



# Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

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# Swan Creek Restoration & Stewardship

By Ian D. Bruce, R.P.Bio, Peninsula Streams Society

Peninsula Streams Society has initiated a partnership with the District of Saanich and Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and to develop a restoration plan for Swan Creek. This is the beginning of a long term plan that focuses on a program for rehabilitation and enhancement of riparian habitat within the Swan Creek/Swan Lake watershed. The creation of a new stewardship group, "Friends of Swan Creek", will help guide the restoration, planning, and implementation in Swan Creek, which is part of the greater Colquitz watershed.

This fall, initial habitat restoration will begin to serve as a demonstration that there has been a constructive response to the plight of approximately 40 returning Coho Salmon, which had no suitable habitat to spawn last year. New signage will also assist residents in reporting any spills. A five-year restoration plan will be developed in conjunction with the partners. Based on Peninsula Streams' experience with the restoration and reestablishment of Coho Salmon in Reay Creek in Sidney by the Sidney Anglers Association, there are expectations that on a good Coho return year, up to 100 spawners could be supported by the potential habitat available in Swan Creek, and perhaps up to as many as 400 from the Blenkinsop system as a whole.

On the Blenkinsop Creek site, a small riffle structure was recently constructed to create slower moving, deeper pools for fish to hide, rest, or spawn in. This type of modified habitat also helps with gravel retention, summer water oxygenation, and provides a substrate for aquatic invertebrates. The work consisted of hand-placement of riffle spine boulders, riffle tail-out cobble, and gravel on the upstream side. A small amount of excavation was done by hand and the channel work area isolated with the flow temporarily pumped around the site. Previously there were no rock structures or gravel in this section of the creek

(only a dug clay channel) although Coho adults were attempting to spawn here in December, 2011. Coho fry were observed in this area in 2009.



On the Swan Creek site, the channel was previously moved by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and is devoid of substrate and has very limited riparian vegetation. In December of 2011, a fuel spill in Swan Creek necessitated the construction of a siphon dam in this location. The rock supporting the siphon dam was deliberately chosen as cobble and was released into the channel when the siphon dam was decommissioned in January 2012. Although this riffle

is functioning well, the riffle crest needed to be moved downstream about seven metres and decreased in elevation by approximately 25 cm to facilitate the future construction of a new riffle 50 metres upstream of this location under the McKenzie Road overpass. After the riffle cobble had been moved downstream by hand, spawning gravel was introduced on its upstream side. The riparian area was also cleared of extensive Reed Canarygrass, and native trees and shrubs will be planted next to the channel in November 2012. The partnership envisions this project engaging local schools, post-secondary students and community members as supporters and volunteers.

Initial funding has been provided by the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, and in-kind support from the District of Saanich. A meeting was held on October 23rd to inform the public about this project and provide the community an opportunity to volunteer. If you missed this meeting, and would still like to be involved, please contact the author below.

For more information about the Swan Creek Restoration Project please contact:

Ian D. Bruce: 250 888-2191, Email: [peninsulastreams@gmail.com](mailto:peninsulastreams@gmail.com) [www.peninsulastreams.ca](http://www.peninsulastreams.ca)

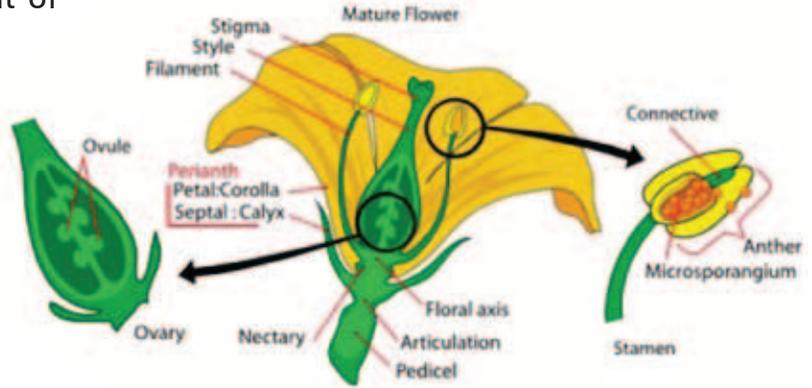


# Buzzzz...Giving Nature a Helping Hand

By Aimee Pelletier, Ecosystem Scientist, Parks Canada

Parks Canada personnel have been literally, “busy as bees” this spring carrying out a cross-pollination experiment to assist in the recovery of the endangered Deltoid Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*) with exciting results. Deltoid Balsamroot is a showy native sunflower that once grew abundantly in Garry Oak woodlands in our region but is now restricted to eight relatively small natural populations, including one in Saanich. For unknown reasons, the small population at Fort Rodd Hill produces very little viable seed. A recent study from Washington (where Deltoid Balsamroot is more abundant) demonstrated that hand-pollination of inflorescences with pollen collected from nearby populations can increase the development of viable seed by as much as 50%.

