

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society



New Park Entrance Information Kiosk with Charter Rock in Background.

In This Issue

- Annual General Meeting
- Churchill Dr. Entrance Project
 - Charter Twin
 - Trash Receptacle Moved
 - Kiosk (also at Beach Parking lot)
 - Entrance Rock
 - Remaining Improvements
- Carcass Transplant
- New Trash Receptacle Locations
- Trail Way-finding Posts
- Bench Locations, Policy
- Invasive Work
- Chum Egg Cassette
- Bus Stop Locations
- PSF Creek Flow Meter Grant
- Pending Creek Work
- Weir Pond
- Old Tower Base Removal
- Parks 2015 Work Plan
 - Trail Closures
 - Trail Water Issues
 - Upper Glendenning Trail Plans
 - Invasive Master Plan
 - completion of entrance project
- Crosswalks
- Road Edges
- Matt's Corner

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday May 6, 2015, 7:30pm, Feltham Room, Gordon Head Recreation Centre

Speaker: Ann Nightingale: Birds you'll see in Mount Douglas Park

Nominations: Contact Matt Boyd at 250-813-0102 before May 4.

Churchill Park Entrance Project

This project started in 2012 as a 20th anniversary project to improve the Park entrance at Churchill Drive. Each year another step towards completion has been realized. Likely the two changes most noticeable are the Charter Rock with the Park Charter inscription and the new kiosk and information sign.

One of the project goals is to make a distinction between the Shelbourne speedway and the park road, Churchill Drive. (Churchill Drive is not a gazetted road like other roads in Saanich, but is simply a paved section of the Park). The concept to achieve this distinction is through three "thresholds".

- The first is the "Entrance Rock" which was very recently installed at the start of Churchill as one enters the Park from Shelbourne.
- The next threshold is the very impressive kiosk.
- The third threshold is at the "gateway" between the Charter Rock and the Charter Twin (they were both split from one very large rock!).

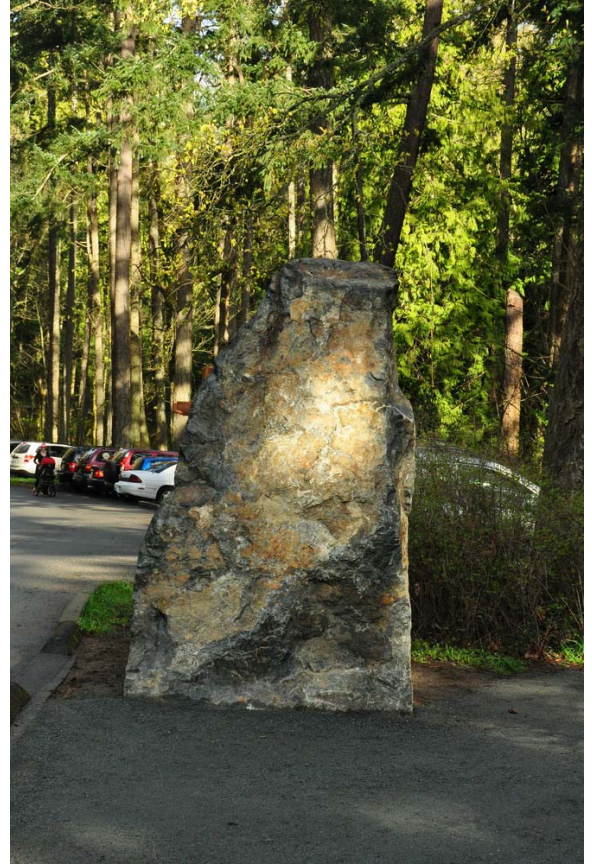
Later this year, there will be a rumble strip installed at each threshold. A new gate will replace the existing industrial gate.

Other improvements include moving the trash receptacle that previously was the main entrance focus and placing a "sitting rock" near the Charter Rock. Also, the Douglas Creek tributary as it flows under the kiosk has been cleaned up. An attractive arched rock bridge has replaced the plastic drain pipe.

