

Knockan Hill Park News

F R I E N D S O F K N O C K A N H I L L P A R K S O C I E T Y

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **November 17**— come out and help
- Park master plan proposed
- Good Neighbours

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Staff from the Saanich Parks Department met recently with some of the board members of the Society for a park walk-through, pointing out areas that are in need of care and attention. They discussed the need to "modify" or "make safe" a number of hazardous trees near the trail coming up from Burnside and in the area that will join up with the new View Royal trail. Also, there are two main patches of dead grand firs on the periphery of the park close to neighbouring properties that need to be removed (unfortunately there is likely no potential to "wildlife" these trees). Tree work for these projects is underway and will be completed in November to reduce concerns for property damage in

Please come and join in on **Saturday morning, November 17th from 10:00 to noon** to help with invasive species removal. Meet at the top of the hill. Wear long sleeves and bring gloves. As in previous years, we'll be focusing on removing scotch broom. Specially designed broom pulling implements will be available. The Municipality of Saanich has asked that volunteers register for

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fall storms and to allow for the trail construction crews to resurface the designated sections of the trail. The tree assessments are done by



certified arborists who are guided by a number of factors in deciding which trees need to be fallen. So while it may appear arbitrary to the untrained eye, a lot of thought has gone into deciding which trees need to be removed. In most cases, the

trees will be left where they fall, and will, over time, provide valuable habitat for a range of species.

While they're here, Saanich Parks will also be picking up the branch pile at the top of the access from View Royal and the broom pile near the picnic table off Burnside as well as at the Stranton Lodge parking lot.

The Strawberry Vale Community Club Association is always looking for new members. This local non-profit society runs the Strawberry Vale Community Hall at Burnside and High Street. They meet on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the hall. Visi-

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

these activities both to mitigate risk exposure and also to provide insurance coverage for the volunteers. There are two processes; a one-time registration for those who volunteer regularly, and also a single event registration for those who are just giving it a try. We'll have both types of the necessary paperwork on hand at the

event. This is not to discourage volunteers for fear of injury or lawsuit, but to encourage us to carry out work with due care.

The 2008 Annual General Meeting will be taking place on Thursday February 7, 2008. Notices and an agenda will be issued early in the new year.

PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A PARK MASTER PLAN

A proposal has been submitted to Royal Roads University to have a team of students in the School of Environment and Sustainability develop a Master Plan for the park.

A Park Master Plan is required to guide the park through the coming years. The plan will pull together existing research and will also provide an inventory of plant and animal life in the park. The plan will address governance issues and provide some assistance in coordinating the competing interests of the two municipalities and the other

People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world which cannot sustain people.
- Bryce Nelson

stakeholder groups that have an interest in the park, such as the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society. If possible, the plan should consider the likely effects of climate change and provide recommendations concerning ongoing reforestation efforts. It should also guide volunteer efforts in removing invasive species through prioritizing problem species and locations. The preliminary specific objectives of the plan are:

- Inventories of existing flora and fauna
- Recommendations concerning invasive plant species along with a priority list of critical areas
- Identification of any previous research projects concerning Knockan Hill Park or other relevant research projects

- Recommendations concerning reforestation and/or replanting, taking into account the impact of climate change
- Integrating the management of the park by the municipalities of Saanich and View Royal
- Identifying any pertinent issues and recommending a course of action
- Providing a living document that will be continuously updated, within a formal and logical structure

Announcing new products from the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT)

1. The Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook: nurturing native plant habitat in Garry oak communities.

Available soon in print form, plus easy downloads from www.goert.ca (see 'at home and in your community'). To request a print copy, please email info@goert.ca or call (250) 383-3427.

2. Protecting Garry Oak Areas During Land Development

A resource package for the development industry and local governments.

Available in print form (8 sheets in a folder), plus easy downloads from www.goert.ca

3. General Decision Process for Managing Invasive Plant Species in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems (GDP), along with best management practices (BMPs) for blackberry, daphne, broom, ivy, & orchard grass; and a species scoring algorithm. All documents can be downloaded from our new website at www.goert.ca (see 'publications/invasive species').

