

Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH



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Caring for Critical Creatures of the Night

By Jill Robinson, Habitat Acquisition Trust Executive Director

It's dusk. A warm summer breeze licks across a sun-scorched field as another day comes to a close. Mosquitos dance along the surface of a nearby pond in search of their evening feast. Only the song of a White-crowned Sparrow can be heard over the sound of trembling leaves. It's 9:06pm. I curl up beside the old wooden barn, pad my back with a well-used yoga mat and get settled in amongst the tall grasses. I sit eagerly awaiting the flurry that I know will soon ensue; a spectacle of dark wings silhouetted across the night sky. My eyes adjust to the ever-dimming light and I look around, squinting to carefully survey the area. A small pile of droppings have collected next to me, clear evidence of a good-sized group of barn dwellers that have occupied this site for the last few weeks. It's 9:14pm. I stare expectantly at the small dark crack in the peak of the A-frame of the barn. This ½ inch sliver of space is too small for most creatures to enter, but is a welcoming entrance to local flying mammals. 9:16pm, we should be expecting them any minute. A blanket of clouds slowly draw across the night sky. Without the bright shine of the moon, these high-flying acrobats will be sure to make an appearance, safe from the gaze of potential predators. My thumb rests patiently on the trigger of my counter, poised to begin the mad burst of clicks as they depart from their roost. A flash. Barely noticeable, but something catches my eye. A second flash, a third, and they're off. It's 9:18pm. It's bat time.

This past summer, HAT staff and volunteers watched as hundreds of bats left their roosts each night with hunger-driven enthusiasm. In the flurry of wings, it's impossible to differentiate between species. There are ten species of bats living on Vancouver Island, and three are commonly found colonizing artificial structures like homes, barns, and sheds. There are sixteen species living in British Columbia, all of which gorge themselves solely on insects. These talented aerial insectivores can consume more than their own body weight in a single evening on a balanced feast of mosquitos and moths. They owe much of this effective feeding and in-flight navigation to their ability to echolocate. Similar to their mammalian cousins of the sea (whales and dolphins), bats use echolocation to sense their environment; speedily identifying and steering around barriers and locating their prey with precision. The high frequency sounds they emit are mostly inaudible to humans. They bounce off surrounding objects and return to the bats' perked ears. Echolocation aids their already well-cued senses, including their sense of sight. Yes, if you haven't heard it yet, bats are not blind.

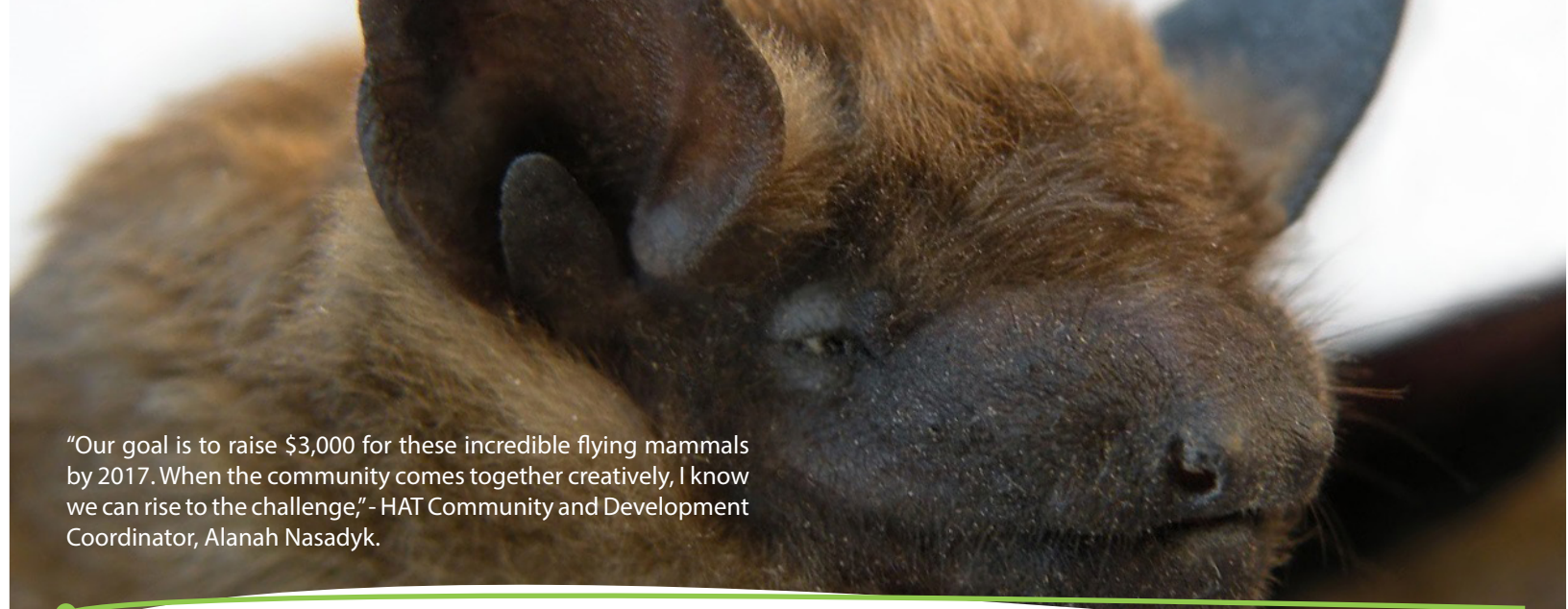
Adult female bats live in maternity roosts in the summer and each have a single pup. Males tend to be more solitary. In the winter, very little is known about the whereabouts of these cryptic creatures. Some species migrate south, while others are presumed to hibernate in suitable local habitat on the island.

