



Charter Rock

Kerry Mann from Mortimer's Monumental Works prepares the Mount Douglas Park Charter for sandblasting onto the Charter Rock.

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Top Five Family Activities in Mount Douglas Park

1. Climb to the Top. At 225 metres high, climbing to the top of Mount Doug isn't exactly an alpine ascent that people include on their bucket list. But for a child living in Victoria, Mount Doug is the 'tallest mountain in the whole wide world'. Therefore, climbing to the top for a child is akin to climbing to the top of Mt. Everest.

There are two options to get to the top:

- The first is to take the roadway (Churchill Drive) which is closed to regular traffic everyday before noon. This is ideal for anyone who has to include a stroller in their trek. The roadway recently had milestone markers built in so everyone can keep track of their progress.
- The second option is to use the trails. This option is much more adventurous with teamwork being a necessity. Taking the trails is suitable for older children who are capable of hiking the whole way on their own, unless you have a 4x4 automatic stroller.

Bring along lots of water and maybe a treat that everyone gets to enjoy once the summit is reached. And don't forget to take a picture once you reach the top!

2. I Spy With My Little Eye. Once you're at the top, there is no better family activity then playing a game of I Spy With My Little Eye. With 360 degrees of nature, cities, suburbs and farms, the game could go on for hours. There aren't too many places in the world where you can spy the Sphinx and a cruise ship in the same game.

3. Throwing Rocks at the Beach. To relax, some people like to do yoga, others like to meditate, my son likes to throw rocks down at the beach. He could do it for hours. He may be the first toddler ever to require Tommy Johns surgery.

See who can throw the farthest. Put some rocks on a floating log and play battleship. Or find the perfect skipper. Just relax and enjoy the splashes. (Just don't hit any wildlife!)

4. Search for Beach Glass. It's the ultimate treasure hunt. Sifting through the rocks to find those rare pieces of beach glass and storing them away in a glass jar for all to see. Extra points for anyone that finds any blue beach glass!

5. Mudwalks. In the Pacific Northwest, 'sometimes' it rains. Celebrate this rain by slapping on your boots and go hunting for mud puddles. Walk through those mud puddles with reckless abandon. If you can still tell what colour your boots are, then you're not doing

it right.

For the best mudwalks, start with the Glendenning Trail as it provides optimal mud and puddle conditions. "Isn't it lovely, do get so muddy?"

Stream Keepers Course

Back in April Saanich Parks, along with our Society, hosted a Stream Keepers course. Professional biologist David Clough, who is also leading our Douglas Creek restoration, was the very entertaining presenter. Those of you that attended our last AGM where he was the guest speaker, know what a knowledgeable and captivating speaker he is! Classroom sessions were held at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre. The first day field trip was in Douglas Creek where participants learned techniques for measuring creek attributes. Participants included representatives from our Society along with some from other similar groups as well as Saanich Parks employees involved in the stream work.



At the start of the stream keepers course field work, RP Biologist David Clough reviews safety and equipment operation before heading down to Douglas Creek.



Biologist David Clough shows techniques for measuring and documenting stream width and depth during the stream keepers course at Douglas Creek.

Churchill Challenge

The engraved marker stones are in! In May Saanich Parks installed the Churchill Challenge stones that show the distance and elevation every 250m along Churchill Drive. If you recall, the Churchill Challenge is the very popular 1500m walk along Churchill Drive from metre 0 at the bottom of Churchill to metre 1500 at the upper parking lot with a 160m elevation gain. Mornings when the road is closed to vehicular traffic is certainly the most popular time for walkers. For many it's a social and personal exercise opportunity.



Cutting asphalt for installation of distance and altitude marker stones. Engraved stones were placed every 250m along the walk up the “Churchill Challenge”.

Douglas Creek Tributary

The summer “fisheries window” is the only time during the year when work can be done in fish bearing streams. We took advantage of this window to complete restoration work.

Three tributaries that flow into Douglas Creek were GPS mapped last year. The one that flows from the Park on the south side of lower Churchill Drive is called tributary three



Tributary 3 after clearing and gravel bed placement. Subsequently, natural vegetation was planted along the banks.

