

Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

Fall - Spring 2016-17

It's been a white winter!

Annual General Meeting May 3, 2017

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Annual General Meeting

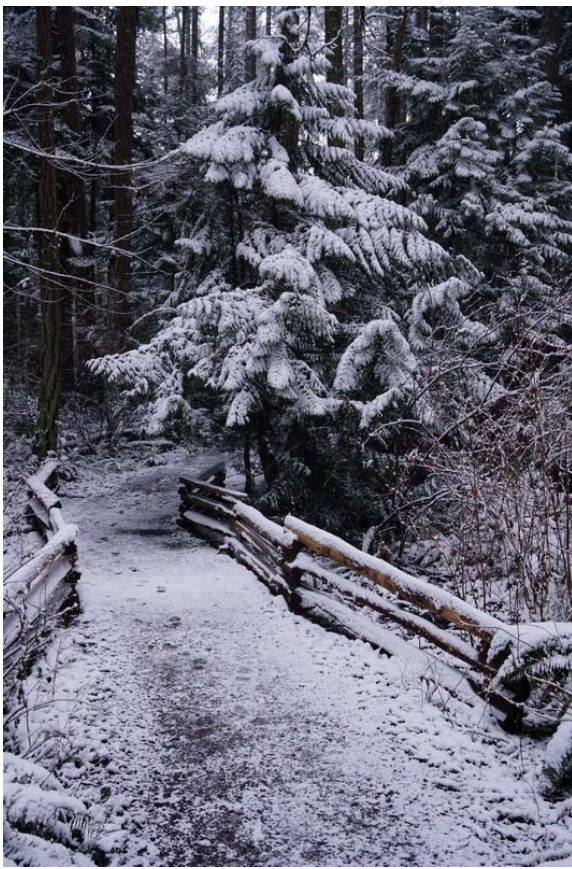
Wednesday May 3, 2017, 7:30pm, Feltham Room, Gordon Head Recreation Centre

Speaker: Suzanne Samborski, Director, Saanich Parks & Recreation

Nominations: Contact Nancy Lewthwaite at 250-658-0763 before May 1.

Notice of motion. We are not required to have an official audit, hence we may avoid that extra expense by having a "verifier" followed by board and then AGM approval of the financial statement. This entails replacing section 7.1 of our constitution:

7.1-old: The accounts of the Society shall be audited at the end of each fiscal year and the Board of Directors shall recommend to the Annual General Meeting an auditor or auditors for the ensuing year. The end of the fiscal year shall be the 31st day of December of each year.



Snow drifts at the summit.



Snow on the summit trail

7.1-new: The accounts of the Society shall be verified at the end of each fiscal year and the Board of Directors shall recommend to the Annual General Meeting one or more verifiers for the ensuing year. A verifier shall be a member in good standing who is not a member of the board. The end of the fiscal year shall be the 31st day of December of each year.

Summer Creek Restoration Project



Work begins with a safety meeting to review the day's work and to identify any potential safety hazards, who will be the first aid attendant and where the first-aid kits and the spill kits will be located.



Saanich Creeks & Waterways installs a temporary dam to keep the work area dry. Creek water is then pumped from this pond around the work area.

Creek restoration work was done during the summer “fisheries window”. The restoration area was the creek section near the Edgemont Road Park entrance. We had hoped to finish restoration on the entire creek this year, but that last section was more difficult than expected. The large shovels couldn't traverse the narrow sections with steep creek banks. This meant another access would have had to be constructed for the shovels and the trucks bringing the large rocks and tree root balls. There simply wasn't sufficient time within the schedule, so this last creek section restoration close to the weir was rescheduled for summer 2017.



One “shovel” places tree stumps for salmon habitat while the other places large rocks to protect the banks from further erosion.