Bats play a critical role in ecosystems. In southern parts of the world, fruit and nectar-loving bats play a significant role in pollination. In Canada, their role is invaluable in controlling nocturnal insects by their impressive appetite. As such, they are very useful in cycling nutrients between wetlands and forests by way of their feces (guano). Of the 16 bats found in BC, half of them are considered vulnerable or threatened. This is largely due to issues around habitat loss and degradation, pesticide-use, and wind-turbines.

Most recently, the emergence of a distressing fungal disease, White-nose Syndrome, is an added concern on the west coast. This syndrome has devastated bat populations in eastern North America, killing 6-7 million bats in just six years. Finding near Seattle, Washington in late March has confirmed the presence of this syndrome for the first time ever in western North America. Currently bat specialists across the country are on high alert to find out more about how to effectively conserve bats in our region and how to mitigate the impacts of this terrible disease, which kills bats during their winter hibernation.



Rick Hatch of Saanich Parks installed rocket-box for bats at Beckwith Park with local Cub Pack.



“Our goal is to raise \$3,000 for these incredible flying mammals by 2017. When the community comes together creatively, I know we can rise to the challenge;” - HAT Community and Development Coordinator, Alanah Nasadyk.

Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) is working tirelessly within the community in the effort to learn more about these important creatures in order to protect and conserve their habitat. As a member of the BC Community Bat Program, HAT has provided bat boxes to more than 80 homeowners in the last two years and we have reached out to landowners across the Capital Regional District through community presentations and workshops.

HAT has also been collaborating with the District of Saanich Parks Department and CRD Parks to provide roosting habitats at local parks. Most recently, a rocket-style box (stand-alone bat box) was installed at Beckwith Park by Rick Hatch from Saanich Parks and a keen Cub Pack, the 10th Garry Oak. With the help of volunteers and local residents, we will keep a close eye on these boxes and patiently await the new residents to arrive. So far, these boxes have been very successful: they are strategically placed in bat-friendly habitats, where it's hot and close to a water source.

Along with providing bat homes to local residences, HAT and our many volunteers also conduct annual bat counts to better understand local populations. To learn more about HAT's Bat program, contact us at 250-995-2428 or hatmail@hat.bc.ca.

Hats for Bats: Adopt a Bat Colony Fundraiser

By Alanah Nasadyk, Habitat Acquisition Trust Community and Development Coordinator

It can be tricky finding a safe place to live nowadays if you're a bat. Habitat loss due to development and deforestation have reduced bats' options for finding suitable homes. Three out of the ten bat species found on Vancouver Island are considered at risk. The Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is listed as endangered by the Species at Risk

Act (SARA) and Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*) and Keen's Myotis (*Myotis keenii*) are provincially blue-listed as species of special concern.

Habitat Acquisition Trust's (HAT) Bat Stewardship Program helps out by providing bats with the habitat they need. Through the Bat Stewardship Program, HAT has collaborated with community members to install 90 bat boxes that provide roosting habitat for bats in our region. Every summer HAT administers the BC Community Bat Program's Bat Count on South Vancouver Island. This year, 39 volunteers and HAT staff counted 5,951 bats at 16 colonies over the course of 4 summer evenings. The Bat Count strengthens knowledge on bat health and how populations fluctuate by using citizen scientists.

