

My Chickens Live Next Door

By Angela Evans (a resident of the City of Victoria)

Had a rough day at the office? I have two words for you: Chicken Therapy. It works like this – grab a tea or cold drink on your way to the back yard, settle into a chair, and watch your chickens waddle about the yard. I pretty well guarantee that in under 20 minutes you'll feel like a different person. Quiet, non-invasive, chemical-free, low carbon footprint, cheap and painless, chicken therapy could be the stress remedy of the future!

Why it works I don't know, but it's remarkably entertaining and soothing to watch my little feathered friends peck about the yard, have little rumbles amongst themselves about unspoken poultry issues, or clucking contentedly. They look so purposeful, yet somehow comical.

I have four chickens, handsome girls whose black feathers glisten with a green iridescence and whose necks are a glorious russet colour. Well, to be completely honest, I am actually a part-owner of four chickens. My family shares them with the next door neighbours. My neighbour and I were talking about sharing her yard for veggie gardening when I asked how she "felt about chick..." Before the words were out of my mouth, Gloria interrupted with "YES! Let's get some!" So, I researched coop designs and drew up a compact little unit that keeps the feed and water dry, and is easy to clean. Gloria's uber-handyman partner whipped up the coop and run, making some cunning little improvements for easy access. If our neighbourly circumstances ever change, the coop can be lifted by four people and relocated. Seeing how much our first set of girls loved to dig and explore for bugs, we later added an extended outdoor area with a six foot high fence to keep the high flyers in.

While I do most of the weekly care and cleaning, it's great to know we can leave the girls in safe hands if we go away. Coop "rent" is a 50% share of egg production to Gloria and Peter. They, in turn, enjoy spoiling our joint pets with little treats of milk and bread in the afternoon.

Now, I know you have questions so I will attempt to answer them. Yes, our chickens all have names. Yes, I can tell them apart. No, we will not eat them when they die (they have names, remember?). No, you don't need a rooster to get eggs – it's an ovulation thing. Yes, Victoria has rats but our chickens didn't bring them here. Nor does their presence increase the rat population. Like any good pet owner, we don't leave food scattered about our properties, so the rat issue is a non-issue. Yes, their poo smells a bit when it's wet. But, like any good pet owner we use proper bedding and know when to clean up. No, they don't come when I call, but I'm working on it.

One of the funniest things about the chickens is that, because I raised them from day-olds, they still think they can hop up on my knee for a nice little pat and snuggle! Of course, they have to be in the right mood, usually in the evening, but it's amusing to have four full sized chickens tucked up like little loaves of bread, two on each knee. Another kind of chicken therapy, I guess.

Resources:

www.self-sufficient-life.com

Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre, annual chicken-keeping classes

Watch local papers for the annual Coop de Ville Tour and Metchosin Poultry Swap

Note: The Municipality of Saanich is currently considering the keeping of backyard chickens on Single Family Residential Lots. Research and public input received will be reported to Saanich Council in early 2011.

View the current Animals Bylaw here: www.saanich.ca/living/pdf/animals8556.pdf



Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

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From The Editor

Darren Copley, Environmental Education Officer
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When I look up collaboration in the thesaurus, many words come up: teamwork, partnership, group effort, and cooperation. These are probably the most important elements for any successful environmental initiative and, not surprisingly, all of them can be used to describe the stories in this issue of *Our Backyard*.

Greater Victoria has dozens of conservation organizations that are working to make a difference. These range from the larger land trusts that conserve land by acquisition or conservation covenants, to the smaller groups that are quite specific in their organization's goals; taking on the stewardship of a specific natural area. There are also many that focus on lobbying for the protection of public lands, or a specific conservation activity, and we are now seeing education become a larger component as well. Non-profit organizations have diverse approaches to conservation: ranging from organic farming practices to planting trees. I suggest you visit Habitat Acquisition Trust's Conservation Connection website www.conservationconnection.bc.ca to learn more.

Many groups are involved in restoration projects in our natural areas, and the District of Saanich values the partnerships it has with these organizations. Volunteers such as The Friends of Mount Doug and the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed regularly work with Saanich on invasive species removal and other restoration activities. Saanich staff are also on advisory committees with groups like the Gorge Waterway Initiative, Rithets Bog Conservation Society, and Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.

