

Farms Forever-A Model

By Nathalie Chambers, Madrona Farm

Summer 2010 successfully concluded the four-year campaign to protect Madrona Farm. Thank you to the more than 4500 individuals in the community that took a stand! The farm will now be protected in perpetuity by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia. This campaign really puts the power where it belongs—with the people. It shows that if we all work together and take a stand we can accomplish the unimaginable.

Madrona Farm is just one farm and cannot feed everyone, but the model can. The success of the model can be attributed to the fact that it addresses one of the major obstacles to food security on the Island: the price of farmland. It is no longer economically viable for farmers to purchase farmland. As a result, many farmers are being denied access to farmland. Those who can purchase farmland are generally not farmers, and this is how farmland is taken out of production. This eroding pattern threatens our food security (and emergency-preparedness) and has placed us in a food crisis.

The good news is the Madrona Farm model is completely repeatable. It is a good thing too, because there is a new legion of farmers emerging from the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria, ready to get their shovels in the ground and speaking the language of agriculture: permaculture, agriculture and biodynamics, etc. Together we can conserve farmland, protect biodiversity, and provide access to these new farmers.

On that note, this year's **Chef Survival III- Quest for the Golden Broccoli** is a fundraiser that is going to provide the funds to help repeat the model. This is a culinary arts performance of epic proportions! Come and watch 20 of the Island's best chefs engage in a boot-camp style obstacle course: haystack hurdles, irrigation pipe crawl, climbing wall, balancing beam over the mud pit, boat race to Condiment Island, and more! Then the chefs race over the 27-acres of Madrona Farm to pick the vegetables they need to create a masterpiece that will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. The whole event is catered and this year, to add to the festivities, we will be playing a spectator game called "What's on the Plate, Mate?!" for the Foodie-Connoisseur-Of-The-Year Award. Contestants from the audience will come up on stage, be seated at a dressed dinner table, and blindfolded while they taste ingredients from dishes prepared by our secret chef. Live music will round out this fabulous afternoon.

If you have not attended this event before, it is a great time for a worthwhile cause. Located at 4317 Blenkinsop Road, Madrona Farm will once again host this spectacular event from 12:00-5:00pm, Sunday, October 03, 2010. Tickets are \$75, with 10% of the ticket price going to the Island Chef Collaborative, a group that directly funds new farmers, and 90% go to the The Land Conservancy's Agriculture Program, to provide the funding to repeat the model. Tickets are available at the Madrona Farm gate Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or online through The Land Conservancy's website. A charitable tax receipt of \$35 is issued with the purchase of each ticket.



Our Backyard



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A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

From The Editor

Darren Copley Contact number 250-475-5579
EEO or email darren.copley@saanich.ca

Well let's just say that the summer of 2010 will not be known as the great tomato year. In fact, most people probably had very few tomatoes ripen in this bumper lettuce and pea year. If this was the year you finally decided to grow your own garden, you can take heart that many seasoned gardeners (myself included) had difficult times with warmer weather plants like tomatoes and butternut squash. So try not to be discouraged, and make sure you go to our Sept 18th Organic Gardening presentation (page 10) to help inspire you for next year. We are fortunate that a crop failure for us doesn't mean we starve, but on a larger scale it does impact the cost and availability of food. This is a very good reminder, or perhaps foreshadowing, of things to come as our climate changes. How do we plan our garden to be successful? (Heritage varieties of vegetables performed well. I won't plant peppers next year, and I'll look for shorter season squash and tomatoes). While you think about these adaptations in your own yard, you can help the District of Saanich with our Climate Change Adaptation Plan (see page 4 for details).

The other really memorable thing for me this summer was a return of red squirrels to my own Saanich yard. It's been more than 20 years since they were consistently present, and this year we have at least two individuals! My wife Claudia and I hope that their return is in part due to the fact that we grow everything organically and have naturescaped our landscape to attract native species. If you aren't familiar with the term, naturescaping is a landscaping method that uses native plants to create natural habitats that attract and support wildlife. One of the best things about naturescaping, besides the fact that you don't have to worry about deer or watering, is that you are always discovering some use that an animal has for a plant or other habitat component. This year it was seeing how important mature grand firs are to our red squirrels; they are very busy right now cutting the cones off the trees. Since the cones normally fall off one bract at a time, you rarely get to see them.

