

## **Old Growth Conservancy Society OGCS Directors' Report for 2018**

The Directors of the Old Growth Conservancy Society at the end of 2018 were:

- President: Karen Marzocco
- Vice-President: Marshall Bauman
- Secretary: Alan Bardsley
- Treasurer: Doug Bardsley
- Directors-at-Large: Mike Phillipoff, Hugh Hamilton, Paul Hundal, Katharine Steig, Herb Storm
- Advisory Members: David Cook, Terry Taylor
- District Representatives<sup>1</sup>: Corinne Ambor,  
DWV Parks Stewardship Manager,  
and  
Kari Pocock,  
DWV Parks Planning Assistant.

The Old Growth Conservancy Society (OGCS) held 10 regular directors' meetings in 2018 including the AGM, which was held February 28, 2018 at the West Vancouver Seniors' Centre.

### **2018 Snowshoeing, Summer Guided Tours and New Tours Outside the OGC**

One snowshoe hike into the Conservancy occurred on Sunday, March 4, 2018. A small number of directors met at Hi-View Lookout where we discussed the heavy, wet falling snow and cloudy conditions that filled the morning sky. These less-than-ideal weather conditions led to the cancellation of the bookings for a number of our members who had signed up for the snowshoe outing. In addition, there was a lack of rental snowshoes available for those guests who wanted to join anyway but who had no gear of their own. Thus, only a small party of five directors and one member joined us for the trip. The snow conditions inside the OGC were decent enough for the snowshoe trip and it was fun to snowshoe high above the ground through the large trees. Winter and snow can always be unpredictable, though, and safety in numbers can come into play. When we sat for our lunch, Hugh picked a spot too close to a tree and he dropped into a tree well. There is probably no one with more experience in the woods than Hugh so it shows how vigilant we all have to be about our surroundings. It also highlighted the tricks the snow can play and the traps and dangers that can be present around the bases of trees. Hugh was unharmed but it took two people to pull him out of the tree well. It made for an unexpected photo op. and unscheduled break and rescue between our lunch courses.

### **Summer Trips and Fallen Trees--Oh My!**

The OGCS regularly has a sign-up sheet at Community Day and again at the Coho Festival with the dates of the summer tours into the Conservancy.

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<sup>1</sup> The District Representative role for the OGCS is a non-voting board membership. Corinne Ambor's extensive experience with WV Parks provides the OGCS with insight into issues that may relate to or impact the Conservancy. Kari Pocock, whose own experience prior to joining Parks in DWV is highly valued by the OGCS, joined us for some meetings. She and Corinne will share the Representative role on the OGCS Board.

In August, the OGCS had what Hugh Hamilton described in our newsletter as “a surprise from Mother Nature...” That is--our rekkie for the first summer tour revealed three large yellow cedar trees had fallen across our traditional route into the apex of the Conservancy. A different route into the apex had to be found quickly. An alternative was chosen and used to access the apex for the 2018 tours. At the end of September, this alternate route was decommissioned to reduce the possibility of the flagging tape being discovered by forest adventurers and to avoid any risk of creating a defined trail. On November 6, DWV Parks and OGCS directors met at the fallen trees that blocked the traditional route to the apex to discuss whether the tree trunks could be cut to enable passage into the Conservancy. (The tree-fall was outside the OGC boundary.) Plans were made to arrange the cutting and removal of the barriers which will likely take place this spring.

The OGCS led six guided tours into the Conservancy. Alan Bardsley, our Secretary, organized all of the correspondence and tour bookings into the OGC. This is no small task. The tours were limited to eight participants at a time and Alan tested out the airline standard of overbooking tours. However, Alan would only accept two additional bookings per tour and this proved to be a pretty accurate system as people have to cancel or rebook for a variety of reasons. Fully booked, these tours would have enabled 48 people the opportunity to experience the old-growth forest ecology. Last summer, a total of 45 participants joined us for the Conservancy tours.

On all the tours, our practice is to guide people into the OGC where they are able to experience areas of pristine old-growth forest. We then lead them into a once logged second-growth stand just south of the Conservancy boundary. The tours include some history about the loss of old-growth forests due to coastal logging as well as information about the plants and fungi that form the ecology of an old-growth environment.

The normally dry and pleasant September was a much colder and wetter one than we usually encounter. Four of the six trips were damp or rainy. During one particularly wet, cool tour, a couple of participants suggested that we provide more descriptive information about what to expect in the written information that we provide before each tour. Many that day had dressed in light jackets assuming that they would be hiking quite quickly through the woods. As the tours are informational and they occur in some areas with no trails whatsoever--they can be relatively slow moving. They are tours not hikes into the woods. We look forward to incorporating this feedback into the tour information emailed to the people who are looking to book our tours in 2019.

The tour guides for 2018 were David Cook and Hugh Hamilton with two tours led by Peter Ackhurst, a forester and friend of Hugh's.