(or T-3). Tributary two (T-2) drains the area between lower Churchill Drive and the Norn Trail; it is the creek that crosses the Norn Trail about 50m northeast of Churchill Drive . Tributary one (T-1) drains a spring fed pond located in the centre of the area between Cedar Hill Road, Douglas Creek, Ash road and the weir trail.

During a previous survey of Douglas Creek, RPBio David Clough found these tributaries were bringing a large amount of silt into Douglas Creek. Further investigation revealed that fallen trees had blocked the tributary channels so that they overflowed their banks and were flooding a very large area, drowning many trees. You might have noticed the dead trees when you look north from the weir.

Restoring these tributary channels was a two step project. Last year the lower sections were cleared of channel blocking debris. This year the upper sections near Cedar Hill Road were restored. Additionally, the T-1-pond which had filled with silt, was restored as a functioning pond for settling silt and providing a wonderful watering hole for animals.

Invasive Team

It's a scary thought to think of what the park would look like if it wasn't for the dedicated invasive team. The "team" includes a range of volunteers. There is the fearsome three, Dick Battles, John Jungen and Dave Poje, that are in the park five mornings a week. Their success is legendary! Judy Spearing organizes a Thursday morning group of volunteers (see schedule on our web site calendar).

Several church and scout groups have dedicated a morning to the effort. Helping rid the park of threatening invasives provides a wonderful opportunity to volunteer – even just two hours of work can make a real difference and the collective results are significant! If you like to be outdoors and want to do something meaningful for the park, contact Judy (contact information on last page).



The Park if it wasn't for the Invasive Team!

Douglas Creek Debris Dam Removed

About mid-way between the weir and Ash Road, a very large debris dam had formed in the creek with a 2 metre water elevation difference. Not only was it blocking the migration of salmon, but there was the very real fear that if a surge of storm water broke it, the debris would form a new dam at the Ash Road culvert. The resulting backup of water could very easily wash out Ash Road! A large machine was required to remove the dam. It was a challenge to get the machine in and out while



Removing large logs and other debris that formed a dam blocking salmon migration and presenting a danger downstream if it broke during a storm surge.

minimizing any lasting damage to the Park, but we are pleased to report success. The dam was removed, the silt removed, and the original creek gravel bed exposed. Restoration planting in November has removed the last evidence of the machine travel route.

Charter Rock Inscription – Churchill Gateway

A temporary Mount Douglas Park Charter inscription was put on the Charter Rock to meet the deadlines of last year's 20th anniversary ceremony. It was done at the quarry before the rock was moved. The rock surface turned out to be too irregular for sandblasting the letters making many of the words almost undecipherable.

In October 2013 the irregularities of the inscription area were ground smooth and the Charter was re-inscribed, this time with larger, easier to read letters.

Other components for the Churchill Park Entrance, initiated with the 20th anniversary celebration, are progressing. The overall concept is to create a true Park entrance distinguishing Churchill Drive from the Shelbourne speedway. The Churchill Challenge marker stones were the first to be installed, followed by the Charter Rock. Next will be a new large cedar kiosk along with a bench and board walk where tributary two crosses Churchill. As well, designs for the new road closure gate are underway. The new gate is designed to have a more park like look resembling a giant leaf and will replace the current industrial gate. The installation will be completed next year, as will the installation of the other half of the Charter Rock on the opposite side of the road. Together the rocks will form a grand entrance gateway to Mount Douglas Park.



Sandblasting the Mount Douglas Park Charter Rock. The rock is part of the 20th anniversary gateway enhancing the Park entrance and distinguishing the park from the Shelbourne “speedway”.

See <http://saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/projects/mt-doug/anniversary.html> for a good pictorial illustrating the entire 20th Anniversary Churchill Gateway project.

