



LIGHTHOUSE PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Fall, 2015

Issue #24
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www.lpps.ca



Caulfeild Cove (Tiddly Cove) eastern part of Caulfeild Park

photo: Suann Hosie

Another hot, rain-less day in July. My dog and I are taking a late-afternoon walk along a favourite route, down The Dale to Caulfeild Park. Over the years, I have experienced many changes in the Park – some for the better, others not-so-favourable for the natural flora and fauna. LPPS members and District of West Vancouver volunteers have done restorative work which includes removal of non-native, invasive plants and replacement with native species. In Caulfeild Park, the job of removing ivy is massive in scope – the western part of the park has benefited from the action of volunteers but as my walk extends eastward, I see ivy everywhere - far too much for one person to tackle on a dog walk!

This time of year, I am treated to watching the birds which nest in the park. Reaching the foot of The Dale where it intersects with Pilot House Road, I hear a loud, chopping sound. Ah ha! Pileated Woodpecker! I soon locate two of them, high on a dead Douglas-fir. The louder and more vigorous bird is managing to chop a deep, rectangular hole. With his red crest and sleek pelage, he is surely an adult male. Above him is a juvenile, identified by his wild, orangey-pink crest. The youngster is doing his best to imitate its parent but is hammering on an impenetrable knot! It is a delight to see this parent and offspring during a how-to-get-your-own-food lesson. Another instructive session is taking place on an exposed rock in the waters of Caulfeild Cove. A Northwestern Crow adult is teaching its single offspring to harvest the mussels encrusting the rock. The demanding youngster is only interested in continuing his “feed me, feed me” raucous calls. Soon he will become proficient, learning other techniques such as dropping the bivalves on the road to expose their delicious contents.

Later, I turn to the treed area between the road and ocean. I had noticed a bushtit nest earlier in the spring, well-camouflaged in some bushes. I am pleased to find the bushtit family (9 to 12 individuals) foraging amongst the native bushes – Saskatoon, Ocean Spray and Pacific Crab-apple. Nearby, Spotted Towhee families are giving their location calls “whee?!” as they forage closer to the ground. Close by are Anna’s and Rufous Hummingbirds, as well as Flickers, the latter taking advantage of snags to forage for food. Cheerful, active Black-capped Chickadee families abound, emitting varied calls. White-crowned Sparrows, young and old, add variety to my walk. The adults have a warning call – a short “chink”. Their young don’t look much like the adults, being spotted on their breast and lacking the white eye stripe and black crown stripe, making them easily confused with nearby Song Sparrows.

There is so much to enjoy in Caulfeild Park. The views across Burrard inlet to the city and Mount Baker are spectacular, but there is much more to see and hear for residents and visitors who take the time to appreciate the natural world.

Suann Hosie

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Lighthouse Park Preservation Society is a membership based non-profit organization formed in 1998 to:

- *Protect the natural integrity of Lighthouse Park;*
- *Promote public awareness of its natural features;*
- *And support the development of biological zones near the park boundaries.*

President - Alexandra Mancini
Vice President - Marja de Jong
Westman

Treasurer - Nick Miller

Directors

Ann Crosby

Elaine Graham

Daphne Hales

Areta Sanders

Membership - Lynn Nordman



WEST VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

GIRL GUIDES HELP RESTORE PART OF JUNIPER LOOP

by Daphne Hales

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It is sad indeed that it took a tragedy to initiate this project – but the loss of 7 year old Erin Moore when a landslide hit her while hiking above Lions Bay last December has led to what will be a lasting legacy for a little girl who loved the outdoors, loved hiking, loved helping others – and loved being a Brownie.

We were all devastated that a fluke of an accident could take such a lively, fun loving child, and we, the Guiders of West Vancouver, wanted to do something to celebrate the joy she had brought to so many people in her short life. The very week we were discussing a variety of projects which Erin would have enjoyed, the National Office of Girl Guides advertised an opportunity to apply for a tree planting grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. Erin had attended our nature workshops at the Phyl Munday Nature House in the Park, and suddenly it seemed like a wonderful way to honour Erin's memory – we would apply for a grant, and have a great planting party for all the Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers. We would clear a small degraded area of the Park of invasive species and close off an unnecessary trail by replanting it, thus re-joining a little isolated triangle to the rest of the forest. This would not only help preserve the roots of the trees already there, but would allow greater access to the forest for the little critters that might have been trapped on the wrong side of this unnecessary trail. The Girl Guides would call the newly planted piece of forest ERIN'S GROVE, and we would be able to watch over it, care for it and see it grow to maturity over the years. We are delighted that Parks staff Tiffany Bentley, who has already helped LPPS with other planting activities, will be in charge.

So many people came forward to help this idea come to fruition – Elaine Graham, Elspeth Bradbury, and Areta Sanders of LPPS helped choose the site, Elspeth and her husband Ray measured the area and drew up a map and a plant list. Ian Haras, Manager of Operations for the Parks Department and Alex Charanin, Trails Supervisor, gave us their blessing and offered help with moving soil, scarifying the trodden earth and ordering plants. With all this support, we sent in the application – and were given the largest possible grant of \$2,500! We were ecstatic. So in late September, the various units of Guiding will all spend time in the Park clearing out invasive plants, then in October the planting will take place.

