

Our Backyard

Volume 7
Issue 2
Summer 2007

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

2007 Official Community (General) Plan Review

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the principal policy document that Council uses to make decisions on matters such as land use, growth management, transportation and mobility, economic development, infrastructure, housing needs and protecting the environment.

Periodically, the OCP needs to be reviewed by Council, the public, staff and other key stakeholders, to determine:

- 1) If the vision, goals and objectives of the document are still valid, and;
- 2) Where the document may need to be altered to reflect changes in our community.



The OCP review will focus specifically on the General Plan which provides the over-riding policy framework from a broad municipal perspective, whereas the Local Area Plans are more detailed, neighbourhood-focused policy documents.

The majority of the Plan's goals, objectives and policies are still

valid and as such, will require little to no alteration.

In terms of the review, greater attention will be focused on the following areas:

- External forces that affect the community and future planning in a significant manner (i.e. growth pressures, climate change, protecting the environment, and aging of our population);
- Major & Neighbourhood Centers;
- Federal, Provincial and Municipal policy changes that require amendments be made to the OCP, and;
- Updating the format of the document, including photographs and diagrams to better illustrate the Plan's goals and objectives.

Participation in this important review process is both encouraged and welcomed.

The first opportunities for the public to provide input were undertaken in May. We encourage you to watch for notices in the "Saanich News" and on Saanich's website in the fall, which will note times and locations where the draft document can be reviewed and you can add input.



If you have any questions about the Official Community Plan review process, please contact: Sharon Hvozdanski, Saanich Planning Department, 475-5494 ext 3409 or hvozdans@saanich.ca

People, Places, and Perspectives
June 19th, 2007
7:30pm to 8:30pm
**City Making in Paradise:
A Conversation with Mike
Harcourt**

Join the Honourable Mike Harcourt, former Premier of British Columbia, for a thought-provoking discussion of the ways in which the daily choices we make as leaders, activists, and citizens influence our capacity to build liveable and resilient communities.
Fee: \$15 plus GST
Register: By telephone at 250.472.4747 or via e-mail at register@uvcs.uvic.ca
Or visit: <http://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/>

An invitation for community groups to *Compost for our Climate*

Did you know that composting can reduce the impacts of climate change? Composting food and yard waste means: fewer trucks go to the landfill and therefore less carbon dioxide is released in exhaust; less methane is released from the landfill; and finished compost ("black gold") can replace synthetic fertilizers and prevent the greenhouse gases associated with their production and transportation.

For a limited time only, the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre is pleased to offer subsidized compost bins and composting support to eligible community groups. Community groups can take leadership in addressing climate change and make a difference by starting to compost today!

Join us in our Compost for our Climate and Community program. \$35 includes a composting and climate change workshop, access to subsidized composting supplies, materials for joining the Black Gold Rush Challenge to measure how your composting is having an impact on climate change, and follow-up composting support.



To be eligible, you must be a non-profit, a cooperative, community centre, or community group. Further, your group must be located within the Capital Regional District, have been in existence for at least one year, have a minimum of 5 members, and have demonstrated interest and dedication to continue composting over the long-term.

If your group is interested in participating, please contact the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre at 386-WORM or info@compost.bc.ca and we will send you an application form.

This program will be offered during 2007 only, so please apply early. Thank you to Vancity, the Capital Regional District and Environment Canada for making this program possible.

Ideas Bloom at Broadmead Garden Tour

Not only do Mrs. Hooper's native perennials reduce maintenance time and money, they attract birds and butterflies too. Native plants thrive without pesticides and synthetic fertilizers that can wash down storm drains that lead to salmon in Colquitz Creek. Some residents have already benefited from HAT's land care visits. HAT's field staff meet with landholders to create planting prescriptions specific to their property. Qualified residents will receive free native plants and can choose to host swallow nest boxes built by the 5th Tsartlip Cub Scouts.

Broadmead residents Mary Hooper and Glenn Church hosted a Garden Tour in May as part of HAT's Good Neighbours Project around Rithet's Bog. Over 75 plant species adapted to our dry summer climate, were showcased. Almost fifty people buzzed about the gardens with wish-lists in hand. "Wonderfully organized and presented. Very impressed!" said BARA Bugle contributor Bruce Stewart.

Broadmead resident David Gellately appreciated his land care visit. "HAT's knowledgeable staff gave me a folder of useful landscaping information and some solid recommendations on protecting my Garry oaks. This is exactly what I needed - my interest in native plants has skyrocketed", he said.

What are the Top Ten plants for your garden? Call the HATline with your landscaping questions: 995-2428. Email us at hatmail@hat.bc.ca or visit our website www.hat.bc.ca.