At the end of the project, the signs at the entrance and along Churchill will be reviewed to determine what information is needed. One missing sign is for the speed through the parking area and along Churchill Drive. Earlier this year driving speed tests were conducted to identify appropriate speeds in the parking area taking into account cars backing out or turning around plus walkers. Tests were also performed along Churchill



Installation of Entrance Rock



Entrance Rock

Drive taking into consideration walkers, dogs and also family groups with children. A speed limit of 20 kmh was deemed a comfortable speed for both cars and walkers, especially in the upper two thirds of the drive. This speed matches the posted speed limit in the Borden Street Saanich yard, a similar area.

Salmon Carcass Transplant

This January, with the help of the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream, we held a



Coho fry arrive from hatchery



Good Toss!



A Full Load!

dual transplant event; 500 Coho fry were transplanted into Douglas Creek along with 100 salmon carcasses. Peter McCully gave an educational talk on the importance of these transplants and the value of salmon carcasses for the creek, the creek riparian area and the animals that inhabit it. Chum salmon are sometimes referred to as “nature’s fertilizer” as millions of these salmon die after



Coho Fry



It's heavier than it looks!

spawning in the creeks throughout the northwest providing essential nutrients. Goldstream provides a good example of this process; 20,000 returning salmon results in excess of 40,000 kg of carcasses. These not only provide essential nutrients for the creek water but also food for birds, animals and bugs that eat the carcasses. Many of these bugs then become food for the hatching salmon fry.

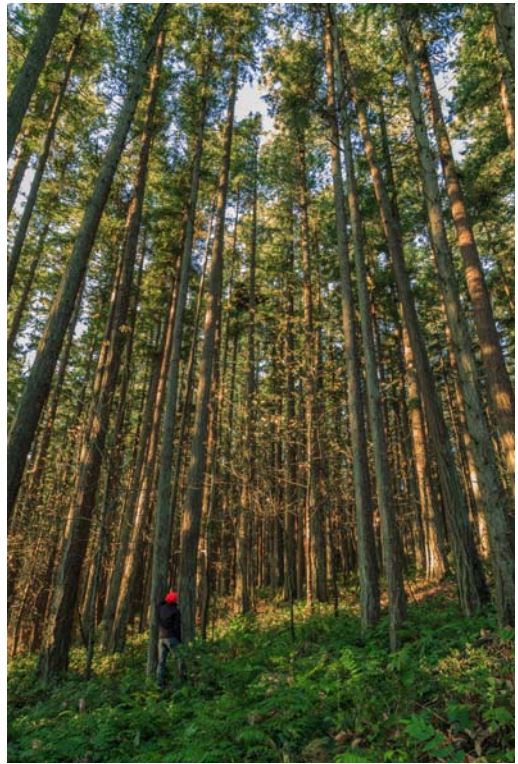
All the volunteer help, including from the many children, was very much appreciated. Overall, the event was a great success!

Invasive Work

The herculean efforts of our invasive group continue to make huge strides in ridding the Park of invasive species. But, as one walks through the Park, it isn't immediately obvious where they have removed the invasive plants to allow the natural vegetation to prosper. To truly appreciate these very impressive results, walk along the Glendenning Trail where the group has been working for the past couple of years. Half way along, between the trail start and its intersection with the Whittaker trail, look on the west side of the trail at the huge infestation of English Ivy and holly trees. But just a little further up the trail the invasive section ends and the cleared area begins. What a difference!



Early Spring Fauna



Reaching to the sky

Be sure to also notice the east side of the trail which was previously cleared and where the native plants have had a little more time to recover. Kudos to this group, under the direction of our Society director, Judy Spearing. Why not help out? Contact Judy at 250-472-0515. A schedule is on our web page under "Calendar of Events".

Crosswalks

We have made a request to Saanich Engineering for two crosswalks. One is for the Douglas Trail crossing of Ash Road, the second is for the trail crossing of Cedar Hill Road midway between Churchill Drive and Ash Road. Both requests have been turned down, mostly based on sight lines. We plan to continue our pursuit of these two crosswalks since both present crossing challenges for trail users, especially during rush hours when there is a continuous flow of traffic. Engineering did however, install pedestrian warning signs on each side of both crossing locations, but no actual crosswalk markings...yet.

