

PARK Partners



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Wildlife Tree Stewardship workshops inspire parks volunteers

At first glance, wildlife trees may not look like much, but these standing trees – dead or alive – have qualities that can support up to 80 wildlife species for decades. Bald eagles and osprey nest in their crowns; woodpeckers, songbirds and ducks find food or shelter among their branches and trunks; bears make dens in their bases and bats roost in their bark.

Participants at two recent workshops (at Burnaby Lake Regional Park and Campbell Valley Regional Park) learned more about the qualities that make a wildlife tree valuable and also found out how each of them can help keep track of these natural treasures.

After a 45-minute presentation, participants hit the trail for an hour in search of wildlife trees and tried out their newly-acquired skills in assessing the trees and looking for signs of wildlife use. It was a morning of learning and fun.

To check on available space in the last Wildlife Tree Stewardship workshop at Deas Island on Mar. 14, call (604) 432-6359 or email:

programs.info@metrovancouver.org

To find out more about the WiTS program and how you can get involved, go to www.wildlifetree.org



Photo: Dawn Hanna

Field notes: Jeanne Hughes (left) of the Wildlife Tree Stewardship program helps participants at the Burnaby Lake workshop try out their assessment skills

Regional Parks Forum updates

Stewardship Stream

Following on the success of the wildlife tree stewardship workshops, the Stewardship Stream will be offering the following workshops:

- **No Plot is too Small: A Community's Guide to Restoring Public Landscapes** (in partnership with Evergreen)
Dates: Mar. 11 at Boundary Bay Regional Park, Mar. 23 at Capilano River Regional Park. For details, see www.parkpartners.ca.
- **Introduction to Wildlife Tracking**
Date and location TBA
- **Invasive plant species specific best management practices**

Dates: Fall 2009

For updates on stewardship stream activities, check www.parkpartners.ca or sign up for the stewardship email list by sending a note to dawnhanna@telus.net

Education, Training and Communications Stream

The steering group for the Education, Training and Communications Stream is set to meet on Mar. 5.

Possible workshops include

- Writing successful grant applications
- Project WILD environmental education

Check www.parkpartners.ca for more details and activities.

Community Development Coordinator updates and area highlights

By Jeremy Plotkin and
Suzanne Stewart-Patterson

East Area

A warm welcome to Theresa Harding who joined Metro Vancouver as the community development coordinator in December 2008. See more below.

Central Area

Jeremy Plotkin has taken the reigns from Trina Sakata, who is away on maternity leave. His current projects include: helping the Burnaby Lake Park Association market corporate invasive species removal work parties; working with the Minnekhada Park Association to host a special event in the summer called Art in the Park; creating a Minnekhada history photo album with a person whose grandmother lived and worked on the farm in the 1960s; collaborating with the Colony Farm Park Association to participate in new plantings and help maintain last year's plantings; organizing the Burnaby Lake viewing tower opening.

West Area

Ideas Fair 2009 takes place on Saturday, Mar. 7 at the UBC First Nations Longhouse. Suzanne has been working with a Pacific Spirit Park Society committee and MV staff to develop the tour program. Other key projects include preparing for the 2009 Pacific Spirit Regional Park Joint Workplan Session with Pacific Spirit Park Society and staff for mid-February. Working with PSPS outreach initiative to target local schools keen to be involved during the school year. Working together we have confirmed MV requirements for PSPS partner-led work parties for youth. The first work party is planned for Feb.14. With Camridge House Committee/ Boundary Bay Regional Park Volunteers, we are preparing for Heritage Day event in February and will be participating in Birds on the Bay in March.



De-vine intervention: KPMG corporate Weedbusters pulled 1,000 kg of ivy from Burnaby Lake Regional Park this past September.