This time of year you can also appreciate the bounty of our native plants as you watch birds feed on the abundant fruits of Oregon grape, black hawthorn, arbutus, red-osier dogwood, and others. And spend as much time as possible near moving water this time of year – the sound attracts migrating warblers and other brightly-coloured birds, many that don't usually come to feeders.

To learn more about native plant gardening, check out the CRD and Swan Lake workshops in the events listing, and don't miss their great fall native plant sale. You can also visit our website at www.saanich.ca/living/natural/naturescape.html or contact me to learn more about naturescaping.

As you enjoy your naturescaped yard, or one of the many parks in Saanich, here are some things to watch for this Fall:

- Dampwood termites are flying around finding mates and new rotten logs to move into.
- Steller's Jays return to Victoria on the years the Garry oaks produce a bumper crop of acorns.
- Field crickets singing: the frequency of their song depends on how warm they are!
- Fungi popping up everywhere after the first fall rains.
- Shorebirds pass through on their way south, but many of the ducks stop and stay for the winter.
- Few native flowers are blooming: asters typically are all that are still showy, but the shrubs and trees are loaded with fruit that birds will enjoy for months.
- Turkey Vultures start to fly in groups, called "kettling", in preparation for their trip southward. See the events listing (page 11) for the annual Hawk Watch on Sept 25.
- Spawning salmon in our region's larger streams and rivers.
- Fox Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos reappear in large numbers at bird feeders.





A Gardening Project for Those in Need

By Cali Olleck, Compost Education Centre

What excites you most about summer? Here in Victoria there are so many things to enjoy during this season – lakes, beaches, parks...and gardens! Known as the “City of Gardens”, Victoria enjoys a mild, Mediterranean climate that allows us to grow food every month of the year. This is one of several reasons why the *Plant a Row–Grow a Row* project is a perfect fit for our city.

Plant a Row–Grow a Row is a project that started in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1986. It is an initiative to connect gardeners to their communities by encouraging them to grow extra food for those who do not have enough to eat.

Plant a Row–Grow a Row was spearheaded by the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre, in partnership with Lifecycles Project Society and the *Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group*, in June this year. Every week about 45 local gardeners, as well as various farmers at the Moss St. Market, bring their extra produce to the Compost Education Centre. It then gets distributed to *Our Place Society* and the *Best Babies* program that is sponsored by the *Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group*. The goal is to continue the project throughout the year and donate 1 tonne (1000 kg) of produce. At present, 58 kg have been donated, but the project is still in its early stages, and the weight will really increase once those zucchinis and autumn veggies are ready to harvest!

If you are interested in joining *Plant a Row–Grow a Row* it's never too late! Contact Cali at 250-386-9676 or stop by the Compost Education Centre (1216 North Park St.) Wednesday – Saturday between 10am and 4pm to register. To find more information about the project you can also check out www.compost.bc.ca.

Upcoming Events

Saanich Recreation Free Programs

www.saanich.ca/parkrec/recreation/index
250-475-5408

Sunday Hikes

Sundays, 1:00-3:30pm

Sept 12 Konukson Park & Ten Mile Point

Meet at Cadboro Gyro Park, main parking lot beside washrooms

Oct. 17 Lakehill Loop

Meet at Beckwith park parking lot, on Beckwith, off Quadra

Nov.14 Calvert & Logan park

Meet at the end of Viaduct Ave., off Interurban

Gentle Walk & Talk

Thursdays, 9:30-11am

Enjoy fresh air, beautiful scenery, a friendly chat and some exercise as we explore the parks & trails around the region. Suitable for all walking abilities.

Sept 16 Sayward Hill

Meet at Lochside Park, north of Cordova Bay Rd, past Mattick's Farm

Sept 23 McMinn to Doris Page Park

Meet at McMinn Park beside tennis courts off Maplegrove St.

