

**MINUTES**  
**ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Held via MS Teams

**February 15, 2023, 6:05 pm**

Present: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Kaden Callenberg, Kurban Ali Keshvani, Spencer Gillis, Sarah Anderson.

Staff: Katie Turner, Parks Stewardship Coordinator; Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Alix Link, Manager of Urban Forestry and Nature Area, Parks; Kirsten Brazier, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Jennifer Grant; Ryan Senechal, Braedan Drouillard.

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**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by S. Anderson and Seconded by K. Ali Keshvani “That the Minutes of the Special Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held January 18, 2023, be adopted as circulated.”**

**CARRIED**

**CHAIRS REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed committee members and discussed the new committee configurations and Terms of Reference.

**PKOLS-Mt. Douglas Conservancy**

The President of the PKOLS Mt. Douglas Conservancy, Darrel Wick, gave a presentation on the history of the park and conservation efforts that the Conservancy is undertaking. Highlights include:

- The Province granted the park to Victoria in 1889.
- In 1930 a Royal Commission was issued to manage, regulate, and protect the park.
- In the 1930's a tearoom existed in the park. The Park provided housing for workers existed in what is now the parking lot. A trail to the top of the mountain (Churchill Drive) was established in 1939.
- A silo with radio direction finding equipment was installed on the summit the mountain during World War II.
- Douglas Creek is the watershed and in the 1960's salmon were naturally returning to the creek.
- In the 1980's the park was transferred from Victoria to Saanich.
- In 1989 the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society was formed.
- On November 22, 1992, the official transfer of the park from Victoria to Saanich occurred, and the Park Charter was issued. The language was strengthened to identify the area as a wilderness preserve.
- Additional land surrounding the park was acquired and added to the park over the years.
- The entrance to the park at the Churchill parking lot was enhanced in November 2012 as part of the 20-year anniversary.
- The Churchill Challenge hike to the top was established. Marker rocks were installed along the route.

- The Park charter was etched in stone on the “Charter Rock” at the entrance to the park.
- The longest standing growth and yield study is in the park. Core samples are taken every 10 years by the Ministry of Forests.
- Development in the surrounding areas has decreased the percentage of watershed that is undeveloped in the area.
- Water issues from storms and runoffs are an increasing problem.
- It would be ideal for a pipe to be installed to move the high-water levels away from the creek.
- Creek restoration after the washouts have taken place. Rocks and woody debris were brought in to reestablish the area.
- Spawning gravel was reintroduced in the creek.
- Salmon restoration in the creek has been taking place for many years. Dead salmon have been placed in the creek so that the nutrients from their bodies could be used a fertilizer for the salmon roe. The Salmon Throw takes place in January.
- Sound scaping of the area has been completed and shows which areas of the park are not affected by urban noise.
- Chum, salmon and cutthroat trout can be found again in the creek.
- PKOLS-Mt. Douglas Conservancy have submitted a request to the committee consider putting forward a motion that asserts environmental preservation and protection of PKOLS-Mount Douglas recognizing the incompatibility of dogs, on or off leash, with the protection of this sensitive environment.

#### **COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE**

- The Conservancy has submitted letters to staff requesting a review of policies.

#### **PULLING TOGETHER AND PARKS STEWARDSHIP**

The Parks Stewardship Coordinator, Katie Turner presented on the Pulling Together Parks program.

- Katie introduced the stewardship and volunteer programs that are coordinated through parks.
- Under the Official Community plan, parks stewardship is highlighted.
- The Pulling Together Volunteer program involved 45 lead sides with 60 lead stewards that do invasive species removal.
- Some groups meet weekly. Schools and community groups are invited to participate.
- Goals of the program are to enhance biodiversity, engage the community, educate about natural values, help to restore ecosystem services, contribute to social well-being and to learn a teach others about ecological restoration.
- The Park Ambassador Program has 13 volunteers at PKOLS who focus on education and outreach. Over 500 volunteer hours take place each year.
- Goals are to enhance the visitor experience, provide volunteer opportunities, build capacity to visitor education improve park management, and to engage First Nations in meaningful relationships.
- There is a structured volunteer program in place.
- Volunteers increase the capacity of work that takes places on ecosystem restoration.
- Pulling Together volunteers work in diverse areas. They remove and manage control species. Volunteers focus on higher priority invasive species in the region.
- Students of all ages are invited to participate in removing weeds and complete restoration planning.

- Planning and monitoring are an important part of these projects.
- Outreach and education are important aspects of the volunteer programs.
- Volunteer recognition and training takes place throughout the year
- Partnerships between staff and volunteers are supported.

**COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE**

- The committee recognized that metrics are difficult to measure. Staff are anticipating that volunteer hours will plateau to a steady state for a while as programs are evaluated and maintained.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting date will be March 15, 2023.

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Councillor Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Kirsten Brazier, Committee Clerk