

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:

- Annual General Meeting Friday Feb. 12th
- Website launched

PARK NEWS

The 2010 Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday February 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Columba's church hall, at the corner of Burnside Road West and High Street. All members are welcome and please don't hesitate to bring along potential new members! The guest speaker will be Darren Copley of the Victoria Natural History Society.

"Extreme Home Makeover", a veritable army of blue t-shirt clad volunteers ap-

various features were pointed out to the crew.

We have also kept up the battle with the Broom. During the past summer, a number of pockets on the View Royal side of the park were tackled, with some very large specimens being rooted out. In the fall, a substantial patch, just below the brow of the hill was removed.



This past fall, volunteers continued to clear a large patch of ivy in the centre of the park. In particular, the Saanich Baptist Church came out in force in September. Like a scene from TV's

peared on the hill with big smiles and lots of enthusiasm. It was a real pleasure to see them tackle a huge amount of work in a short time, followed by a walk through the park, where

The Barred Owls (AKA Hoot Owl) returned again in the fall. These large predators tend to feed on small rodents like field mice and squirrels and they hunt at dawn and dusk.

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OBSERVATIONS?

Occasionally, when you are out walking on the slopes of Knockan Hill, you might catch a glimpse of the first woodpecker of the year, or a Cooper's Hawk, or even a Northern Alligator lizard. This may cause you to wonder if anyone is keeping track of this sort of information. After all, wasn't that what Henry David Thoreau did, living at Walden Pond? Well, as a matter of fact, there are lots of folks who track all sorts of data on both the

flora and fauna found in the park. Knockan Hill has been part of numerous academic and scientific studies over the years. Researchers usually are looking at a variety of locations as well as our park, but the work they do is fascinating nonetheless. Perhaps in the future, it will be possible to use the new website to keep track of all the studies and theses, dissertations

and reports that include data gathered in, or relevant to Knockan Hill Park. In the meantime, the Friends of Knockan Hill Park have sporadically maintained a journal over the past few years. The current custodian is Bob Burow and he'll be happy to note your observations. Just drop a note using Park Journal as the subject to: bdburow@shaw.ca

Big Animals in the Park

Other than the neighbourhood dogs out for walks with their owners, the only reliably seen large mammal in Knockan Hill Park is the Black-tailed deer. The Black Tail is the small cousin of the Mule Deer, and it's found pretty much everywhere on BC's coast. Depending if you're a gardener or not, you either love or hate our Black-tails, but it's still a thrill to walk through the park and come across one or two deer bounding away. Those of you that can look out on the park might watch the young bucks as they grow their annual rack, starting with a single spike for the yearlings and working up to 2-4 pts per side by the time they're 3 years old.

A few years ago, a resident deer was badly injured, probably due to a close encounter with a vehicle. It has managed to survive but now has the closest thing to a limp one could imagine.

It's not completely unheard of to have a black bear in the park. The Times-Colonist did report a bear sighting last September off West Saanich Road and in the more distant past of the 1990's, a young bear decided to stroll up High Street. Andria Tetlow tells the story of coming across this bear as it was checking out a few gardens and then strolled up High Street to disappear into the park.

Another rare but possible visitor is the cougar, and again in 2009, the local paper reported several Saanich sightings. A few years ago, here in Knockan Hill Park, coming up the trail from Helmcken Street just short of the big arbutus tree, Dave Trudel saw a flash of tawny movement out of the corner of his eye. At first it appeared to be a deer, but upon closer inspection, the neck seemed way too short and the tail way too long. The realization dawned that it was a cougar, not a deer at all. After all, just about anywhere that has a deer population is subject to occasional visits from their natural predator.

Smaller mammals in the park include rabbits and squirrels. These are mostly introduced species, but their populations are kept well in check by some of the large predator birds in the park. The eagles, hawks and owls have been keeping the numbers of these introduced species fairly low and stable, which is a good thing as we can be reminded with a visit to the campus of the University of Victoria.

A very small animal that is probably in the park is the tick that carries Lyme Disease. Lyme Disease is caused by an even smaller animal, a bacteria. Both dogs and humans can be bitten by the ticks, which are carried by the deer into the park. There are a whole range of symptoms but if its caught early, Lyme Disease is easily treated by antibiotics. Left untreated, later symptoms may involve the joints, heart, and the central nervous system.

Another small animal to be wary of is the Black Widow Spider. There have been several confirmed sightings and its also likely that the equally dangerous Brown Recluse is another resident. It's one reason to stay on the trails and during the Broom Bashes to wear long sleeves and gloves!

Any more unusual animal sightings – please let Bob Burow know!

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
- Help to manage the website

F K H P S

Executive Board:

President: Nancy Densmore 727-0600

Vice President: Andria Tetlow 479-1947

Membership/Treasurer: Jean Screech 479-1782

Director: Charles Krusekopf 382-0256

Director: Bob Burow 479-3086

Director: Jo Mason 479-5061

Director: Della Pears 479-7228

Memberships

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.

2010 Membership Form FRIENDS OF KNOCKAN HILL PARK SOCIETY
Family Fee - \$5.00

Name _____ Tel. _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

E-mail _____

Please mail this completed form, with fee, to:
Jean Screech, Membership/Treasurer, FKHPS
1256 Burnside Road West, Victoria, BC, V8Z 1N8