

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society



Spring 2016

Douglas Creek

Annual General Meeting May 4

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Annual General Meeting

Wednesday May 4, 2016, 7:30pm, Feltham Room, Gordon Head Recreation Centre

Speaker: Eva Riccius, Saanich Senior Parks Manager

Nominations: Contact Claude Maurice at 250-598-7407 before May 2.

Park Access Study

Saanich Parks has initiated a Mount Douglas Park access study as directed by Council. Our Society received an invitation to join this study: "As some of you are aware, parking restrictions along Glendenning Road leading into Mount Douglas Park were phased in through 2015. These restrictions followed discussions with the Blenkinsop Valley Community Association regarding concerns about damage to the trail and tree roots along the west side of the road. Further investigation led to concerns regarding public safety vehicle access, resulting in the restrictions that are currently in place."

"Council heard from a number of park users that the restrictions now negatively affect their access and experience in the park. Staff have been directed to prepare a report to address access to Mount Douglas Park. A key outcome is to develop options that minimize impacts to the special character of the park and its access routes. Our goal is to present the report to Council in November 2016."

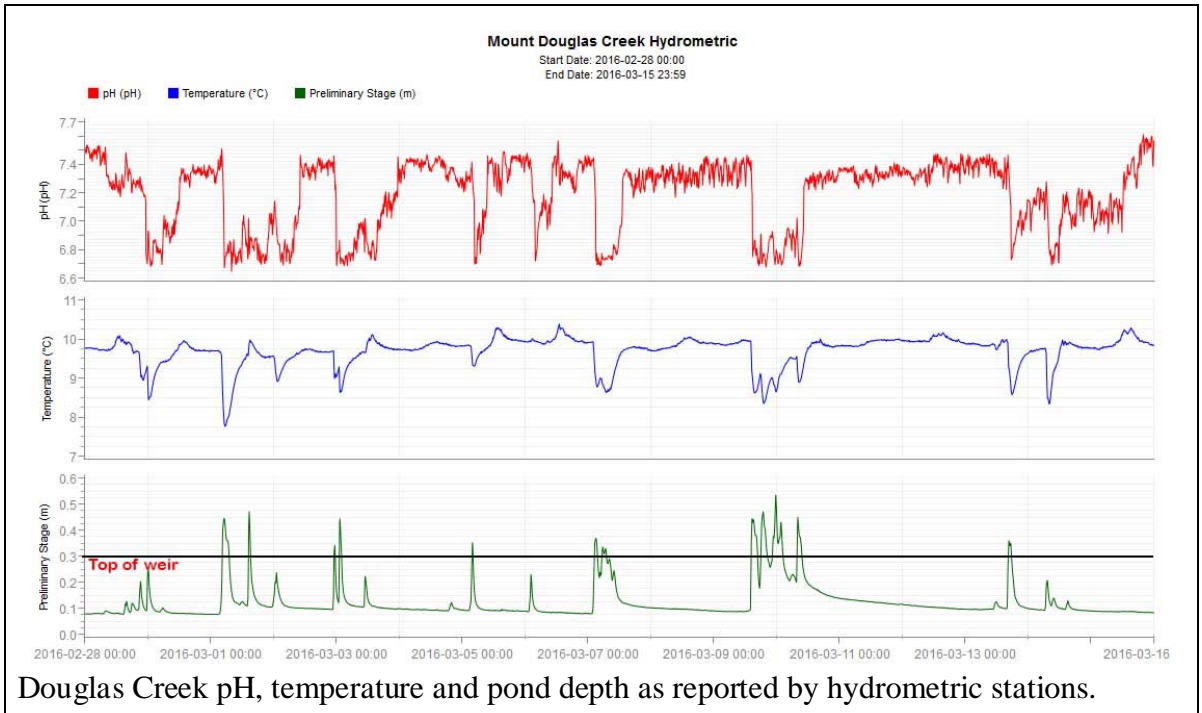
"To achieve this goal, we would like to establish a Project Advisory Team comprised of staff and citizen representatives from various key stakeholder groups. We are inviting your group to participate on the team by providing a representative."

New Hydrometric Station

Sensors measuring water temperature, pH and water depth were installed earlier this year at the weir where Douglas Creek enters the Park. A conversion table will provide a



Storm surge at the weir. The scale shows the depth is 40cm above the top of the weir.



correlation between water depth and water flows providing a measure of the storm surge volumes. The data is uploaded every four hours so that the values can be monitored.

This hydrometric station was a joint project between our Society, the Capital Regional District and Saanich Parks with partial funding from the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

The next step will hopefully be a correlation between rainfall within the creek catchment area and creek water flows that would provide a measure of the success of various mitigation techniques such as downspout disconnects, rain gardens and street swales.