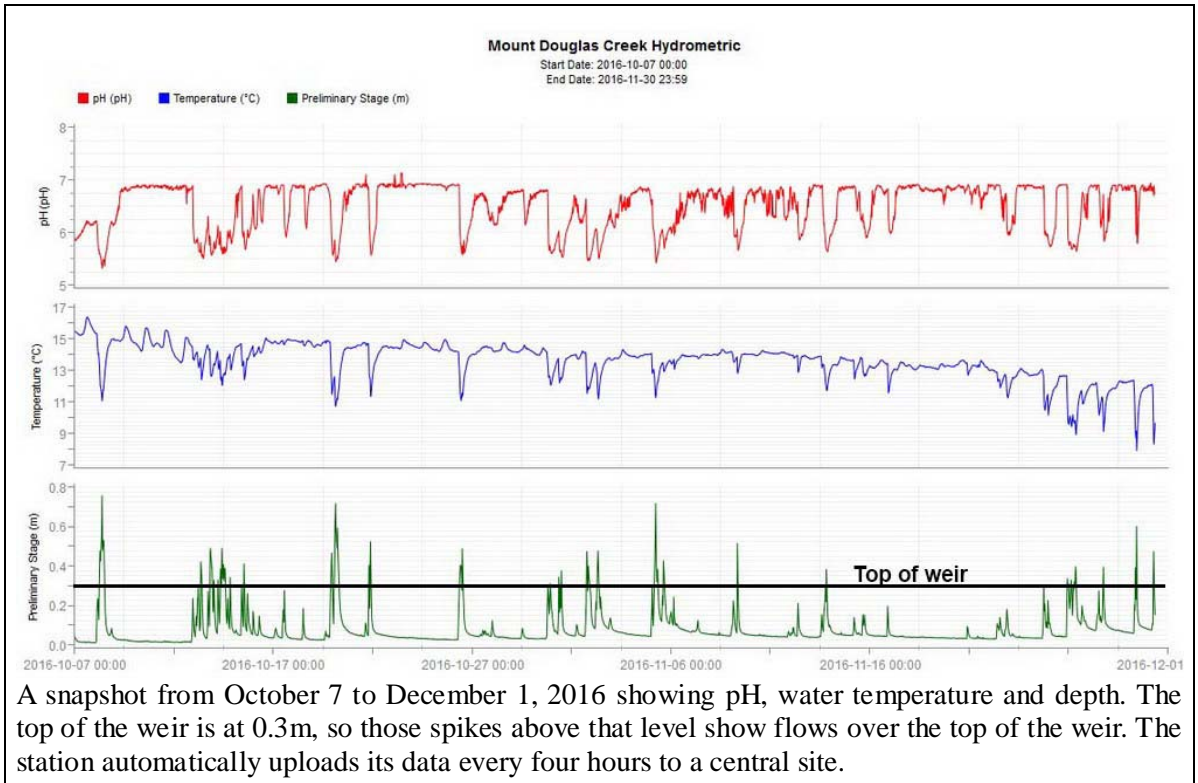
Each stump and tree root ball must be anchored with cables to an adjacent large rock. Without these cables, the first storm surge will wash away the root ball.



A view from the Irving Trail, looking beyond Cormorant Point towards Mt. Baker

Hydrometric Recording

A hydrometric station was installed at the weir last year. It measures water pH, temperature and water depth. Water depth provides a correlation to the volume of water flowing in the creek and potentially provides a measure of improvements related to reducing the storm surges. Damaging storm water surges can be reduced with rain gardens, street swales, downspout disconnects and impervious surface reductions.



A snapshot from October 7 to December 1, 2016 showing pH, water temperature and depth. The top of the weir is at 0.3m, so those spikes above that level show flows over the top of the weir. The station automatically uploads its data every four hours to a central site.

Riparian Restoration

There were two temporary creek accesses from the Churchill Trail down to the creek. These were used by the shovels to get into the creek and also for the many dump truck loads of large rock and root balls. Restoration planting of these accesses was done after the rains started in November. One access was replanted by students from Braefoot Elementary School, the other by the 10th Garry Oak Scouts. A special thanks to both groups!



Rich Hatch from Saanich Parks Urban Forest Section shows Braefoot Elementary School students the finer points of tree planting and site restoration.