Road Edges

As a society policy, roads through the Park should provide a natural forest atmosphere for road users. A good example is Cordova Bay Road. On the mountain side, vegetation extends right to the road edge. On the water side, vehicles



Mt. Baker on a clear day

driving off the pavement continually tear up the vegetation leaving vehicle tracks. The short first 50m section of Ash Road is even worse with deep vehicle ruts. Long time residents might remember this section of Ash Road once amounted to a de facto parking lot

until Saanich placed a rock border with plants, dramatically improving the Park ambience. On the stretch of Cordova Bay Road, what makes the difference between the hill side and the water side is the demarcation made by the moss covered curb on the hill side. We will continue to lobby



Victoria at dusk

Saanich to address the water side of Cordova Bay Road as well as the Ash Road section.

Additional Trash Receptacles

The two trash receptacles that were installed last fall, one at the summit parking area and a second on Churchill at the Irvine crossing, have helped reduce trash and especially doggie bag dumping. But dog poop, whether it is simply left where deposited, placed in a bag and left along the trail, or the very worst, placed in a bag and then thrown into the bush, remains one of the Parks biggest blights! It's time for dog owners to assume more responsibility!

Emptying the many hundreds of receptacles throughout the municipality is a considerable expense for Saanich and they are hesitant to install new receptacles just anywhere, especially in difficult to service locations. Our society is working with them to identify additional appropriate locations.

Parks 2015 Work Plan

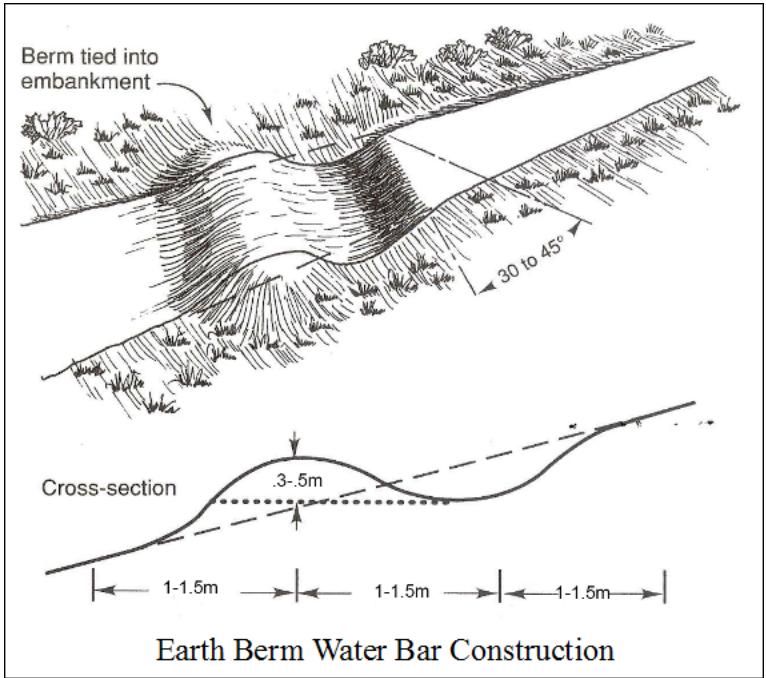
Saanich Parks has listed the following work plan for this year:

- **Upper Glendenning Trail:** This trail is likely in the worst condition of any trail within the Park and the entire south slope area is eroding. The Parks Dept. will develop a plan,

along with a budget, to repair this section of the Glendenning Trail, deal with the myriad of unofficial trails and stabilize the slope.

- **Trail water issues:** On the very occasional rainy day, some trails become a little muddy... Many mud holes are a result of trails not draining correctly, often because trail usage has created a trail hollow holding water. This will be addressed by digging drain trenches on the downhill side.

- **Trail erosion:** When it rains, many trails turn into creek beds causing significant erosion. Many parks elsewhere use some sort of metal or wood water bar to divert water away from the trail, but these often fill with debris and require regular maintenance. Saanich Parks prefers an earth berm water bar, that when properly constructed, tends to self clean. They tried this two years ago on the Irvine Trail, and last year on the Whittaker Trail near Cedar Hill, but in both cases the berms were too small and they all failed. Hopefully there will be better success this year.



