



Volume 13  
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Summer 2013

# Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH



Be on the lookout for  
**Giant Hogweed**

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## Sierra Club BC Announces *Take Action!* Winner

By Kristen Evers, Environmental Educator, Sierra Club BC

This past school year Sierra Club BC's Education Team has had the pleasure of visiting more than 150 classrooms, delivering our interactive education programs to students across British Columbia. Enthusiastic students have shared their great ideas for schoolyard gardens, recycled art projects, and much more. It's incredibly inspiring to hear young people speak so passionately about the Earth, and the ways they hope to make it a better place, not only for us, but also for all other living things with whom we share this planet.

Each year, Sierra Club BC holds a *Take Action!* Contest that all schools in British Columbia are able to enter. The contest offers classes an opportunity to showcase their environmental efforts and win great prizes. There are different categories for a wide range of environmental stewardship projects, from creating school composts and gardens to art projects made of recycled, reused, and renewed materials. Each year, at the end of April, our education staff has the difficult task of going through these amazing submissions to choose a winner. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it!

The winner of this year's *Take Action!* Contest is **Torquay Elementary School's green team, the Torquay Eco-Tigers!** The Torquay Eco-Tigers held an Eco Fair to educate others on a variety of environmental topics which the students selected and researched. In addition to carefully planning their projects, the students created posters to spread awareness about their event, inviting the whole school community to the fair. They're Clean, they're Green, they're the Torquay Team! And we couldn't be more proud. Congratulations Torquay Eco-Tigers for all your hard work to help the Earth!

**Thank you to Tree Canada for providing us with prizes.**

For more information on the programs we offer and September school program registration, visit our website at [www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education).





# THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR!

By Carolyn Richman, Environmental Education Officer, District of Saanich

It's been said many times, "there's nothing like a good neighbour". We're so thankful for the kind person next door who picks up our mail for us while we are away, who brings us treats when they've been baking, lends us tools.... Friendly neighbours build strong communities and can create life-long friendships.

What we might not stop to think about is what our neighbours DON'T need us sharing with them. It's those quiet, creeping things from our gardens, stealing under and over the fence and behind the shed. Garden escapees! Even if we know a plant tends to take over and don't quite get time to control it, we may forget that it is affecting others (and natural areas) beyond our yards.

## Be a good neighbour!

- Find out more about invasive plants
- Keep invaders from spreading to neighbouring properties
- Garden with native plants and non-invasive species
- Be aware that Saanich has a bylaw (Noxious Weeds Bylaw) requiring us to keep our invaders from spreading.

There are obvious invasive plants in this region that spread from people's gardens, including English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Daphne/Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*). Here are some others you might not be aware of:

- Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca major* and *V. minor*)
- Cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*)
- Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)

## For more information about invasive plants:

[www.invasives.saanich.ca](http://www.invasives.saanich.ca) and [www.coastalisc.com](http://www.coastalisc.com)

## Saanich Noxious Weeds Bylaw:

[www.saanich.ca/living/natural/stewardship/nwbylaw.html](http://www.saanich.ca/living/natural/stewardship/nwbylaw.html)

## Be Alert!

Saanich and regional partners are asking the public to report and help manage high priority invasive plants that are new to our region or have low populations that could still be eliminated. We have a chance to manage these species in our region before their spread and impact is too great. 'Tis the season now to watch for these invaders:

- Knotweed species (*Fallopia spp/Polygonum spp*)
- Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
- Blessed Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*)
- ...and more

Visit our website for more information: [www.invasives.saanich.ca](http://www.invasives.saanich.ca)