East Area welcomes new community development coordinator

Theresa Harding is the new community development coordinator for East Area, filling the position previously held by Lisa Ferris and Trina Sakata, who are working in other areas within MV Parks. She is a professional planner with a Master of Arts in planning from the University of BC School of Community and Regional Planning and is a member of the Canadian Institute of Planning. Since graduating in 2004, Theresa has worked with Arlington Group Planning and Architecture Inc. in Vancouver on a wide range of projects involving land use analysis, land use development and site planning, community planning, socio-economic research and public consultation. She was also involved with organizational development and community development projects for non-profit organizations in Richmond including, CHIMO Crisis Services, the Richmond Women's Resource Centre and the Richmond Poverty Response Committee on a range of initiatives from food security to affordable housing.



Theresa Harding

Congratulations!

In 2008, the Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society, better known as KEEPS, and the Pacific Spirit Park Society celebrated 10 years as registered non-profit societies.

BLPA welcomes new volunteer coordinator



Ann Green

Burnaby Lake Park Association welcomes our new volunteer coordinator, Ann Green. Ann has been an active volunteer with the BLPA for almost two years. She and her husband Bryan have been dedicated volunteers with the Weedbusters program at Burnaby Lake and have also volunteered with the nest box program and the recent viewing tower demolition work party.

Ann's hard-working nature and extensive volunteer experience will be a great asset to the BLPA, its directors and volunteers. Ann's friendly nature and sense of humour also make her a good candidate for this position.

The BLPA is grateful to have someone with Ann's experience and enthusiasm to take over this key role for the group and is looking forward to the year ahead.

The BLPA is also very grateful to Metro Vancouver for providing the funding for this important position for our organization for the fourth year in a row.



The addition of a new pergola (left) and stepping stones (below) make the Burnaby Lake butterfly garden (bottom) even more attractive.

Photos: Bruce Meek

Burnaby Lake butterfly garden gets new additions

By Diane Hayward-Meek

Every year the Butterfly Garden at Burnaby Lake keeps expanding and getting more beautiful and 2008 was no exception!

Thanks to the vision and many volunteer hours of Judy Wellington and the master gardeners and volunteers that weed, water, plant and tend the garden every year.

During 2008 the Butterfly Garden received many lovely updates. Last spring, one of the new additions to the Butterfly Garden was a pergola/arbour near the footbridge at the garden. This wonderful new feature was made possible by a very generous donation of \$1,100 from the Burnaby Rhododendron Society.

In the summer, youth volunteers from the Catching the Spirit program made and decorated stepping stones which now line several small new paths that invite visitors to wander quietly into the garden for a closer look at the beautiful flowers, and the butterflies, bees and other insects that thrive in this tiny oasis.

This garden continues to be a living legacy to its founder, Bob Gardner, who would be so pleased to see the love, and attention that the garden still receives and the enjoyment it brings to so many visitors.



Nurture with Nature: New Program Targets Occupational Health Nurses

A growing body of research indicates that nature is good for us.

“As a park interpreter, I’ve seen first hand, the effects wild places have on people,” says Lisa Ferris, Metro Vancouver park interpretation specialist. “Many a teacher has cautioned me that ‘little Timmy will be a problem during the program.’ But when faced with a natural setting, this child that might be challenged indoors demonstrates a totally different and valuable skill set in the outdoors. Nature is a touchstone for my own well being, so I’m pleased to see that evidence is growing to support what I’ve always guessed was there.”

The natural world can have great benefits for many residents. The Regional Parks and Greenways Plan outlines strategies to promote the therapeutic benefits of parks. In an effort to make these goals a reality, park interpreters have been working on Health and Wellness programming related to parks.

Early this summer, contact was made with the Health and Wellness team, a sub group of occupational health nurses with Fraser Valley Health. This small team of nurses has been tasked with increasing employee well-being. This isn’t an easy task, as working in health care can be very stressful. Many of their 23,000 staff, stretching from Boston Bar to Burnaby, are challenged with various health issues of their own and work/life balance. As part of this initiative to increase employee well-being, the team has introduced a variety of programs



Photo: Lisa Ferris

Experiencing serenity: Nurses taking time to reflect on returning to nature.

including reflexology, salsa aerobics and laughter yoga to their staff. When presented with the opportunity to pilot an additional program

connecting people to nature, the health and wellness team jumped at the opportunity.