New split cedar fence protects stream crossing



The view from the summit is never the same twice

maintained by Saanich versus shortcuts or other impromptu trails. Park usage has been increasing. To keep the Park as a nature preserve for all to enjoy, there has to be some control on the number of trails. Individual whims to wander and make private trails can no longer be supported. It only takes a few footsteps, especially in the winter, to trample plants, pack the soil and create a new trail. Saanich Parks, with our support, will be closing and restoring selected trails this year.

- **Invasive master plan:** Despite the super human efforts of our invasive removal team, the Park is huge and there is a lot to be done! Saanich will complete a master plan in 2015 for the removal of invasives throughout the Park. The plan will include the nature of invasives in different zones along with the effort to remove them from each zone. Zones, along with the type of invasive in each, with consideration for endangered species, will be prioritized.
- **Completion** of the Churchill Park entrance, Douglas Creek work and weir pond expansion are discussed elsewhere.

Pending Weir and Douglas Creek Work

Year four of our five year plan for Douglas Creek restoration work will continue this summer. The work will be in the upstream side of Ash Road. It will include bank stabilization. (There is a steep bank below the bench overlooking the Creek along the Douglas Trail that is being undercut.) The work also includes creation of new spawning beds and riffles.



Douglas Creek water measurements:
Temperature 9.4, Dissolved Oxygen 11.4 ppm, Saturation
102%, pH 7.4

Another component will be the enlargement and enhancement of the weir pond. The pond is being enlarged to slow the water down to form a settling pond for sand and silt arriving from road runoff. The existing pond has filled with sand and silt and will be dredged. In addition to the excavation work, invasives around the pond will be removed and the area restored with native vegetation.

We have made an application for a grant from the Pacific Salmon Foundation for this work. The past support from PSF has provided significant help and is very much appreciated.

40,000 Chum Eggs

In past years chum salmon fry have been transplanted to Douglas Creek from the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream. The hope has been that these fry will imprint the Douglas Creek watershed so that after their four year tour of the north Pacific, they would return back to Douglas Creek and spawn here. And many have done just that. What we



Digging a hole for the egg cassette.



Egg cassette inspector

don't know is, did some of those transplanted chum not fully imprint on Douglas Creek and instead return to Goldstream? Perhaps the imprinting begins even earlier in their life cycle? Hence the idea of bringing chum eggs to Douglas Creek so that the eggs hatch there.

In January, the hatchery helped us with 40,000 eggs. Through the efforts of Peter McCully at the hatchery and Bob Bridgeman, an egg cassette was fabricated that would hold the eggs, yet allow water to flow through it and also allow the chum alevins to swim out of the cassette into the surrounding gravel. The alevins remain in the gravel as they absorb their yolk sacks. After about a month, the alevins



Pouring the chum eggs into the cassette



Salmon chum eggs

emerge from the gravel as fry and soon start their journey down to the ocean. Estimates suggest the number of fry emerging from the gravel at less than 10% of the original spawned eggs. We hope for a little better results because these eggs were “hatchery selected and approved”!

Bus Stop Locations

Two bus stops for route 39, Royal Roads / Camosun / Royal Oak / Uvic, on Cordova Bay Rd located between Ash Road and the Irvine Trail crosswalk are, we believe, simply in the wrong location. There is no trail access to either stop location and worse, there is no place to stand and wait for the bus except in the bike lane.

These stops are the most convenient locations for those living in the northwest corner of Gordon Head in the general vicinity of Ash Road. Common destinations for bus patrons would be the Interurban campus of Camosun College or VIATECH in the west direction and UVic in the opposite direction. These riders would be walking to or from the stop from Ash Road, but the only trail access and the only crosswalk is in the wrong direction, further uphill along Cordova Bay Rd, beyond the bus stops. Without trail access or a crosswalk near the bus stop, transit users are tempted to j-walk across Cordova Bay at the bus stop. The only other option is to walk along the busy road back up to the official crosswalk. Neither option is an acceptable solution.

The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society have requested that the two bus stops be moved next to the Irvine Trail crosswalk so that there is trail access and a crosswalk adjacent to the stops. We have also requested that a safe waiting area be created.

