

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:

- **January 17th** – come out and help
- **Annual General Meeting Feb. 3rd**
- Major project reports

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The 2009 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday February 3rd 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 theme of the night will be the birds of Knockan Hill.

This past fall, volunteers helped to clear a large patch of ivy in the centre of the park. Weather permitting, more work will be done on Saturday, January 17th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Members are encouraged to

Occasionally some people wonder why the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society doesn't issue tax receipts. The answer is that although we are a provincial non-profit society, we aren't a federally registered charitable organization and only federally registered charities can issue tax receipts.

The process to become a registered charity is complex and in order to maintain the charitable status, organizations have to

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come out and help with this invasive removal.



During both of last year's major projects, it became more and more apparent that the Friends of Knockan Hill Park need to create a website. At a recent meeting of the executive, it was

decided to pursue this initiative. Over the next few months we will be laying the groundwork to launch ourselves into the internet age. This should result in numerous benefits, including more timely and immediate information for all concerned, links to other relevant sites, and a way to publicize Knockan Hill Park. It will also serve as means to coordinate all park activities more effectively and will be the repository for the park management plan, as it evolves. Stay tuned!

Don't forget, the AGM is on February 3rd.

TAX RECEIPTS?

meet certain standards, such as annual audits, and in addition they are specifically forbidden to engage in any kind of political lobbying. At this stage, FKHPS simply doesn't have the resources necessary to make the transition, nor do we want to commit ourselves to not engaging in lobbying activities. In the future, this may change as our situation

evolves, and if and when the federal government amends the legislation and regulations governing charitable status. Certainly there a lot of positive benefits to consider, including being able to apply for a much wider and richer array of grants, as well as being able to offer some direct benefit back to the local community of donors.

ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY PROJECT

Between January and August of 2008, a team of students from Royal Roads University prepared an extensive report that came to be called "A Study for a Management Plan for Knockan Hill Park.

This report describes the initial study for a park management plan for Knockan Hill Park as requested by the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society, and as described in previous newsletters. The project team worked closely with staff from the District of Saanich, the Town of View Royal, with assistance from the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society.

"There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings ... Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change ... There was a strange stillness ... The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of scores of bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh."

- Rachel Carson

The report is to act as a living document that can be continually updated and added to by Saanich, View Royal and the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society. The specific areas researched were the physical and cultural history, natural history and community.

Literature reviews and interviews were conducted to obtain the physical and cultural history which includes the geologic formation of the region as well as traditional land use and management.

Floral surveys were performed to determine the types and distribution of native and non-native species present within the three different ecosystems of Knockan Hill Park: Garry oak, Douglas-fir and the transitional zone. A community survey was also conducted to elucidate general opinions on the current conditions of the park and to be used as a guideline for a community engagement strategy.

The final recommendations of the report include the most up to date and successful methods for removal and management of invasive species based on current research in this field. These include a calendarized, five year invasive species removal plan.

Other recommendations include management options for the encroaching conifers on the Garry oak ecosystem; an assessment of the fire risks and hazards within the park and methods to mitigate them; ideas for converting Knockan Hill Park into a public demonstration park, which includes

Stranton Lodge as an integral part; and finally, general recommendations for the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society to increase community engagement within the park as well as to develop a source of revenue for the society to allow continued research in Knockan Hill Park.

The work that went into the report was substantial and reflects the growing reputation for excellence that has come to characterize Royal Roads University.

Just as importantly, the project worked effectively as tool for dialogue, bringing together the key stakeholders in the park in a very positive and collaborative way.

Now that we have had a few months to digest the lengthy document, FKHPS along with Saanich and View Royal will be meeting to begin establishing a means to move the document from being a study to actually becoming a fully integrated park management plan.

Copies of the final report are available on request - contact David Trudel at 250-479-2778.



HAT— A Good Neighbour in action

From January to June 2008, the Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) worked with local residents, the Friends of Knockan Hill Park Society (FKHPS), Royal Roads University, The District of Saanich and the Town of View Royal to protect and restore the ecologically significant Garry oak ecosystems and Douglas fir forest of Knockan Hill Park in Victoria, British Columbia. Land trust staff co-ordinated a series of activities in the Knockan Hill Park community to raise awareness of local biodiversity, habitat values, park issues, and conservation strategies.

HAT is a regional land trust established in 1996 to enhance the protection and stewardship of regionally significant habitats on southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands. They do this through:

- Community projects promoting environmental education and stewardship;
 - Legal mechanisms such as conservation covenants; and,
- Acquisition of ecologically significant habitats.

During the months of May and June 2008, HAT staff delivered postcards to 530 residential addresses in the Knockan Hill Park area. HAT spoke with over 150 landholders by telephone resulting in 97 residents accepting land care packages. Of those, 37 landholders opted for land care visits and received naturoscaping prescriptions for their property. HAT signed 25 Land Care Agreements with visited landowners and posted 21 permanent Habitat Steward signs on participating properties. The project attracted new community volunteers to assist the ongoing efforts of HAT and FKHPS. The Knockan Hill Park Speaker Series and conservation activities with local cub scouts generated television and local newsletter coverage. Activities co-ordinated by the project included storm drain marking, a four part speaker series, and over 40 hours of community volunteer weed control.

A copy of the final report can be downloaded from HAT's website at: <http://www.hat.bc.ca/>



Conservation Data Centre: the Other CDC

Accurate information about species and ecological communities at risk is essential in order to manage and protect these entities.

In recognition of this fact, the Conservation Data Centre was established in 1991 as a joint project of the Ministry of Environment, the Nature Trust of B.C., the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Nature Conservancy. Their goal is to assist in preserving the biodiversity of the province by providing accurate information on species and ecological communities at risk.

Staff specialists at the Conservation Data Centre, in cooperation with scientists and experts throughout the province, have identified BC's most vulnerable vertebrate animals, vascular plants and ecological communities. Invertebrate animals, mosses and lichens are currently being identified. Each of these species and ecological communities is assigned a global and provincial conservation rank according to an objective set of criteria established by The Nature Conservancy.

Once identified, species and ecological communities at risk are 'tracked' in the CDC's computerized database. Information on their biology, conservation status, and individual locations or 'occurrences' are systematically collected.

The CDC also compiles records on areas such as Nature Trust and Nature Conservancy Properties. They can identify which endangered species or ecological community occurs within one of these areas. The CDC also focuses on identifying areas where there are concentrations of species and/or ecological communities at risk.

Once identified, these ecologically sensitive 'sites' can be used to assist in establishing land protection priorities for the province.

Information on species and ecological communities at risk which would otherwise take a great deal of time and expense to gather is available from one source at the CDC. The Centre collects and assembles information from museums, herbaria, universities, published and unpublished reports, theses, scientists, natural history groups and the ongoing work of its own staff and contractors.

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

Executive Board:

President: Nancy Densmore 727-0600

Vice President: Andria Tetlow 479-1947

Secretary: David Trudel 479-2778

E-mail: David-Trudel@shaw.ca

Membership/Treasurer: Jean Screech
479-1782

Director: Charles Krusekopf
382-0256

Director: Bob Burow 479-3086

Director: Evie Chauncey 479-5499

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.