Stormwater

Huge surges of water during rain periods remains one of the largest challenges for Douglas Creek. The creek watershed basically corresponds to Gordon Head. The watershed problem is that the watershed has evolved from forest and farm land to its current urban setting. When it was forest and farm land, rain water was absorbed where it fell, adding to the water table. With urbanization and the impervious streets, driveways, parking lots, roof tops, etc., rain water is diverted into storm water pipes which quickly deliver the water to Douglas Creek. Many have experienced the sudden and dangerous rise of the creek flood waters, in some locations increasing by over a metre in a 10-15 minute period! It's this storm surge that washed out the original gravel beds. Not only were the beds washed out, but the



Low water in Douglas Creek. Compare to high water on next page.

channel was cut deeper, eroding the banks. Restoration has involved armouring the banks with very large boulders, widening the channel to slow the water, and building spawning pools with interconnecting riffles.

A serious problem related to urbanization is the pollutants from the first rains. Hydrocarbons collect on the streets and wash into the storm drain system and then into the creek.

The volume of storm surges cannot be controlled at any central location and requires a distributed approach throughout the watershed. Long term solutions are roof downspout disconnects, rain gardens, and street rain swales. Rain gardens and swales can be a street



Large volume from storm surge is 1 metre above low water level plus filling a much wider channel. The creek can go from low water to these storm levels in less than 15 minutes!

enhancement as has been proven elsewhere and we need to do it throughout Gordon Head.

Addressing the rain surges also addresses the pollutant problems - rain gardens and swales can physically strain and biologically clean the water. Roof downspout disconnects divert rooftop pollutants to lawns or gardens where they similarly are cleaned. The pollutants from one rooftop are essentially insignificant, but the pollutants from thousands of rooftops delivered to Douglas Creek are a problem.

Tree Appreciation Day

Approximately 35 volunteers with children and Saanich Parks staff planted hundreds of native plants and trees in the area where the tributary restoration work occurred. The goal was to plant the tributary banks with native shrubs, to plant shrubs and trees where flooding from the blocked tributaries had occurred, to plant cedar trees around T-1-pond and to restore the area where the machine removed the Douglas Creek debris dam.



Tree Appreciation Day volunteers receive planting instructions in Mount Douglas Park.



Tree planting volunteers.

Trails

New Mount Douglas Park Trails Map: Saanich Parks has produced a new map of trails in Mount Douglas Park. The new map will be installed in kiosks as well as the smaller “you are here” maps within the Park. This new map shows the trails that are maintained by the Parks department. Not shown are the non-maintained, impromptu shortcut trails which are an on-going problem. Many of these unofficial trails need to be closed and should be avoided.

The **Blenkinsop parking lot & trail** construction is now complete. There is a pedestrian activated light to cross Blenkinsop Rd. that provides connection to Lohbrunner. The parking lot can handle nine cars and the trail is clearly marked with way-finding cubes and plates, the new standard for markers along the trail.

The trail is steep and slippery in many locations, but also offers spectacular views of the Blenkinsop Valley. The trail condition is being monitored, and future work will address the slippery problem sections.

New way-finding posts at all trail intersections: As a major effort to improve way-finding within the Park trail system, and to encourage walkers to use the official trails versus the impromptu trails, the 1.5m tall way-finding posts will be installed at all trail junctions. This is no small task, as there are in excess of 80 junctions, each with custom signage and orientation. The specific post sign and orientation details were plotted over the summer, the signs will be manufactured in the fall and installed this winter.

Trail Counters: We now have visitor counters along seven trails, including Churchill Drive. The counters are remarkable little units; each has a three year battery life using three AAA batteries and can record 400 million counts. They are configured to accumulate and record the total number of walkers in each one hour period throughout the day. One of the limitations of the sensor on trails like Churchill, is that two or more side-by-side walkers are registered as a single walker. To account for this, we have made manual counts and compared this with the automated counters to determine a correction factor. For Churchill mornings, the factor is roughly 2:1. That is, there are twice as many walkers than are auto-counted.

Whittaker Trail boardwalks: The Whittaker Trail behind the “motel” area was a true mud quagmire with walkers making wider and wider detours around the mud holes. In much of the area, it simply wasn't possible to divert all the water flowing through the area. The solution was to install a series of boardwalks over the worst areas coupled with drain

rock covered by pathway blend gravel in the in-between sections. The boardwalk is constructed using an engineered grade synthetic board avoiding the rot problem when using wood in a constantly wet environment.