The nearest pollen source for our population is the small population at Mill Hill Regional Park. Parks Canada obtained a research permit from the Capital Regional District to collect a small number of mature anthers from the Mill Hill population. Feeling positively bee-like, the anthers were swiftly buzzed over to Fort Rodd Hill and carefully rubbed on receptive stigmas to transfer the pollen. Several pollen collection visits were made to Mill Hill over the course of six weeks from late April to early June until the Fort Rodd Hill flowers had matured and been hand-pollinated.



The ripe seed heads were collected in late July and the seeds shaken out and sorted into categories that are known to reflect seed viability. Plump seeds have been observed to have a high percentage of germination while shrivelled, empty seeds typically do not germinate. A total of 140 plump seeds were counted from six flower heads. In past years, where no hand-pollination or cross-pollination was performed, usually two - six plump seeds were obtained. The experiment appears to have been very successful in increasing seed set.

The seeds have been sown in the native plant nursery at Fort Rodd Hill with the hope that they will produce healthy seedlings that can be used to increase the size of the Fort Rodd Hill population. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact Aimee Pelletier ([aimee.pelletier@pc.gc.ca](mailto:aimee.pelletier@pc.gc.ca) or 250-478-5140).



Tweezers were used to rub the anthers collected from Mill Hill across the stigmas of Fort Rodd Hill flowers to transfer the pollen. (Photo credit: Susan Macisaac, Parks Canada).



Susan Macisaac hand-pollinating Deltoid Balsamroot at Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site. (Photo credit: Aimee Pelletier, Parks Canada).

# Pulling Together

By Jocelyn Green, Lead Steward for Arbutus Cove Park

## Come and join the *Pulling Together* Program at Arbutus Cove Park!

Winning the “war” against invasive species is virtually impossible, but with help from the Saanich *Pulling Together* Volunteer Program, there is an opportunity to control these species in our parks, in order to allow native plants and ecosystems to flourish.

I have lived in the Victoria area for almost seven years, and I quickly realized how many amazing parks we have in our own backyard. It came as a wonderful surprise to me that many of our parks have a very active group of volunteers working to improve them by removing invasive species, planting native plants, and generally making the parks more attractive and welcoming for everyone. Our work as ecological restoration

volunteers greatly improves habitat for native species of flora and fauna, some of which occur no where else in Canada. It is important work to do.

In January of this year we had our first work party at Arbutus Cove Park. *Pulling Together* volunteers work in more than forty Saanich Parks and we are very fortunate to have an enthusiastic and supportive coordinator of volunteers, Jenny Eastman. Jenny provides us with guidance, equipment, and energy! Volunteers are working at many Gordon Head area-parks such as Mount Douglas, Ferndale, and Glencoe Cove.

Over the last few months we have had a number of work parties at Arbutus Cove Park, with neighbours and some University of Victoria students helping out. English Holly, English Ivy, Periwinkle and Spurge-laurel have been removed, and some “dumping sites” and litter have been cleaned up. More helpers would be greatly appreciated! We need people who enjoy the outdoors and digging in the dirt, rain or shine! University of Victoria students from the Restoration of Natural Systems Program completed an independent study of Arbutus Cove Park and, not surprisingly, the study concluded that volunteer labour was very important for park restoration.

If you would like to volunteer please contact Jenny Eastman at [jenny.eastman@saanich.ca](mailto:jenny.eastman@saanich.ca) or myself, Jocelyn Green at [greenjocelyn@gmail.com](mailto:greenjocelyn@gmail.com), or 250-220-5329.

