

Playfair Park

A Community Partnership Project with Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team

In more than forty Saanich Parks, community volunteers of all ages and abilities are assisting us to remove invasive species and encourage native ecosystems to flourish. Volunteers have played an essential and leading role with ecological restoration in Playfair Park since 1995. To learn about ecological restoration projects in Saanich Parks or to volunteer with the Saanich Pulling Together Program, please contact Saanich Parks at 250-475-5522 or www.saanichparks.ca. We need your help!



In all of Canada, Garry oak ecosystems are found only on southeastern Vancouver Island, the southern Gulf Islands, and in two isolated areas on the Lower Mainland. Garry oak ecosystems support more than 700 plant, 800 insect, and 100 bird and other wildlife species, many of which are rare or endangered. Unfortunately, less than 5% of the habitat remains

in a near-natural condition. Although this area before you is protected in a park, the sensitive habitat is threatened by alien invasive species, especially grasses, and trampling by park visitors. Please help to conserve this unique natural place by keeping feet on designated paths (people and pets too!) and volunteering with Saanich Parks.

Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration Site

This ecosystem is enchantingly beautiful and high in biodiversity. The Municipality of Saanich is working in partnership with the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team at Playfair Park to protect and restore rare plant populations and to enhance the habitat they need for survival. We are doing this through on-going research and hands-on ecological restoration work supported by a committed team of volunteers and staff.

This meadow area of Playfair Park is a significant, rare remnant of the deep-soil Garry oak woodland meadows that once were much more common in the Greater Victoria area. The meadow is approximately 0.85 ha in area, and is a part of the Saanich Garry Oak Restoration Project (GORP), a restoration initiative of the District of Saanich, that focuses on Garry oak ecosystems. Despite its small size, this site retains a high diversity of plants unique to Garry oak ecosystems and features an impressive display of spring flowers, including great camas, common camas, western buttercup, shooting star and chocolate lily, all much appreciated by local residents and park visitors.



Camas

Many of the native plants in the park are rare in the surrounding landscape, including one nationally endangered species. Playfair Park also has a rocky outcrop Garry oak ecosystem, close to the end of Judge Place, where volunteers are also doing ecological restoration work.

Volunteers have removed English ivy, Scotch broom, daphne laurel, Himalayan blackberry and other invasive species. In 2009, researchers experimented with controlled burning of the invasive grasses to see if this method could be effective in controlling alien invasive grasses. Mulching, specially planned mowing and other methods have also been used, as we continue to research how best to accomplish our goals.



Chocolate lily



Garry oak



Playfair Park



Western buttercup