



# Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

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# SCHOOLS GETTING A CLIMATE ACTION BOOST

## "SCIENCE IN ACTION" IS THE COMMUNITY CARBON FUND'S FIRST PROJECT!

By Mark Boysen, Saanich Sustainability Coordinator

Two local middle schools, Lansdowne and Arbutus, joined in WildBC's year long program, Science In Action, that focused on climate change and sustainable action projects. Sponsored by Saanich through the Community Carbon Fund, students learning about climate change, energy efficiency, and sustainability was supported through teacher training and curriculum resources.

A key component of the program was to encourage groups of students to "take action" either by initiating or continuing action projects that enhanced awareness and/or reduced the school's carbon footprint. The first steps were taken this year with projects that connected with local community groups and contributed to climate action. Building on these successes, the story will continue next year as Saanich and WildBC work together to support schools in Action!

### Arbutus Action Project

One of Arbutus's action projects focused on what students could do to lessen their carbon footprint. Throughout May, students, staff and administration got on their bicycles, scooters, or skateboards, putting on their rollerblades or walking shoes, and took public transit on "Wheeling & Walking Wednesdays". The first week had just over one hundred students participate, the second 150. By week five more 300 students - three quarters of the school population - were traveling to school using sustainable transportation!



Sustainable

Saanich



WildBC

LEARN MORE AT [WILDBC.ORG](http://WILDBC.ORG) AND [CLIMATEACTION.SAANICH.CA](http://CLIMATEACTION.SAANICH.CA)

## New Protection for the Environment in Saanich

By Adriane Pollard, Saanich Environmental Services

In March 2012, Saanich Council adopted the Environmental Development Permit Area (EDPA), which consists of guidelines and an atlas. The EDPA Atlas highlights the areas where the guidelines apply. These include the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory sites; Conservation Data Centre sites (rare and endangered ecosystems and species); the marine backshore; isolated wetlands and watercourses; and wildlife trees identified by the Wildlife Tree Stewardship program. To know if an area is included, the official atlas must be consulted.

A brochure was mailed out to all affected properties and many people have contacted us to find out what is so special on their property – already a positive educational experience. Keep in mind that the EDPA is new, so many developments that were already in-progress, or applications that were received prior to the EDPA's adoption, are unaffected by the guidelines.

For more information on the EDPA, please visit our website at [www.environment.saanich.ca](http://www.environment.saanich.ca), or ask for our brochure.



# Pulling Together

By Jenny Eastman, Coordinator of Volunteers [jenny.eastman@saanich.ca](mailto:jenny.eastman@saanich.ca)

Twice each year, the *Pulling Together* team of volunteers gathers to share ideas, learn new techniques and connect about ecological restoration in Saanich Parks. We met for a day of information and inspiration at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary on Saturday, June 2. At this session we heard from Rachelle McElroy, Coordinator of the Coastal Invasive Species Council (formerly Coastal Invasive Plant Council) and we had a completely inspiring tour of the restoration work in progress at Swan Lake, led by Swan Lake Site Manager, June Pretzer. Saanich Parks Manager Cory Manton also outlined the prioritization of species and ecosystems that will guide ecological restoration work in Saanich. The next Pulling Together Volunteer Training will be Saturday, October 20, 2012.

As we work away in the summer sun, hacking out Himalayan Blackberries and tugging out English Ivy, keep in mind the impact that all your volunteer efforts have in the natural areas of Saanich Parks. Remember also the work that so many people in Saanich all share in. We are part of a team with Swan Lake, Saanich Environmental Services, schools, businesses and many neighbours who care for their own natural areas – no matter the size. Thank you to our hard working, dedicated and highly skilled team of volunteers.