Anecdotally, there appears to be an increase



CRD's Dale Green accepts \$1000 from Society treasurer Graham Shorthill & President Darrell Wick for the hydrometric station. \$927 was from a PSF grant.

in non-permeable surfaces within Gordon Head which both increases runoff surge volumes and decreases water table levels. It would be good if Saanich had stronger regulations related to percentage of non-permeable surface areas.

Old Tower Base Removed!

It took 25 years, but it's gone!

Back in the early 1990's, the plan was to locate the communication site building on the south summit. A base for the tower was constructed near where the building was to be located. Our Society successfully lobbied to hide the building under the summit parking lot instead of making an eyesore on the summit itself. But this already built tower base was too far from the new building location, so another base was constructed and the tower erected at its present location.

Contractors used large diameter saws to cut this old tower base with its reinforcing steel rods into manageable blocks. To avoid any



Cutting saw in action



Crane used to remove old tower debris and lift top soil to summit.

damage to the surrounding natural areas, they loaded all the pieces and other debris into ten very large container bags on-site. A crane then lifted the bags from the summit to a waiting container in the parking lot. At the same time, the crane also lifted several bags of top soil to remediate the site. It was a very well executed operation!



Large saw blade used to cut old tower base into manageable cubes.

Glendenning Trail Repairs

The steep, upper section of the Glendenning Trail is in the worst shape of any of the Park trails. Starting from the summit parking lot, the trail basically follows the course of a creek bed which water has severely eroded. About mid-way down, the base turns to sand where the walkers push the sand downhill with each step and the washouts from heavy rains have created deep ravines with exposed tree roots.

A contractor with trail expertise surveyed the existing trail and made some recommendations about potential remediation. Later discussions determined that a hydrologist report was necessary as any successful trail remediation was dependent upon eliminating the water erosion issues. The hydrology report is expected in the next couple of weeks.

Severe Trail Water Damage

A lack of trail water control combined with several heavy rains this winter resulted in significant trail damage and erosion in several locations. The most significant was at the junction of the Southridge and Harrop Trails where a two metre drop-off and deep ravine was created. Walkers along the Whittaker Trail below this area can see the resulting very large sand mounds. Although not as severe, there were similar water erosion areas along the Glendenning Trail.

There hasn't been any water control work done on the Park trails in the past many years. The combination of rains and increased numbers of walkers has resulted in trail depressions forming water channels. Instead of the rain water dispersing to the sides of



Normal Douglas Creek Flows



High Water Storm Surge

trails, it's now channelled to flow down the trail, increasing in volume the further it flows. This is what happened on the South Ridge Trail where the channelled water within the trail was essentially draining the entire slope and the water volume simply washed out a huge ravine.

What is urgently needed is water control diversions at frequent intervals along these trails to get the water off the trail as soon as possible.

Water control for trail mud sections also needs to be addressed. Walkers try to go around these mud sections, either widening the trail or creating bypass trails. The mud sections are there only because of a trail depression with no escape channel for the water but, in many cases, a little shovel work can provide a drain channel eliminating the muddy section. Our Society has raised this issue with Saanich Parks and has been requesting this work.

Porta Potty at Lower Churchill

Saanich Parks intends to install a porta potty in the vicinity of the Churchill lower parking lot. It will be somewhat hidden by some sort of cedar fencing. At this time, we don't know exactly what it will look like, nor its planned location.

Classroom Incubation Program

Fisheries and Oceans Canada sponsors a Stream to Sea Program in Capital Regional District schools. Schools receive subsidized incubation equipment and annually receive salmon eggs. Within the classroom setting, they monitor the various parameters such as water temperature and oxygen content so that the eggs hatch, alevins appear with their food sacks and eventually become salmon fry. Douglas Creek is one of the local creeks where the students release their fry, usually in the April time frame.

Churchill Park Entrance Project

The final components of the Churchill Park Entrance Project (20th Anniversary Project) are expected to be completed this year. Already completed are the kiosk, entrance, charter and sitting rocks. Remaining are the three rumble strips and the replacement of the industrial gate with a leaf gate.



Society director Claude Maurice stands in water eroded ravine at lower end of Southridge Trail.

\$10,000 Cheque for Saanich

Susan Bryce, as chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee and on behalf of the municipality, accepted a cheque for \$10,000 from our Society for last summer's creek restoration work. \$8400 was from a Pacific Salmon Foundation grant, the remainder was from our Society's funds as a contribution for the creek work and also the hydrometric station installation.

Salmon Carcass & Coho Parr Transplants

January saw one hundred salmon carcasses from the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream, brought to Mount Douglas Park and tossed into Douglas Creek by several dozen keen young and not-so-young helpers. Peter McCulley, from the Hatchery, again presented an entertaining explanation of the event purpose; to mimic nature where salmon die after spawning, providing needed nutrients for the water and food for the many creek critters.