# HAT Meeting

*Good Neighbours on the Peninsula*

By Tod Carnahan, Habitat Acquisition Trust  
www.hat.bc.ca

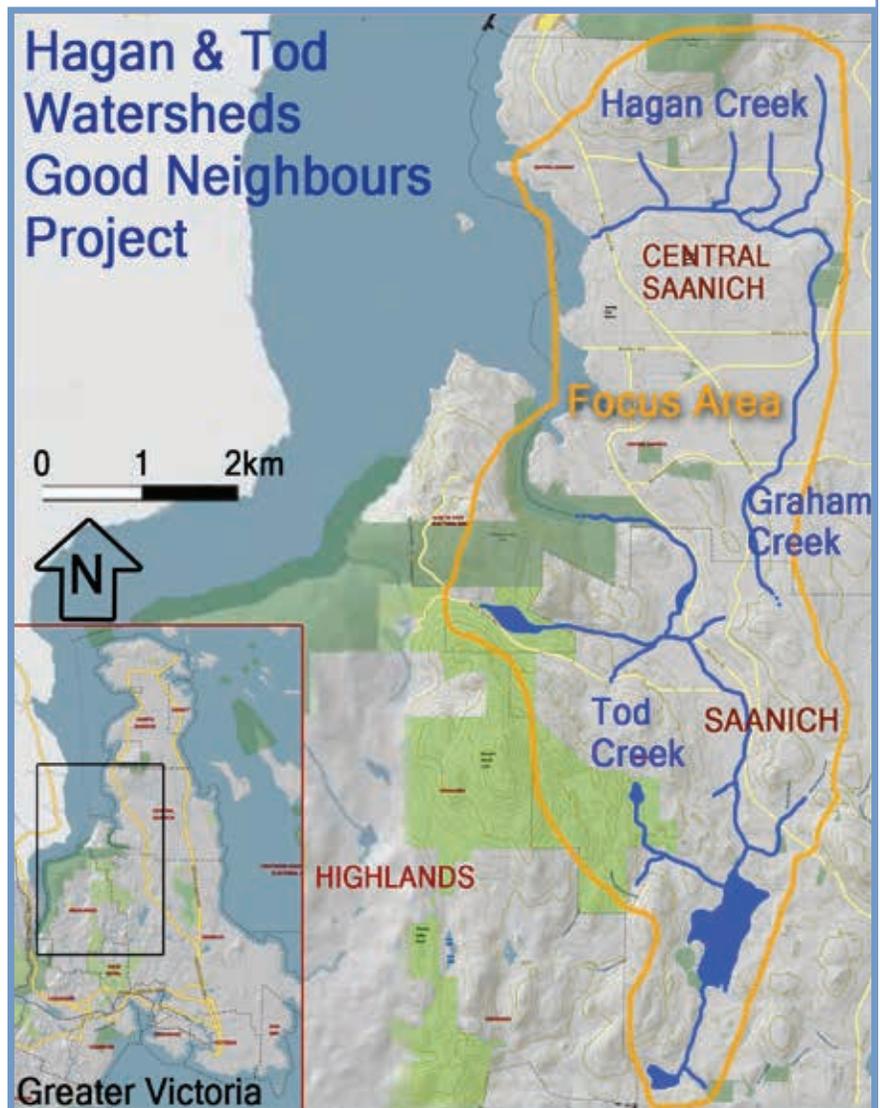
In 2013 Habitat Acquisition Trust will bring our Good Neighbours community outreach program to several watersheds on the Saanich Peninsula including: Hagan, Graham, and Tod Creeks. If you or someone you know lives in the area and would like to learn more about environmentally friendly ways of maintaining your landscape, please let us know! For your free and confidential consultation please call Todd at 250 995-2428 or email [todd@hat.bc.ca](mailto:todd@hat.bc.ca).

The Hagan/Graham and Tod Creek Valleys are partly located in the District of Saanich and are well-known for their pastoral beauty. But did you know they also feature trout streams, old growth Douglas-fir forest, and endangered Garry Oak meadows? Farms, people, and wildlife such as Cutthroat Trout rely on the clean creek water that flows through farms and neighbourhoods to the Saanich Inlet. The beautiful Garry Oak ecosystems here are among the rarest ecosystems in Canada.

Unfortunately, there are many threats to our Peninsula's biodiversity and water quality, and they are increasing. Urbanization impacts habitat directly as well as affecting streams, adjacent parks, and other natural spaces in less visible but equally harmful ways. Water pollution and increased storm flows from intensified land use and impervious surfaces limits trout habitat. Water pollution impacts combined with invasive species, increasing recreational pressure, and climate change create a recipe for accelerated habitat degradation. The woodland and forest habitats under threat are already fragmented, and, like our wetlands, less than five percent remains. Habitat loss also results in reduced quality of life in our community and the loss of free ecological services. Engineered storm catchment infrastructure is an example of the high cost associated with the loss of free ecosystem functions provided by healthy wetlands.