The fall work parties are scheduled for 10 am to 12 noon:

**Saturday, October 27 | Saturday, November 10 | Saturday, November 24**

**Equipment and refreshments are provided. Hope to see you!**



# Whitehead Park and Yellow Flag Iris Removal Project (Summer 2012)

By Winona Pugh and Mary Haig-Brown, Lead Stewards Saanich Pulling Together Program and the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed.

This summer's major project for Whitehead Park was to dig out the Yellow Flag Iris which was flourishing along the edge of the creek. Since the removal of another invasive, Golden Willow, the iris expanded its territory and was blocking the return of the native vegetation. A Qualified Environmental Professional, Sara Stallard, was hired to obtain the required permissions from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of Environment and to advise us on the necessary procedures.

We have been cutting the flower heads of the Yellow Flag Iris for two years to prevent the seeds from developing and spreading along the shore or floating downstream. Under Sara's direction, Saanich Parks built silt fences out of heavy polyethylene with pool noodles at the top edge for flotation, and chains to anchor the bottom. These floating fences kept any silt or mud from getting into the stream. We also spent some time identifying the many native plants growing among the iris. We hope these will recolonize the cleared areas, but if not, we will buy or transplant some once the rains start.

With some exploratory digging of Yellow Flag Iris back from the stream edge by Don Illingworth and Richard Hatch of Saanich Parks, we figured out our tools of choice. A stout spade for digging and a digging fork or a mattock for prying in the softer soil were the winners. August 15th was the start of the site Fisheries Window (that time span presenting the least risk of harm to fish, including their eggs, juveniles, spawning adults and/or the organisms upon which they feed) and work began in earnest. Don and Rick did the heavy digging and we used wheelbarrows to move the heavy clumps up to tarps spread in the sun. As the clumps dried in the hot sun we were able to knock some of the soil off and then toss the roots and tops into Saanich trucks to be hauled away for composting. Through the last half of August and into September, Don and Rick dug and dug and we wheeled and spread. We held two work parties on Saturdays and worked throughout the week. At one point we thought it might rain so we spread black plastic over the bare area to prevent any runoff getting into the creek. It didn't rain and the work of digging, hauling, drying, and loading trucks continued until the area was cleared.

Don and Richard covered the bare area with winter rye seed and spread coconut fiber mat over it to help prevent erosion. With an orange fence to protect the area from trampling, the job is done for now. The rye has sprouted quickly through the mat and is now showing a soft green over the area.

We will continue to dig or pull errant Yellow Flag Iris that pops up, probably for the next few years. The native vegetation is abundant: Narrow-leaved Bur-reed (*Sparganium angustifolium*), Common Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Dagger-leaf Rush (*Juncus ensifolius*), Small-flowered Bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*) and Common Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) to name a few. We will allow time for these to recolonize the disturbed area and then replant as needed.

We would like to thank the Saanich Matching Grant Program whose generous grant allowed us to begin this project. We also give thanks to Cory Manton (Manager of Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas in Saanich Parks) and his team for making sure the project happened.

# Urban Forestry & Natural Areas Corner

By Cory Manton, Saanich Parks

## Douglas Creek Habitat Assessment Report and In-stream Work 2012

In June 2012 the District of Saanich hired D.R. Clough Consulting to perform a habitat assessment on Douglas Creek in Mount Douglas Park.

The project objectives were to:

- Conduct a habitat assessment of Douglas Creek in Mount Douglas Park
- Identify best options/locations for a salmon egg box (mimics the natural spawning grounds where salmon eggs are hatched and incubated; a self-contained artificial spawning ground installed alongside a stream and fed with stream water)
- Assess the current condition of the in-stream enhancement work already completed in the lower watershed; and
- Identify, prioritize, and describe potential in-stream enhancement projects in the upper watershed, upstream of the Ash Road crossing.

The fish habitat assessment of Douglas Creek included activities that should improve water quality through detention, reduction of sediment, and erosion. It was recommended that all water quality improvement activities be done first. Below is the suggested order of priority taken from the habitat items in this report.

1. Conduct the priority maintenance areas in Reach 1;
2. Repair the channels of Tributaries 1 and 2, to address sediment and riparian issues;
3. Clean out all erosion sources in Reach 2 such as the debris jams;
4. Clean out the sump area and increase its size as large as possible;
5. Protect exposed banks from further erosion at the Large Woody Debris sites in Reach 1
6. Add spawning gravel and other fish habitat features in Reach 1 and 2; and
7. Conduct a riparian restoration plan for both Reach 1 and 2.