Sept 30 Tod Inlet

Meet at Tod Inlet access on Wallace Dr. opposite Quarry Reservoir, south of Benvenuto

Oct.7 Glencoe Cove

Meet at Vantreight Park off Ferndale.

Oct.14 Swan Lake

Meet at the end of Nelthorpe, off McKenzie

Oct.21 Beckwith park to Hutchison

Meet at Beckwith Park, parking lot on Beckwith Ave., off Quadra

Oct.28 Copley Park to Brydon Park

Parkridge off Vanalman

Nov.4 Viaduct Flats to Glendale Gardens

Meet at Viaduct Flats parking lot, off Interurban Rd., just north of Camosun College

Nov.18 Blenkinsop Lake

Meet at Lochside Trail parking lot by Don Mann Excavating, off McKenzie at Borden

Nov.25 Mt.Doug Park to Glendenning

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

Preschoolers in The Park

Play on our adventure playgrounds, enjoy organized circle time, and partake in a nature/urban walk through surrounding neighbourhoods. Bring stroller or child carrier. Registration not required. Parent participation is required.

Sept 10 Lochside Park

Meet in playground area, Lochside Dr., off Cordova Bay Rd. past Mattick's Farm

Sept 17 Meadow Park

Meet in playground at end of Ker Ave., off Tillicum Rd.

Sept 24 Copley Park West

Meet at playground area, located on Vanalman Ave., & Parkridge St

Victoria Natural History Society

www.naturevictoria.ca for more programs

Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Wolverines: A Story of Ecological Myths and Economic Realities

Tuesday, Sept. 14, 7:30 pm

UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Join wildlife ecologist Dr. Jason Fisher as he takes us on a remarkable scientific and photographic journey to reveal hidden insights into this largely unknown animal.

Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Some Interesting Ferns and “Fern Allies” of BC

Tuesday, Sept. 21, 7:30 pm

Swan Lake Nature House

Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

Birds of Vancouver Island

Wednesday, Sept. 29, 7:30 pm

UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Join Mike Yip on a photographic journey off shore of Vancouver Island looking at pelagic species.

Hawk Watch (Field Trip)

Saturday, Sept 25, 11-3pm

Aylard Farm parking lot off Becher Bay Road

Join CRD Parks, the VNHS, and Pacific Northwest Raptors for live displays and activities. The best viewing involves a 20-minute trek up a steep, rocky trail. Bring binoculars, water, and a lunch.

Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

Whales, Satellites, and Cold Lunches on the Edge of Antarctica

Monday, Sept. 27, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Sea Otters and Persistent Organic Pollution

Tuesday, Oct. 12, 7:30 pm

UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Identification Blitz

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 7:30 pm

Swan Lake Nature House

Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

The Effect of Ocean Acidification on Intertidal Mollusks

Monday, Oct. 25, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

Marine Bird Conservation

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 7:30 pm

Swan Lake Nature House

Septic System Inspections

By Gail Pike, Capital Regional District

Need to get your septic system inspected and have no idea who to call or what to expect? Fear not. The CRD Septic Savvy program is here to help you navigate an inspection.

Why get an inspection?

Is your septic system showing signs of malfunction? Don't know where your system is? Has it been ignored? Thinking of selling? These are all good reasons to get an inspection. Investing in a baseline inspection might cost a few hundred dollars. Ignoring your septic system can cost you thousands.

Who do I call?

A Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) Inspector is the best person to contact. They are highly trained professionals, carry the correct equipment and must conform to a strict code of ethics. For a list of qualified ROWP's go to <http://wastewater.asttbc.org/cfinder.php> or call the ASTTBC Customer Information Line at 1.877.456.7697.

What can I expect?

Even if the whereabouts and condition of your septic system are unknown and you have no previous maintenance records, it does not necessarily mean that your whole yard will have to be dug up. The modern inspector relies on pipe cameras, laptops and other modern tools to locate the tank, distribution box and pipes. They will then test the components and flow and give you a maintenance plan to follow.

How much will it cost?

Typical cost for inspections and a maintenance plan on Vancouver Island ranges from \$350 to \$650. Compare system repair or replacement at \$20,000 to \$40,000, or more and the value of inspections is clear.