At the same time, the hatchery brought five hundred Coho parr which were released in the creek. The Coho parr differ from the



Saanich Councillor Susan Bryce accepts \$10,000 cheque on behalf of Saanich from FMDPS President Darrell Wick and Society Treasurer Graham Shorthill, thanks to funding from Pacific Salmon Foundation.



Ready for the toss!



Mine's bigger than yours!



Netting fry from hatchery transport tank



Remember these – they'll be back in 4 years



Just prior to Peter McCulley's "why transplant dead fish?" welcome talk



Impressed!

chum fry in that the Coho will stay in the creek for a number of months before migrating to the ocean whereas the chum leave the creek within a week or so. We hope to see them again in about four years!

Invasive Report, Fall / Winter 2015-16

The Invasive Species group cleared a lot of territory last Fall, working mainly on the last section of parkland on the southeast side of the Park, (between Winchester Road, Parkside Crescent and Glendenning Trail). In addition to the usual invasive plant species there was a lot of human detritus in the southernmost part of this section. We found remains of a very rusted old vehicle, an extension ladder, some plastic patio chairs, etc. So a lot of garbage had to be hauled out by volunteers and Parks staff to truly restore the area. There are also many enormous Holly trees in this area, all to be “treated” by Parks staff as cutting them down alone will not kill them. Once this is done more native tree species can be planted in this area to infill as the Holly dies off.

In January, the group moved to the section east of Cedar Hill Road that includes Douglas Creek and associated tributaries. This section was cleared 10 years ago by Dick Battles so this is a secondary sweep to clear regrowth. It's very slow work in this section as there's a lot of “blow down” of trees and branches and accumulated tree debris piled up during the restoration of the Creek's 3 tributaries. Volunteers have to be especially careful of the beautiful native vegetation in this section of the Park. Additionally, we have to work around hundreds of small shrubs and trees planted during two Tree Appreciation Day events held over the past 3-4 years, after the tributaries restoration was completed.

Other ongoing work is happening near Mercer Trail, in from Blenkinsop Road, with large volumes of ivy removed. Another area being restored through Broom removal lies along Todd Trail as it heads toward Little Mt Doug. And last, but not least, many hours have been spent working in an area between Mercer Trail and Madrona Farm. Ivy, a few holly, and thousands of Daphne have kept Dick Battles very busy in this area.

Spring 2016 signals the start of the 10th year of Garlic Mustard removal in Mt Douglas Park. Who knew it would last this long? But, once again, volunteers are hoping to see a marked reduction in infestation as this has been the case every year since 2009, (2007 and 2008 being the worst years), but time will tell.

As ever, new/more volunteers are needed and all skill and ability levels are welcome!

The Last Word

Naturally, the best place to enjoy Mount Doug Park, is to be within Mount Doug Park. Whether it be at the summit, at the beach or along one of the many trails, the park provides no shortage of spectacular natural experiences. While the park is beautiful within, it is also a spectacular sight to see from other parts of the South Island. With the mountain standing tall in the background, the park provides endless photo opportunities from almost everywhere in Victoria.

Here is list of the top five places to enjoy Mount Doug Park, that aren't actually in Mount Doug Park:

1. From the Lambrick Park Sports Fields. Mount Doug provides the perfect backdrop for the athletes and spectators at the fields. During a summer sunset baseball game, or rainy November soccer game, the mountain stoically and faithfully sits in the background.

2. From Mount Tolmie: The other popular summit in Victoria is Mount Tolmie, which provides an amazing vista view of Mount Doug Park. My natural tendency whenever at the summit is to wave to Mount Doug summit assuming that there is someone else on the other side waving back. It's also fun to imagine how a peak-to-peak gondola might work!

3. From a Downtown Victoria Condo: Most people searching for a condo downtown are looking for a water view. But the savvy ones are also looking for a northern view so that they can regularly look out at Mount Doug. Like Ayers Rock in Australia, Mount Doug can sometimes change colours throughout the day: from the foggy crispness of dawn to the alpenglow of the sunset. Imagine seeing that everyday from your bedroom window?

4. From Cordova Bay Beach: One of the best parts about living on Vancouver Island is the perpetually endless supply of gorgeous beaches. One of the best on the South Island is Cordova Bay, which on a warm summer day can feel like you're on a beach in California (until you put your feet into the ice cold water). The added bonus of this beach is the view of the north side of Mount Doug.

5. From a Harbour Air Float Plane: Not necessarily the cheapest view, but easily the most magnificent. If you're lucky enough to fly to or from Vancouver via the float plane, then you'll understand just how special it is to see the park from a bird's eye view. With the float planes you fly high enough to get a great view, but you're still low enough to identify landmarks and geographical details. It's amazing how small everything looks from that perspective.

Board of Directors

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Vice President	Claude Maurice	2200 Lorne Terrace	V8S 2H8	598-7407
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At-large	Matt Boyd	1571 Craigiewood Court	V8N 5Y3	516-4142
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

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