A great recent example that shows how working together can strengthen any project happened at Haliburton Community Organic Farm. The District of Saanich was a partner in presenting a wetland construction workshop with the Farm's Biodiversity Project, a group of conservation organizations that work with the farm to enhance habitat values (<http://haliburtonfarm.org/wp/>). This workshop attracted many other groups, and the result was a new ephemeral wetland. The project also involves the restoration of an abandoned hayfield into a Garry oak meadow, and Saanich Public Works has been generous through their leaf mulch program by providing mulch to help inhibit the growth of weedy grasses.

While you're out enjoying natural areas, here are some things to watch for now, as well as in the coming months:

- Watch for (and report!) the endangered Blue-grey Taildropper slugs in small openings of Garry oak meadows and Douglas-fir forests.
- Bald Eagles gathering at salmon-spawning rivers (Goldstream). Courtship behaviours can be observed as well, including nest-building.
- Owls calling as they establish and maintain their breeding territories. In Greater Victoria, only the Great-horned and Barred Owl are very common.
- Male Anna's Hummingbirds territorial displays can be heard and seen: he flies straight up, "sings" a little, dives down in a deep arc and makes a loud, explosive noise at the bottom of the dive with his tail.
- Wetlands and the ocean are covered with overwintering ducks, geese, loons, and grebes.
- Bird nests from the previous year are easy to spot in the leafless trees. Remember to leave them, as some birds, like Bushtits, will reuse them.
- Pacific chorus frogs (formerly tree frogs) begin chorusing in local wetlands. Get involved in FrogWatch to learn more: www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frogwatch/
- Indian plum begins to flower and the tips of wildflower bulbs are peeking up through the soil. Get involved in PlantWatch to learn more: www.naturewatch.ca/english/plantwatch/



News from Whitehead Park, Prospect Lake

By Pat Carfra, The Friends of Tod Creek Watershed

“Hey, what’s going on at Whitehead Park?” Neighbours are speculating.

Well, lots of good things are happening at once. It’s a work in progress, so put on your gumboots and take a look.

All the activities are part of the park enhancement plan created and implemented by Saanich Parks after more than a decade of consultations with The Friends of Tod Creek Watershed. We have been meeting with staff not only to create a more inviting park, but to save Tod Creek itself, which had become overgrown by willows at its mouth. This impacted fish habitat, as well as the beauty of our park.

There are two projects happening hand-in-hand.

1. New play equipment will soon be installed in what looks like a swimming pool at the moment. The grounds will be contoured and landscaped with new paths and picnic spots. We have been assured that there will be no increased boat access.
2. Invasive willow removal: The enormous golden willows that choked the creek were invasive, non-native trees. Their removal has dramatically changed the park and the creek is visible again. You can almost hear it breathe. All this has been professionally done with great care. Native plants will be placed along the streambanks and The Friends of Tod Creek Watershed have volunteered to keep them watered in dry spells.

On the east side of the creek, our volunteers will continue the removal of invasives as they have done on the west. We beg folks not to dump garden waste there, as lots of invasives have taken root and spread.

Hurray for Saanich Parks for their years of working towards this goal!

Find out more about The Friends of Todd Creek Watershed: www.todcreek.rd123.ca. Join us in our projects!

For more info about the Prospect Lake & District Community Association, also part of the consultation process: www.pldca.ca



Saanich’s Urban Forest Strategy

By Cory Manton, Saanich Parks

On November 1, 2010, Saanich Council adopted the Urban Forest Strategy for Saanich

The Urban Forest Strategy provides a long-term plan for achieving a sustainable urban forest in Saanich. 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, and other municipal bylaws, plans, policies, and initiatives.

The Saanich Urban Forest Vision is:

“The urban forest in Saanich is a highly valued asset comprised of a rich and diverse forest that is widely recognized and appreciated for the contribution that it makes to our community and to our sustainable environment.”

The goal is:

“Protect and enhance the urban forest”

The seven Strategies are:

1. Grow the Urban Forest Canopy,
2. Amend the Tree Preservation Bylaw,
3. Develop Urban Forest Guidelines,
4. Integrate the Strategy with other Saanich & Regional Initiatives,
5. Inventory the Urban Forest,
6. Develop an Urban Forest Operations Program, and
7. Engage the Community.

The implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy will be referred to in Strategic and Departmental Plans as well as the budget review process.

In 2011, Saanich will: measure the urban forest canopy and set canopy cover targets based on the typologies listed in the Urban Forest Strategy; engage the community in a public process to amend the Tree Preservation Bylaw; and develop and implement design guidelines.