“I sit at my picnic table with a cup of tea from where it's effortless to count our colony of Little Brown Bats emerging from the box,” comments HAT bat box recipient and bat counter, Carmel Thomson

With the detection of White-Nose Syndrome in nearby Washington State, and the death toll by this disease elsewhere in North America in the millions, ensuring that we have healthy bat populations are more crucial than ever. In spite of this, the HAT Bat Stewardship Program did not receive this year's anticipated funding.

The popularity of the Bat Stewardship Program and local interest in bats has exploded over the past year. Bats can't afford for us to lose our momentum. With that in mind, HAT is reaching out to the community with a fundraising campaign to continue its important work with local bats. You can support the “HAT for Bats” fundraiser by sponsoring a bat colony for \$345, which covers the cost of building, transporting and installing a box for an entire bat colony. Community members can also team up with HAT to fundraise by collecting donations from their friends and neighbours, or hosting their own mini-fundraiser event.

What's That Track?

By Renee Cenerini, Program Manager at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

Track-hunting can be a fun outdoor activity that needs no prior preparation. Obviously this activity is most easily done in snow, which we Victorians are blessedly free of most of the time, but it can also be done on moist sand and soft soils which should appear with the fall rains. Children are fascinated by the idea of animals having crossed their paths and love to theorize about what animal it was and what they were doing. If you have a bird feeder or water source in your yard, try observing the soil around the base and you may be able to identify some of your very own backyard visitors.

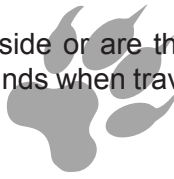
Here are some basic steps in identifying the mystery track maker:

Paws, hooves, or feet: This will narrow down your guesses considerably. A hoof is like a thick toenail and leaves a large flattened imprint. Mammals with hooves such as deer, horses, and cows would leave this kind of print.

Some mammals that leave paw prints essentially walk on their tiptoes and only leave the imprint of their toes and the center pad. These include dogs and cats. Other mammals like Raccoons and bears walk flat footed and form a print of the whole paw. Songbirds on the other hand will leave tracks that often look like scratch marks as their toes are long and narrow while water birds such as mallards will often leave a bigger track due to the webbing between their toes.

Claws or no claws: For paw prints, can you see an imprint of claw marks at the tips of the toes? Mammals such as dogs and Raccoons are unable to retract their claws while members of the cat family retract their claws and leave no imprint of them when walking or running.

Patterns: Are the prints side by side or are they staggered? This can help you differentiate between an animal that walks versus one that hops or bounds when traveling. Distance between the prints can help determine if the animal was walking or running.



Size and depth: The size of the track goes a long way in identifying your track maker. The same can be said of the depth of a print. Larger, heavier animals will tend to leave deeper tracks than smaller, lighter ones.

So whose track might you be seeing here in Victoria? Here is a list of the most likely candidates with a brief description of their prints. You may want to check out your local library for a field guide for further information.

Raccoon - The Raccoon's print looks a bit like a human handprint, with five well-formed toes and small claw marks that appear as dots at the end. Its hind prints which are usually clearer, show heels.

Deer - This should be the only hoof marks you see in the city (unless of course you have a cow in your back yard!). Their prints are somewhat heart-shaped and pointed.

Whether they are wild animals or your own - happy tracking!