For a full copy of the report contact [parcs@saanich.ca](mailto:parcs@saanich.ca)



On August 28, 2012 the work began in earnest to repair the previous work completed in Reach 1 below Ash Road. Dave Clough, fisheries biologist, was on site for the next two weeks to provide valuable advice and oversee the work in the creek to repair weirs, place wood, repair banks, and ensure that all Best Management Practices were followed. The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society had their intern from Germany, Georg Dischner, on site during the two week work period. Saanich staff assisted with all in-stream works and Don Mann was contracted to provide the machinery. Over 30 tandem loads of large blast rock was placed in the creek to provide fish habitat, pool riffles, weirs, and secure the slumping banks.

Saanich staff and Georg Dischner also completed hazard tree removal and hand dug out the tributaries in the upper reach above Ash Road to ensure sediment deposits are reduced and water coming off Mount Douglas enters the creek through the channels rather than flowing through the forested area.

The work was a success with special thanks to D.R. Clough Consulting Ltd. (Dave Clough), Georg Dischner, Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society, Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Goldstream Hatchery, and Department of Fisheries and Oceans for their part in preparing the report and completing the first year recommendations.

Habitat restoration will continue this fall in partnership with the community. Be sure to have a walk in the Park and check out the work that was completed in 2012.

## Restoration in Cuthbert Holmes Park

By Carol Milo, University of Victoria restoration student

Did you know that even forests get tired? Cuthbert Holmes Park, conveniently situated behind Tillicum Mall, enjoys extensive use by nature enthusiasts, dog walkers, and children from nearby schools, and out-of-school programs. Over the years, this intensive use has led to the loss of ground cover, and resulted in soil compaction, especially in the area near the Dysart Street footbridge.

Why is this a problem? Pressure below ground in the compacted areas crushes tree roots, and prevents new roots from growing. Compacted soil typically has too little void space for air and water movement necessary for respiration and growth. In time, this could lead to the loss of the mature Douglas-fir forest in the area, which includes trees more than 100 years old. The lack of understorey means that this forest will not be replaced, and the absence of an organic layer on the forest floor means that no nutrients are available for forest growth. This organic litter layer is also important in regulating water supply to the site, serving as a reservoir during times of drought, and preventing erosion from run-off during heavy winter rains.

Over the past two years, Saanich Parks has held three public open houses, with the goal of obtaining information necessary to develop a Park Management and Direction Plan. This plan will attempt to address the many complex and inter-related issues facing Cuthbert Holmes Park. These issues include, but are not limited to, natural areas management. With a view to implementing this plan, Saanich Parks will begin restoration of the Dysart Street site later this fall. Soil aeration and mulching will be utilized to help restore the soil composition. This will be followed by a planting program in the fall of 2013, as well as mulching with recycled organic materials from the Park. It may be necessary to temporarily close access to this area while restoration activities are underway.

Stop by and observe the work in progress on this site. Julian Anderson and the Friends of Cuthbert Holmes, who I've been working with, have partnered with Saanich Parks and the Gorge Tillicum Community Association to host several work parties in the Park. If you would like to be kept up-to-date on these activities, please send an e-mail to [CuthbertHolmes@telus.net](mailto:CuthbertHolmes@telus.net) to be added to the contact list.



# INTERNSHIP IN MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK

By Darrell Wick, President Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

We suspected an internet scam when, over six months ago, we received an inquiry from Germany to travel here and provide eight weeks of volunteer work in Mount Douglas Park. That was then, but now a truly successful eight weeks for our Society, for the Park, and for the intern has passed. Georg Dischner, as a final requirement for his degree in Forestry and Forest Restoration at the Munich Technical University, needed to complete an eight week internship; gaining practical experience related to his field of study. Georg had fond memories of the Island from a previous holiday with his parents and wanted to return. Lucky for us, he chose Saanich and Mount Douglas Park.

Now that the internship is complete and he has returned to continue his studies in Germany for a Masters degree, we can reflect on his contribution and all that has happened in the Park.

A June study of Douglas Creek identified silting problems in the creek above Ash Road along with a need for more information about this riparian area – a perfect task for our intern! Georg fought his way through some of the thicker undercover, including blackberries, and mapped several Douglas Creek tributaries that we didn't know about. He developed a GIS database showing the tributaries and a classification of the different riparian zones and canopy covers.