For more information on the Urban Forest Strategy please contact Saanich Parks at 250-475-5522, or visit the website at www.saanichparks.ca

Sponsored by Environmental Services of the District of Saanich

Multicultural Environmental Education Program

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

By Robert Newell, Nature Events and Outings Coordinator

If someone asked you to close your eyes and picture "British Columbia", you likely would conjure images of vast landscapes of forest green or extensive networks of shimmering waterways or immense mountainous terrain capped with a frosting of snow. These are aspects of our province that illustrate the richness and vastness of BC's natural beauty, and anyone who considers this province "home" can take pride in the abundance of the natural beauty that surrounds us. The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) recognizes how remarkable this province is and thus has created the Multicultural Environmental Education Program (MEEP): a program that helps newcomers to Canada experience our unique natural areas and sense of environmentalism.

MEEP aims to connect newcomers to Canada to the natural splendour and beauty of their new home within BC. Since 2008, MEEP has conducted outings and workshops which provide newcomers with the opportunity to interact with local nature and develop their knowledge of environmental practices. These sort of events vary in topic and format, and they can be anything from a walk with a nature interpreter at Elk Lake to a workshop on bicycle repairs. Even in this chilly weather, MEEP is still committed to running environmental events and has facilitated workshops on local food harvest and how to be energy efficient in the winter.

VIRCS celebrates the diversity and multiculturalism of Canada, and it is important to note that MEEP does not intend to show newcomers the "right way for environmentalism." Rather, MEEP aims to create a forum for information sharing so that ideas on topics like home gardening, water conservation, and organic cuisine can be exchanged amongst different cultures. And, hopefully, MEEP events will make newcomers feel a bit more at home in this beautiful land.

If you wish to learn more about MEEP, please contact Robert Newell at robert@vircs.bc.ca or 250-361-9433 ext 225.



New Farmers Coming to Haliburton Farm



Boxes brimming with freshly harvested produce were a weekly sight at Haliburton Farm this 2010 season, and those in the 'Food Basket' program were able to enjoy the bounty. The program has grown from 10 to 32 members, and if you would like to experience the flavours and diversity of eating seasonally contact us directly. You will also be able to purchase produce at the new farmstand in the spring of 2011. Our old one was demolished by the 2010 Easter storm.

The winds of winter have brought change to Haliburton Farm: Elmarie Roberts and Marty Snow of Sunbird Farm have decided to not renew their lease after four successful years. They would like to offer up their land (approximately 1.5 acres) to other organic farmers who want the experience of farming. All of us at Haliburton would like to thank these two intrepid, inspiring women for all they have done to promote and engage the community in small-scale agriculture. They will be missed! We also bid farewell to Dayle Cosway who ran 'Terralicious': she has moved to California. The Haliburton Board has responded to these recent changes by creating a Land Use Plan and a series of Requests for Proposals for the available land plots. With a mandate to engage farmers in a cooperative farming system, we are excited by the number of applications we have received from eager farmers. We are also looking for educational ventures to steward the lands managed by the Society – the perfect venue for on-farm learning, with the possibility of using the renovated kitchen for cooking and teaching.

Haliburton Board members recently gave presentations on the farm, projects, and garlic at two Victoria Natural History Society gatherings. Please check our website for volunteer work party dates. See you on the farm!

<http://haliburtonfarm.org/wp/> or info@haliburtonfarm.org

By Paula Hesje, Haliburton Community Organic Farm board member

Saanich Appreciation Day 2010

By Cory Manton, Saanich Parks

Mayor Frank Leonard proclaimed November 7, 2010 as Tree Appreciation Day in Saanich. Many benefits and values come from trees and their associated ecosystems, including a very specific sense of place, aesthetics, air and water quality, soil and water conservation, and protection and enhancement of the environment. The planting and preservation of trees is an action that yields long term benefits.

In recognition of Tree Appreciation Day, the Honourable Murray Coell, Minister of Environment, joined Mayor Frank Leonard in Mount Douglas Park to plant a ceremonial bigleaf maple tree and unveil an interpretive sign above the banks of Douglas Creek. This "Salmon Life Cycle" sign was painted by local artist Kristi Bridgeman. The sign is a continuation of the long-standing work of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the District of Saanich to improve spawning conditions for returning salmon. More than 1,500 native trees and shrubs were planted by volunteers during the morning's festivities and Bob Bridgeman, a longtime member of the Friends of Mount Douglas Park and Douglas Creek Steward led volunteers on an interpretive walk highlighting the work completed in the creek over the last 15 years to restore and enhance salmon spawning habitat.