As so much of the land on the Peninsula is privately owned, residents play an important part in providing wildlife with habitat and in maintaining water quality for trout. Residents want functional and attractive landscapes and HAT's Good Neighbours Project helps them achieve their land use objectives without compromising water quality or sustainability. HAT's goal is to engage the community in practical solutions to significant local conservation issues and to promote community appreciation of their watershed's fish and wildlife values. New residents (often from distant places) benefit most from a visit, which helps them to recognize and interpret the existing values of their land before they make costly decisions. We also provide guidance and resources to long term residents who already have been recognized by their peers for best practices in conservation. This free community service is not restricted to our focus watersheds so please give us a call wherever you may reside.

Call HAT today to reserve your summer land care visit by calling 250 995 2428 or email [todd@hat.bc.ca](mailto:todd@hat.bc.ca).



# Help with Climate Action

By Glenys Verhulst, City Green Solutions

## While Saving Money at Home and Work

With the worrisome news that our planet has surpassed 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide, it's good to know that there are some great ways to shrink our carbon emissions and find better ways to power our lives.

In Saanich, 30% of community greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings. Those who have upgraded their buildings are already benefiting from reduced energy bills, increased comfort, and the knowledge that they are taking action to help meet our community's climate action targets. On average, those who upgrade their homes for energy savings are reducing their energy use by 22%, and their greenhouse gas emissions by 2.5 tonnes per year per home. That's like taking the family car off the road for 6 months of every year!

And there's also help for businesses and homeowners to know what upgrades will make the most difference, and what incentives are available to help out with upfront costs.

## At Home

### Single Family Homes

A Home Energy Assessment with a City Green Certified Energy Advisor provides you with expert advice and a customized retrofit plan so that you can save money on your energy bills, improve your home's health and comfort and reduce your home's environmental impact. Recommendations from a Certified Energy Advisor can save you hours of planning time and thousands of dollars by assisting you to make energy upgrade decisions that are right for your home and budget. You can also access LiveSmart BC incentives for insulation, air sealing, and bathroom fans. To learn more, contact City Green, your local non-profit energy efficiency specialists.

### Apartments and Condominiums

Owners and property managers of multi-unit residential buildings can save money and help take action on climate change by accessing free efficient fixtures for showers and faucets provided by the Tap by Tap program for their buildings. As a part of this special offer, all buildings that participate can receive a free Energy Savings Opportunities Assessment from City Green to identify further ways to save money in common areas, and incentives available for upgrades.

## At Work

Small businesses in Saanich can access a free business assessment from a City Green business energy advisor who will provide ideas about low-to-no-cost actions you can take to save energy, and connect you with incentives for your upgrades. If you do take action to save energy, your Advisor can nominate your business for recognition from LiveSmart BC. A recognition package includes a LiveSmart BC: Small Business Program certificate, window sticker, and use of the LiveSmart BC logo.

## Start Saving Today!

Start your savings today by contacting City Green at 250-381-9995 or [savings@citygreen.ca](mailto:savings@citygreen.ca), or visit [www.citygreen.ca](http://www.citygreen.ca) to learn more.



### Insulation Gaps Revealed

The blue areas in the thermal images above represent cold spots where insulation is missing or not performing properly. Insulation upgrades can save 20% or more of your home's energy use.



### Is Your Home Leaking Heat and Money?

Thermal imaging reveals cold spots (dark blue) where your home can be leaking. The average 20 year old home has leaks that would add up to a round hole 16 inches across.

# Urban Forestry & Natural Areas Corner

By Maryanna Kenney, Student Saanich Parks Technician

## Ladybug Releases

The Linden (*Tilia* spp.) tree creates shade, moderates local climate, acts as a wind break, and helps storm water infiltrate into the soil. Linden leaves and flowers have many medicinal applications, namely for colds, cough, fever and inflammation. Linden flowers include flavonoids which act as antioxidants for both humans and bees. Occasionally, Linden trees line Saanich boulevards, providing the benefits listed above, but also, unfortunately, sustenance for the Linden Aphid (*Eucallipterus tiliae*). Each adult aphid can produce up to

80 offspring in a week, expanding the population exponentially. These large populations feed in colonies and cause yellowing leaves, stunted shoots, and transmission of viruses which may harm the tree. As aphids feast on Linden leaves, they exude a sticky residue known as honeydew. Because many species of hover flies have larva that eat aphids, these wasp-coloured flies can be seen hovering around the Linden Tree, alarming people who are worried about stinging insects, even though they have no ability to sting.