Late August and early September saw significant restoration work by Saanich Parks in the lower creek under the guidance of David Clough, Registered Professional Biologist. Georg was David's "right-hand man" throughout this project, a really great team. Hopefully when the Chum and Coho Salmon return next month, they will appreciate the excellent spawning beds along with bank armoring!

Saanich Parks welcomed Georg, providing him with many positive experiences. He participated in a couple of danger tree assessments in the park. It should be noted that we appreciate the care Saanich takes in handling danger trees in the park. First, if there is no target (i.e. nothing will fall on a trail), it isn't a danger tree. If there is a target, they don't simply cut the tree down, but carefully assess how to remove the danger. For example, it might be that an overhanging branch needs to be removed, or that the tree balance altered so, if it fails, it falls away from the trail instead of on it. The Saanich arborists included Georg in a danger tree operation, including the safety debriefing, but for safety reasons, he had to remain at distance whenever actual tree work was performed.

Georg really enjoyed the Park, often taking his lunch to a view spot or to the beach. But one of his pet peeves was best said in a Saanich News article: "I don't get that. People come here to enjoy nature and then pollute it," Dischner says. "People who visit the Park should be concerned about the natural areas. I find the doggy bags every day."

A special thanks to Ryder's Cycles for providing Georg with a bicycle for his stay. And to Graham Shorthill, for providing a room for Georg. And the Saanich Parks staff who went beyond work and invited Georg for fishing trips. This was truly a "win – win"!

## Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

[www.garryoak.info](http://www.garryoak.info)

**Be Part of a Growing Movement!**

**GOMPS is excited to announce the opening of their Garry Oak nursery this fall, to address local losses of Garry Oaks and the lack of locally sourced seedlings. Sales of the first crop of trees are expected in 2019, but volunteers are needed now to help gather local acorns. With your help, a new dedicated nursery will sow acorns in the spring of 2013.**

**For collection instructions, please see our website or contact Michael Croteau, Volunteer Coordinator at: [grow.oaks@gmail.com](mailto:grow.oaks@gmail.com) or 250-744-2257**



# Septic Tank Effluent Filters: The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread!

By Gail Pike, Environmental Sustainability, Capital Regional District

## Do You Have A Septic System?

Septic systems work best when properly maintained, and ensuring your system has an effluent filter will help your septic system do its job. Septic tanks are designed to collect wastewater from your home, separate liquids from solids, hold the solids in place in the tank and allow only liquids to leave the tank. If solids exit the tank and move into the soil treatment area, they could plug the distribution pipes and/or the soil. When plugging occurs, wastewater is not dispersed or treated effectively, which can lead to expensive repair or replacement of the soil treatment area and the very unpleasant experience of sewage backing up into your home.

## Effluent Filters

Having an effluent filter as part of your overall septic system will help protect your drain field from clogging. Effluent filters are now required by provincial regulations and are an excellent, affordable investment. A filter can save you thousands of dollars in repairs, extend the life of your system, and be retrofitted into existing septic tanks.

## How Effluent Filters Work

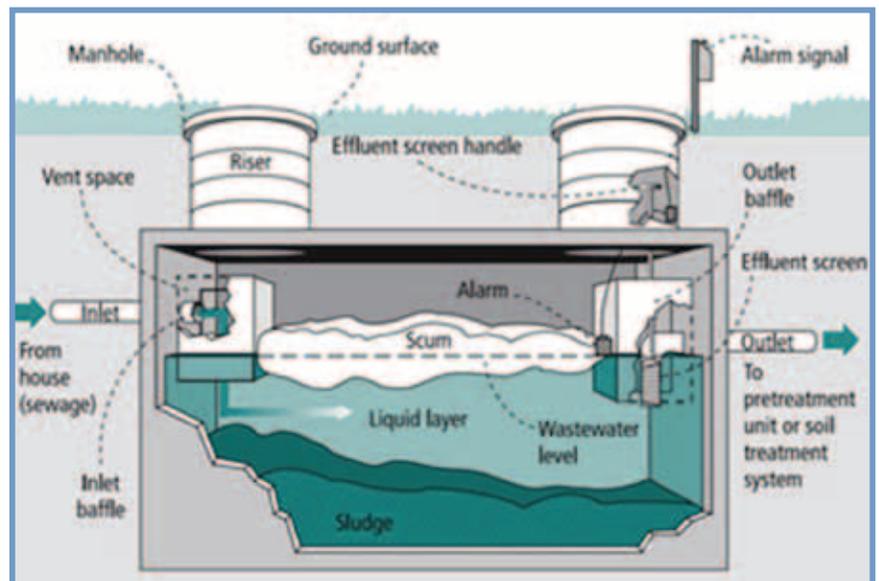
Effluent filters (also called Effluent Screens) are installed at the outlet of the final septic tank where the liquid or effluent leaves the tank. All wastewater leaving the tank must first pass through the filter before going to a pump chamber, pretreatment unit or soil treatment area. Filters come in a variety of shapes and sizes. All filters are designed to capture and hold solids, preventing them from leaving the tank. It is important to have access to septic tank access lids and effluent filters in order to make