Across town, Saanich Parks, along with the Gorge Tillicum Community Residents' Association and the Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park and other community members also planted more than 1100 native trees and shrubs within areas recently cleared of invasive species in Cuthbert Holmes Park. Members of the Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park and Saanich Parks Natural Area's Technician also took volunteers on an interpretive walk through the park to discuss invasive species and the restoration work that is ongoing.

The District of Saanich wishes to thank all the community volunteers for making Tree Appreciation Day 2010 a success.

Community 'Walk and Talk' events

By Norm Mogenson, Cadboro Bay Residents Association
nmogensen@shaw.ca

The Cadboro Bay Community Association is conducting a series of 'Walk and Talk' events to examine how best to adapt to the issues of the 21st century. We begin by considering what kind of community we can and should strive to achieve that is both balanced and sustainable, well before the era our grandchildren have fully inherited the world. If you're young, that may mean by about 2060. Based on that, we will consider how our community would have to evolve over the next decade, and the next, and the next after that.

This series is our version of community awareness walks first initiated by Jane Jacobs, a community and urban visionary who was one of the first social planners to actively engage communities in their own place. Please visit the Cadboro Bay Residents Association website (www.cadborobay.bc.ca) if you are interested in attending any of our upcoming walks. To develop a similar community strengthening endeavour in your neighbourhood, please contact me for advice.

Walk topics include community inspections for:

- Safeguarding against earthquakes and tsunamis in further development;
- Linear options for new greenways and a more walkable community;
- Preservation of urban forest remnants;
- How to enhance local food security;
- How best to integrate into a modernized Regional Transit network;
- Determining what Jane Jacobs would advise us to do;
- Devising local responses to meet Saanich's Climate Action Strategy targets; - and more.

Visit www.climateaction.saanich.ca for up to date information



Sustainability and Climate Change

Our sustainable vision is now a part of everything we do



Official Community Plan

The Sustainable Saanich OCP is an expression of the fundamental values and goals of the community and establishes directions for achieving a collective sustainable vision for Saanich.



Saanich Strategic Plan

The 5 year Strategic Plan gives Council and staff a clear roadmap to reach Saanich's vision for a sustainable, livable and economically vibrant community.



Climate Change Plans

The Climate Action and Adaptation Plans lay out greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and strategies to guide the community towards climate change resiliency.



Community Programs

There are new program now available to Saanich residents and businesses to help reduce your footprint and help save you money!

climateaction.saanich.ca



by Marian McCoy, Marian.mccoy@saanich.ca
GORP Program Leader and Saanich Parks Natural Areas Technician

Garry Oak Restoration Project (GORP) Updates

December 4th was our last work party for 2010. The snowy end-of-November weather conspired to keep us out of Playfair Park and off of Little Mt Doug, so we're aiming to get to those sites early in the new year. See below for the new schedule.

We've heard from some of our volunteers that they'd appreciate an extra half hour of sleep on Saturday mornings, so as of January 2011, work parties will run from 10:00 am until noon on a trial basis. If the majority prefer it, we'll stick with this later start time until we switch to summer evenings.

GORP schedule for early 2011

Date	Time	Location	Activity
5 Jan	10:00 – noon	Little Mt Douglas	Scotch broom removal
22 Jan	10:00 – noon	Mt Douglas summit	Scotch broom removal
29 Jan	10:00 – noon	Playfair	Orchard-grass removal
5 Feb	10:00 – noon	Chatterton	Scotch broom removal
12 Feb	10:00 – noon	Wetherby	Orchard-grass removal, tree & shrub care
19 Feb	10:00 – noon	Camas	Invasives
26 Feb	10:00 – noon	Mahon Brook	Tree care, invasives

GORP 2010 Year in Review

As is usual, GORP volunteers had a busy and productive year. Here are the site-by-site highlights.

At Camas Park, volunteers removed fall cyclamen, hairy cat's ear, nipple-wort, oyster-plant, and much Himalayan blackberry. Fall cyclamen continues to spread rapidly.

At Chatterton Hill, volunteers cut large amounts of English hawthorn, Scotch broom, and Himalayan blackberry. We are experimenting with English hawthorn removal methods and are monitoring for re-growth.

Volunteers at Little Mount Doug removed Scotch broom from the middle sections of the site's sunny, south facing slope. Progress is looking good as we work our way up the hill.

Mount Doug Summit continues to receive broom removal attention. This year, specially-skilled volunteers removed broom from the steep rock cliff that overlooks the site.