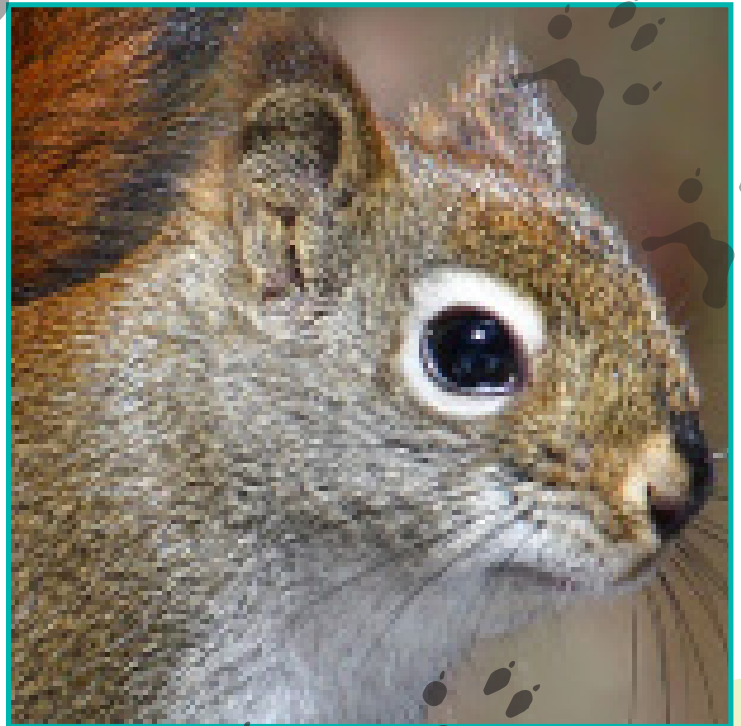
Squirrel – These small prints reflect the squirrel's tendency to bound when on the ground. This type of gait leaves four prints with the hind prints (five toes) falling in front of the fore prints (four toes) which tend to be side by side.

Dogs – These can vary considerably in size (compare a Chihuahua to a Great Dane) but will leave an alternating pattern of four toes and claw marks.

House Cats – A very common track in residential areas, the house cat prints show four toe pads but no claw marks as these retract during walking.

Birds – Differences in bird species are not as clearly reflected in their tracks like they are for mammals. However, it is possible to determine the relative size of the bird from the track and differentiate between a small songbird such as a Dark-eyed Junco and a large, web-footed bird like a Canada Goose.

If there are no animal tracks, try making some of your own! Step into a soft soil and compare your tracks to someone else's – is yours bigger or smaller, what kind of tracks do your shoes leave? Also try different movements, are the tracks you make when you are walking the same as when you



Swan Lake Ballet Comes to Sanctuary

November 12, 2016

When you think of Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, foliage and flowers may come to mind, but tutus? Well, Moscow Ballet's 'New Horizons' program would like to change your way of thinking.

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is pleased to announce the famed Moscow Ballet is bringing the well-known production "Swan Lake" to Victoria with breathtaking presentations to support a different stage altogether. The traditional telling of the tragic story includes award-winning dancers and lavish costumes being performed as part of an exciting fundraising effort to raise funds for the Sanctuary's *Bridges to Nature* Campaign.

The sanctuary's dramatic boardwalk, although beautiful, has been weathered by the elements and is beyond repair. Phase one was completed in 2015, on time and on budget at a cost of \$350,000. Phase two requires \$800,000 in order to span the lake with 230 metres (755 feet) of floating boardwalk. This partnership offers several incredible opportunities to help with the boardwalk fundraising campaign.

For more information on this program, please visit our website at www.swanlake.bc.ca or call 250-479-0211.



Value of Our Urban Garry Oaks

By the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society
(reprint Nov 2004, Garry Oak Leaflet, Vol. 11, No.2)

Arthur Plotnik*, in his book about trees, provided a list of the benefits of maintaining urban forests. Here are some of the values of urban trees beautifying our yards, streets, and parks.

Did you know that trees:

- Increase the property value of your home by 15% or more
- Produce as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year.
- Clean the air
- Lock up carbon, thereby helping to slow climate change.
- Reduce heating costs by providing windbreaks.
- Reduce cooling costs by providing shade in the summer
- Are effective sound barriers.

Furthermore, “trees are indicators of a community’s health,” according to American Forests, “While urban ecology is more complex than just tree cover, trees are good indicators of the health of an urban ecosystem. When trees are large and healthy, the ecological systems – soil, air, and water – that support them are also healthy. In turn, healthy trees provide valuable environmental benefits.”

Trees in our urban areas have not received the attention they deserve and are disappearing at an alarming rate. Decision-makers want everything evaluated, preferably in dollars and cents, which is now being done through mapping programs and professional evaluations. Realtors are now using trees on a property or in the neighbourhood as selling points.

Anyone wishing to contribute to preserving, growing and advocating for our Garry Oaks and their related ecosystems, can become a GOMPS (Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society) member, volunteer, or supporter by contacting us through our website: <http://www.garryoak.info>.