Want to learn more?

The CRD Septic Savvy program can help you understand your system and how to care for it. To get more information, register for a free two hour workshop, receive a household information kit or learn how the onsite bylaw may affect you, call us at 250.360.3030, or visit (www.crd.bc.ca/septic).

Watch for an upcoming fall workshop in Saanich, or register for the October 2 workshop at the Juan de Fuca Library.



First Phase of The Land Conservancy's Wild Hills and Beaches Campaign Complete

By Heather Skydt, The Land Conservancy

On August 12, The Land Conservancy and The Capital Regional District (CRD) completed the purchase and transfer of the first group of Western Forest Products lands on Vancouver Island. The purchase adds critical lands to the Sooke Potholes Regional Park and creates a new Sandcut Beach Regional Park, the first regional park west of Sooke.

A total of 5,800 acres of land will be purchased for \$18.8 million over three years. All of the parcels placed in regional parks will be further protected by conservation covenants held by TLC. Acquisition of these lands include major additions to the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt, an inspired, grassroots campaign first envisioned and promoted by Ray Zimmerman and the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt Society. Over the years, community groups including the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and TLC have continued the work to create a 28,400 acre corridor of protected wilderness and parkland on Victoria's western horizon. When all three phases are completed in 2012 the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt will be 90% finished.

In March 2010, TLC was instrumental in securing an agreement in principle for the CRD to purchase these lands for future regional parks. With the first phase completed, the CRD will take over management of lands adjacent to Sooke Potholes, parcels surrounding Weeks Lake in the Leech watershed, as well as Sandcut Beach. A second parcel of land at Sandcut Beach will be transferred to the CRD in August 2011. Parcels in Jordan River and remaining land in the Sooke Hills will be transferred in August 2012.

The Land Conservancy launched the Wild Hills and Beaches Campaign to fulfill its commitment to raise 35% of the purchase price. "Sandcut Beach, Jordan River, and the Sooke Hills are the definition of West Coast paradise. We would like to thank the Province of B.C. and co-founder of Thrifty Foods, Alex Campbell, for their donations," says TLC's Executive Director Bill Turner. "With these contributions, plus many others, TLC now requires just over \$3 million to fulfill its commitment for the next two phases."

To donate to TLC's Wild Hills and Beaches Campaign visit www.conservancy.bc.ca or call 1-877-485-2422.