Community Outreach Proposal for Knockan Hill neighbourhood in Saanich and View Royal

Although Knockan Hill Park is protected as parkland, this site is still threatened by pets disturbing wildlife, invading exotic plants, and damaging recreational uses. Completely surrounded by residential neighbourhoods, the park's documented ecological integrity is declining. Isolated from other natural areas and criss-crossed with trails, the entire site suffers from a lack of core areas free from regular pedestrian traffic. Community awareness of these issues is widely recognized as a critical foundation for solutions to most threats to Knockan Hill's ecological integrity.

As part of its *Good Neighbours Strategy*, the Habitat Acquisitions Trust (HAT) delivers award-winning landowner contact projects to neighbourhoods surrounding Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) like Knockan Hill. The goal is to promote community awareness and understanding about ESAs so residents will reverse negative impacts, and manage their own lands as protective buffers around sensitive areas.

HAT would like to continue their successful partnerships with Saanich, View Royal, and FKHPS to deliver their project in the **spring of 2008** over 16 weeks. In the Knockan Hill neighbourhood, HAT's experienced outreach staff will encourage interested landowners to plant landscapes with drought tolerant native plants that support the integrity of the park's rare ecosystems. They'll help residents to find alternatives to pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, to use high-efficiency irrigation, and to control their pets in natural habitat areas. Their staff will deliver free information packages and provide property consultations to interested landowners. Consultations may include naturescaping prescriptions, composter trouble shooting, advice on pests, weed control, drainage, and soil improvement. HAT will help to reinforce the efforts of FKHPS by identifying new volunteers, coordinating conservation events at the park, and through increased media coverage. Conservation events are tailored to the specific threats facing local natural areas and the interests of concerned residents. Some activities HAT coordinates at conservation events include: invasive plant control, native plantings, trail improvement, and interpretive tours. HAT involves community groups and other organizations to provide experiential opportunities for urban residents. The community conservation activity generated by this project will be ongoing and sustainable land management ideas will spread beyond the park neighbourhood.

Expected Outcomes

- 450 homeowners contacted by direct mail with key land care messages
- 200 landholders telephoned by outreach specialists
- 100 land care packages delivered to interested landholders
- 35 visits to private properties at or near the park border
- 25 Land Care Agreements signed with HAT
- 2 events at the park including invasive plant control, interpretive tours, games, speakers
- A project news release achieving 2 media articles on the project (including radio or TV)
- Student projects measuring park impacts, biodiversity, and/or user perceptions.
- More members joining Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society and more volunteer hours

Reporting

HAT produces comprehensive project reports for sponsors based on measurable outcomes. Every project is evaluated critically to improve upon the ongoing outreach strategy.

The landowner contact information will be recorded in a new regional *Landowner Contact Database* that will benefit regional outreach groups in the future through improved coordination of conservation efforts. They treat information gathered on landowners and their property confidential: the collective success in outreach depends on high client confidence.



THINKING GLOBALLY,
ACTING LOCALLY

**F R I E N D S O F
K N O C K A N H I L L P A R K
S O C I E T Y**

The Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society is a volunteer non-profit society dedicated to serving the interests of the park. Some of the ways you can help include:

- Become a member of FKHPS
- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Assist with removal of invasive plant species
- Help with the upkeep and restoration of the Stranton Lodge garden
- Assist with newsletter production and distribution

F K H P S

Memberships

Executive Board:

President: June Rogers 479-2538

Vice President: Andria Tetlow 479-1947

Secretary: David Trudel 479-2778

E-mail: David-Trudel@shaw.ca

Membership/Treasurer: Jean Screech
479-1782

Director: Bob Burow 479-3086

Director: Rex Welland 479-2063

Send \$5.00 along with your name, address and phone number to:

FKHPS c/o Jean Screech
1256 Burnside Road West,
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1N8

This newsletter is published by the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society.