Help! It's Garry Oak Acorn Collecting Time

Each fall GOMPS issues a call for volunteer acorn collectors! The need for local acorns from all regions of Greater Victoria is great as we strive to get our nursery up and running. Please visit our website for guidelines that include tips on collection, sorting, and testing as well as labeling and storage. Please try to limit the volume of acorns from any one area to between 6 - 8 litres.

Saanich Recreation Trails & Treks

www.saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/trails/index.html

250-475-5408

Weekend Walks (FREE Drop-In)

Sundays | 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

These hikes are open to adults of all ages. Please wear sturdy footwear and carry water. Walks go rain or shine.

Nov 13 | Glencoe Cove to Sierra Park

Meet at Vantreight Park on Vantreight Drive

Dec 4 | Shelbourne Valley Circle

Meet near the footbridge in parking lot of Cedar Hill Recreation

Gentle Walk & Talk (FREE Drop-In)

Thursdays | 9:30 am to 11 am

Enjoy beautiful scenery, a friendly chat, and gentle exercise as we walk through our parks & trails. Suitable for all walking abilities, but wear suitable footwear. Dogs not permitted.

Oct 27 | Lower Trails of Mount Doug

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

Nov 3 | Gorge Waterway

Meet at Gorge Waterway near Canoe Club, end of Tillicum Road

Nov 10 | Sayward Hill

Meet at Lochside Park, North of Cordova Bay Rd, past Matticks

CRD Parks & Environmental Services

Our naturalists lead guided walks, hikes, canoeing, and events for all ages. Most are free, all are fun! The Parks brochure can be found here: <http://crd.bc.ca/parks-events> **250-478-3344**

Grow a Native Plant Garden (Course)

Thursday, October 27 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Sunday, November 06 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Swan Lake Nature House (3873 Swan Lake Road)

Residents of the Capital Region are invited to participate in a FREE 3-hour workshop on gardening with drought-resistant native plants. Call Swan Lake 250-479-0211 to pre-register.

Habitat Acquisition Trust

Visit www.hat.bc.ca for more programs

20th Birthday Online Nature Auction

<http://hatbc2016.eflea.ca>

Give a gift to nature and yourself or someone special, all in celebration of 20 years of conservation with HAT.

Ruby Creek Restoration Day

Saturday November 5 | 12pm - 3 pm

Metchosin (RSVP for details to volunteers@hat.bc.ca)

Last year we discovered an endangered Blue-grey Taildropper.

You never know what incredible gems of the woods you may enjoy while clearing away invasive plants. Won't you join us?

20th Birthday Nature Fundraiser

Tuesday November 8 | 12 pm to 3 pm

5447 Rocky Point Rd (Glenrosa Farm Restaurant, Metchosin)

Join us for a night of music, finger-food catered by Nature's Chef, auctions, and raffles all in support of conservation programs. Tickets while supplies last at hat20thbirthday.bpt.me

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary

www.swanlake.bc.ca 250-479-0211

Creepy Crawlies (Drop-in Event)

Sunday, October 30 | 12 pm to 3 pm

They creep, they crawl, and may even give you the willies! Meet a variety of 6 legged, 8 legged and even no legged creatures and find out about their amazing adaptations.

Moscow Ballet's Swan Lake (Event)

Saturday, November 12 | 2 pm

Moscow Ballet has committed to donating a portion of every November 12th, Swan Lake ballet performance ticket purchased - using the code "SWAN" - to the sanctuary.

www.rmts.bc.ca/promo/swan

Super Slimers (Drop-in Event)

Sunday, November 27 | 12 pm to 3 pm

They're slimy, slippery, and super cool customers! Discover the mysterious world of slugs and snails with games, slug goggles and slime making. Admission by donation.

Victoria Natural History Society

Visit www.naturevictoria.ca for more programs

Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Badgers | Tues, Nov 8, 7:30 pm

Antarctic Wildlife | Tues, Dec 13, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Lichens and Superorganisms | Tues, Nov 15, 7:30 pm

Members Picture Night | Tues, Dec 20, 7:30 pm
Swan Lake Nature Centre

Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

Bird Songs of the Boreal Forest | Wed, Oct 26, 7:30 pm

Saving Endangered Shrikes | Wed, Nov 23, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

The Giant Pacific Octopus | Oct 31, 7:30 pm

Farmed Salmon | Nov 28, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Royal BC Museum Fieldtrippers

Visit <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/learn/> for more programs

Fieldtrippers: Birding the Bay

Sunday, November 5 | 10am to 12:00pm

Cowichan Bay

Join Museum biologists on a birding trip to Cowichan Bay as part of the [WildWings Nature & Arts Festival](#), a celebration of the return of the Trumpeter Swans. Meet at the parking lot near the intersection of Cowichan Bay and Lochmanetz Roads opposite the Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club.