Wetland Restoration *at Haliburton Farm*

Visitors and residents living adjacent to the Haliburton Community Organic Farm in Cordova Bay are witnessing the restoration of a wetland within urban Saanich.

The project, carried out by Dr. Purnima Govindarajulu and her University of Victoria Environmental Studies students, aims to restore a vernal (seasonal) pond on the farm. Over time, non-native plants, grazing, and logging have degraded the ecological value of this wetland. It will take years to fully restore the wetland to its full ecological health – and this project is the beginning.



Wetland Restoration at Haliburton Farm

Vernal ponds like those at Haliburton Farm fill with water in the winter and spring, but are dry by late summer. The dramatic fluctuation in water levels provides specialized ecological habitats for many rare plants and animals. These seasonal wetlands are unsuitable habitat for fish, but perfect for many insects and amphibians which can breed and develop with less chance of predation.

The majority of vernal ponds have disappeared from the landscape around Victoria, primarily because people have underestimated their ecological significance. Farmers often view them as non-productive areas because they don't generate income. Urban dwellers may not understand or appreciate the changing views of a vernal pond, and often convert them into permanent ponds with introduced goldfish.

As a first step in reversing this trend, the Haliburton Farm project attempt to restore the vernal wetland on the Farm to its full ecological functioning. The project will begin with collecting baseline data. The next step involves developing a restoration plan, which will have opportunities for farmer collaboration, and opportunities such as harvesting from the wetland. This spring,

nesting boxes were installed and quickly inhabited, and are proving to be a blessing to the farmers as they attract birds that eat insects. For updates on the project, and to volunteer, please visit www.haliburtonfarm.org.

Upcoming events & announcements

For full schedules and program details, please contact the appropriate agency directly.



Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

For full information, visit our website www.swanlake.bc.ca or call us at 479-0211.

Join us in July and August for a variety of nature programs and activities:

🌿 Drop-in Programs:

- July 2, Breakfast on the Hill, 8-10 am
- July 5, Watershed Fun, 10am-12pm OR 1-3pm,
- July 19, Reptile Day, 12-3pm
- Aug 9, Pebbles Rock, 1-3pm

🌿 Pre-registered Programs:

- Night Creatures, 8-9:30pm, July 13 OR Aug 10
- Sunset Hike, July 27

🌿 Day Camps:

- Biology Buddies, for ages 4-6 years, 4 sessions in either July or August
- Junior Nature Explorers, for ages 7-10 years, 1 week at the end of July
- Big and Little, for ages 4-6 years and their adults, 10 separate sessions

Showcase of living sustainably:

Visit Salt Spring Island for a weekend of activities, projects and to learn more about sustainable initiatives. Saturday June 16th - Transportation Forum and back by popular demand on Sunday June 17th the Salt Spring Eco-Home Tour, 10am - 4pm (Tickets are \$25 each).

For more information visit www.saltspringconservancy.ca or contact Karen Hudson at: 250-538-0318, or email: ssiconservancy@saltspring.com

The Arts at Glendale

August 11th & 12th, 10 am to 4 pm 13th Annual Arts Show
Admission- \$5.00 for 2 days.

For more information, visit: www.hcp.bc.ca/

Cedar Hill Recreation Centre is hosting 2 **Arts Weekend Workshops**. Learn how to build a "Green" cob oven, (July 27-29), or make a water fountain (Aug 17-19), for your Naturescape garden. To register or to find out more information, visit <http://recreation.saanich.ca/reconline/> or call 475-7121.

Sustainable Saanich Series #4:

Green Value, Green Marketing and Green Financing

Friday, June 22, 2007, 1-4:30pm at the University of Victoria.

Join us to learn more about the economic and environmental incentives and benefits of building green.

For information or to register, email:

sustainablesaanich@gmail.com or call 391-8772.

The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) has a new website!



Garry Oak
Ecosystems
Recovery Team

Check out GOERT's new website at www.goert.ca, with new features, including free downloads of our new publications:



Protecting Garry Oak Areas During Land Development, a resource for land developers, local governments and landowners, and;



Excerpts from the Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook, a resource for people interested in restoring and caring for Garry oak habitat in their backyard.

The website also features outstanding Garry oak sites, interesting research projects, and community restoration projects.

Please visit www.goert.ca



Knockan Hill Park

Submissions and subscriptions can be sent to the editor:

Nathalie Dechaine,
Environmental Education Officer
District of Saanich • 770 Vernon Avenue
• Victoria BC • V8X 2W7
Phone: 475-5475 • Fax: 475-5430
Email: dechaine@saanich.ca