Free Workshop
Organic Gardening and Lawn Care

Saturday September 18th, 2010
11:30am to 3:30pm at Pearkes Recreation Centre

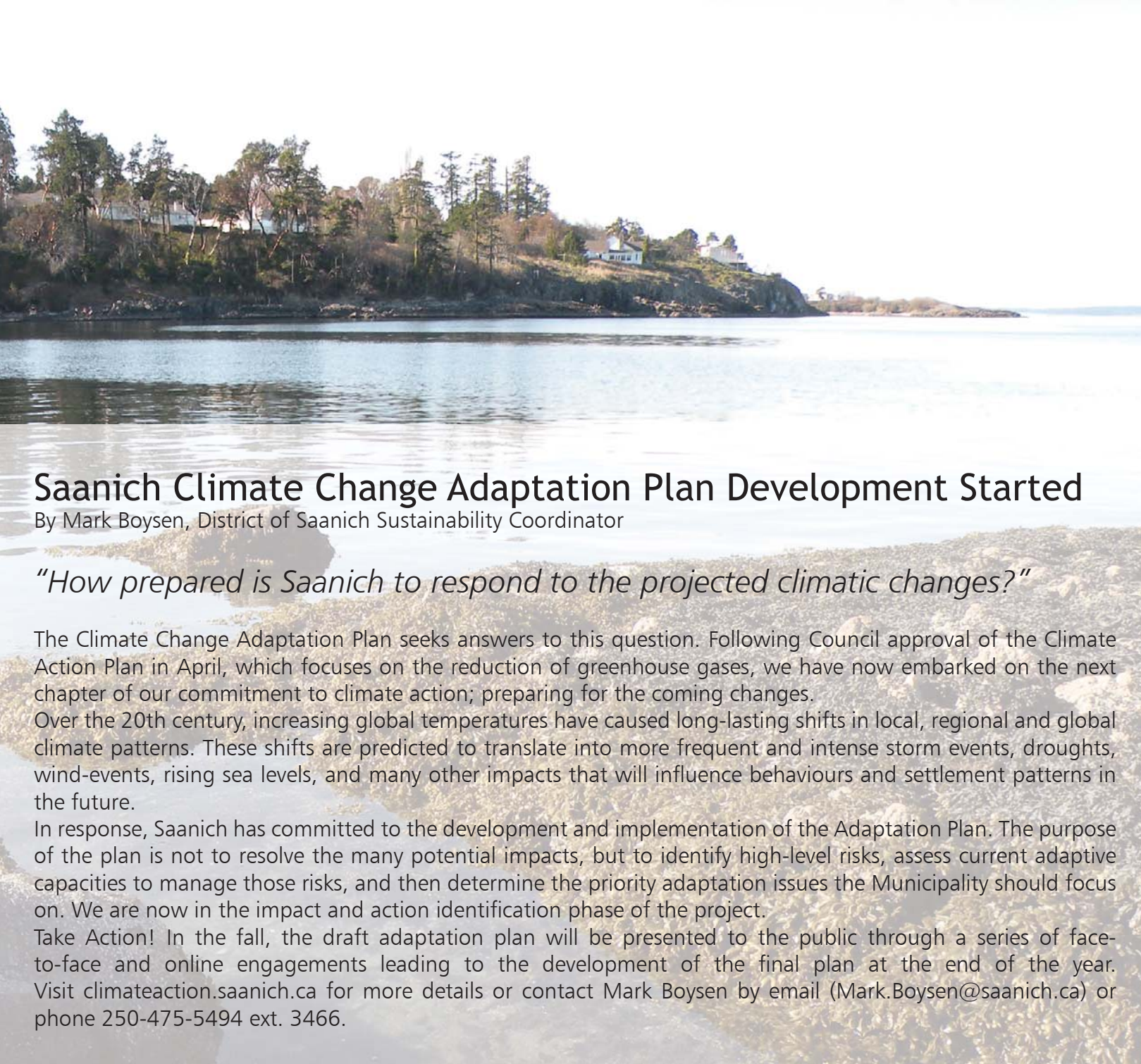
Carolyn Herriot
 Don't Panic, Grow Organic (11:30am - 1:00 pm)

Dr. Linda Gilkeson
 Life After Pesticides: Beautiful Yards and Healthy Gardens (1:30 - 3:00 pm)

For more information call 250-475-5579 or email at Darren.Copley@Saanich.ca
 Location: Pearkes Ross Room, 3100 Tillicum Rd, Bus Routes: #21, #22, or #26.

Bring your questions!
 And a mug... refreshments will be served

 
 Making a difference...together



Saanich Climate Change Adaptation Plan Development Started

By Mark Boysen, District of Saanich Sustainability Coordinator

“How prepared is Saanich to respond to the projected climatic changes?”

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan seeks answers to this question. Following Council approval of the Climate Action Plan in April, which focuses on the reduction of greenhouse gases, we have now embarked on the next chapter of our commitment to climate action; preparing for the coming changes.

Over the 20th century, increasing global temperatures have caused long-lasting shifts in local, regional and global climate patterns. These shifts are predicted to translate into more frequent and intense storm events, droughts, wind-events, rising sea levels, and many other impacts that will influence behaviours and settlement patterns in the future.

In response, Saanich has committed to the development and implementation of the Adaptation Plan. The purpose of the plan is not to resolve the many potential impacts, but to identify high-level risks, assess current adaptive capacities to manage those risks, and then determine the priority adaptation issues the Municipality should focus on. We are now in the impact and action identification phase of the project.

Take Action! In the fall, the draft adaptation plan will be presented to the public through a series of face-to-face and online engagements leading to the development of the final plan at the end of the year. Visit climateaction.saanich.ca for more details or contact Mark Boysen by email (Mark.Boysen@saanich.ca) or phone 250-475-5494 ext. 3466.