Braefoot Elementary students did a super restoration planting.



Scout leader Rick Hatch shows 10th Garry Oak Scouts how best to prepare potted plants for planting.



We did it! It's all replanted!

New Bike Racks

There is now a total of 5 bike racks at various Park entrances. They are located at the beach parking area, lower Churchill Drive parking, summit parking area, Glendenning Park entrance and the Blenkinsop Parking lot.

Limited Mobility Parking

As a result of the 2016 Mount Douglas Park Access Study, Council authorized additional limited mobility parking locations. When installed, there will be a total of six reserved spots. Two each at the beach parking and the summit parking areas, and one each at the lower Churchill lot and the Glendenning entrance lot.

Dumping in the Parks

Sadly, people still dump their trash and garden waste in the Park. The trash can be picked up, at a cost to taxpayers and to the Park's budget, money that could be better used for improvements. But the very serious Park threat is from those that dump garden waste. Invariably it contains seeds or roots and simply cannot be 100% picked up. Soon these "garden escapees" sprout and the invasive plants spread. These invasives are one of the biggest threats to the Park's natural environment.



New bike rack now at beach parking lot. There are now racks at 5 Park entrances.



A lawn mower dumped in Douglas Creek.
Report dumping to 250-475-5522 or
ParksAdmin@saanich.ca

Illegal Mushroom Collections

Fall is a special time in the Park when the fall rains bring the diverse crop of mushrooms. They really are photogenic. But it's unfortunate that a few Park visitors are either unaware or choose to ignore a Saanich bylaw prohibiting this collection. *"No person...shall remove any sand, soil, plants, tree, wood, log or other matter from a park"*.

It's not just mushrooms. Every spring a few feel entitled to collect fern fiddleheads, also contravening the bylaw and subject to bylaw fines.



Someone had collected all of these mushrooms the day after this photo was taken.



Carcass Transplant

The 2017 Douglas Creek Carcass Transplant was possibly the best yet. We had around 70 participants and well over 100 carcasses. We are indebted to the Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream for the carcasses and their on-going support of our Douglas Creek restoration.

Peter McCully from the hatchery provided us with an entertaining and educational overview of the importance of these carcasses in the restoration process and how it mimics natural processes in other streams. Also, a big thank-you to the volunteers from the hatchery for their work there and also for bringing the carcasses and their help at the event.

A long time local resident reported that in the early 1960s the creek was full of spawning salmon and also cutthroat trout, but that was when the Gordon Head watershed was mostly farmland where rain soaked into the ground replenishing the water table. Urbanization started shortly after that, along with impermeable streets and rooftops sending rain water into the storm pipe system causing huge surges that washed out all the spawning beds and eroded the stream banks. Our restoration efforts have been armoring the banks to stop the erosion and creating new gravel spawning pools.



Some of the 100 carcass successfully transplanted, thanks to Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream



I want to take this one home!

FMDPS Provides \$10,000 to Saanich

Saanich Councillor Dean Murdoch, chair of the Parks & Rec committee accepted a cheque for \$10,000 on behalf of Saanich for creek restoration work last summer. The funds are from a grant from the Pacific Salmon Foundation. PSF funding support and also project endorsement have been instrumental in the successful restoration, now with salmon returning every year; thank you PSF!

Invasive Progress by Judy Spearing

From January to August 2016, the Invasives Species volunteers focused on reworking a large section of Park between Cedar Hill Road and Douglas Trail; from Churchill Drive to Ash Road. This area was previously cleared some 10 years ago but was in need of another visit to deal with regrowth from old root remnants.

In the Summer we were fortunate to receive an offer of help from student members of the Claremont High School Community Services group. These young people contacted us before their school year ended to make plans to work and then they followed through on their promise. With help from their families, they made their way each week to the Park to work alongside our regular volunteers in spite of the heat, dust, and insects. At the same time we also received help from some UVic students and a young Environmental Engineer, newly arrived from her home country of Columbia. It was a pleasure to have these young people join us, with their energy and sincere enthusiasm for the environment.