**When life gives you aphids, bring in the lady beetles!**

Lady beetles or ladybugs (Order Coleoptera: Family Coccinellidae) are another group of predators of aphids. Adult ladybugs can eat up to 1000 aphids a day and as a larvae, about half as many. So, on a sunny afternoon, Saanich Parks staff were tasked with aphid patrol. Armed with a bucket of 3,500 ladybugs, their objective was to help reduce the aphid population on a block with Linden boulevard trees. Sandy and Rick carefully released a few hundred ladybugs into each Linden tree after spraying the tree with a blend of pop and cranberry juice to entice the ladybugs to help further reduce the aphid population. Curious onlookers joined the Saanich Parks team and thanked the ladybugs for a job well done!

**Ladybug Beetle (*Coleoptera: Coccinellidae*)**



# Invasive Species Management Strategy

By Maryanna Kenney, Student Parks Technician

The abundance of invasive species can vary dramatically over space and time, therefore a precautionary approach to invasive species plant management is necessary. After two years of consultations with Saanich staff, the public and professional experts, the Invasive Species Management Strategy (ISMS) was adopted by Saanich council on April 15, 2013. The primary focus of the ISMS is on invasive plant species, where-as management of invasive animals and other animal conflicts will be considered on a species by species basis. Over the next five to seven years, the ISMS will address invasive plant management on public and private land, staff roles and responsibilities, priorities, actions, community stewardship, and partnerships. It is pivotal in supporting long term management goals through species mapping, inventory, monitoring, and implementation of restoration plans. Municipal direction coupled with continued community involvement will increase our capacity to control existing invasive species and ensure new invasive species are eliminated from our landscape.

For further information see the ISMS at: [saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/natural/invasive.html](http://saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/natural/invasive.html)

## Best Management Practices

In response to increasing invasive species awareness within the Municipality and among the community, best management practices (BMP's) offer one approach in supporting Saanich's Invasive Species Management Strategy (ISMS). Saanich Environmental Services and Saanich Parks are developing BMP's for priority invasive species. These provide the best scientific information currently available and, if appropriate, outline the Integrated Pest Management process for effective invasive species treatment. Focusing on long term prevention of pests while minimizing the impacts to people or the environment is key. Invasive plant controls include manual, mechanical, biological, chemical or a combination of methods that work best together. Management classifications are also assigned to guide decision-making. Additional priority may be given to species identified for special concerns such as toxic qualities for humans and/or animals. The classifications are as follows:

**Prevent:** Species not known to occur in the region, but likely to establish if introduced. Eradicate if found.

**Eradicate:** Species known to occur in limited distribution and low density. Eradicate if found.

**Contain:** Established infestations found in portions of the region. Contain existing infestations and prevent spread to un-infested areas.

**Control:** Established infestations common and widespread throughout the region. Focus control in high value conservation areas.

The management status, along with the best management practice of a particular invasive species, will evolve as new information and techniques are verified through trials. These strategies will be made publicly available to help prevent invasive plant establishment and spread throughout the region.

**To view Alert Sheets with best practices for private land,  
please visit [www.invasives.saanich.ca](http://www.invasives.saanich.ca)**

# SAANICH'S NOXIOUS WEED BYLAW UNDER REVIEW

By Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services, Saanich

Saanich's Noxious Weed Bylaw was written in 1906 mainly to address weeds that could threaten agriculture. Over 100 years later, most of the cases under the bylaw are to address unkempt yards—tall grasses, dandelions, and general weeds. Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase in complaints about current invasive species such as Giant Hogweed and Blessed Milk Thistle.

Of the average 220 annual cases under the bylaw, most occur during the months of April to October, peaking in July. Most complaints were about plants spreading from neighbouring properties, unkempt properties, and concerns about attracting rodents.