Ecological Restoration Projects in Saanich

We're excited about a number of ecological restoration projects underway or planned for this fall that Saanich is undertaking or supporting. Here are a few you can check out:

- In early July, several thousand pounds of invasive yellow-flag iris were removed from Swan Creek in the Community Allotment Gardens (see photo) with the aim of allowing this reach of Swan Creek to flow freely again. The work was done by a hard-working and dedicated crew hired under the Hot Spots program. Jointly funded between Western Economic Diversification and the Province's Job Opportunities Program, the Hot Spots program is a collaborative partnership between the Invasive Plant Council of BC, local governments, and regional invasive plant committees. It aims to minimize the impacts of invasive plants while providing job skills and new employment opportunities for displaced resource workers across BC. Saanich Roads department also removed debris and some branches that were blocking the creek. This fall, appropriate native riparian species provided by Saanich will be planted along the creek's banks by volunteers from the Community Allotment Gardens.
- As part of the Federal Recreation Infrastructure Canada (RIInC) grant, the existing playground at Falaise Park will be dismantled and a new one with more modern equipment installed in the lower area of the park. The original playground was built many years ago in the middle of a once spectacular Garry oak woodland and wildflower meadow. Elements of this meadow will be restored this fall and over the next few years, using salvaged and purchased native plants and native grasses. Volunteers will be needed over the years to help keep the restored meadow free of invasive plants, such as Scotch broom and blackberry.
- In late August, two sites near the upgraded Admirals Bridge were being prepared to receive several hundred native trees and shrubs, to compensate for riparian and Garry oak habitat that was disturbed during the bridge replacement in 2009. Excavators have removed non-native trees and invasive shrubs, which will be replaced this fall with the native plants. The soil surface has been left rough to help emulate natural structure, while coarse woody debris has been added to create micro-climates and minimize erosion until the new plants establish. Saanich worked with the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) to design the Garry oak compensation site, which is directly beside the approach on the northeast side of the bridge. Technically part of Cuthbert Holmes Park, the two sites will be left to establish in a natural state with a minimum of management.
- Also part of the Admirals Bridge replacement is an in-stream habitat compensation project which includes building a berm and planting native emergent aquatic plants to provide shade and habitat for fish and other aquatic species in the Colquitz River. The route used by the heavy equipment to access the site and the river is intended to eventually become a kayak and canoe launch.

For more information on these projects, contact Saanich Parks at 250-475-5522 or parkadmin@saanich.ca



YFI removal Willow looking to bridge - before



YFI removal Willow looking to bridge - after





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

To take advantage of the hot, dry days of August, work at GORP sites shifted to evenings and focused on causing extreme discomfort to drought-stressed Scotch broom and other invasive shrubs on the exposed hill-top sites on Mount Tolmie, Little Mount Doug, Mount Doug summit, and Chatterton Hill. For the autumn work party schedule, please see below.

To find out more about GORP, check out the website at www.gorp.saanich.ca.

Saanich Parks Events

Volunteer Training & Recognition Event

Targeted at site stewards and regular volunteers, the event is Saturday, Oct 16th from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Lam Room, Parkes Recreation Centre. Our guest speaker is Val Shaefer, Director of the UVic Restoration of Natural Systems Program, who will deliver a talk on ecological restoration in the community. Invitations will be sent by email.

For more information, contact Marian McCoy, Natural Areas Technician 250-475-5539.

Autumn Events & Work Parties – Volunteers needed!

Date	Time	Activity / Location
Sat 11 Sept	10:00 – 3:00	Rithet's Bog Chatterton trail cattail removal
Sat 18 Sept	9:30 – 11:30	GORP Little Mt Doug
Sat 25 Sept	9:30 – 11:30	GORP Mt Doug summit
Sat 9 Oct	9:30 – 11:30	GORP Mt Tolmie
Sat 16 Oct	9:00 – 3:30	Saanich Parks Volunteer Training & Recognition Event
Sat 23 Oct	9:30 – 11:30	GORP Camas Park
Sat 30 Oct	9:30 – 11:30	GORP Chatterton Hill
Sun 7 Nov	10:00 – 1:00	Tree Appreciation Day events at Mt Douglas Park and Cuthbert Holmes Park

For more information, contact Marian McCoy, Natural Areas Technician 250-475-5539.

