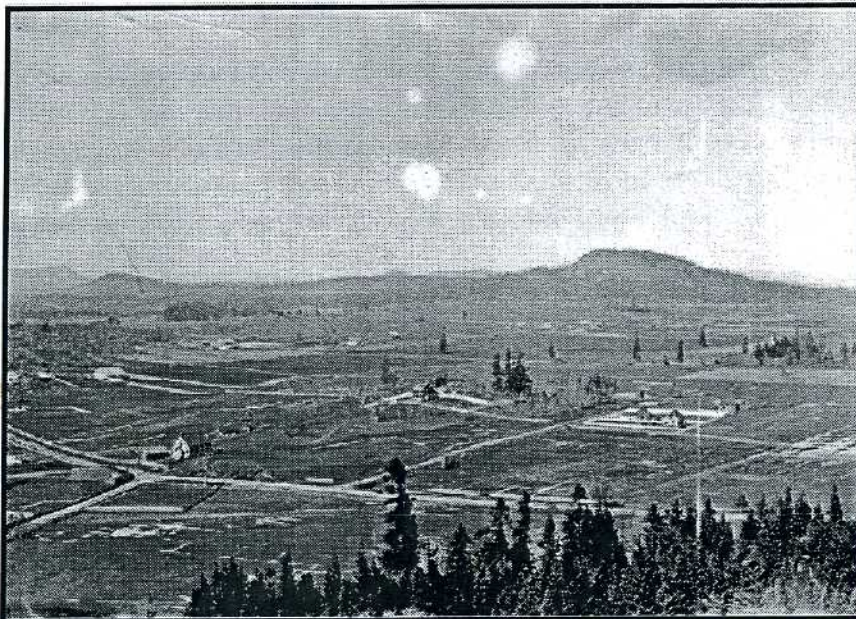


FRIENDS OF MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

Newsletter
March 2004

Mount Douglas from Mount Tolmie



BC Archives

in the good old days!

'03 Rankin:
Mr./Mrs. K.W.,
4285 Cedar Hill Rd.,
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2004/2005 Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 7
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: McMorrans's Seaview Room
5109 Cordova Bay Road
Speaker: Ray Roer, Saanich Parks Manager

Park management

We had a meeting with Ray Roer, the new Parks Manager for Saanich, not long after he assumed office. This was mainly to introduce ourselves and to explain in a cursory way what our interests are. More recently (on February 6) we had another meeting with him and Gerald Fleming, in part to place on the table a draft of our Management Plan for the Park, and in part for exploratory discussion on a wide spectrum of issues.

Topics we touched on included

- Installation of antennae on the transmitter and new cable
 - Burial of the transmitter power line to the summit
 - Trail program
 - Proactive steps for controlling mountain bike activity as spring approaches
 - Repair and enhancement of the weir
 - East side of Ash Road from the creek bridge
 - Douglas Creek stream restoration, including re-vegetation
 - Volunteer work—insurance coverage, ivy pulls and broom control
 - Closure of road access to private dwellings off Cedar Hill Road
 - Roadside power line / telephone line burial
 - East Summit action plan
 - The quarry
-

Access to east summit

In last November's issue of this newsletter we gave an account of our onsite meeting with Saanich staff to discuss plans for a path and stairway leading from the top parking lot to this summit. The major aim was to prevent the erosion at the parking lot side of the summit resulting from people scrambling straight up.

The main issue to arise at this first meeting had been over just where to place the stairway. Since then we have been presented with plans setting out in detail two options for its precise location. On Feb. 12 we met with staff on the site once again, and both parties reached an agreement in the choice of one of these options. It made the stairway somewhat less visible from the parking lot, and therefore visually less obtrusive. Since then, however, difficulties of a technical sort have arisen. The original plan to blast into the rock apparently has had to be abandoned for fear that the foundations of the transmitter tower would thereby be destabilized. Hence more use of concrete is now being favoured.

Harvest Lane

This is a newly constructed road joining Cedar Hill Road to serve the new subdivision on the site of the old orchard. It terminates in a staired access to the driveway used by the two dwellings next to the Park at the top. This has caused problems, since walkers who have begun to use that staired access have then deviated along the driveway, thus violating the privacy of at least one of these dwellings.

The solution has been to construct a new trail leading from the head of the stairway straight into the park to connect with a main trail. In fact at this point a new trail is already beginning to emerge due just to such use. Since the trail will function merely as a connector, we have recommended that it should not exceed 3 feet in width.

The beach

After a long delay, the Advisory Committee on the cliff stabilization project met in February to review the consultant's concepts for preventing erosion at the toe of the cliff.

The core of the new proposal is to prevent the erosion by beach nourishment rather than using the traditional rip-rap. This is a major departure from earlier proposals and

stems from observations made at Spanish Banks in Vancouver and around the large rock at the mouth of creek in the park.