Old Tower Base Removal

Around 1992 when the Park was transferred to Saanich, plans included the installation of the communications building and tower right on top of the southeast summit. The Friends of Mount Douglas Park made strong objection to a large ugly building to be located on this summit. We initiated the idea of burying the building under the summit parking lot and proposed



Old unused tower base has to go!

this to Saanich. The idea was accepted, but the tower base that had already been constructed was too far from the new building location, necessitating a new tower base at the current communications tower location. The old unused base still remains as an eyesore on the otherwise beautiful natural summit.

We have lobbied since 1992 for the removal of this old unused base and have finally achieved agreement with Saanich. We understand the technique to remove it involves drilling holes in the concrete, then filling the holes with an expanding mixture that causes the concrete to crack and break apart.

PSF Grant – Measuring Creek Flow Volumes

We are pleased to announce that we have received a \$927 grant from the Pacific Salmon Foundation. With an additional \$1000 from our own funds, making a total of \$1927, the funds will be applied to the installation of a creek flow meter in Douglas Creek to measure water flow volumes. This is a joint project between the Friends of Mount Douglas Creek, the CRD and Saanich.

The meter measures water depth. Through calculations provided by the CRD, depth readings correlate to flow volumes. Data from the meter will be transmitted in real-time to the CRD providing live information. The CRD has several such water flow measuring systems located in other streams.

The long term goal is to provide data indicating the success of storm water surge reduction efforts. Storm surge reduction techniques include rain gardens, street swales, downspout disconnects and limits on impervious surfaces. The plan is to correlate the flow volumes to watershed rain fall values that would provide measures of success of the various techniques.



Stream creatures

Bench Locations and Policy

Our Society has approached Saanich Parks with an offer to donate funds towards the installation of several new benches. We are looking at possible locations where one can sit and enjoy a beautiful view such as the bluff along the new Blenkinsop trail overlooking the Blenkinsop Valley. Another possible location might be as a resting place such as where the Irvine Trail crosses Churchill Drive. Currently there are thirteen benches in Mount Douglas Park.



Good location for a bench to enjoy the view

Saanich has changed the policy related to inscriptions on all benches. Instead of an “in memory” type message, future messages will be along the lines of “enjoy the view”, “have a rest” or something similar. Earlier, donations were essentially for the life of the bench. The new policy states an explicit ten year life. Since benches generally don't last much longer than ten years and in some locations even less than 10 years, the new timeline isn't a big policy change.

Way-finding in the Park

Over the past couple of years, way-finding in the Park has seen significant improvements. Our Society walked all of the trails and produced GPS tracks of each one. Using that data, both Saanich and our Society have produced trail maps. Specifically:

- A printable trail map is available on our web site.
- Saanich has installed way-finding posts at every official trail intersection within the Park, a total of 90 posts! We provided help by confirming signage for each location prior to the manufacture of the posts.
- The small map kiosks at several locations within the Park have been updated with the latest trail map.



Updated trail map

- A new information kiosk with a large trail map and other information has been installed as part of the Churchill Drive Park entrance project. The same map with information



Park Friends

has been installed at the beach parking lot.

- Our Society has produced a smart phone app map that shows the trails and, most important, shows your current location within the Park. This can be downloaded from either our website or the Saanich web site.



End of winter sun is welcome

- Two trails, Irvine and South Ridge, have been marked with way-finding posts, cubes and plates attached to rocks. It appears this improved way-finding has encouraged walkers to stay on the trail. Unfortunately there are still a number of people that feel that they can trample anywhere they wish.

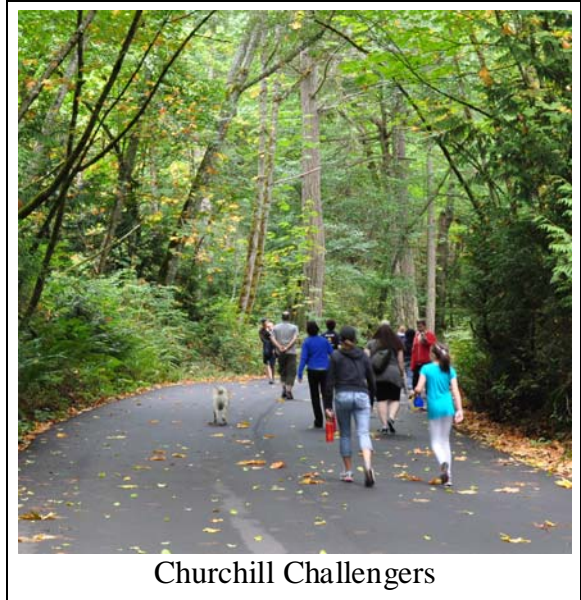
Matt's Corner

There are lots of different types of people who like to hike up to the top of Mt. Doug. But after a while, you begin to notice a pattern in the type of people. Below is a summary of the eight different types of people you'll see when hiking to the top of Mount Doug.

