

Our Backyard



Volume 7
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Spring 2007

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

Alien Invaders Beware!

Saanich residents concerned about non-native, invasive plants spreading into natural areas in Saanich Parks have formed volunteer groups to tackle the “aliens”. Work is underway, and many more volunteers are needed to help control exotic plants such as English ivy, Daphne and Himalayan blackberry in specific areas of Mount Douglas, Brodick, Bow and Feltham Parks. There are also plans underway to address the ivy “barrens” in Konuckson Park. Some reasons to consider joining:

- Removing invasive plants helps restore a park to its natural state by providing space, water, and light for native plant species to regenerate and flourish.
- It's great outdoor exercise.
- Like-minded people meet, work together, and forge new friendships.
- Volunteers quickly see the results of their efforts.

- A person discovers they can contribute and truly have a positive effect on our environment.
- This work benefits all residents and wildlife living in our community!

No experience is necessary and training will be provided. These projects have been approved by Saanich Parks and are supported by the following appropriate groups: The Gordon Head Residents Association, The Cadboro Bay Residents Association, The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society and Saanich Parks.



Volunteers removing invasive plants from Bow Park

How you can help:

To volunteer at Mount Douglas, Bow, Brodick or Feltham parks, please contact:

Judy Spearing at 472-0515 or by email: janddspearing@shaw.ca

To join the Anti-Ivy League at Konuckson Park (Ten Mile Point), contact: **Norm Mogensen at 477-9114**, or by email:

nmogensen@shaw.ca

Control Invasive Plant Species on Your Property!

Many invasive plants are a result of escaped garden ornamentals. To learn how to identify and control problematic exotic species, download “Controlling Invasive Plants on Your Property”, available at:

<http://www.saanich.ca/resident/environment/pdfs/invasiveplants.pdf>



Rithet's Bog Buddies

Make a Startling Discovery!

Students of Camosun College are placing Rithet's Bog under a microscope to determine what's in the water. After a recent storm, second year Environmental Technology student Travis Nagy collected samples of the runoff entering Rithet's Bog Conservation Area. "It was almost like chocolate milk!" he said after his hand disappeared just below the water's surface.

Travis' project is one component of Habitat Acquisition Trust's (HAT) Rithet's Bog Good Neighbours Project to protect habitat and water quality. This spring and summer, HAT staff is meeting with land owners to identify excellent land care practices that protect bog habitat and water quality.

Rithet's Bog is a unique conservation area as the sole surviving bog in our region. The other six regional bogs and over 90 percent of all wetlands have been ditched and ploughed in recent history.

In the last 40 years, 30% of the land area around Rithet's bog, has been covered by impervious surfaces like asphalt or concrete. Significant stream degradation can occur at just 10 % impervious cover. The resulting over-land runoff funnels pollutants into the bog through storm drains at a rate far greater than historical flows. These high flows of dirty water are straining the Conservation Area's ability to filter water as it drains to the salmon bearing Colquitz River.

Residents can help keep Gabo Creek clean by practicing some simple land care techniques that save time and money. HAT will work with qualified neighbours to plant Naturescapes near habitat areas. HAT will also be holding events over the next few months with community groups to build swallow nest boxes (thanks to 5th Tsartlip Scouts), paint yellow fish near storm drains (thanks to Department of Fisheries and Oceans), invasive plant removal with the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society, and other fun bog-lovers events.

Learn about upcoming events on the Conservation Connection website: www.conservationconnection.bc.ca, or at www.rithetsbog.org



*Image compliments of
Department of Fisheries and
Oceans*



Sustainable Saanich Series

Workshop # 3 Building and Designing Homes (New and Retrofit) for Energy Efficiency

Homes are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Come and learn how to build and retrofit homes to make them more energy efficient and what local governments, builders and homeowners can do. This workshop is funded in part through by BC Hydro, and the ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Community Action on Energy Efficiency Program.

Friday, April 27, 1 - 4:30 pm

Room 125, Engineering and Computer Science Building (UVic).

For more information, or to register, please contact: sustainablesaanich@gmail.com (250) 391-8772



How homeowners can prevent *Oil Spills*

A residential heating oil tank can hold 1,000 liters, yet only one cup of oil has the potential to contaminate the amount of water contained in an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Crews from Saanich Public Works get called out about twice each week to check on reported spills. While not all of these calls end up being a real spill, many of those that do, are related to heating oil leaks. What may seem like a small leak can cause serious environmental impacts and can be financially costly to private property owners and society.

Some of the effects of leaking heating oil include:

- polluting creeks, groundwater, marine waters and drinking water supplies
- contaminating soils, costing thousands of dollars for clean up
- getting into basements, making indoor air quality hazardous
- damaging storm drains
- entering neighbouring buildings' drainage systems
- creating combustible fumes
- delaying the sale of a home while testing and remediation occurs

There are three types of household fuel oil tanks: above-ground outdoor tanks, buried outdoor tanks and indoor tanks. Each type presents different challenges, so find which kind you have and how to properly maintain it.