If you would like to help restore your Saanich Parks, please be in touch. We can provide tools and refreshments. All our events, contact information and program details can be found at [www.saanich.ca/living/natural/opportunities.html](http://www.saanich.ca/living/natural/opportunities.html)

## Whitehead Park – Summer 2012

By Mary Haig-Brown, Friends of Tod Creek Watershed

Plans for the continuing restoration of the riparian area of Whitehead Park are in full swing. The east side of Tod Creek is coming along nicely. The new plants we put in early in the spring are growing well and the deer are even leaving some of them alone. We have placed dog hair in the shrubs and that seems to have discouraged browsing. Saanich Parks are helping us fence the Black Hawthorn and Red Elderberry which the deer find most popular. We are continuing to keep an eye on things but are now turning our full attention to the west side of the creek.

Two summers ago Saanich Parks removed the invasive Golden Willow that was choking the creek. We had previously worked at removing the blackberries and so the area was opened up to sunlight and fresh air. The margins of the creek were covered in another invasive, Yellow Flag Iris. We removed the flower heads to prevent the spread of the seed and wondered how we could get rid of the plants altogether. Two years of sunshine and space have encouraged the Yellow Flag Iris to spread. Our project for this summer is to get rid of them.

We have hired a Qualified Environmental Professional to guide us and to gain the necessary permissions to work in the stream. Saanich has mapped the extent of the infestation in order to plan the work and estimate the amount of material that will be binned and properly disposed of. We have applied for a grant to cover this cost and to replant the area.

Our research has shown that the best method of removal in an area such as this is to hand dig the iris. This will be hard physical labour and we expect to be hosting several work parties of willing workers to accomplish this. Saanich has also offered some strong backs for this part. To find out more, visit [www.saanich.ca/living/natural/opportunities.html](http://www.saanich.ca/living/natural/opportunities.html)

The question of how to prevent the erosion and resultant silting of the creek is still being discussed. We will need some fast growing cover that can survive some flooding. We will also use erosion control matting that grasses can grow through. In the fall we will add native willow and Red-osier Dogwood stakes to tie it all together.

We look forward to seeing the results of our labours, but in the meantime we are preparing for it by continuing to remove invasives such as Golden Willow, Himalayan Blackberry, and English Ivy that are creeping into the area to be restored.

# Urban Forestry & Natural Areas Corner

By Cory Manton, Saanich Parks

## **Invasive Species Management Strategy Update**

The primary focus of the Invasive Species Management Strategy Update (ISMS) is on invasive plant species. The ISMS builds on lessons learned from previous work on invasive plant species management locally, regionally, provincially and nationally. The ISMS provides the framework for successful invasive species management and is expected to remain relevant over the next five to seven years. The management of invasive animals and other animal conflicts will continue to be considered in the future on a species by species basis.

In addition to optimizing municipal resources, the ISMS provides a long-term plan for preventing the establishment of new invasive species and reducing, controlling and mitigating the effects of established invasive species on natural ecosystems, human health and the economy. It is one of the tools that Council, staff and the community will be able to use in conjunction with the Sustainable Saanich Official Community Plan 2008 (OCP), Saanich Strategic Plan 2012 and other municipal bylaws, plans, policies and/or initiatives.

### **The ISMS Vision is:**

A sustainable future for Saanich includes healthy ecosystems, people and animals, as well as a vibrant economy protected from new and established invasive species populations. This will be attained through a comprehensive community approach to environmental stewardship led and supported by District staff working in partnership with others.

### **The ISMS Goal is:**

To prevent establishment of new invasive species and reduce, control and mitigate the effects of established invasive species on natural ecosystems, human health and the economy.

The Four Strategies are:

- Implement a Comprehensive Program
  - Policy and Procedure Actions
  - Collaboration Actions
  - Communication Actions
- Prevent the Introduction of and Eradicate New Invasive Species
- Contain and Control the Spread of Established Invasive Species
- Ensure Program Sustainability

We hope to have the Invasive Species Management Strategy before Mayor and Council this fall. For more information on the Invasive Species Management Strategy visit: [www.saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/natural/invasive.html](http://www.saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/natural/invasive.html)

## **Community Tree Planting Partnership**

Saanich Parks is looking to partner with the community to plant trees on public and private lands. The Goal from our recently adopted Urban Forest Strategy is to "Protect and Enhance the Urban Forest." In order to do that we would like to partner with residents to plant boulevard trees. If you would like to have a boulevard tree planted in front of your property contact [parks@saanich.ca](mailto:parks@saanich.ca) or call Saanich Parks at 250-475-5522. In order to qualify for this partnership you must be willing to water the newly planted tree from May – October to ensure establishment.