Saanich Parks prefers the pathway blend gravel because of its low maintenance. Our Society would prefer a different surface. The gravel becomes as hard as a concrete surface and is much less resilient under foot than natural surface trails. It is also noisy – we have measured a very large noise increase of over 20 dB for these surfaces, an unacceptable level! Surely there is a compromise trail treatment?

Classroom Salmon Incubation Program

The Watership Foundation coordinates school salmon incubation programs. They provide help establishing classroom equipment and instructional material along with salmon eggs. The students can follow the salmon through the incubation stages, eventually releasing their salmon fry in Douglas Creek.



Arbutus Middle School students release the salmon fry raised in their classroom incubation project.

Trails Sound Map

The Trails Sound Map is now available for download from our website (<http://mountdouglaspark.ca/web/Maps/>).

Those that walk the Park trails know noise from automobiles varies drastically; from almost overbearing on the trails next to Cordova Bay Road to the complete absence on other trails. This “silence”, where one only hears the sounds of nature, is a valuable Park asset worth protecting, but to protect it, we must first document it!

The first attempt used sound level meters measuring the sound levels using a decibel scale. This worked quite well in the noisier environments where auto noise was found to often be in the 80 dBA level, completely masking any natural sounds. At these levels,

animals and birds move away since they utilize hearing to detect predators and prey and natural sounds are completely masked. But as one moves away from the roads, as the auto generated noise reduces, we found that the decibel meters didn't distinguish a distant car sound from a nearby woodpecker or other bird. What we needed was more subjective, hence volunteers walked the trails and every 50m stopped, listened and provided a subjective car noise indication on a scale of 0 to 3; 0 being no car noise, 3 being similar to standing next to the road. Results from different walkers were very consistent. At the same time the volunteers recorded any human sounds (comparing these values with future values might give an indication of how human visitor use within the Park has changed.). Additionally, any airplane sounds were also noted. One surprising result was the very significant number of small planes heard on the north side of the Park as compared to the east and south sections.

Pacific Salmon Foundation

For many years, PSF, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, has been an important supporting partner for our Douglas Creek restoration. PSF raises money and makes grants to volunteer organizations that work on behalf of salmon as well as advancing scientific and evidence-based solutions to challenges facing wild Pacific salmon. The PSF provided a \$5500 grant to the FMDPS for this year's Douglas Creek restoration. In turn, we provide a significant amount of in-kind volunteer work and use the



Cory Manton, Manager of Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas accepts a \$5500 check from FMDPS treasurer Graham Shorthill and president Darrell Wick. The funds came from a Pacific Salmon Foundation grant.

money to pay for equipment and material from Saanich as well as professional expertise from a professional biologist. The PSF financial support as well as their endorsement of our restoration project has been invaluable.

Salmon Return

Every November we nervously await the first rains, watching for returning salmon. After four years of travel through the North Pacific, there are no return guarantees! But again this year, continued success - spawning salmon have been spotted in the creek.

FMDPS Directors

Two of our Society's founding directors have retired. Ken Rankin was a long serving Society President and a strong supporter of the natural values within the park. Sheilagh Ogilvie was one of three that initiated the formation of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park. She served on the board, wrote the newsletter for the first dozen years and subsequently was an eagle eyed proof reader. Both will be missed as directors and we thank them so very much for their long and dedicated interest in maintaining the integrity and beauty of Mount Douglas Park.