After a recent meeting held in the Campbell Valley Visitor Centre, Lisa, along with park interpreter Frances McCoubrey treated the nurses to the pilot Nurture with Nature program.

“Our objective was to use reflective and sensory activities to connect them with nature and to encourage them to use regional parks for their

health and wellness,” explains Ferris. “Feedback was very positive with many indicating their appreciation for nature journaling (observing and drawing), blindfolded Meet a Tree and silent walk activities.”

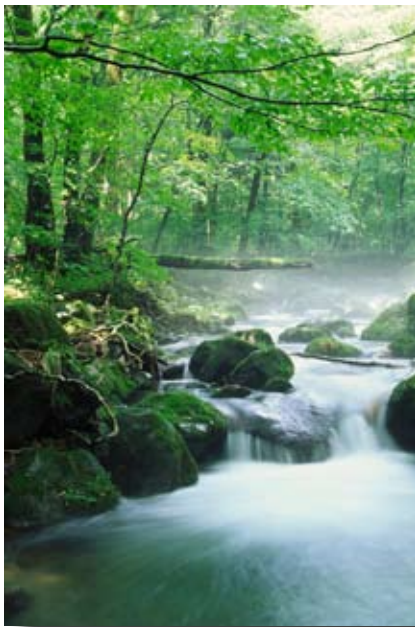
One of the nurses wrote the following vertical poem while enjoying the beauty of nature. Writing one word vertically on the page to represent how the place made her feel, the nurse then wrote corresponding lines as follows:

*Creating
A renewed
Lesson.
Migrating back to nature.*

There is much enthusiasm to explore how this type of program might benefit the staff and clients of Fraser Valley Health as well as Lower Mainland residents.

There is so much potential. Park interpreters also attended a health fair in Surrey on Nov. 20 to continue promoting regional parks and their work, and offered a Rejuvenation workshop at Parksfest 2008. The team is also developing a Natural Vitality program targeting the grade 4 to 6 curriculum.

For more information on the benefits of nature, check out the following link: www.childrenandnature.org/



Diary of a Crazy Bogger

By Erika Milne

Erika Milne is a student in the UBC geography course Geog 210: Vancouver and its Region. A major topic in this course is human-environmental interaction. Part of this section is a discussion of the history of Camosun Bog in Pacific Spirit Regional Park and a field trip to the bog by all 120 students taking the course. This year students were given the option of an assignment based on attendance at five Saturday work parties of the Camosun Bog Restoration Group and writing a journal of their experiences. Six students took part (the maximum possible) and this is the journal of one. It has been slightly shortened. ~ Laurence Brown



Photo: Laurence Brown

Day 1: Stump Removal

A group of us from Geog 210 worked in an area near the southeastern corner of the bog to remove huge old stumps so that later the ground could be leveled, covered with a layer of peat and then planted with sphagnum moss, bog laurel and Labrador tea. After a couple of hours of mattocking and shoveling, we managed to remove about six large stumps from the grumbling, gurgling depths of the peat-rich mud beneath our feet. Another group of geog students spent the day planting Labrador tea and wild blueberry at the other end of the bog. Issaku brought us tea and cookies just after 11 a.m., and newcomers including myself were welcomed into the “crazy bogger” group with an informal ceremony and a little pin made of a slice of pine taken from the bog. I felt extremely touched by the reception.

Day 2: Loading the Big Bin

There were 27 of us throughout the course of the day today, young and old, big and small, helping load up the big rented bin with greenwaste, including the pile of stumps we removed on the previous Saturday. Wheelbarrows borrowed from Metro Vancouver helped immensely, but tarps and buckets also did the trick, and we managed to load up the bin

Boggers victorious: Volunteers celebrate after loading a big bin with greenwaste.

to overflowing, removing the entire pile of debris that Laurence said was supposed to be his “all-winter” project! We also transported some of the finer material to the bog’s compost heap area for recycling, and at one point had a steady train of bucket fillers, carriers and dumpers. The highlight of my day was seeing Denis (Underhill), the revered elder in our group, standing atop the great pile of debris in the bin, stomping it down with bodyweight to make more room! I marvel at his boundless energy, and feel like a bit of a wimp for being tired.