1. The Chatters - These are the people who walk together in groups to the top of the mountain and spend the entire time chatting. For them, the hike is less about the physical activity and beautiful surroundings, and more about the social activity. They are often so caught up in their conversation that they don't even realize they've reached the summit. When these people return home from the hike and reflect on their day, they don't remember the hike, but instead on the quality time and conversations they had with

their friends or family.

2. The Racers - These are the people who are climbing to the summit for the single purpose of improving their fitness. Whether it's trying to lose weight or training for a marathon, these people have their eyes on the prize which is to turn their body into a temple. You can quickly identify The Racers as they usually have earphones on, are wearing technicolor shoes and are dripping with sweat. These are also the people that are taking selfies of themselves at the summit and are using their smartphones to let everyone know what they're doing #NewPB #FeelsGood #ShowerTime".



Churchill Challengers

3. The Repeaters - The Repeaters are similar to The Racers, except they go up and down the mountain several times consecutively. If you're walking up the mountain then you'll typically say hello to a Repeater at least four times as they pass you in both directions. Sometimes, if you're really lucky, you'll even spot a Repeater wearing or carrying some additional weights to increase the resistance. Repeaters refer to this as "fun".

4. Stroller-Pushers - The Stroller-Pushers are the people who are pushing strollers with children up the mountain. They are usually moms or dads and commonly travel in groups of other Stroller-Pushers. Stroller-Pushers have the unique skill of being able to simultaneously push the stroller, give their child a snack and pick up the hat that the child keeps tossing onto the ground. Most people think that pushing the stroller up the mountain is the hardest part. But the truth is, that coming down the road is much harder as the Stroller-Pushers become the Stroller-Holder-On-For-Dear-Lifers.

5. The Bikers - These are the people that ride their bicycle to the top of the mountain. Their bicycles are typically worth more than most peoples' cars and they are usually wearing an outfit that leaves little to the imagination. They often travel in packs and sometimes mistake Mt. Doug for the Alps as they chase each other to the top. Sometimes you'll even see one wearing a yellow jersey.

6. The Naturalists - These are the people that are there to experience nature. They're

regularly pausing to observe a plant, tree or vista and referencing it in their journals. One of them usually has an expensive SLR camera slung over their shoulders which they are using to take pictures of absolutely everything. They are usually wearing brand new hiking boots and a vest with lots of pockets. Tilly hats are also very commonly seen.

7. The Tourists - These are the people from out of town who arrived in a car expecting an easy drive to the summit only to find out that the road is closed until noon. Therefore their only choice is to walk. They are usually wearing jeans, inappropriate shoes and carrying no water. You can spot these people easily as they are usually panting and resting on one of the benches half way up. When the Tourists do reach the summit they typically fall to their knees screaming "Hallelujah" and then desperately lick the water out of a rainpool.

8. The Inspirators - These are the people who are inspiring other people to be more active. They are most commonly senior citizens who regularly hike the mountain at a speed that exceeds what is expected for someone in their age group. They are a walking and talking reminder that if you take care of your body, your body will take care of you. If you see an Inspirator, don't forget to say hello.



Camas

Honourable mention goes to dog walkers, short-cutters and that guy who does it shirtless during the middle of winter.

What kind are you?

Thanks to Matt Boyd for the above article, to Mark Vukobrat for several photos and to all the many volunteers!



Easter lilies along Irvine Trail

Board of Directors

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At-large	Matt Boyd	1571 Craigiwood Court	V8N 5Y3	813-0102
At-large	Nancy Lewthwaite	1559 Mt Douglas X Road	V8N 1Z9	658-0763

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

Send or deliver to: Treasurer, Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society
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Colour versions of newsletters are available on website.