Having finished the slow process of a secondary sweep over this large area, our volunteers opted to move to a new site not



Councillor Dean Murdock accepts a cheque from our Society for \$10,000. Thanks to the Pacific Salmon Foundation grant for the majority of that money.



Camas

previously cleared. And so, work started in September by the Seaview Motel on Cordova Bay Road. From this point, we are slowly moving south, in a swath adjacent to Cordova Bay Road. When we reach Churchill Drive we'll move a little further into the park, turn around, and work north to the motel again, clearing another swath, and so on. There's plenty of English Ivy, Holly, non native Blackberry, Daphne Laureola, non-native bulbs, et al, in this section of the Park to keep us working to the end of 2017 and beyond.

We've made good progress so far at this new site, removing masses of Ivy, with our most intrepid worker, Dick Battles, leading the charge! As we clear invasives, we are also adding back native plants, if needed. And Saanich Parks has added some attractive, protective split rail fencing around the newly planted areas, where necessary.

And now, as we work this month of March, we are seeing an abundance of Fawn Lily leaves emerging in the newly cleared areas. Their bulbs have been in the soil just waiting for someone to lift the thick blanket of Ivy off and let more light in so they can bloom!



Fawn Lilys

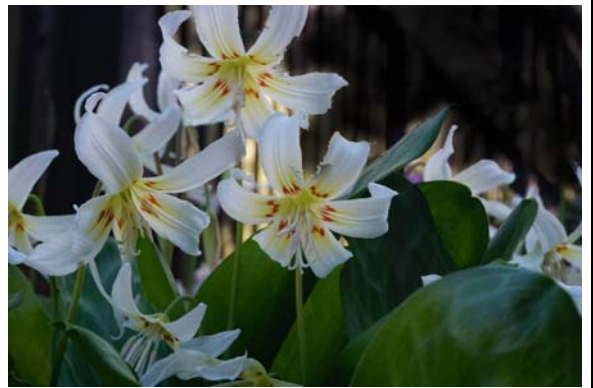
With climate change bringing longer periods of warmer, drier weather we are rethinking how we work. We think we will incorporate more frequent plantings, as we move through an area, vs clearing a very large area and then replanting. We hope this will see faster regeneration of native under-story with reduced loss of ground moisture that can occur during restoration work. Time will tell.

Increasing the frequency of replanting may also serve to prevent degradation of cleared areas in other ways. Experience has shown, over the past 10 years, as we open up an area through the removal of invasive plant species, other "invasive species" move in, often with dramatic effect. These other invasive species may be non-native weed seeds and plants

which only creates more work down the road. Other invasive species are humans and canines who often see a cleared area and, without realizing the harm they do, cut through the cleared parkland, compacting the soil and trampling recovering native plants underfoot. Soon this becomes habit and an unofficial trail is created, removing all the native vegetation and habitat that was once there. It's amazing the pounds per square inch of pressure that a dog or person applies as they walk and even more when they are running. So, to minimize these unintentional but unfortunate incursions into the understory we need to find creative ways to deter this action. Working in smaller sections with rapid replanting, (with protective fencing?), may be one answer.

In 2016 volunteers chalked up a total of 1730 worked hours in Mt Douglas Park! That's a lot of effort!

We currently have a total of 9 regular volunteers who work as often as they can, Thursday mornings. As hard as we work we still need many new volunteers to continue on with this necessary work. Nine volunteers is not a lot of people for such a large park. There's lots to be done with a variety of tasks to accommodate most levels of mobility, whether it's uprooting Ivy or simply cutting Ivy from trees to slow its spread, digging up non native bulbs or removing invasive annuals. We provide tools, gloves, and instruction on site.