## Urban Forest Strategy Update

Saanich Parks engaged the services of Caslys Consulting in the fall of 2010 to develop Urban Forest Canopy Cover information in support of our Urban Forest Strategy (UFS). The objective of the project was to generate a multi-temporal land cover dataset based on the existing 2005 land cover map together with a new layer for 2009. The classification is based on the Saanich 2009 air photo. Over the course of 2011, Caslys Consulting has developed a product for Saanich that not only covers urban forest canopy cover but provides a detailed land mapping product that will be very useful to other departments within the District. The highlights of the Land Cover Mapping include:

- Percent and absolute urban forest canopy cover has continued to decline for the period of 2005-2009.
- Canopy cover decreased on public and private land, inside and outside the Urban Containment Boundary, within each identified zoning class and in every neighbourhood.
- Inversely, percent cover and absolute impervious cover and disturbed soil areas have increased over the same time period on private land, public land, inside and outside the UCB, in every zoning class and every neighbourhood.
- Available planting space is limited throughout Saanich.
- The information will allow Saanich to set meaningful canopy cover targets.
- There is good data contained in the report to drive defensible changes to the Tree Preservation Bylaw.
- There is good data contained in the report to inform a targeted tree planting program.
- In 2005 urban forest canopy cover in Saanich was 40.2 % and by 2009 the urban forest canopy cover had decreased to 37.8 %.

The canopy cover analysis has reinforced the information contained in the UFS. In order to protect and enhance the urban forest immediate measures must be taken to stem the loss of urban forest canopy on both private and public lands within the municipality.

In response to the information contained in the canopy cover analysis, the 2012 Saanich Strategic Plan includes the following language regarding the implementation of the UFS:

- Developing a comprehensive Urban Forest Planting Program
- Developing Urban Forest Guidelines
- Amending the Tree Preservation Bylaw - Community engagement to begin in the fall of 2012

### Help us take care of our boulevard trees

Summer is upon us and the weather is warm and wonderful, but neighbourhood street trees are suffering and dying! Just as we thirst for long refreshing drinks to replenish our bodies during the warm days, so too do the trees that adorn our streets in our neighbourhoods.

Of great help to quench the thirst of your tree, is to remove the grass at the base of your tree and create a round "tree well," about one meter across, which you can then fill with mulch. Make sure you are not disturbing any native plants. Make sure you are not disturbing any native plants. The "mulch tree well" will greatly assist in keeping water available for the tree, make it easy to mow around the tree and protect the tree from line trimmer and lawn mower damage.

Please help quench the thirst of your trees by following these guidelines:

1. Water trees twice a week
2. Water deeply and thoroughly each time a minimum of 15 minutes (20 litres)
3. Water when it isn't raining
4. Water during the cooler part of the day
5. Water at low volume to eliminate water runoff

# Saanich Environmental Awards

## Meet the Winners of 2012

*Recognizing people and organizations that make a positive contribution to the natural environment in Saanich since 2000.*

### Individual Citizen - Judith Carder



For more than ten years, Judith has visited her Garry Oak Restoration Site at Chatterton Hill each month to remove invasive plants, plant and care for native species while monitoring this natural area with incredible care to detail. Over the years Judith has mentored many young people and inspired other volunteers with her knowledge and care of this threatened place. Judith works closely with Rithet's Bog Conservation Area volunteers to share ideas and strategies for their connected parks and she is often engaged in research on how best to restore this area. She enjoys sharing her experience as a GORP Site Steward at conferences and is always happy to lead educational visits of this natural area.

