



# LIGHTHOUSE PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Fall, 2019

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## RESTORATION AND RENEWAL - A Call for Help!

by Alexandra Mancini

By the time you read this, fall will be well under way, and we are looking forward to seeing some of you at our upcoming events. The Lighthouse Park Preservation Society has been doing impressive volunteer work for over two decades. Through our educational outreach program we have hosted 67 talks and published 32 newsletters. We have significantly improved the biological health of the Six-Park Network parks by removing invasive plants and restoring selected areas with native plants. With your help we will continue this work in four of those parks this fall (see page 5). With student help we will also be removing ivy from two parks at six events. Now we need to focus on a very different kind of restoration and renewal – for our LPPS leadership team!

Inevitably every organization must renew its leadership team. Our Society has been very fortunate in attracting new volunteers when life's changes have impacted our volunteer roles. Here are some immediate changes required for the LPPS team:

- Treasurer** – our financial records are quite simple, requiring basic accounting skills.
- Newsletter editor & designer** – a creative position, requiring computer skills for two newsletters a year.
- Education outreach leader** – help to arrange speaker events 4-6 times each year.
- Weed pulls & restoration leaders** – lead 1-2 work parties per year in one of our parks.

*If you would like to help with any of these positions, we will be happy to show you how.*

This is a serious call for help! We must inject some new energy into our leadership team or else we will be forced to relinquish some of our programs. Please help us continue the Society's work in the years ahead. Spread the word among your friends and consider what role you might be able to do yourself. Please contact us at [lighthouseparkps@gmail.com](mailto:lighthouseparkps@gmail.com) or call me at 604-922-1485 to talk about these roles or other ways you might be able to help. Thank you so much for your continued support of the LPPS and the work we do!



Earlier this year, on February 1st, our fine friend and early supporter of the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society, Ian Loudon, passed away after a long and healthy life. Ian became the Society's treasurer in 2006 until the fall of 2007 when he quietly continued the role behind the scenes. Thanks to Ian's life-long partner and soul-mate May, who assumed the title of treasurer and attended the Society's board meetings, Ian's meticulous bookkeeping continued for seven more years until the fall of 2013. His sunny smile, gentle manner and wry wit are most fondly remembered by all who spent time in his company.

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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 - Elaine Graham
- Treasurer - Nick Miller
- Secretary - Areta Sanders
- Membership - Lynn Nordman
- Directors
- David Cook
- Daphne Hales
- Sally McDermott
- Jennifer McQueen



## EAGLE ACTIVITY

by Sally McDermott

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This year there were three active Bald Eagle nests in Lighthouse Park and a fourth nest near Klootchman Park. Two of the nests were newly built this year, making for the highest density of eagle nests in the park since the 1960s. These nests are only 500 metres apart which is four times as close as the average of 2 km apart across the North Shore. All the nests are in old-growth Douglas-firs, the preferred nesting trees of Bald Eagles and which are in high demand in West Vancouver - for eagles anyway! This high density of eagle nests in Lighthouse Park is an indication that more needs to be done in the District to preserve old-growth trees from being chopped down on private property!

Of the four active pairs of eagles only the pair at Shorepine Point did not produce young. Sometimes this is the case with a newly mated pair so we will watch this nest carefully next year and hope that it produces young. The nest was one of the newly built nests in the park and the one most easily seen by the public from the rocks of Shorepine Point.



Valley Trail eaglet photo: Marshall Bauman

The second new nest in the park was on the Valley Trail with an offspring of one. As of August 4<sup>th</sup>, that eaglet, nicknamed the "Valley Girl" (though gender is unknown) could be heard flying from the Valley Trail out to Eagle Point with the parent still in attendance. The nesting pair on the east side of the park's Valley of the Giants trail, successfully fledged one young in early July. Last year, their first year in the park, they fledged two young.

The Klootchman eagle pair hatched two young but despite a scope trained on the nest we missed what happened to one of the young at approximately five weeks of age. The remaining eaglet is happily improving its flying skills after a rocky start. The property owner of that nest was surprised to see the eaglet in a tall tree deep in Klootchman Park. Prior to that she had only seen the eaglet in its nest tree 'wingercising' and hopping a little without the usual short flights within the nest tree then onto nearby trees. Later that day the eaglet was spotted on a mossy ridge where it spent the day with the parents bringing it food. It was flapping its wings so it was not injured. At some point it ended up in the same tall fir tree in Klootchman Park where it spent the entire next day perched on a branch with a parent alongside for a long period. Over the next couple of days it was seen flying, with more than the occasional wobble, down to the point, out to Grebe Islets and back to the nest. Every day the young eagle became better at flying and landing. Our resident monitor has enjoyed the wonderful experience of witnessing the eaglet's first flights and will miss it and the adults when they have all flown to northern rivers in BC and Alaska, to feast on the early salmon river runs. Newly fledged eaglets don't have the hunting skills yet to catch moving prey, they have barely learned how to fly! In the meantime they will eat the spawned out salmon carcasses on the riverbanks.