Spring Fawn Lilys



Glendenning Trail Restoration

The Park trail in the most need for restoration is likely the upper steep section of the Glendenning Trail from the Harrop Trail junction up to the summit parking area. The lower half of this trail is suffering from extreme sand erosion. If you've walked this section, no doubt you've seen the very exposed tree roots where all of the surrounding soil has sloughed away. The upper half is no better, but suffers from a different problem. It's very rocky, the rocks have limited the erosion, but have channelled water so that it is mostly a creek during the wet months.



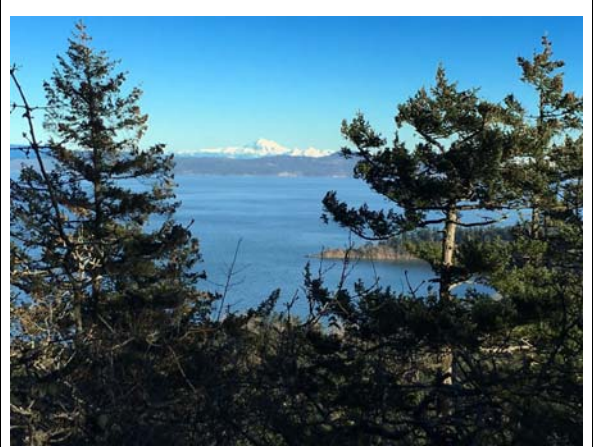
Water bar recently installed on Glendenning Trail near summit.

A good solution is still under study. A consulting company with trail building experience was hired to survey the trail and make recommendations. They provided a lot of good data but their suggestion to construct stairs for that entire trail section didn't seem to fit the character of that trail nor of the Park.

Water control plays a large role in the problem and Saanich is examining how best to divert the water from the trail while not creating a new erosion problem caused by the diverted water. Frequent water diversion bars that would minimize the amount of water



It seems every Halloween, the number of pumpkins increases!



diverted at any one location are being tested. As this newsletter goes to press, there is active work in progress installing water bars as well as cutting out some steps in a couple rock faces for steps. Split rail fences will be installed in areas where the trail has the greatest widths so it can be narrowed down and pocket steps can be created.

Newsletter Editor Sought!

You likely noticed we missed our usual fall newsletter. With all the Park activities last fall, our editor simply ran out of time. Hopefully this combined newsletter meets your approval. But we do need a new editor and hopefully you will consider the opportunity! Please contact any of our directors for more information.



Please report spills to 1-800-663-3456. Residents need to know that in many cases Saanich can trace spills back to the source and that the entire spill cleanup costs are charged back to those responsible for the spill.



New safety railings at the weir

Parks News

A porta-potty has been installed at the lower Churchill parking lot.

The final enhancements for the lower Churchill Park entrance project include three rumble strips to slow traffic as it leaves the Shelbourne speedway and enters the Churchill parking area. The new gate details are still being discussed.

Speed-limits along Churchill Drive to the summit are 25 kmh. Signs to that effect along with signs alerting drivers to the many walkers are being installed. Although most vehicles travel this road at reasonable speeds, it still serves as a hill climbing car performance test drive for too many!

Initial ideas for improvements to the summit parking area and a new kiosk are being discussed. The kiosk will likely be somewhat similar to the lower Churchill kiosk and include a trail map along with some of the interesting summit history, such as the secret military radio direction finding site there during WWII.



Senior Parks Manager, Eva Riccius (left) with new Parks & Recreation Director Suzanne Samborski. The two examined many of the Park trails on a recent hike. Suzanne will be the guest speaker at our May AGM.



Morning Churchill Drive walkers



Along the lower Irvine Trail

Our Society participated in last summer's Mount Douglas Park Access Study. The full Access Study report is available on the Saanich web site. A couple recommendations, such as additional limited mobility parking and bike racks will soon be implemented.



Enjoying the view of Cordova Bay from the summit.



Lone tree on Little Mt Douglas



Fall and Spring



Camas



Salmon Coho Parr Transplant

Late February, 50 volunteers (just under half were excited children) transplanted 400 Coho parr into Douglas Creek.

It was a beautiful day (for a change!) and the event was a super success!