### Volunteer Organization - Konukson Park Weedy Whackers



This team of 15 members of Saanich's Pulling Together Volunteer Program has been working over the last 6 years to remove invasive plants from Konukson Park. Under the leadership of Harry Drage, Project Steward, they have developed restoration plans and impact studies and have received community grants as part of their program. They meet two mornings a week with the goal of restoring this 10 hectare urban forest to a more natural state. An impressive mountain of broom, holly, ivy and daphne has been removed and the return of native species is very rewarding to see. The group are also having a great deal of fun while they work.

### Business/Commercial - Heritage Office Furnishings Victoria Ltd.



Heritage Office Furnishings is a Saanich based company that is leading the way in sustainable business practices. Heritage was verified by the Pacific Carbon Trust as a Carbon Neutral Company earlier this year. They have a full waste management system for all their goods and packaging and have introduced cutting edge technology in their own office to reduce resource consumption. They also work with their clients to ensure that the products they supply are durable and repairable. In addition, Heritage contributes to many local community environmental projects such as Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary and Emerging Green Builder's Group.

### Honourable Mention - Individual - Colleen O'Brien

Colleen received an honourable mention for her achievements as a long standing volunteer restoring Garry Oak ecosystems, specifically in Playfair Park.

### Honourable Mention - Business - Cathy Carolsfeld (WestWind SeaLab Supplies)

Cathy Carolsfeld received an honourable mention for her achievements creating the 'Seaquaria in Schools' program and her dedication and enthusiasm while bringing the wonders of the marine world to both to schools and at community events.

## Youth Group/School - Ecole Marigold



The environmental team at Ecole Marigold has implemented a new system for dealing with waste at the school. They promoted waste-less lunches at assemblies to encourage students to bring less garbage to school. They established a recycling system for drink containers, hard and soft plastics, foil-lined bags, Styrofoam and metal containers. Each classroom is even collecting compost. Through their efforts, Marigold was able to reduce its waste to Hartland Landfill by at least one half. Marigold students and staff deserve recognition for their environmental stewardship efforts and make us proud to have them as members of our Saanich community.

## Biodiversity Conservation Award - Chris Bos, Barrie Goodwin and Dorothy Chambers



These three individuals give many hours of their own time on the Colquitz River and in Cuthbert Holmes Park monitoring the Coho salmon returns in the fall for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Barrie and Chris have been managing the fish fence on the Colquitz now for over 10 years, sometimes visiting several times a day to count and release the adult salmon. Dorothy began contacting schools in the area and led educational tours for students through the park and to see the salmon being counted by Chris and Barrie each day during the fall. Chris, Barrie and Dorothy are advocates for the health of our urban watersheds and the aquatic life they support and are helping make others more aware of this precious resource.

## Long Term Achievement - Rex Welland (posthumous)



Rex Welland was a long term member of the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society who, until his passing in 2008, contributed in many ways towards the environment in Saanich. He was an enthusiastic and capable park steward. He researched Knockan Hill's ecology and history, took photographs and kept records of natural events. He constructed interpretation boards and signs for the park and posted natural history notices. He organized and participated in many invasive plant removal sessions, contributing labour, tools and expertise. Rex also conducted research into the behaviour and significance of native bees and emphasized their importance as pollinators in many presentations to garden clubs and wildlife groups.

## Sustainability - Copperfield Village Strata Corp.



This group of homeowners organized a complete retrofit of their stormwater management system to change from an open water pond system into future wetlands. With professional advice, they installed aeration and planted native riparian plants around the three ponds. The retrofit has resulted in greatly improved aesthetics and water quality and has increased the available habitat and biodiversity in an urban area of the Colquitz watershed. This stormwater management system has created environmental and economic benefits for the Copperfield Village subdivision, as well as the surrounding community.

## Honourable Mention - Biodiversity - Dr. Jackie Lee

Jackie Lee received an honourable mention for her achievements creating habitat for the rare Western Painted Turtle at the site of the newly built Capital Cat Clinic.