There is a fifth nest in Lighthouse Park on Juniper Loop, which has not been used for the past two years. It is possibly an 'alternate' nest for one of the four pairs in and around the park.

To recap we monitored three nests in the park plus one just outside that produced four successfully fledged young. Across the North Shore there was a total of ten nests with 14 successfully fledged eaglets. If anyone is interested in helping to monitor eagles in Lighthouse Park or across the North Shore, or would like more information, please contact Sally McDermott at 604-925-8745, mcjeffery@telus.net.

## WHY ARE THE CEDARS DYING?

by Egan Davis

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What is the most iconic tree of Lighthouse Park? Western red cedar would certainly be a candidate. For thousands of years, indigenous people have revered western red cedar as an excellent material resource and it is often referred to as the tree of life. Alarming, the tree of life has been dying in Lighthouse Park and other areas in this region. Why is this happening, and what does this mean for the future of western red cedar?

Western red cedar, *Thuja plicata*, is in the Cypress family, Cupressaceae. Other local plants in this family include junipers and yellow cedar. Western red cedar naturally occurs in forests from sea level to around 2000 meters in elevation. It commonly associates with Douglas-fir and western hemlock with a familiar understory primarily made up of western sword fern, deer fern, huckleberry, salal and Oregon grape. Requiring good soil moisture, western red cedar can often be observed growing in topographical depressions, on flat and moist to wet sites, or on slopes where there is significant seepage.

Annual precipitation levels in this region average around 1200mm a year. Between 80% and 90% of this precipitation falls in the colder months from October to April. Summers are sub-Mediterranean and commonly very dry. The key months of rainfall that allow plants to tolerate dry summers are May and June. Plants are producing vegetative growth in May and June, and rain during this time allows soft growth to develop without the environmental stressor of dry heat. Rain in May and June will also prime the topsoil horizon with moisture that will serve as a reservoir for plant moisture demands in the dry months of July and August.

I played around with some data collected from the [vancouver.weatherstats.ca](http://vancouver.weatherstats.ca) website and found some very interesting patterns. Annually, precipitation levels have not varied significantly and neither have summer levels but the months of May and June stood out. In the ten year period between 2005 and 2014, precipitation levels in the May-June period were 33% higher than the five year period between 2015 and 2019. Not only that, but precipitation events were more intense and this would negatively affect infiltration rates as heavy rains tend to result in water lost to overland flow (runoff). My theory is that lower levels of rain in May and June are resulting in new growth that is subjected to heat stress and dry soils that are less able to sustain plant life through our normally dry summers. 2015 was a particularly dry summer and it was followed by three drier than average summers in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Plants can ride out one or two dry years but four dry summers preceded by very dry springs will result in death or die-back.

Western red cedar, with its high water demand, is a good indicator of this stress but there are other species in the city that are dying. Urban trees such as katsura, Japanese snowbell and dove tree are also dying all around the Metro Vancouver region. Normally resilient trees in Metro Vancouver such as the ubiquitous tulip tree and hornbeam are also showing abnormal levels of dieback and death.

Certainly, there are a number of indicators of climate change to observe in the plant world. It is a shame to see urban trees die but western red cedar dying in the wild is deeply upsetting. Lighthouse Park is a small and fragmented representation of a special habitat that has been mostly eliminated in the Metro Vancouver region due to residential development. Preserving an intact plant assembly in Lighthouse Park is of utmost importance and for this reason it is particularly concerning. We can hope for rain but more importantly we should be responding to the canary in the coal mine and eliminating the wasteful habits of our modern lifestyle that are contributing to climate change.

**Egan Davis is Principal Instructor in the Horticultural Training Program, Faculty of Science at UBC Botanical Garden.**



Dead cedar

photo: Elaine Graham



## OUR FUTURE PARK STEWARDS

by Areta Sanders

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For the past three years we have been very fortunate in being able to work with two West Vancouver schools: Collingwood School and Mulgrave School. The entire Grade 6 year of Collingwood has come to the park with approximately forty-five students on each of two days. These visits have enriched their science curriculum and also formed part of their service to the community. Students have worked on the Juniper Loop trail that in many places had become wider than necessary. They also restored two areas where short cuts through the trail system had become well established.

Walking in Lighthouse Park you will have noticed new split rail fences along the trails. Behind these fences native plants are flourishing and providing cover for birds and small creatures. Much of the planting work was done by the students. The Parks Department delivered soil and mulch and the students filled buckets to move the soil to the areas where they planted various native species including sword ferns, salal, mahonia and salmonberry. Their next task was to fill buckets with mulch and move it to the planted area.