Day 3: Planting Sphagnum

Today I helped plant an area of the bog close to the stump-removal area with sphagnum moss. It had rained the night before and the ground was extremely soggy, so we weren’t entirely confident it would work. I was careful to tread lightly on the precarious planks placed strategically around some very muddy areas (not wanting to be ‘baptized’ by the bog this morning). Throughout the day we leveled a layer of peat and then planted two kinds of sphagnum moss intermittently over about a four-square-metre plot. Some of the others worked for hours trying to remove

one last stubborn gigantic stump and finally, just before teatime, success! They worked like machines, and were no doubt sore the next day. Someone found a mysterious disc in the bog, some kind of wheel that was totally coated in rust, and which nobody could conclusively identify. They tell us that there’s a whole museum of artifacts that have been found over the years of the restoration process. I find this totally fascinating!

Day 4: Weeding

I spent the majority of today on the far side of the bog helping remove some stubborn salal from an area that would soon be ready to plant, the higher areas with blueberry and Labrador tea, and the lower areas with sphagnum moss and bog laurel. Not being very precise work, I could casually spend the day chatting with Simon, a high-school student volunteering at the bog for his community service requirement and Laurence, who continually inspires me with his enthusiasm for the restoration project. Most of the others were weeding and planting in the area near the entrance as we had done in previous weeks.

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Catching the Spirit Donors

Funding for the Catching the Spirit program is provided by Pacific Parklands Foundation and is made possible thanks to the generosity of our donors:

\$15,000 to \$25,000

- RBC Foundation
- Coast Capital Savings
- Vancity
- Telus



\$5,000 to \$10,000

- Imperial Oil Foundation
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Shell Environmental Fund
- Terasen Gas Utility
- Vancouver Foundation

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\$1,000 to \$3,500

- Scotiabank
- BC Hydro
- Lehigh – Heidelberg Cement Group

In-kind

- Loewen Stronach & Co.

To learn more about how you can support the Catching the Spirit program visit the Pacific Parklands Foundation website at: www.pacificparklands.ca

Catching the Spirit Youth Society

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Catching the Spirit gears up for 2009 season

The Catching the Spirit youth program has been delivered, in collaboration with Metro Vancouver since 2001. The program was developed for youth by youth, through an initiative to engage youth in more meaningful involvement within Pacific Spirit Regional Park. The program provides for youth involvement in stewardship activities, leadership development, social responsibility, outdoor education and community sustainability. The program is free to all youth, ages 12 to 18, in Metro Vancouver and provides opportunities for youth from a variety of social, cultural and financial background to come together, share ideas and help make a difference within their communities and regional parks.

In 2005, the Catching the Spirit Youth Society was formed to help with fundraising, growth and development of the program within

Metro Vancouver regional parks. The role of the society has and continues to evolve. Thanks to the support of Metro Vancouver, the society continues to build capacity and has positioned itself to take a

more direct role in the planning and delivery of the Catching the Spirit program in 2009. The society is committed to delivering a quality program and collaborating with Metro Vancouver to further develop the CTS program into one of the finest youth programs available in the Metro Vancouver area.

The society will oversee the development and delivery of the program, including training and delivery coordination, fundraising and financial management (in partnership with Pacific Parklands Foundation), marketing and communication and recruitment of program volunteers and participants.



Catching the Spirit: new season, new energy

By Natalie Haltrich

Like the crocuses and Steller jays, the alders and bracken fern, Catching the Spirit too is breaking out into a fresh new spring season.

We are in the midst of putting our ninth year of summer activities together and once again look to Metro Vancouver's youth to bring their great leadership skills, brilliant visions, and dynamic energy in making this year's program as successful as ever.