Sailfins, Shrimps, & Sea Slugs!

Monday, December 12 | 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Willows Beach (north end)

Join Museum researchers as they conduct an evening beach seine. As many as 20 species of fish, crabs, shrimp, and other invertebrates will be brought in using a large net, so everyone will get an up-close look at what lives beneath the waves.

This Could Have Been You!

By Heather Pass
Rolston Reclaimers

This summer, Heather Pass, Steward of Rolston Reclaimers on Colquitz River, erected split rail fencing around plantings on the cul-de-sac of Rolston Crescent. Some time earlier, she had noticed a BC TEL crew replacing a telephone pole in her neighbourhood. There was a half pole on the road when she arrived on scene. The crew gladly cut it into short lengths and delivered it to her house. With great effort, Heather managed to split each piece in four. She spent considerable time erecting the fence at the cul-de-sac. All in all, it looked just awful! Hoping for a better appearance, she emailed Andrew at Saanich Parks for supports for the fence. Andrew Burger appeared to assess her efforts. He explained that he would like all split rail fencing in the area to be of similar appearance. Shortly thereafter, a crew arrived and installed an attractive, matching fence. It really enhances the area.

On the evening of August 24th, Heather did her first Walk and Talk with Jenny Eastman and four other Pulling Together Stewards. Everyone enjoyed hearing of the development of Rolston Reclaimers' area. Heather also included a tour of her garden as she has many native plants combined with ornamentals. A slide show viewing of the July 2013 oil spill remediation on Colquitz River was planned for the snack time at the end of the evening. Somehow, the photo viewer's internal memory took over. There were only photos of Heather's trip to Arizona. She tried and tried, but could not find the planned slide show. Everyone said they would love to see slides of Arizona, so that is how the evening finished.



Our Backyard would like to hear from you!

Do you have a Naturescape Project?

Our Backyard would like to hear about your naturescape projects. Have you provided habitat for wildlife? Converted your lawn to a wildflower meadow? Planted a pollinator-friendly garden? Whether it's in your yard, your children's school, or other local area please share your success stories with us.

Please send your stories and photos to the editor at Darren.Copley@Saanich.ca

To find out more about naturescape, visit:
www.saanich.ca/environment

Lead Steward Profile

Rosemary Marsh Rithet's Bog and Baxter Park

By Jenny Eastman, Coordinator of Volunteers, Saanich Parks

"Volunteering in a bog has its hazards", notes Rosemary Marsh, *Pulling Together* volunteer at Rithet's Bog and Baxter Park. "When we work in the wet parts, our Lead Steward always says, "Wear a hat so we know where to look in case you sink out of sight!" After six years of volunteering, Rosemary hasn't sunk yet, but she has been satisfyingly muddy and done her share of invasive Narrowleaf Cattail raking and hauling.

Born and raised in Edmonton, Rosemary grew up playing and enjoying solitude in the city's natural spaces, particularly the ravines - small valleys created by creeks flowing toward the North Saskatchewan River. "There were frogs, lots of birds, and small mammals," she notes. "We played outside on our own, all seasons and then, if I was inside, I was reading."

She started an Education degree at the University of Alberta, which she eventually finished with courses from the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria after moving to the BC coast. Rosemary first taught in Vancouver but having outgrown her desire for city life, moved to Tofino on the West coast of Vancouver Island where she lent her support to planning campaigns to save Clayoquot Sound's old growth temperate rainforest.

After further adventures in BC and Alberta, Rosemary returned to Victoria where she now works in a school library. Seeking out urban locations to bird watch and walk, Rithet's Bog caught her eye as a bus accessible natural area with great wildlife-viewing opportunities. She decided to volunteer and says she can't imagine stopping. Additionally she spends time weeding the native plant beds at Baxter Park alongside the Pat Bay Highway.

As well as her volunteer work with Saanich Parks, Rosemary volunteers with the SPCA, enjoys yoga, and reads constantly. "Two of my greatest loves, books and natural places - that's just who I am." Stay afloat Rosemary and thanks for all you do in your parks!