At Mount Tolmie, volunteers have been removing cotoneaster, iris, forsythia, and young broom plants. We are very grateful to St. Michaels University School students, houseparents, and Community Service Coordinator Laurie Parker for their help in removing a mountain of broom this fall as part of a long term project.

At Playfair Park, volunteers removed orchard-grass and placed mulch in the holes. This is part of a multi-year project to better understand how to manage orchard-grass, a major threat at many Garry oak sites. Lunaria, poison-hemlock, ivy, crocus, and blackberry also met their end through volunteer efforts.

At Wetherby Park, volunteers tended to Garry oak saplings, and removed orchard-grass, oyster-plant, daffodils, and dandelions.

In October, GORP Site Stewards joined others in Saanich's *Pulling Together* Volunteer Program at their annual training and recognition event, where Val Schaeffer of UVic's Restoration of Natural Systems Program was guest speaker.

CRD LAND PURCHASE COMPLETES BROOKS POINT REGIONAL PARK

By Heather Skydt, The Land Conservancy

The Capital Regional District (CRD) and The Land Conservancy (TLC) of British Columbia are pleased to announce a land acquisition of 1.17 hectares to complete Brooks Point Regional Park on South Pender Island.

"This parcel of land has been high on the CRD Regional Parks' priority list for a decade," said CRD Board Chair Geoff Young. "Purchasing the parcel takes advantage of a prime opportunity to join two park segments that were separated by private property."

CRD and TLC have partnered to purchase the parcel. Under the agreement, the CRD will borrow \$1,650,000 and pay the principal back over five years. TLC will pay the interest costs estimated to be \$216,525 and are currently looking for conservation donors, buyers, or investors to help cover the price. The CRD will need to borrow funds because financial resources in the Land Acquisition Fund were committed to the \$15.8 million purchase of the Western Forest Products land in Jordan River and the Sooke Hills in March 2010.

"With this acquisition we are adding some of the most spectacular and beautiful waterfront in the Gulf Islands to the Regional Parks system. The park provides beach access, amazing marine views, and an abundance of wildflowers," said TLC Executive Director Bill Turner.

In approving the acquisition, the CRD Board indicated that its intent, if possible, is to recover all or a portion of the purchase price by selling a portion of the property after the Regional Parks' goal of linking the two existing parcels is secured. CRD and TLC will work with the Pender Island community to explore options to raise funds to cover the net purchase cost of the property.

Brooks Point Regional Park is an oceanfront park featuring an intertidal rocky shore and beach, meadows, and commanding views of Boundary Pass and the San Juan Islands. The CRD, TLC, Pender Island community, and other partners raised funds to purchase the original 4.8 hectares, including Gowlland Point, in 1998 and 2000.

For more information and a map: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks/brookspoint/index.htm>

Eastlake Ivy Pull

By Mary Haig-Brown, Friends of Tod Creek Watershed

On Sunday, November 14th, 2010, The Friends of Tod Creek Watershed sponsored an ivy pull at the "pub" at the end of Eastlake Road. This is a popular swimming area leading directly from rocks into deep water. Over the years the rocks and trees had been swallowed up by English ivy. We were delighted to have more than 22 volunteers ranging in age from a few months to over 80 years old. In two hours we removed a huge amount of ivy from the ground and the trees. Most of the volunteers were immediate neighbours, glad to help restore a popular area, but two people came from North Saanich to join in the fun. The event was arranged in conjunction with the Invasive Plant Council of BC. Through their *Communities Pulling Together* Program we will receive an honorarium of \$250 to be spent on conservation. All we had to do was provide 40 volunteer person hours of invasive removal, which we easily did. A big thank you to all who took part, to Invasive Plant Council of BC and to Saanich Parks, who picked up the big pile.



Have you heard the buzz about Mary Lake?

By Brandy Patterson, Habitat Acquisition Trust

Located in the beautiful Highlands along Millstream Creek, Mary Lake sits in the midst of a treasured 107-acre parcel of carefully conserved and endangered dry Coastal Douglas-fir forest, wetland, riparian and rocky outcrop ecosystems. It is also a critical block of land needed to complete significant regional trail and wildlife corridor networks on the Saanich Peninsula.

For Saanich, preserving Mary Lake will mean an important and long-awaited connection to Finlayson Arm, allowing people and wildlife to travel from Francis King Park through Thetis Lake and Gowlland Tod Parks.