Overall, the structure is called an Australian Sill and consists of a series of rock fingers that start on the beach some way away from the toe of cliff and project into the water, angled so that they directly face the prevailing wind and waves. In the park these are the southeast winds and seas, so the fingers point northeast/southwest. If the whole length, from the creek to the breakline outside the park were protected by this method it would require the construction of twelve of these fingers about 100m or so apart. The gap between the end of the finger and the cliff would be filled with sand brought in by barge from a quarry. This has the effect of raising the toe of the cliff above the high water mark and so prevents the removal of debris from the base while at the same time providing a continuous walking area between the cliff and the fingers. The design of the immersed end has a number of possibilities that provide for the redirection of waves so they slow down, interfere with one another and allow the build up of sand within the gaps between the fingers. The build-up would not go on indefinitely: the free migration of sediment would resume after the rocks had been essentially covered with sediment.

The best case scenario coming from this proposal is:

- **No rocks cascading down the cliff**
- **A continuous beach walk for the public**
- **No net loss of beach habitat**
- **Accumulation of sand and an expansion of the beach .**
- **Minimum interference with fish habitat during construction and the ability to regenerate after construction is complete.**
- **No depletion of sand from other sectors of this system**

As always, there are some potential negative effects or uncertainties, and these include:

- **The impact of barging in material through the off shore eel grass.**
- **The discharge of water from the cliff into the sea.**

However, in the words of the representative from Department of Fisheries and Oceans:

“ There are no show stoppers in this proposal”

The way forward is a little complex, as we now have a chicken-and-egg situation. To fine tune their model and prepare a full-scale presentation, the engineers need the results from a scale model. As these are costly to develop, they will not spend the money unless they have some assurance and support from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans but the latter will not give that support until they have more detailed information.

The meeting adjourned after it was agreed more details would be made available and an open house/public education session should occur before embarking on the next major stage. So, after several decades of talk, we have a proposal that could, again in the words of the fisheries official, transform shoreline protection and preservation of fish habitat on the Island. If that is the outcome, it will have been worth the wait.

The road revived

The renewed Cordova Bay Road has been open now for several months and it appears to be working well: traffic flow is steady and speeds have been reduced a little because of the new crosswalks, the kinks in the road and the narrow, well-defined lanes. In addition, the lane-changing chaos at the Royal Oak/Blenkinsop intersection has been brought under control by the concrete curb: even the 4x4's tend to treat it with respect. As a result, there are now fewer cars diving for the right hand filter lane into Cordova Bay village. Equally heartening is the sight of mothers pushing strollers, people walking their dogs, and senior citizens armed with walking sticks striking out for the park.

Six months ago all these activities were hazardous and now they are a safe everyday occurrence. It is these forms of traffic we hope will increase in the years ahead. Similarly, the danger to the cycling population has diminished considerably, with the result that more cyclists of all descriptions are using the road even in these chilly winter months. Again, it would be a pleasure to see this type of traffic rise.

There are still a number of loose ends to fix; the Parks Department has some final planting to do and the question of buffer zones has not been resolved. The idea was to create zones some distance from the park boundary on each road leading to the park so that motorists would realize they were moving from a suburban area into a natural park

To achieve these buffer zones, in the south (on the main artery leading through the park along Shelbourne/Cedar Hill Road/Cordova Bay Road) signs would appear at either Kenmore or San Juan, and in the north at Cordova Bay Road on the major curve after the Royal Oak intersection.

The problem is the name: the word "Parkway" has surfaced again. When this was last discussed many people called to draw attention to faraway examples such as the Don Valley Parkway, the roads around J.F.K. airport in New York etc. and the idea was dropped. Now we have a concrete example in our own back yard: the Veterans Parkway in Langford carries multi-laned free-flowing motorized traffic passing through manicured green space: the very thing we are trying to avoid. A compromise has been suggested, which would keep the present names and addresses for the houses along of the streets but would give an additional label to these sections of road as:

Mt. Douglas Park

WAY

What do you think?

The transmitter site

No! not the one on the summit but the monstrosity that appeared out of the blue near the main entrance to the beach parking lot a month or so ago.

The question is: Who dropped the ball? Because the cell site has appeared without any of the usual consultation that takes place around such issues.

The initial part is easy to understand. Bell Mobility has a blind spot among its cell sites, caused by the shadow of the mountain, and it was looking for a site east of the mountain to remedy the problem. They rented the pole from B.C. Hydro to create a strong signal along a line roughly from the east end of Tyndall in Gordon Head to Sunnymead in Cordova Bay.

But anywhere along that line would have done. So why here? The most probable answer is that they thought no one would object. This highlights a growing problem: these cell sites are proliferating all over the continent, and where to house them and what to charge for them has not been worked out. As a result, these ugly sites and overhead wires emerge overnight, producing a massive increase in visual pollution. In more sensitive communities they have been able to make the installation a source of revenue: for example, churches lease space in their steeples and the fees make a significant contribution to their budgets. We need to do the same in B.C.