## Honourable Mention - Sustainability - Times Colonist

The Times Colonist received an honourable mention for their publication of Living Green, which raises awareness and promotes sustainability in our region.

# A New Partnership at Haliburton Farm

By Elmarie Roberts, Haliburton Organic Farm

Gaia College, Royal Roads University, and Haliburton Farm in Victoria have teamed up to bring an annual, comprehensive, and empowering Growing Food course as a way of addressing food security in the city. The Growing Food in the City - Victoria - course started April 4, 2012 and runs until September, parallel to the growing calendar. Participants report very favourably on learning how to grow an abundance of nutritious and delicious food right away, saving hundreds of dollars on their food budget – and taking a giant step towards increasing their family's food security.

Going beyond organic gardening – Beyond Permaculture – participants are mentored through an entire food growing season to gain the essential gardening skills and the confidence to grow most of their own food.

They learn to:

- Create and maintain healthy soil, which in turn will grow nutritious, vibrant, health-giving food
- Analyze and optimize the growing conditions in their garden for the best results possible
- Creatively collect, use and preserve water for optimal garden health, and protection of this precious global resource
- Use holistic solutions that increase plant immunity, rather than killing every critter that munches on plants
- Select, plant, maintain and harvest a large variety of food plants for year-round enjoyment
- Propagate plants to build a diverse food garden at very little cost
- Store the harvest for an abundance of home grown food throughout the winter
- Save seeds to develop food crops ideally adapted to one's garden.

The course is held at: Haliburton Farm, 741 Haliburton Road, Victoria, and in students' gardens.

Students receive personal coaching right in their own gardens.

Don't have a garden? There are lots of opportunities for students and graduates of this course to volunteer at Haliburton Farm and get first-hand experience in urban commercial food production. What an amazing opportunity!



# Energy Saving Tips

By Glenys Verhulst, City Green Solutions

[www.citygreen.ca](http://www.citygreen.ca)

Is the approaching summer heat making you think about adding insulation to your house? Maybe it should, says Torsten Ely, a Certified Energy Advisor and Thermographer with City Green Solutions, a non-profit energy efficiency organization. "Just like a thermos, a well-sealed and insulated building can not only keep the heat in during the winter but can also help you keep you cool during a heat wave."

It's also important to check whether your attic vents are working properly. "When vents are blocked by insulation, dirt, or debris, attic temperatures can reach 60°C or 70°C, making it very hard to keep the rest of your house cool," explains Ely. "Check with your roofing contractor to make sure you have the right ventilation balance in the attic to avoid overheating in the summer, and to avoid heat loss and moisture problems in the winter."

Energy-efficient design makes a big difference to the comfort of a home in every season. For instance, the orientation and size of windows can drastically affect how hot a home will get in the summer. Although window orientation isn't something you can change once a home is built, choosing the most energy efficient window models, ensuring they are properly installed, and adding shade with shutters or awnings or planting deciduous trees can make your home much cooler in the summer.

"Most people keep the curtains closed on hot days to keep the heat out, which helps a little, but still allows most of the heat in eventually. It's much more effective to block the sun's heat before it gets through your windows," explains Ely.

If you aren't ready to renovate, there are plenty of low-to-no-cost solutions that can help you keep your cool, including:

- closing your fireplace damper if you use air conditioning;
- opening your windows at night, then closing them in the morning to keep the cool air inside;
- creating a cross-breeze by opening windows on opposite sides of the house and using a fan if the air is still;
- making salads and sandwiches for dinner more often rather than cooking on the stove;
- turning off appliances like TVs and computers when not in use; and
- switching out your heat-generating incandescent lights for efficient CFLs or LEDs.

Priority home upgrade options for keeping your home cool and saving energy include:

- adding attic insulation to at least R40, or R50 for maximum government grants;
- adding wall insulation to R12;
- installing an ENERGY STAR® qualified heat pump, which provides heating and cooling all year round;
- installing ENERGY STAR® qualified windows; and
- adding awnings to your windows to keep your house cool in the summer but still allow heat to come in during the winter months.