Details: www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether



Time for a change!

Saanich Residents are Upgrading from Oil Heating to Heat Pumps

By Glenys Verhulst, City Green Solutions, Communications Coordinator



Since the launch of the Oil to Heat Pump Incentive Program in September 2015, more than 60 Saanich households are upgrading from heating with oil to heating with new efficient heat pumps. Spills from residential oil tanks can be very damaging to affected soils and waterways. Homeowners who upgrade from oil to heat pumps are helping protect our community from the risk of residential oil tank spills, which in the past have caused damage to Colquitz Creek, Swan Lake, and other waters in Saanich. Residential oil spill clean-up costs are the responsibility of the homeowner and are often not covered by home insurance. In a recent local case, homeowners were faced with clean-up costs of more than \$200,000.

How Does a Heat Pump Upgrade Benefit Saanich Homeowners?

- **Improve Energy Efficiency:** Heat pumps are very efficient compared to other heating systems. Newer oil furnaces can be approximately 85% efficient, newer gas furnaces are approximately 95% efficient, baseboards are 100% efficient, and heat pumps can be approximately 150% to 250% efficient, depending on the outdoor temperature. Heat pumps are so efficient because instead of using electricity to create heat, they use electricity to collect heat from outside and move it into your home – a much more efficient approach!
- **Save on Energy Bills:** A typical heat pump upgrade can save you 40 to 75% off your heating bills each year (assuming you heat 100% with oil), and can pay for itself quickly through energy savings.
- **Get Efficient Air Conditioning:** If you are currently using air conditioning, upgrading to a heat pump can also provide you with efficient cooling in the summer.
- **Shrink Home Carbon Emissions:** In typical homes, switching from oil to a heat pump can shrink your carbon emissions more than taking a car off the road every year. These carbon savings happen for two reasons: moving from an inefficient older furnace to a much more efficient heating system, and switching from oil - a higher-carbon fuel (about 70 kg of carbon equivalent/GJ) - to BC's much lower-carbon hydroelectricity (only about 3 kg of carbon equivalent/GJ).

Access Up to \$2000 for Your Heat Pump Upgrade!

Up to \$2000 is available for Saanich residents to switch from oil heating to a heat pump. Funding for this rebate comes from the Province of BC's Innovative Clean Energy Fund (up to \$1700), with an additional \$150 per home each from the Capital Regional District and the District of Saanich. The Oil to Heat Pump Incentive Program is administered by City Green Solutions, a non-profit energy efficiency organization with a mission to excite, inspire, and lead British Columbians in taking both simple and extraordinary actions to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in homes and buildings.

Oil to Heat Pump Incentive Program
1-877-545-6247 | info@oiltoheatpump.ca
www.oiltoheatpump.ca



Tod Creek Fishway upstream entrance

Tod Creek Dam

Tod Creek Dam Fishway (taken October 27, 2015)

Tod Creek Watershed Update

By Brian Koval, Assistant Coordinator, Peninsula Streams Society

The stewards of Tod Creek Watershed have been very busy over the past couple of years!

A huge accomplishment in 2015 was the construction of the fishway at Butchart's Dam in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park.

With support from the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed and Peninsula Streams Society, The Butchart Gardens undertook the project which will allow migrating fish passage around the dam for the first time in many decades. With help from volunteers, we released Coho Salmon smolts at several locations along Tod Creek upstream of the dam so that they will hopefully return there to spawn in a couple of years. We have been adding gravel to the creek to ensure the fish have suitable habitat to rear and later, spawn. We also plan to install a fish camera at the top of the fishway to monitor the fish migrating to sea, as well as those that manage to return to spawn.

Over on the Tod Creek Flats (behind the Red Barn Market on West Saanich Road), our multi-year project is underway which will allow fish access to and from valuable habitat on the Flats and will also improve drainage so that property owners can better farm the land in the summer. Our fish monitoring program has shown that Cutthroat Trout are using the Flats as habitat and we hope to see Coho Salmon here in the near future as well!

Learn more about Peninsula Streams Society and our activities at <http://peninsulastreams.ca/> and the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed at <http://todcreek.rd123.ca/>

Cover Photo: Townsend's Big-eared Bat. Photo credit Christina Carriers (WildARC BC).
Back Page: Great Blue Heron



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Editor: Darren Copley | Phone: 250-475-5579 | Email: Darren.Copley@saanich.ca