Point Ellice Shoreline Restoration Starting Third Year

By Kitty Lloyd, Gorge Waterway Initiative

Come and Join Us!

The Gorge Waterway Initiative and its community partner volunteers are starting the third year of restoration work at the Point Ellice shoreline. Please join us as we carry on the work of removing invasive ivy and periwinkle (over 12 tonnes so far!) and replanting with native trees and shrubs. It's a great way to meet new people, learn about the ecosystems along the Gorge Waterway, and get some fresh air and exercise, while enjoying the tranquility of this beautiful heritage site in the midst of industrial Victoria. Starting on Sunday, September 12, we will meet for community work parties every three weeks (see schedule and details below).

This beautiful heritage site supports a rare remnant of wooded shore that once lined the entire length of the Gorge Waterway. Ivy and other invasive plants escaped from the cultivated areas of the formal gardens, and blanketed the entire understorey of the wooded foreshore. We are working to return the shoreline to its former natural state, with native shrubs like ocean spray, red-flowering currant, Oregon grape, and Saskatoonberry, and canopy trees including Douglas-fir and arbutus.

WHEN? 10:00am – 1:00pm on the following Sundays:

September 12, October 3 & 24, November 14, and December 5

WHERE? Pt Ellice House is located at 2616 Pleasant St; just east of the Bay St. bridge.

WHO? Community members, school groups, corporate groups – everyone is welcome.

We supply the tools, gloves, and refreshments.

For more information or to join the email list please contact:

Jody Watson 250-360-3065 jwatson@crd.bc.ca.

A Householder's Journey to a Low Carbon Lifestyle

By Norm Mogensen, Saanich resident-at-large

As I sit here on my back patio, under my shade tree, imbibing cold fluids to keep cool on this blistering hot day, I take stock of our situation respecting the vastness of emerging 21st century paradigm changes to our global environment that we must all adapt to, fast.

- Yes, we have a heat pump and thus no longer generate CO2 to cool or heat our house (so long as we use hydro generated electricity).
- Yes, we live within 400 meters of transit stops and accordingly, seldom drive.
- Yes, our home is well insulated.
- No, we don't fly anymore.
- Yes, we do grow fruit and vegetables, but only enough to partially feed us, seasonally.
- Yes, our property is still a haven for urban wildlife, which we happily co-exist with.

What's next?

- We should install solar water heating.
- We should install solar and small scale wind electricity generating capacity, to charge electric car batteries or to back-up our household needs and feed surpluses into the grid (but does BC Hydro encourage this sufficiently yet?).
- Based on my 17 years of precipitation measuring and recording, on average, 118 cubic meters of water will be captured each year by our 169 square meter roof area. That will require an in-ground water storage tank (cistern) with inside measurements of 6 X 6 X 3.3 meters - hmm - maybe under this patio. That will sufficiently water a much larger area than I do now, and bring us closer to self sufficiency in basic food staples. Something to think about!

Walking on Water

By Terry Morrison, Executive Director of Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

Ask anyone who has visited the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary what was so special about the place, and they will eventually get around to talking about walking on water. Yes, the peace and serenity of the natural surroundings, the rich and varied parade of birds, river otter, mink, and muskrat leave a lasting impression. It is the floating boardwalk trail, however, that brings you into their world, and creates an intimate connection to this amazing community of nature in the middle of a busy urban area.

The new generation of children, raised with so much television and computers as a tool for their learning and entertainment, are the ones impacted the most by a walk on the floating boardwalk. "I've never seen a Great Blue Heron in my life before," says grade five visitor, Alice. "I really liked seeing the swan and duck and eagle chasing after them." Magical moments like this are made possible by the floating boardwalk trail that extends into the habitat of birds and wetland creatures.

Sadly, the boardwalk, built of wood in 1991, is soon to be closed for safety reasons. Weathered beyond repair, the floating classroom and essential link to our trail systems needs to be replaced by 2012 at a total cost of \$450,000.