Erin's parents have been overwhelmed by the out-pouring of love and support from friends and strangers, from schools and community groups, and they are touched by the legacy their little girl is leaving - not the least of all a newly replanted corner of this treasured park - **Erin's Grove**.

You can read more of Erin and her family's journey in the ongoing blog written by her mom by subscribing to her blog "erinkatemoore.weebly.com"



IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, we recently lost a valued member of the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society. Jocelyn Howden (known to all as Joss) died very suddenly in May. She had been one of my phone team for years, letting members with no internet connection know about all our events and talks. Joss would phone me ahead of time to say WASN'T IT TIME TO DO THE PHONING? And she would have her list at the ready, along with all the details. She sounded so lively on the phone and had such a wicked sense of humour that I was stunned when she told me a few years ago that she was over 80. Joss was a nurse and supervisor at LGH for much of her life and was a passionate lover of the natural world. She may no longer have walked the trails of the Park, but she certainly did her valuable bit to help, and that was much appreciated. We have lost a good friend, and will miss her.

Daphne Hales, Phoning Team Leader



Warbling Vireo, *Vireo gilvus*, with nest and young, July 5, 2015

Photo: Paola Merkins

We always seem to see something special on our monthly bird counts in the park and July was no exception. We sighted a Warbling Vireo's nest in a low alder just below the old theatre site. It is an open cup-shaped nest suspended on a thin branch and held three young chicks which were begging for food. Their parents did not disappoint them and returned several times while we were observing them, presumably with insects as this is their main diet.

It is usual for these vireos to lay 3-4 eggs that are white with a few brownish dots on them. Both parents care for the young for about 40 days after they are fledged.

As well as the vireo chicks we were also lucky to see a young Bald Eagle in its nest, stretching its wings and maybe getting ready to fly.

Areta Sanders



Fledgling Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Juniper Loop, July 16, 2015
photo: Elaine Graham

Around 8:30 am on July 16th, Gary Grass, a regular park visitor, was walking his dog on the Juniper loop trail when he realized that a young eagle perched on a decayed tree trunk near the forest floor was unable to fly. Gary contacted O.W.L. the wildlife rescue centre in Boundary Bay, which had received several calls by then. Recognizing that the eagle's parents did not have enough open space to help their fledgling, and because the situation was in an urban park, O.W.L. decided to relay the message to a volunteer in Dundarave. Within fifteen minutes volunteer-Marianne arrived on the scene with a towel and large cardboard box. Alex Charanin, Trails Supervisor with the Parks Department, arrived shortly thereafter and was able to clamber up beside the eagle, drape the towel over its back, and enfold the bird into his arms before carefully easing it into the box, and carrying it out to the parking lot. Marianne then drove the eagle to Boundary Bay, where it has since been living with other immature eagles. He is in good health, has been banded and is in an enclosure with four other youngsters, and a foster parent (mature eagle) who feeds them. By the time you read this newsletter, he will have been returned to Lighthouse Park and released.

Eighteen young eagles have required O.W.L.'s help so far this summer, and one of the most common challenges they face is getting aloft on their first flying attempts, which is why Lighthouse Park's eagle was stranded below its nest on the forest floor.
Elaine Graham

THE SLUG KILLER

By David Cook, P. Eng.

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When gardening or hiking through the forests in our area, you may have noticed, scurrying rapidly away from you, a large black beetle with prominent eyes, powerful spiny legs and large jaws. It is very likely a species of the Ground or Carabid beetles that belong to the family Carabidae.

The Carabids are one of the most species-rich families of beetles on earth with at least 40,000 known species worldwide, of which 2,500 are found in North America. Because of their abundance, wide distribution, ease of capture and the fact that many are flightless, they have received much attention from biologists interested in ecological restoration and conservation. Carabids are vigorous feeders that can consume their body weight in prey daily so other studies focus on their use in controlling insect pests on agricultural lands and in gardens.

In Lighthouse Park, the species of Carabid you may see is the slug killer, *Scaphinotus angusticollis*, a forest floor predator. It has distinctive elongated and narrow mouthparts, head and thorax as well as spoon-shaped palps for extracting snails from their shells. Due to declining populations of native snails, however, it now feeds primarily on slugs, which are far more abundant. It also eats slug eggs, earthworms, spiders, springtails and possibly aphids and nematodes. In turn, it is prey to Swainson's Thrush, White-crowned Sparrow and possibly one or more species of shrew.

The slug killer's wing covers are fused together, which renders it unable to fly. Vestigial hind wings lie unused beneath the wing covers. The lack of flight limits the beetle's spread, but some disperse by rafting on logs or branches carried by moving water. Creeks are therefore important for linking sub-populations and for establishing new populations.