All tanks are metal and erosion, which is especially hard to spot inside the tank, is a major cause of leaks. Since oil is lighter than water, water from condensation settles at the bottom of the tank where it causes the metal to rust. The key to avoiding most leaks is to prevent corrosion. Here are some simple ways to maintain your tank and obvious signs you may have sprung a leak:

Tips to maintain your oil tank:

- Keep the tank relatively full over the summer to reduce condensation inside the tank
- Change your oil filter each year when your furnace is professionally serviced
- Clean off any rust or corrosion on the tank and apply rust-proof paint

Clues to spot a leak:

- Inspect around the tank for oil spots or drips
- Be alert to any oil smells near the tank
- Watch for leaks in the fuel filter, or the nozzle becoming plugged
- Look for unexplained or sudden increases on your oil bill

Used tanks are not permitted in Saanich so if you are considering installing a new one, hire a qualified professional, – this is not a “do-it-yourself” project. Tanks must be installed in accordance with the BC Fire Code and Saanich's Oil Burning Equipment Bylaw #8204.

To install, relocate, abandon, or remove a tank in Saanich, you will need a permit. For more information call the Fire Prevention Office at 475-5500.

If you heat your house with oil, keep a simple spill kit close by in case of emergencies (they can be purchased from a safety supply store). Preventing a leak could save you thousands of dollars in cleanup costs and fines, and protects our local environment. .

For more information about maintaining your oil tank or preventing leaks, visit:

<http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/eng/pdfs/ftank.pdf>

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/contam_sites/fact_sheets/pdf/fs32.pdf

One cup of fuel oil can contaminate enough water to fill an Olympic sized swimming pool.

Avoid spills by detecting problems early on!



Upcoming events & announcements

For full schedules and program details, please contact the appropriate agency directly

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Swan Lake/ Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

www.swanlake.bc.ca or 479•0211

Swan Lake presents the 12th annual Native Plant Sale and Gardening for Wildlife Weekend

Sat. April 21st, & Sun. April 22nd,
10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

100 species of native plants, seeds,
and books for sale.

Displays on developing wildlife
habitat in urban settings.

Presentations:

- Earth-Friendly Pest Management
- Replacing Lawns with Native Plants
- Enhancing Backyard Wildlife
- Dealing with Wind and Salt Spray
- Tour the Native Plant Garden

Admission: \$3/day, \$5/weekend

Plant list and presentation schedule
is available at our website:

www.swanlake.bc.ca

250•479•0211

Native Plant Study Group

Network with native plant enthusiasts. The drop in rate is only a "twonie". Visit the website www.npsg.ca for more information or mark your calendars for the next couple of meetings:

Thursday April 19th - Briony Penn
Thursday May 17th - Dave Blundon

Room D-116 MacLaurin Building
(UVIC).



Learn more about this regions' natural history! Visit: www.crd.bc.ca/parks for more information!

April	Event	Time
1	Wild About Wildflowers	11am-3pm
8	Where's the Elk? Where's the Beaver?	1pm
14	Spring at Francis/King	9:30am
15	Hilltop Wildflowers	1pm
21	Astronomy Day	10am-4pm
22	What has the Tide Brought in?	1pm
28	Flower Prowl	1pm
29	Seaside Blooms with a View	1-3pm
30	Sooke Potholes Ramble	10am-2pm
May	Event	Time
5	Life's a Beach	11:30am
6	Coles Bay Ramble	1pm
12	Beginner Birding Basics	10am-12pm
13	Marvelous Matheson Hike	11am-2pm
19	Between the Tides	11:30am
20	Seashore Snoop	1pm
26	Hike from Park to Park	10am-2pm
27	Spring Birds at Witty's Lagoon	9am
27	Trail Tales	1pm
June	Event	Time
2	High and Dry Intertidal Program	11am
3	Witty's at Low Tide	10am-2pm
3	Slug Program	1pm
9	Bat Habitat	1pm
10	Cedar Grove Trail and Beyond	10am-2pm
16	Beach Bonanza	10:30am
17	Sun Day Sunday	12pm-2pm
23	Mount Work Out!	10am-2pm
24	A Wilderness to Share	10am-2pm
30	Weeds of the Sea	10:30am



CRD Stormwater, Harbours & Watersheds News

If you enjoy Our Backyard, you may also enjoy the CRD's newsletter: Stormwater, Harbours & Watersheds News. Watershed protection, low impact development and stormwater management issues are explored throughout the region.

To subscribe, please contact the editor at:
stormwater@crd.bc.ca or 360-3149.

Previous editions can be found at:
[http://www.crd.bc.ca/es/
environmental_programs/
stormwater/index.htm](http://www.crd.bc.ca/es/environmental_programs/stormwater/index.htm)

Volunteer Requests

Join the Anti-Ivy League at Konuckson Park!

Contact: Norm Mogensen at 477-9114,
or: nmogensen@shaw.ca

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janddspearing@shaw.ca



YOU ARE INVITED
TO
Conservation Connection 2007

Friday April 20th, 2007, 9 am to 4:30 p.m.
Victoria City Hall-Council Chambers
#1 Centennial Square

Network and collaborate with the many organizations working on environmental stewardship and conservation projects in the Capital Region.

Registrations must be received by Monday, April 16th

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**
Jennifer Eliason (250) 995-2428 or
hatmail@hat.bc.ca
[http://www.hat.bc.ca/projects/
connection.htm](http://www.hat.bc.ca/projects/connection.htm)

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