Closing the boardwalk will greatly hinder the work of the Nature Sanctuary Society, which is to *provide a diverse and enriching experience with a focus on natural history, education, and ecological restoration to inspire personal action in stewardship activities*. Since 1975, trained staff and volunteers have guided more than 390,000 school children and families from the Greater Victoria area to experience first hand the wonders of nature almost in our own back yard. Many students have gone on to careers in ecology, environmental education, and biology, thanks in a large part to their early experiences at Swan Lake.

In the future, walking on water will be on a long-lasting, non-slip composite decking material and galvanized cable. The use of cedar for the top railing, the siding and some decking maintains the warmth and aesthetics of the boardwalk in a natural surrounding without sacrificing structural integrity and durability.

Phase One of the campaign is already completed. Generous donations from Nature Sanctuary supporters and members raised the \$46,000 required to replace the wharf below the Nature House in June. The new wharf will be highlighted on September 18, 2010 during the 35th anniversary celebrations, when it will be dedicated to the original founders of the Nature Sanctuary.

The new wharf also paves the way for Phase Two of the campaign, to replace the remainder of the aging floating boardwalk system – the wharf on the south side of the Lake and the 755-foot floating walkway across the Lake. The Sanctuary Society's goal is to raise the required \$450,000 by 2012.

You can help the Nature Sanctuary Society replace this unique community facility. Drop in to the Nature Sanctuary and take a walk on the new wharf. Stop by the Nature House office and make a donation. Visit our web site <www.swanlake.bc.ca> to give securely online through Canada Helps, or phone 250-479-0211 to find out more on how you can help.

The Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary preserves and protects 154 acres of Saanich's natural heritage, with a rich variety of habitats ranging from a significant urban wetland around Swan Lake to the endangered Garry oak highlands of Christmas Hill. The Nature Sanctuary is operated and maintained by a registered charitable organization, with support from the generous citizens of the Greater Victoria area and an annual grant from Saanich Municipality.



Join us for intriguing and fun-filled evenings in support of the

Bridges to Nature Campaign

An Evening with Tea: Exploring Native Plant Teas

Thursday Sept 30, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

\$30 per person

Location: Swan Lake Nature House

Learn how to make your own herbal teas using native plants with Silk Road's owner and Tea Master in residence, Daniela Cubelic. Co-presenter June Pretzer describes the ease and gratification in selecting, planting and harvesting native plants for teas and even jams. Workshop fee also includes a \$5 credit for the Native Plant Sale.

Dance to Backstage Betty

Saturday, Oct. 16, 8:00 to midnight

\$25 per person

Location: St. Joseph the Worker Hall

Backstage Betty, a dance band frequently appearing at Swans Brew Pub, will be pumping out the dance tunes at a benefit event for the Nature Sanctuary. This is a popular local band that happens to include the Nature Sanctuary's Executive Director Terry Morrison on keyboards. This event will also feature the launch of the limited edition Swan Lake Beer, produced by Spinnakers Brew Pub, snacks by Country Grocer and a silent auction, too!

An Evening with Free Beer and Flying Chipmunks: How to Save the World in 60 Minutes

Saturday, October 23, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

\$30 per person

Location: Swan Lake Nature House

Award-winning naturalist, Scott Mair will turn things on their head and right back up again in a presentation that takes a fresh look at nature education. Country Grocer Chef Michael Williams and his partner Kristina entertain you with an edible demonstration on preparing savories paired with the newly created Swan Lake Beer, thanks to Spinnakers Brew Pub. Silent auction too!

An Evening with Annie Scoones and Country Grocer: Home-grown, Local and Lucious

Saturday, Nov. 20, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

\$30 per person

Location: Swan Lake Nature House

Sure to be an evening full of fun and whimsy, while focused on home-grown and local food, Author Annie Scoones reads from her new book and Country Grocer Chef Michael Williams and his partner Kristina entertain you with a demonstration on creating desserts paired with Swan Lake Beer, thanks to Spinnakers Brew Pub. Silent auction too!