proclaimed this 22nd. day of November 1992 by the council of the Corporation of the District of Saanich on behalf of the citizens of Saanich



Newsletter July 2004

It's appropriate to remind ourselves (and others) of the Mount Douglas Park Charter from time to time, but even more appropriate at this time because on May 19th the Friends of Mount Douglas Park awarded a

Lifetime Society Membership

to:

Pam Lewis

Pam was a founding member of the Society—in real terms THE founding member of the society, because it was her concern and persistence over many years that finally led to the creation, in 1989, of an organization—the Friends—dedicated solely to the welfare and protection of Mount Douglas Park.

She has never abandoned that concern and persistence. She pressed for the reinstatement of the original charter. She served on the executive board of the Society for many years and, as the Society's historian, continues to this day as the invaluable (and invincible) watchdog of the true interests of the Park.

This summer, Hal Gibbard, a member of our executive, received individual recognition of his work to benefit the environment. The award reads:

Hal Gibbard: Biodiversity Conservation

The members of the Saanich Environment Advisory Committee would like to recognize your achievements in the protection of the biodiversity of Garry oak ecosystems . Your efforts are truly appreciated, and we wish you success as you continue to work for the environment in Saanich. Congratulations.

And the Society itself was honoured by the Saanich Environmental Advisory Committee:

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park

Environmental Achievement
Volunteer Organization

The members of the Saanich Environmental Advisory Committee would like to recognize your achievements in stream restoration, invasive species, removal, stormwater management, research and public education in the watershed.

Your efforts are truly appreciated and we wish you success as you continue to work for the environment in Saanich. Congratulations.

Shoreline protection and the beach

This project has been delayed to some extent because the work on the pump station is taking longer than expected, but the next step in the approval process has been completed.

There was a well-attended Open House at Lochside School in June where two major concerns were raised by the public. Firstly, the possibility that the new structure would prevent sand from getting to the main beach in the heart of Cordova Bay and secondly, concerns over the amount of environmental damage done when the construction materials are brought in and while construction takes place.

The proposed structure has the ability to hold a certain maximum amount of sand and the question is, very simplistically, do you ship this sand in from a pit or do you allow nature to do the job for you? If the first method is used, then the cost of the project goes up but the surrounding beaches are unaffected. With the second method, the cost goes down but sand is removed from the overall system until the structure is filled, having an impact on the local beaches. It's reasonable to predict that a compromise between these extremes will be found before final approval for the project is given.

The environmental damage problem is far more complex, and the marine biologists who are consultants to the project freely admit that it will be a major challenge to do a complete restoration. Again, there are two main pathways forward to complete the construction project—do the minimum restoration and allow nature to do most of the job over a long period of time, or include a significant fraction of the restoration as part of the overall project, leaving nature to take care of the details once the project is finished. In either case, maintenance work will be required for the foreseeable future.

What has emerged from the limited discussions amongst the members of the Executive is that we should go for the option that embeds as much restoration work as possible in the project as it unfolds. What do you think?

The beach itself

Michael Vaninsberge, our Youth Representative, has an extensive acquaintance with Mount Douglas Park, including, of course, the beach. There could be a very real danger in the coming months if the beach is considered as simply an inactive part of the slope restoration project. Here are Michael's comments and, on this page and the next, a broad selection of pictures of the beach life he and his mother, Laurie have found there.

"The Cordova Bay shoreline was once used by the Songhees and other neighboring tribes to collect bivalves, seaweed and sea cucumbers. Evidence of this still remains as an area of midden (a "garbage dump") containing various bivalve shells, and can easily be spotted on the left side of Douglas Creek. Now the shoreline is used mainly as an important recreational area, entertaining locals and tourists alike.

As well, however, Mount Douglas Beach is a fragile ecosystem containing a variety of unique habitats, and therefore a vast array of different species.

Almost eighty species of sponges, hydroids, anemones, jellyfish, worms, bryozans, crabs, shrimp, isopods, amphipods, barnacles, bivalves, snails, limpets, nudibranchs, chitons, sea stars, brittle stars, sea cucumbers, seaweed and sea grasses have been identified by elementary and high school students. Because of this diversity, these areas should be treated with respect and preserved as a public park for future generations."