## Here is how the bylaw is currently used:

- 61% Tall grasses, weeds in general
- 26% Priority Invasive Species (including agricultural weeds)
- 12% Established Invasive species, such as English Ivy and Himalayan Blackberry

Through its annual Strategic Plan, Saanich Council has requested staff to review the bylaw and recommend changes. The overall goal is to accomplish greater environmental, social, and economic gains by shifting resources away from traditional weed concerns and approaches, towards contemporary plant issues and best management practices. Saanich's new Invasive Species Management Plan provides a framework for discussion.

This initiative is just getting started and there will be plenty of opportunities for public input and discussion. Look for an announcement in the next edition of Our Backyard.

# Creatures of Habitat - Days of Action

By Francesca Loro,  
Stewardship Coordinator, Peninsula Streams Society



For the first time this year, Grade 6 students from Glanford Middle School took part in "Creatures of Habitat," an environmental education program delivered by Peninsula Streams Society (PSS). The tag-line "Days of Action" refers to one of the program's original goals: to motivate and inspire youth, and to give them some real-life tools for creating positive change in the environment.

Creatures of Habitat was the brain-child of a diverse group of people...Susi McMillan and Anne Marie Daniel, business owners and mothers, Britta Frombach, wellness practitioner, and Ian Bruce, Executive Director of PSS. It began in 2009 as a district-wide conference, where 600 students converged upon the Mary Winspear Centre for a full-day event, with restoration activities taking place at nine Saanich Peninsula green spaces. This program has run annually at all SD63 middle schools since then, and with the interest and support of Glanford teachers and the District of Saanich, we were delighted to expand the program to SD61 this year.

The Glanford event took place on Friday April 19th. For half the day, students participated in a theatre-based EnviroJeopardy game (presented by Ian and local theatre group "Acting Out"), and workshops (with Lifecycles and the Sierra Club). With the help of our adult volunteers and District of Saanich Parks staff, the students spent the other half of the day at Baxter Park, their local green space. In 2009, Glanford students had helped plant trees and shrubs to celebrate BC's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. This year's students worked hard weeding out invasive species and replanting native ones where needed, picking up garbage, and learning about the unique ecosystems represented by the four plant beds in the park. It was a great learning experience for all, not just the students!

Thanks to all who participated in the event...we're already looking forward to next year.

For more information, contact 250-363-6480 or visit us at [www.PeninsulaStreams.ca](http://www.PeninsulaStreams.ca)

Peninsula  
Streams



# Upcoming Events

## Saanich Recreation Free Programs

[www.saanich.ca/resident/recreation](http://www.saanich.ca/resident/recreation) 250-475-5408

### Sunday Hikes (FREE Drop-In)

**Sundays, 1 pm - 3:30 pm**

These FREE guided hikes are open to adults of all ages. Please wear sturdy and supportive footwear and carry adequate drinking water. Sorry, dogs are not permitted.

Jun 23 - Swan Lake to Bow Park

Meet outside behind Saanich Municipal Hall

### Gentle Walk & Talk (FREE Drop-In)

**Thursdays, 9:30 am – 11 am**

Enjoy beautiful scenery, a friendly chat, and gentle exercise. Suitable for all walking abilities, but wear suitable footwear. Sorry, dogs not permitted.

Jun 27 Colquitz to Cuthbert Holmes Park

Meet beside Silver City Theatre at Tillicum Mall by Colquitz Creek Park sign.

### Preschoolers In The Park (FREE Drop-In)

**Fridays, 10 am - 11:30 am**

Play on our adventure playgrounds, enjoy organized circle time, and partake in a nature/urban walk. Bring a stroller or child carrier. Parent participation required. If raining, program is cancelled a half-hour before program start. Not all parks have washrooms.

Jun 21 - Gorge Waterway Park – 300 Gorge Rd & Tillicum

Jun 28 - McMinn Park – 4820 Maple Grove, off Lochside

## CRD Regional Parks

Visit [www.crd.bc.ca](http://www.crd.bc.ca) for more programs 250-478-3344

### Morning Mist Canoeing (Guided Paddle)

**July 13, 27, 28/August 10, 18, 24, 25, 8 am - 11 am**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided and no experience is necessary. You must pre-register. Adult \$20/Child \$10.

### Early Evening Canoeing (Guided Paddle)

**July 16, 30/August 13, 6 pm – 9 pm**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided and no experience is necessary. You must pre-register. Adult \$20/Child \$10.