If you are considering home improvements to keep your home cooler in the summer, there are grants available through the LiveSmart BC program for insulation, draft proofing, ENERGY STAR qualified windows, and efficient heating and cooling systems. To access grants, book a home energy assessment with an Energy Advisor. Energy Advisors are certified by the federal government to provide expert, independent energy efficiency advice and a customized retrofit plan for saving energy in your home. Visit [www.livesmartbc.ca](http://www.livesmartbc.ca) to find Certified Energy Advisors serving Saanich.

For Keeping Your Home Cool all Summer Long



# Septic System Additives (a bad idea)

By Gail Pike, CRD

Wouldn't it be nice if we could just flush a magic potion down the toilet once a month and never have to deal with our septic systems? While there are many products that suggest just that, it is simply not true. In fact, the use of septic system additives is illegal in some provinces and states. Here's the scoop on additives and how they actually cause harm, waste your money and could end up costing you thousands in repairs.

Additives mislead homeowners into the belief that pumping is not necessary, when in reality all septic systems are designed to be pumped out.

With a properly designed, operated and maintained septic system, there is no need to use additives or stimulators in your septic system. All that is required in the tank is the naturally occurring bacteria from our intestines provided in abundance when we use the toilet. Tanks should be pumped out every 2 to 5 years.

## Biological Additives

Some biological additives have been shown to kick start bacterial populations in cases where die-off occurs due to the introduction of chemicals such as anti-bacterial agents, drain cleaners or bleach. However, these additives have also been shown to allow solids to be carried into the drain field, where they can clog your system and cause expensive repairs. Regular use provides all the kick start needed.

## Chemical Additives

Chemical additives aren't a good idea either. Chemicals can alter the structure of drain field soil, making it less permeable and cause clogging. Chemicals can also initiate bacterial die-off and can pollute groundwater supplies and surrounding soils.

## Hamburger, dead mice, yoghurt, yeast, raw chicken or fish

Myths abound about adding these to the tank to keep things cooking when in reality adding these products just adds more solids for the system to deal with.

## There is no need to use a septic additive with a properly maintained system!

Here's what you can do to ensure your system functions properly:

- Avoid putting any chemicals down the drain, including anti-bacterial soaps, bleaches, harsh cleaning products, hair dyes, oils or grease.
- Use greener cleaners including baking soda, vinegar, salt and lemon juice.
- Conserve water: install low flow toilets and avoid doing all your laundry on one day.
- Protect your drain field; leave it undisturbed, landscape with grass and do not park on it.
- Properly maintain and pump out your system in order to keep it clear and flowing.

Attend a free Septic Savvy workshop! For more information about workshops and 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.



# Upcoming Events

## CRD Regional Parks

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

### Early Evening Canoeing (Guided Paddle)

July 17, 23, 30/August 7, 14, 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.

### Snake Day (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, August 9, 11 am - 3 pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

CRD Regional Parks has teamed up with Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary 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.

### Blood and Guts (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, August 23, 11 am - 2 pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Learn more about animals that make their living by eating meat. See live raptor demonstrations!

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

Saturday, September 22, 11 am – 3 pm

East Sooke Regional Park

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.

## Rithet's Bog Conservation Society

[www.rithetsbog.org](http://www.rithetsbog.org)

### Volunteer Treasurer Needed

RBCS is a small Registered Charitable Society devoted to the conservation and restoration of Rithet's Bog. Please contact Karla Wagner at [kwag@shaw.ca](mailto:kwag@shaw.ca) or phone 250-658-9490.