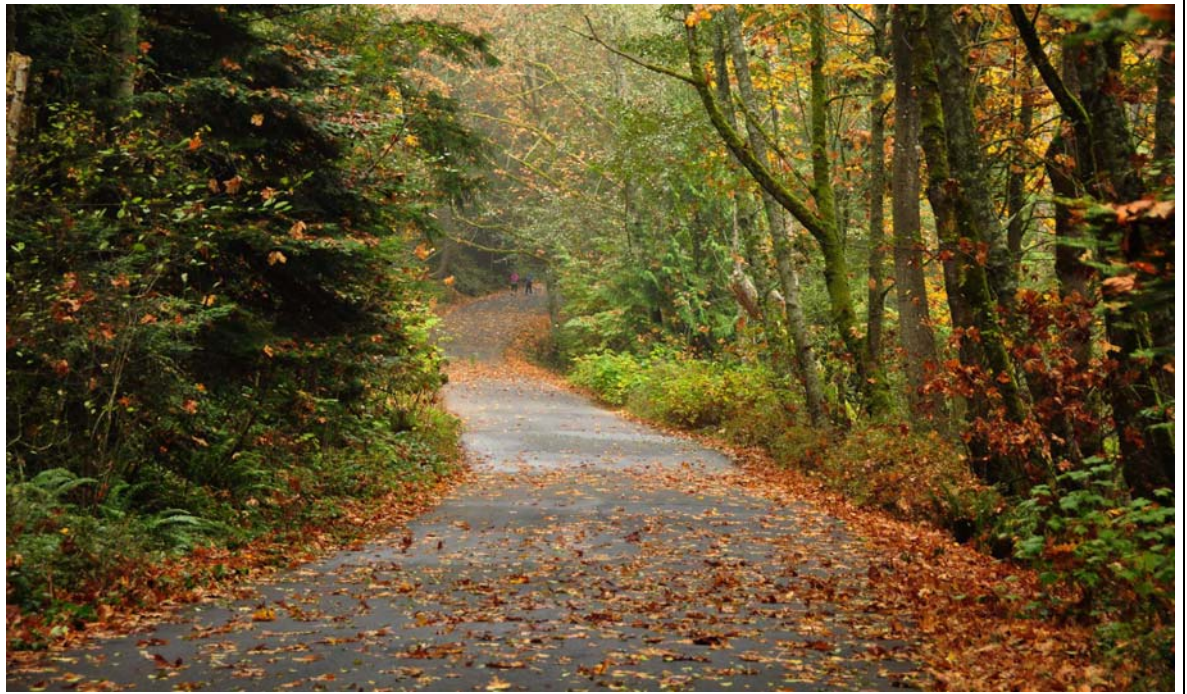


Society Founding Directors (photo from 2000):
Front: Retiring directors Sheilagh Ogilvie and Ken Rankin.
Rear: Darrell Wick, Graham Shorthill, Claude Maurice and Bob Bridgeman

Another director, Thomas Munson, recently stepped down because of other pressures. We very much appreciate his volunteerism to the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society.

Following last spring's AGM, we have two new directors. Nancy Lewthwaite chaired our phone committee before her election as a director and has added updating our web site news page to her responsibilities. Matt Boyd is in charge of our Twitter tweets.

Currently our board is short one director. Members of FMDPS are welcome at any board meeting and it is a good way to see if you would like to become a director – why not take advantage of the opportunity?



Which is your favourite trail?

Board of Directors

President	Darrell Wick	1491 Edgemont Road	V8N 4P7	477-9291
Vice-President	Claude Maurice	2200 Lorne Terrace	V8S 2H8	598-7407
Treasurer	Graham Shorthill	4623 Cordova Bay Road	V8X 3V6	658-5873
At-Large	Matt Boyd	1571 Craigiewood Court	V8N 5Y3	813-0102
At-Large	Nancy Lewthwaite	1559 Mt. Douglas X Road	V8N 1Z9	658-0763
Invasives	Judy Spearing	1545 Eric Road	V8N 5Y6	472-0515

Membership Renewal - Gift Membership

Providing information via this newsletter about the Park is an important Society function. We want to reach more Park users and Park neighbours. Why not **give someone you know a gift subscription and include it with your renewal**? A one year membership isn't much more than the price of a good cup of coffee! You provide the gift and we'll send notification to the recipient of your generosity. We hope you will continue to support the work of the Society for another year.

Gift From _____

New Member (or renewal) form:

Name: _____

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Address: _____

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Membership 1 year \$5 2 years \$10 3 years \$15 4 years \$20

Send or deliver to:

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

<http://www.mountdougspark.ca>

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Twitter: @MountDougPark.