### Going Buggy (Drop-in Event)

**Thursday, July 18, 11 am - 2 pm**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

We love 'em, we hate 'em. They're fascinating, finicky and fabulous! Meet at the Beaver Lake Nature Centre off the main parking lot.

### Bejewelled Dragons of the Pond (Guided Walk)

**Saturday, August 3, 10 – 11:30 am**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Did you know dragonflies live a dual life? Join a naturalist for an up-close and personal look at the amazing world of dragonflies as they zig and zag in search of their prey across the wetlands. Nets and field guides will be available. Meet at the Retriever Area off Beaver Lake Road.

## Violet-green and Barn Swallow nesting

<http://members.shaw.ca/swallows/>

Free Barn Swallow ledges, including mounting and guidance on attraction and management. Please contact Malcolm at 250 812-6461 or [swallows@shaw.ca](mailto:swallows@shaw.ca).

### Snake Day (Drop-in Event)

**Thursday, August 8, 11 am - 3 pm**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Snakes, snakes and more snakes! CRD Regional Parks has teamed up with Swan Lake Christmas Hill and UVic for this slithery event: watch snake shows, hold a snake, play a snake game and more. Meet at the Beaver Lake Nature Centre off the main parking lot.

### Hawk Watch (Special Drop-in Event)

**Saturday, Sept 28, 11 am – 3 pm**

East Sooke Regional Park

Have you ever seen turkey vultures 'kettling?' Join CRD Regional Parks and the Victoria Natural History Society for this annual migration event complete with live raptor demonstrations and activities at Aylard Farm. The 20-minute steep and rocky trek up to the viewpoint requires sturdy footwear. Bring binoculars, water and a lunch. Meet at the kiosk in the Aylard Farm parking lot off Becher Bay Road.

### Check Out the Green Scene (Drop-in Event)–13-18 years

**Sunday, Sept 29, 12 pm – 4 pm**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Ever wanted to learn survival skills or check out the world of outdoor leadership? Maybe try your hand at canoeing or edible plant ID? Youth from around the region are gathering again with the Youth In Parks team to gain skills in outdoor workshops. Meet at the kiosk in the Beaver Lake parking lot

## Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary

[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca) 250-479-0211

### Guided Bird Walks (Drop-In)

**Every Wednesday and Sunday, 9:00 am**

Bring binoculars and meet in the parking lot for this informative walk around the lake. Suitable for ages 12+.

### Volunteer Restoration Team (Drop-In)

**Every Thursday and Saturday, 10 am - 1 pm**

Volunteer to help remove invasive plants from Christmas Hill!

Email Charlotte Houston for more information and where to meet [restoration@swanlake.bc.ca](mailto:restoration@swanlake.bc.ca)

### Going Batty (Drop-in Event)

**Sunday, June 30, 12 pm - 3 pm**

Join us as we celebrate our best source of natural mosquito control – Bats! Explore their weird and wonderful world and find out how to encourage bats to visit your neighbourhood. Admission by donation.

### Summer Daze at Swan Lake (Drop-In)

Games, crafts, songs, and hands-on activities.

Reptile Day - Thursday, July 4, 12 – 3 pm

Having a Backbone is Overrated - Thursday, July 18, 12 – 3 pm

Mammals Madness- Thursday, August 1, 12 – 3 pm

Birds of a Feather - Thursday, August 15, 12 – 3 pm

Admission by donation. For more information call: 250.479.0211 or visit [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)

### Creatures of the Summer Night

**Wednesday, July 24, 7:30 – 9:30 pm**

**Friday, August 16, 7:30 to 9:30 pm**

Suitable for families with children over 6 years.

Check out the nightlife of Swan Lake! Sharpen your senses as we go in search of owls, bats and other night time creatures. Using a grab bag of tricks we'll discover how these animals are adapted for their nocturnal life. Pre-registration is required. \$4 members; \$6 non-members.

# Top 5 Myths about Septic Systems

By Gail Pike, Capital Regional District

The CRD Septic Savvy program staff are often at community events offering information on how to care for septic systems. We hear some wild myths and misinformation. Here are the top 5.