This year's program will be in Pacific Spirit Regional Park, Burnaby Lake Regional Park, Tynehead Regional Park and Capilano River Regional Park.

Many of our old favorites activities will be back, including:

- minimum-impact camping;
- environmental restoration;
- wildlife inventory and monitoring;

- GPS use;
- invasive species management;

The Spirit Ranger Program gives youth a chance to patrol the park on bicycle or foot and interact with the public.

Activities include:

- bike safety, cycling etiquette and stewardship;
- hazards identification;
- providing tours and assisting visitors;
- environmental monitoring and mapping using GPS;
- learning more about natural history.

For more information and updates, check the website at www.catchingthespirit.com or call (604) 562-0583. Hope to see you this summer!



Two of the faces behind Catching the Spirit



Robert Gunn, Chair

A founding director of the CtSYS, Bob loves to work with youth (and adults) and to encourage them to explore their connection to nature. He is a firm believer in offering opportunities for youth involvement in environmental projects and in the abilities of youth to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills and social responsibilities through active participation. As chair of the Regional Parks Forum from 2002 to 2004, Bob supported the formation of and participated in the Regional Youth Initiative Group [RYIG], which was the precursor, to the CtSYS. Bob is currently an instructor in the Fish, Wildlife & Recreation program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.



Natalie Haltrich, Program Coordinator

Natalie has worked with youth in different times in different spaces. She received training as a youth development instructor in South Carolina, has initiated, developed and delivered outdoor camps for children and youth in BC, and has worked with Project Wild and orangutans. Most recently but long after completing her undergrad in biology and environmental sciences, Nat obtained an MSc in Strategic Sustainability from the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Sweden. She is an accomplished sea kayaker, a level III guide and has led trips on BC's Coast from Bamfield to Bella Bella and Haida Gwaii. She maintains that her desire to play and explore keeps life full of opportunity.

www.catchingthespirit.com



Photo: Laurence Brown

The end is near: Planting sphagnum moss is the last stage in restoration.

Bogger, continued from page 5

Day 5: Preparing an area for Planting

Today a few of us worked on leveling the ground in the area from which we had removed all the stumps during my first work party. Caitlin dug a “glory-hole” (she heard the word and was first to volunteer) in order to retrieve peat to cover an area that would subsequently be planted. By the end of the day she was up to her waist in the hole! One group was also working in an area just at the entrance of the bog off 21st Avenue where a few weeks before a small stream had been diverted a few feet in order to provide a solid area for planting.

Reflections, Post-Bogging

Throughout my five weeks (thus far) working with the “crazy boggers” I enjoyed learning about the various processes involved in this type of restoration project. It amazes me how much dedication and time this project has taken, and the tireless enthusiasm that makes the work, though sometimes manually exhausting, very special.

Since the early 1990s, the restoration process has made giant leaps in terms

of the re-establishment of parts of this ecosystem which had been largely lost due to human impacts and urban development. Nowadays, most areas of the two-hectare plot encompassed in the restoration plans are restored to resemble the original appearance and function of the wetland. The project of restoration, by its very definition, precludes the possibility of a complete revival of the original ecosystem because any efforts by humans to alter nature are inherently un-natural. That being said, my experience working at the Camosun bog has helped me to understand what can be enacted by a group of people with a strong vision for change. For me, the value of learning about an ecosystem like this one, nestled within an urban community and nurtured by urban inhabitants who see this area as more than a spot to put a power line or to dump construction fill, is tremendously important. I am very proud to have been a crazy bogger and hope to continue with this amazing project in the future.

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Fall 2009	Sep. 15	mid-Oct.
Winter 2009	Dec. 1	Jan. 1

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We welcome your contributions. To make submissions, contact Dawn Hanna at (604) 831-5069 or parkpartners@telus.net

**For the latest updates on activities, news and more on the Regional Parks Partnership Program, check the website at:
www.parkpartners.ca**