Mary Lake also provides habitat for many plant and animal species, including a number of rare and endangered species such as the red-legged frog and Great Blue Heron (both on British Columbia's blue list: species of special concern).

To protect and conserve the beautiful Mary Lake property, The Mary Lake Conservancy must raise \$4.5 million. The *Save a Square Metre at Mary Lake* campaign was launched on October 24, 2010. 'Selling' square metres of forest for \$10 and square metres of waterfront for \$40 has made it easy for everyone to help conserve Mary Lake for future generations. In just over a month 11,824 square metres of the Mary Lake property have been saved!

How can you help?

- Visit SaveMaryLake.com to pick your square metre using the interactive map and leave your mark for the world to see!
- Help spread the word – visit SaveMaryLake.com to learn more about this amazing property and get the most recent updates. Then share your support on YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter!

Once the purchase price of the property is raised, Mary Lake will become a prized treasure for the world to enjoy.

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA

Open House

An Environmental Development Permit Area (EDPA) is a planning tool used to negotiate the protection of the environment prior to development according to a set of guidelines. Saanich Council has requested that a new EDPA be prepared for their consideration.

Similar to the existing Streamside Development Permit Area (SDPA), development proposals would need to follow guidelines to protect environmental features such as known locations of sensitive ecosystems, rare species and ecosystems, the marine shoreline, and wildlife trees.

To find out more about the proposed EDPA, or to fill in a feedback form, please attend one of the following Open Houses:

Thursday, January 13, 2011

Drop in from 3:00 to 8:00 pm

Pacific Dogwood Room

Saanich Commonwealth Place

4636 Elk Lake Drive.

Saturday, January 15, 2011

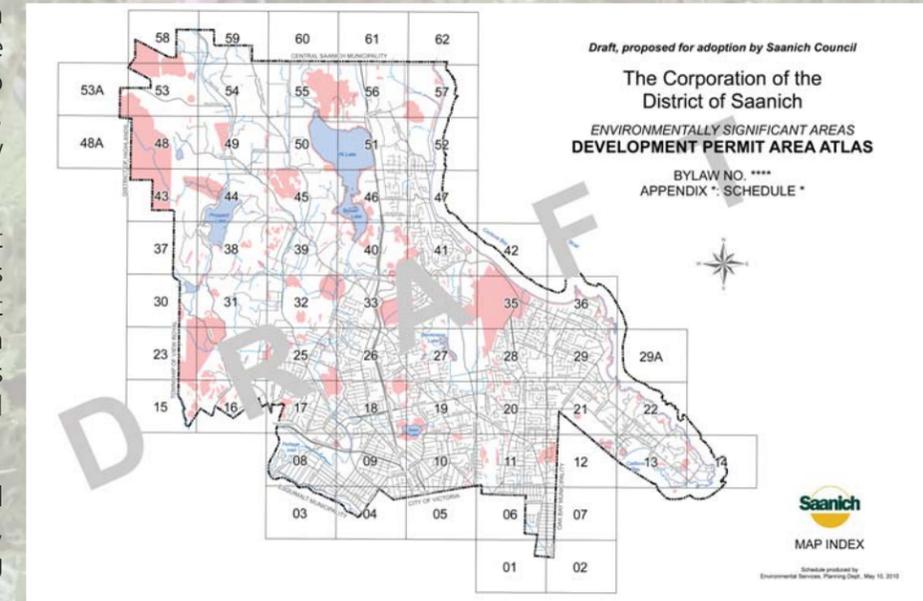
Drop in from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Lam Room

G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre

3100 Tillicum Road

For more information contact Adriane Pollard at (250) 475-5494, ext 3556.



GETTING READY: INVASIVE SPECIES SEASON APPROACHES

Heads up: we need all hands on deck to help us win the battle against priority invasive species threats in Saanich! Though there is work to do year round, we are preparing for the onslaught of the spring season. We especially need help – whether eyes or hands – for priority species such as Garlic Mustard and Milk Thistle.

Saanich Environmental Services and Saanich Parks both work on invasive species issues in Saanich and both need volunteer assistance.

On Private Land:

Saanich Environmental Services:

250-475-5471 or plansec@saanich.ca.

On Public Lands or Parks:

Saanich Parks:

250-475-5522 or parcs@saanich.ca.

Visit www.environment.saanich.ca/ (under Environmental Stewardship) for information and alerts on priority species.

A few things to watch for now (coming up or over wintering):

- poison hemlock
- garlic mustard
- milk thistle