A special thanks to Howard English Hatchery at Goldstream for again providing fish and volunteers. Also thanks to Pacific Salmon Foundation for their continued support in our successful creek restoration work, to Saanich Parks, without their restoration participation this wouldn't have been possible and to Saanich Creeks & Waterways for clean water!



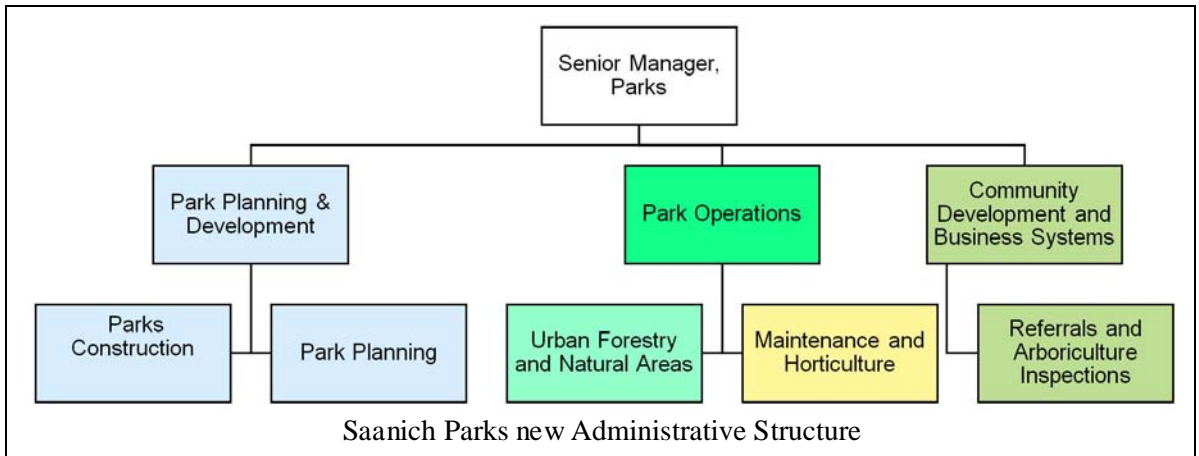
Coho parr taken from the hatchery truck in buckets to the creek.



We're on our way!



New Parks Admin Structure



Eva Riccius is the Parks Senior Manager. She was our guest speaker at last year's AGM. Parks is part of the Parks & Recreation division under director Suzanne Samborksi. Suzanne has agreed to be the guest speaker at our upcoming May 3 Annual General Meeting.

Park Planning & Development manager is Gary Darrah. This department previously was called Park Planning which Gary has managed for many years.

The Park Operations position is currently open and the hiring process is currently under way.

The Manager of the new department, Community Development and Business Systems, is Nathalie Dechaine. Nathalie joins Saanich Parks from BC Parks, where she has held positions as the Community Engagement Coordinator, Program Manager for Discover Camping (the BC Parks reservation platform), Project Manager to celebrate BC Parks Centennial in 2011, and Parks Permit Analyst.

This is Nathalie's second tour with Saanich. She worked in Parks and Environmental Services in the mid 2000's and was instrumental in initiating Saanich's very successful Pulling Together Volunteer Program.

A key focus of this position will be to work with community groups such as the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society to assist with projects of mutual interest. Nathalie will undoubtedly reach out to the Friends of Mount Douglas in the near future.

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
Invasives	Judy Spearing	1545 Eric Road	V8N 5Y6	472-0515
At-large	Matt Boyd	1571 Craigiewood Court	V8N 5Y3	516-4142
At-large	Nancy Lewthwaite	1559 Mt Douglas X Road	V8N 1Z9	658-0763
At-large	Alan Walton	4236 Parkside Pl.	V8N 4V5	477-5003

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: _____

Email _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____ Telephone No. _____

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

Send or deliver to: Treasurer, Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society
P.O. Box 31002, #301-3980 Shelbourne St.
Victoria, BC V8N 6J3

<http://www.mountdouglaspark.ca>

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Colour versions of newsletters are available on website.