As part of their Outdoor School program, twelve to fifteen Mulgrave students have also been involved in planting on the Juniper Loop trail as well as areas at Arbutus Knoll at the start of the Valley Trail, and at the end of Beacon Trail where a number of trees came down in a storm.

Last year the Collingwood students worked to remove ivy from the beach access trail at Caulfeild Park and we look forward to continuing this project in the fall.

We have been so impressed with the work done in the parks by all of these students, and we hope that this younger generation has been inspired to carry on the Society's mandate to preserve the parks in as natural state as possible for everyone to enjoy.



Juniper Loop planting

photo: Hannah Mele



Arbutus Knoll planting

photo: Areta Sanders



The Phyl Munday Nature Hut in Lighthouse Park, is a volunteer project of the Girl Guides, open from 2:00-4:00 pm every Sunday. Maya Seethram, grade 12 student at Rockridge School, recently joined as volunteer host.

*“The Phyl Munday Nature Hut gives me an opportunity to take time to relax and reflect on the environment. It is important to me to build connections with people (either in my community or from abroad) and I deeply enjoy interacting with those who share my respect for our beautiful old-growth forests!”*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS - 2019

*For all volunteer events please wear old clothes, sturdy shoes and good work gloves. Twelve years and under must be accompanied by an adult.*

**WEED PULL, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

9:00 am - noon

### **CAULFEILD PARK**

Meet at the anchor on Pilot House Road.

**WEED PULL, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19**

9:00 am - noon

### **NORTH PICCADILLY PARK**

Meet at the junction of Piccadilly North & Clovelly Walk, north of the railway crossing.

**RESTORATION, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23**

9:00 am - noon

### **THE DALE PARK**

Meet at the corner of The Dale and Water Lane.

**WEED PULL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30**

9:00 am - noon

### **LIGHTHOUSE PARK**

Meet at the upper kiosk in the parking lot.

### **MONTHLY BIRD COUNTS**

Everyone welcome



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

**8:30 am - Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1.**

For more information call Suann, 604-926-9094



[www.capilanou.ca/EarthWorks/2019](http://www.capilanou.ca/EarthWorks/2019) Lectures

Free and open to everyone.

**The Tipping Point: the End of Oil September 26, 6:00 pm Blue Shore Theatre.** Filmmaker Tom Radford introduces his award winning documentary about the town of Fort Chipweyan, Alberta, and the consequences of the Tar Sands project and the chemicals being released into the Athabasca River.

**Anthropocene October 10, 11:30 am & 6:00 pm BOSA Screening Room.** A screening of award-winning feature documentary from Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, and Edward Burtynsky. Anthropocene provides evidence that humans have impacted the earth in profound and lasting way.

**Climate Change and What We Can Do, October 23, 6:00 pm Blue Shore Theatre.** Ian Hanington is an expert with the David Suzuki Foundation, and co-author of Just Cool It!: The Climate Crisis and What We Can Do and Everything Under the Sun: Toward a Brighter Future on a Small Blue Planet.

**Briony Penn November 19, 6:00 pm, Blue Shore Theatre.** The geographer, author, and activist tells stories about the value of environmental activism.



**Come join our Monthly Birds Counts, they are not always strictly for the birds!**

The bird count this June came to a temporary halt at Shorepine Point when two dark masses with sharp fins sticking out of the sea were spotted below Juniper Point. Our scope revealed California sea lions lounging sideways in circular groups with their fins and tails in the air. (Apparently this is called "rafting".) As if that wasn't enough excitement, two curious harbour seals popped up to look around, just as a family of river otters came cruising along the shoreline directly below us. Half an hour later at our next lookout, by which time the barking of the lions had eclipsed any chirping of the chickadees, we were astonished to see a pod of porpoises heading westward towards the action. What an unexpected spectacle - truly a marine mammal-fest!



## EDUCATIONAL TALKS



### **PLANT - ANIMAL COMMUNICATIONS**

with

**DANIEL MOSQUIN**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2019

2:00 - 4:00 pm

Welsh Hall

West Vancouver Memorial Library

Join botanical consultant, Daniel Mosquin, to explore the latest research into how plants communicate with each other and with animals. Daniel honed his skills growing up on a Manitoba farm, where gardening, bird watching and mucking about in ponds led to studies in plant biology, photography and a career with the UBC Botanical Gardens.



### **MUSHROOM WALK in LIGHTHOUSE PARK**

with

**David Cook**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Join David to learn about the important role of fungi in our forests and how to safely identify them. This is a joint event for Lighthouse Park Preservation Society and Nature Vancouver. Membership in these societies is not required.

*To limit the size of the group and because the event may be rescheduled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, registration is required. Contact David at [cookeco2@yahoo.com](mailto:cookeco2@yahoo.com) to register.*