regular maintenance easy. Effluent filters should be hosed off into the tank every few months. You may hose it off yourself, or hire a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) to do it for you. Do not put your head in the tank. Keep pets and children well away from the open lid and do not leave it unattended. Effluent filters are now required by Provincial regulation.

## Where to get an Effluent Filter

Effluent filters range in price from \$75 to \$300 and are available at some plumbing supply stores and through some septic system companies. Septic system companies are listed in the phone book and most of them will install and maintain the filters for you, or you may do it yourself. If changes are required to your tank to accommodate a filter, only an Authorized Person is legally allowed to do it. Go to the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC Onsite Wastewater Registration Program website at <http://owrp.asttbc.org> and select the ROWP finder tab.

Take the guesswork out of operating and maintaining your septic system and have years of trouble free-service. Sign up for a Septic Savvy Workshop, check out our online videos for owners of septic systems, or for more information about how to care for your residential septic system go to: [www.crd.bc.ca/wastewater/septic](http://www.crd.bc.ca/wastewater/septic) or call 250-360-3030.



# Celebrating 15 years of Environmental Education in BC schools



**SIERRA  
CLUB  
BC**

Sierra Club BC is excited to start its 15th year of environmental education programming this October! Throughout the fall our education team will be focusing on delivering fun, interactive programs in the Greater Victoria Area and lower Vancouver Island. With programs designed to reconnect youth with BC's ecosystems, understand climate change, environmental stewardship, and help students in direct action projects, Sierra Club BC's education programs are presented by a team of vibrant and professional educators.

Elementary and middle school programs focus on coastal temperate rainforests, climate change, ecostewardship, and non-timber forest products. Our Sustainable High Schools Project (grades 9-12) includes presentations on water & food security, economy & wealth, and youth action for sustainability. All programs are linked with the BC Ministry of Education's Prescribed Learning Outcomes.

Some programs, like the popular GoingWild! Education Program (grades 4-7), accompany an educator's guidebook. "Going Wild! explores local history and wild products from BC's coastal temperate rainforests," explains Meg Banavage, Sierra Club BC's Elementary and Middle School Programs Coordinator. "The in-class program uses activities from the guidebook. We also offer professional development workshops to help teachers integrate rainforest ecosystems, wild products, traditional ecological knowledge, local and contemporary uses of plants, and regional entrepreneurship into their curriculum."

For older students, Sierra Club BC's Sustainable High Schools Project (SHS) has been active in environmental studies, global studies, social sciences and leadership classrooms since 2004. SHS engages youth in diverse ecological and social issues and supports youth in student-led sustainability projects (from concerts to composting!). Students develop the skills to become leaders for action in their school and community.

If you are interested to have these programs in your school this fall, contact the education team with Sierra Club BC at [schoolprograms@sierraclub.bc.ca](mailto:schoolprograms@sierraclub.bc.ca) or register at [www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education).



# 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.

#### **Nov 4 - Cadboro Bay to Queenswood**

Meet at Gyro Park parking lot in Cadboro Bay, by washrooms.

#### **Dec 2 - Beckwith Park & Lakehill Loop**

Meet at Beckwith Park by washrooms, on Beckwith.

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

**Thursdays, 9:30 am – 11 am**

Enjoy fresh air, beautiful scenery, a friendly chat and gentle exercise as we take different walks through Saanich parks & trails. No registration required. Suitable for all walking abilities. Wear suitable footwear. Sorry, dogs not permitted.