## Myth # 1

**Septic Systems take care of themselves. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Flush and forget.**

**Fact:** Septic systems need care and maintenance just like our cars, bicycles and homes. Maintenance means more than just pumping it out every 2 – 5 years. Maintenance includes having an effluent filter and cleaning it out at least twice per year, keeping toxic substances out of the system, conserving water, protecting the drain field and having professional inspections. A pump out is not an inspection. Each component from tank to field and everything in between should be examined to determine if it is functioning and cleaned and repaired as needed.

## Myth #2

**It's underground, so I can build a shed, hot tub, carport etc. on top of it.**

**Fact:** While much of it is underground, we need to maintain access to all components and we still need to protect the components from damage and the soil from compaction so that the microorganisms doing the bulk of the treatment in the soil are not compromised.

## Myth #3

**Tanks don't need pumped out every 2-5 years. The bacteria in the tank eat the waste.**

**Fact:** All tanks need to be pumped out no matter how carefully the system is cared for. The tank is anaerobic, meaning there is no oxygen in the tank. The anaerobic bacteria in the tank, provided by our bodies, can only break down the solids at a very slow rate. Eventually the solids build up to the point where the waste is not getting proper treatment, pathogens are heading to the groundwater and possibly wells, solids may make their way into the pipes and plug them or the tank gets so full it starts to back up into our homes.

## Myth #4

**There is no smell, so there is no problem.**

**Fact:** Odour is only one of many signs of a malfunctioning septic system. Other signs include slow or backed up drains, wet or spongy areas on the drain field or patches of lush green growth. There can also be problems with no evident signs so it is crucial to get an inspection by an Authorized Person at least every five years. Catching problems early can save significant costs and hassles.

## Myth #5

**If I use an enzyme additive or drop a dead mouse or some raw hamburger into the tank once a month, I don't have to do anything else.**

**Fact:** While additives are marketed to 'help it break down', studies have shown that they don't speed up the treatment process and can in fact just make more work for the system. Worst of all they may fool us into thinking we don't have to do any other care or maintenance. Don't waste your money or time adding extras to your system and be sure to practice maintenance and monitoring just as you do with your car or bicycle.

For information on septic systems, free Septic Savvy workshops and the CRD bylaw, please visit our website [www.crd.bc.ca/septic](http://www.crd.bc.ca/septic) call the CRD Hotline 250-360-3030 or email [hotline@crd.bc.ca](mailto:hotline@crd.bc.ca)



## Frank Hobbs Elementary School Native Plant Garden Club

Despite the mixed forecast, a handful of dedicated volunteers came out to help in the garden on Sunday, 21st April. They managed to get the bulk of their work done before the heavens opened at around 2.30pm!

The children also really worked hard loading bark chips into the barrows – it was great to see teamwork in action!

Real progress is being made this year and all the cardboard and bark mulching is helping to put much needed nutrients into the ground, keeping the weeds down and allowing the plants to get more established.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who was able to come out and lend a hand!



### Can You Help?

Clean Up Dates For June 2013

Volunteers will be meeting in the school garden on Friday 21st June from 9:15am until 11:15am. Don't forget to bring your garden gloves – come and meet others, keep fit and help to know you are helping your local school, community... and the environment!

A large, close-up photograph of a Giant Hogweed plant. The plant has large, deeply lobed green leaves and a tall, thin stem topped with a large, flat-topped cluster of small white flowers. The background is a soft-focus green field.

This highly invasive member of the carrot family is also a human health hazard, with sap that can cause skin blisters (contact dermatitis) in the presence of sunlight. Although at 6m tall when mature it is easy to identify, this invader is often mistaken for the native Cow Parsnip when young. Before reporting, visit <http://frenchcreekhogweed.ca/> for a detailed presentation on how to identify Giant Hogweed. Photo credit: Nick Page, Raincoast Applied Ecology

## Join the *Our Backyard* mailing list!

Be kept up to date on local community stewardship projects and environmental issues. Subscriptions to this quarterly newsletter are free and available in electronic or paper version. To subscribe, please send your contact information to the editor or visit the following website [www.ourbackyard.saanich.ca](http://www.ourbackyard.saanich.ca)

Editor: Darren Copley | Phone: 250-475-5579 | Email: [Darren.Copley@saanich.ca](mailto:Darren.Copley@saanich.ca)