The slug killer is active from May to November and hibernates for the rest of the year. It is mainly nocturnal, hiding beneath litter, rotten logs and moss during the day, but may also forage in daylight if plenty of ground litter is available for cover. Females deposit many eggs in the organic layer of soil and then protect them. The feeding habits of larvae are similar to adults but more restricted due to limited mobility. All species of *Scaphinotus* go through complete metamorphosis, passing through the four stages of egg, larva, pupa and adult.



Carabid beetle, *Scaphinotus angusticollis*

Research has shown that some species of *Scaphinotus* follow the mucous trails of slugs, snails and earthworms in order to track them down, but one study showed that they sometimes track in the wrong direction. It is not known if the slug killer behaves this way. Having found its prey, the beetle paralyzes it by biting the head or mantle cavity. If the victim is able to respond to the threat quickly enough it releases a toxic and viscous mucous that discourages further attack. The Pacific banana slug, *Ariolimax columbianus*, on which the slug killer commonly feeds, uses this kind of mucous protection but, unlike many other slug species, does not practice self-amputation as an escape mechanism.

An interesting video of a snail using mucous to effectively repel a group of slug killers can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLGVtj78Qmo

While I have focused on one Carabid found in Lighthouse Park, it is important to consider that the large and diverse family of Carabidae can serve as a keystone indicator in assessing ecosystem health. Vegetation has commonly been used for this purpose, but Carabids can provide an equally accurate view of environmental structure.

For all volunteer events please wear old clothes, sturdy shoes and work gloves.

FOUR SESSIONS, THE DALE PARK

Meet at the corner of Water Lane and The Dale

9:00 am - noon on the following dates:-

Ivy Pull, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th

Ivy Pull, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17th

Restoration, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14th

Restoration, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28th

WEED PULL, CAULFEILD PARK

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road

9:00 am - noon

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31st

MONTHLY BIRD COUNTS

Everyone welcome

Meet at the upper kiosk of the parking lot in
Lighthouse Park on the first Sunday of the month
at

8:30 a.m.

Sept. 6th, Oct. 4th, Nov. 1st, Dec. 6th, Jan. 3rd

Call Suann at 604-926-9094 for more information

The Dale Park Restoration Another Big Push this Fall

Great news to share on this project! Our focused efforts, particularly over the past year, have transformed this small park which connects to the northeast corner of Lighthouse Park. What started as a significantly degraded environment, overrun with invasive plants, has already been vastly improved by removal of enormous quantities of English ivy and laurel. We added over 1000 native plants in late 2014.

This fall we have an ambitious goal to finish the primary phase of restoration in The Dale; by December we hope to have removed the most problematic invasive plants throughout and restored the area with native trees, shrubs, and smaller plants. Most of the park north of Water Lane has been cleared of the worst invasive plants; we have a small amount of ivy left to remove there and much replanting. South of Water Lane, volunteers will work in flat areas and Green Admiral Nature Restoration professionals will be hired for the steep section along the creek. Four volunteer events are planned this fall to ensure we meet our goal and finish this first intense phase of this restoration project. We need at least 300 hours of volunteer labour and 60-80 hours of professional labour. Our wish list includes around 600 new native plants.

Large areas of the forest floor invaded by yellow lammium will remain covered with thick black plastic for about two years before replanting will be attempted. Several small zones of spreading Japanese knotweed will require attention by the WV Parks Department over the next couple of years.

So how will we pay for the contractors and plants? We are very fortunate to have received two more grants this spring (\$5000 from the TD Friends of the Environment Fund and \$500 from the West Vancouver Community Grant program). This leaves us about \$3000 short of our target and we will continue to seek more grants and private donations. Additional donations of any magnitude would be greatly appreciated. (The LPPS is a registered charity and gives official donation receipts for income tax purposes.)

Very soon our work in this park will transition into a maintenance phase, with occasional volunteer events to keep recurring invasive plants under control. It will be most enjoyable to watch the maturation of the thousands of new native plants as this forest re-establishes its balance.

Alexandra Mancini



A field trip for Elder College Rambling Program
Registration required. Call [604-984-4901](tel:604-984-4901)

**“Climate Change Past, Present & Future
using Lighthouse Park as our class room”**

with

David Cook, P. Eng.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th, 2015

10:00 a.m. - Noon

Lighthouse Park

David will outline what we know about vegetation and climate changes in our area since the ice left 12000 years ago. These changes are illustrated today as we walk north from the coastal bluffs to forested habitats in Lighthouse Park. With knowledge of what happened with certain plant species in the past as the climate changed, we will speculate on future changes.

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot at 10:00 a.m.
For further information contact David at cookeco2@yahoo.com or [604-924-0147](tel:604-924-0147)



**"Climate change and the ecology of
rocky shores"**

with

Dr. Chris Harley

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th, 2015

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

West Vancouver Memorial Library

Dr. Chris Harley is a marine ecologist with the faculty of Zoology at UBC, who studies the effects of climate change on rocky shores. Chris will describe the ongoing effects of changing river flow, ocean warming, and ocean acidification on marine ecosystems in British Columbia, including the shorelines of Lighthouse Park.