#### **Nov 1 - Lambrick Park to Sierra Park**

Meet at Gordon Head Rec Centre lobby, 4100 Lambrick Way

#### **Nov 8 - Marigold Park**

Meet at Strawberry Vale Community Centre on 11 High Street

#### **Nov 15 - Panama Hill Park**

Meet at Hyacinth Park parking lot, off Marigold at Interurban

## Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

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

### Guided Birdwalks (Drop-In)

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

Bring binoculars and walking shoes and meet in the parking lot for this informative walk around the lake.

### Native Plant Gardening Workshop (Course)

**Thursday Nov 8 & 15, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm**

**Saturday, Oct 27 & Nov 3, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm**

This FREE 3-hour workshop is a joint presentation with CRD Environmental Sustainability. Instructor Patricia Johnston will provide instruction on native plant ID, their benefits, and how to grow and use them. Includes tips for reducing or eliminating lawns, creating wildlife habitat, and a tour of the Swan lake native plant garden.

Pre-registration is required by calling 250-479-0211.

### Wild Mushroom Show (Drop-in Event)

**Sunday, Oct 28, 10 am - 4 pm**

A special presentation by the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society. The huge variety found in our forests, fields and gardens will be on display. Bring your specimens for identification by Society members. Admission by donation.

## Sierra Club BC

[www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education)

### Sierra Club BC's Education Program!

This fall starts Sierra Club's 15th year delivering environmental education programs throughout British Columbia. Whether you are a teacher, a student, a parent or supporter, we invite you to visit our website and request a school program.

## CRD Regional Parks

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

### Fabulous Fungi (Adult Presentation)

**Saturday, November 3, 10am–12pm**

Francis/King Regional Park

Join CRD Regional Parks' guest naturalist Kem Luther and learn to identify some of our common mushrooms, as well as the role they play in the ecosystem. \$7+HST. Pre-registration required by Nov. 2.

### Fabulous Fungi (Guided Adult Walk)

**Saturday, November 3, 1–3pm**

Francis/King Regional Park

Join guest naturalist Kem Luther on guided walk on mushroom identification. \$7+HST. Pre-registration required by Oct. 5. Space is limited.

### Spectacular Spiders (Guided Walk)

**Saturday, November 10, 10am–12pm**

Island View Beach Regional Park

Join CRD Parks' guest naturalists Claudia and Darren Copley on a seaside expedition searching for spiders. Meet at the picnic shelter off Homathko Road, off Island View Road.

### Marvelous Mushrooms (Guided Walk)

**Saturday, November 17, 10:30am–12pm & 1–3:30pm**

Francis/King Regional Park

For the novice mushroom explorer, join a CRD Parks' naturalist to discover more about fungi in the forest. There is no fee but pre-register by Oct. 12. Space is limited.

### Wreathmaking (Drop-in Event)

**Sunday, December 2, 11am–3pm**

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Join CRD Parks to make a festive wreath. We will supply materials and instructions—you supply the creativity! Food and money donations welcome. Suggested minimum donation \$5/wreath (proceeds to a local food bank). Meet at the Beaver Lake Nature Centre off the main parking lot.

## Victoria Natural History Society

Visit [www.naturevictoria.ca](http://www.naturevictoria.ca) for more programs

### Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Local Projects of the Nature Conservancy of Canada

**Tuesday, November 13, 7:30 pm**

Hiking and Beach Walking on Remote Haida Gwaii

**Tuesday, December 11, 7:30 pm**

UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

### Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Alpine Plants of the Central Coast Range

**Tuesday, November 20, 7:30 pm**

UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

### Victoria Christmas Bird Count (Free)

**Saturday, December 15**

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out the VNHS website ([www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/)) and the Christmas Bird Count site ([www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org)).



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Our Backyard email  
list!

**WHY?**

- View the entire document in colour
- Receive it earlier
- Reduce our use of paper
- Save energy

If you currently are receiving a paper copy, and you would prefer an electronic (pdf) copy of Our Backyard, please visit [ourbackyard.saanich.ca](http://ourbackyard.saanich.ca). Or email me at: [Darren.Copley@saanich.ca](mailto:Darren.Copley@saanich.ca)

Deltoid Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*) in bloom at Mill Hill Regional Park being sampled for pollen with tweezers (Photo credit: Laura Kroesen, Parks Canada).

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