## Farming Focus Talks at the Saanich Fair

September 1-3, 2012 (times to be announced)

Saanich Fair Grounds -1528 Stellys Cross Rd. in Central Saanich (#75 bus) There will be three sessions held over the weekend:

Grow food in small spaces – by Linda Gilkeson

Grain farming – by Mike Doehnel

Backyard chickens – by Nickey Wylie

Presented by the Peninsula Agricultural Commission. More information will soon be available at [www.saanich.ca](http://www.saanich.ca) & [www.saanichfair.ca](http://www.saanichfair.ca)

## Violet-green and Barn Swallow nesting

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

Free on site guidance on attracting and managing Violet-green and Barn Swallows. Please contact Malcolm and Christina Rodin at [swallows@shaw.ca](mailto:swallows@shaw.ca).

## 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.

**Su Jul 15 - Reservoirs of Royal Oak**

Meet at Wesley Court, off Wesley Road

**Su Aug 19 - Konukson Park & Ten Mile Point**

Meet at Cadboro/Gyro Park, main parking lot beside washrooms

### 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. Wear suitable footwear. Sorry, dogs not permitted. No registration required.

**Jul 26 - Bow Park**

Meet at Gordon Head Rec Ctre front lobby, 4100 Lambrick Way

**Aug 2 - Gyro Park to Telegraph Cove**

Meet at Gyro Park parking lot, bottom of Sinclair St.

**Aug 9 - Lochside Trail**

Meet at Lochside Park parking lot, off Cordova Bay past Mattick's Farm

**Aug 16 - Arbutus Cove Park to Hollydene**

Meet at Arbutus Cove Park, Arbutus Cove Lane, off Gordon Head Rd.

**Aug 23 - Lower Trails of Mt. Doug**

Meet near washrooms in main lot off Cordova Bay Rd at Ash St.

**Aug 30 - Colquitz to Panama Flats**

Meet at Colquitz Creek Park sign near Silver City

## 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.

### Introduction to Dragonfly Watching (Course)

Wednesday, July 25, 7 pm - 9 pm

Fieldtrip, Sunday, July 29, 1 to 3 pm

After years of living underwater, these fascinating and beautiful insects last only a few short weeks cruising our marshes and meadows. Discover who's who as instructor Gordon Hutchings guides us through the wonderful world of damsel and dragonflies. Cost: \$25 for Swan Lake members; \$35 for non-members. Please call to register.

## Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse

[frh.volunteer@pc.gc.ca](mailto:frh.volunteer@pc.gc.ca) 250-812-8133

### Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration

During the week: Individuals and groups are welcome to help out, call or email to arrange a time to volunteer. Weekends: We hold scheduled volunteer days that run from 10-3 and include a veggie friendly lunch. Dates for summer 2012 are July 21, and August 18. Contact us for more information



# Pulling Together Volunteer Program

Saanich is working to provide volunteer opportunities and partnerships to protect and restore natural areas.

Saanich's Pulling Together Volunteer Program supports volunteer efforts to remove invasive plants and restore ecosystems. Our longest running program is the Garry Oak Restoration Program (GORP). Pulling Together supports community groups working on public lands (primarily right-of-ways and park natural areas) by providing start-up training, on-going ecological advice, restoration plan guidance, staff and equipment for selected work parties, plant debris removal, and annual training and recognition events. Occasionally, Saanich volunteers work on private property to control high-priority invasive plant outbreaks. Saanich Parks and Saanich Environmental Services work together to actively support volunteer efforts.

**To learn more about invasive plants and volunteering, please visit:**

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

## Why volunteer?

Meet people! Rewarding results! Help the environment! Make a difference in your community! Learn techniques and new ideas! You are needed!

## Key Contacts

Saanich Parks - 250-475- 5522

Saanich Environmental Services - 250-475-5579

Coordinator of Volunteers - Jenny Eastman, [jenny.eastman@saanich.ca](mailto:jenny.eastman@saanich.ca)

This Cedar Hairstreak (*Callophrys nelsoni*) prefers to nectar on composites such as Woolly Sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*). Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) is the main native larval food plant in our region. Photo credit: Michael Croteau.

## Join the Our Backyard mailing list!

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