### **New! Tours of West Vancouver Old-Growth Forest Areas Outside the OGC**

At our February 28th, 2018 AGM, members approved our proposed change to the second purpose of our society. At the time, we were reexamining our purposes as part of our obligation to register the OGCS with the Province under the new BC Societies Act. As we reexamined our society's purposes, we believed that we had already expanded our work to areas outside of the Conservancy. Thus, with member approval, we adopted the following purpose #2: “To ensure

that the natural values of old-growth in West Vancouver are respected and appreciated by the community”.

In keeping with the OGCS change to Purpose #2, Paul Hundal led three trips into old-growth forested areas in West Vancouver that were outside the OGC. These occurred in September and October, 2018. Paul focussed on the history of logging on the North Shore with a particular concentration on West Vancouver. He also pointed out old-growth trees and the accompanying flora that are often found in old-growth ecosystems. The trips included visiting old-growth in Lighthouse Park, Whyte Lake and Brothers Creek. Unfortunately, advertising and outreach about these new guided tours did not reach as many people as we had hoped. Undaunted, Paul plans to guide tours outside the Conservancy this year, too with the hope that more people will attend and enjoy these informative and fun trips.

### **New Brochure on Old-Growth in West Vancouver**

Also in keeping with the expanded Purpose #2 and our continued focus on the sustainability of the Old-Growth Conservancy, the OGCS began work on a brochure that highlights old-growth forested areas in West Vancouver. The brochure is the brainchild of Katharine Steig and it existed in an older form many years ago but it needed rewriting and updating. The plan for the original brochure and its improved, updated cousin is for it to be handed out to interested parties who wish to hike to and visit our local old-growth ecosystems. The brochure will describe the OGC but the focus is to redirect people to the old-growth areas outside the Conservancy. The hope is to educate people about the locations of old-growth on existing trails and inspire them to visit these rare places while protecting the Conservancy itself from curious visitors. There will be five areas featured in the brochure including: The Old Growth Conservancy, Cypress Falls Park, Cypress Provincial Park, Lighthouse Park, Nelson Canyon/Whyte Lake and Brothers Creek. Hollyburn Ridge will also potentially be included depending on the space available on the pages. Katharine and Paul began work on the brochure in earnest in 2018 with the intention to create an informative version for later in 2019. Future plans may include a link to more information on the OGCS website.

### **West Vancouver Community Day**

The OGCS took part in the June 2, 2018 Community Day. The event was very well organized but fewer people seemed to drop by to ask questions or view the displays than the previous year. Nonetheless, we had signup sheets ready for the August and September Old Growth Conservancy tours and we enjoyed the conversations we had with the people who did drop by and with the members of the other sustainability groups. Community Day and Coho Festival are great places for our groups to exchange information and keep up to date.

### **Coho Festival**

As with Community Day, OGCS always looks forward to attending the Coho Festival as it attracts visitors from all over the North Shore and beyond. It was held on September 9th last year. We were very excited to be treated to our very own tent! The tent and provided tablecloths made for an especially professional presentation of our displays. It also gave the sustainability groups room to move around and engage with our visitors. Despite a very rainy day, we had a large number of guests visit our displays as they ducked under our tent seeking respite from the rain. It likely would have been quite crowded and less successful if there had been the two or

more groups under one tent. Whether or not the same luxury accommodations will be available in 2019 is yet to be seen but we sure enjoyed the space in 2018. We thank the Coho Society of the North Shore, especially Larry Carlsen and Sherry Parrot and all the volunteers, for a successful day from our perspective and hope that this year the weather will reward all the hard work they put into creating the festival each year.

### **Monitoring the Conservancy**

Marshall Bauman is the eyes, ears and feet of the Society in the Conservancy. His regular visits keep tabs on the flora and fauna in the OGC. Marshall says, “Messin’ about in the Old Growth is great fun! – in a Tom Sawyer/Huck Finn sort of way.” What is less fun for Marshall, and more time consuming, is controlling the proliferation of invasive plants that grow in parking lot 5 next to the Conservancy. The OGC was protected, in part, because of its “pristine” nature: the original state of its forest ecology and its freedom from invasive flora. Yet, adjoining the Conservancy is parking lot 5 which, prior to the addition of its locked gate and occasionally since, became a dumping ground for garbage--especially garden waste. In spring, when the snow banks in the parking lot melt, up springs a nursery of buttercup, morning glory, hawkweed, lamium, burdock, foxglove, bachelor buttons and others, perhaps the most concerning of which is reed canary grass (RCG). “Oh,” interjects Marshall, “Let’s not forget the occasional broom plant that pops up here & there. “

In 2018, as in other years, Marshall cut seed heads off RCG nearest the Conservancy in the part of lot 5 that is, technically, in the OGC. He also cut the seed heads off some new RCG on the far side of the parking lot. Additionally, he chopped down burdock and a few broom and dug up orange hawkweed and some bachelor buttons. Marshall has said that it all seems generally overwhelming but the good news is that there are still almost no invasive plants in the forest. This is likely due to the lack of sunlight as well as Marshall’s dedication and hard work. Marshall has removed a few patches of small grass off of the Conservancy Crossing Trail although this is not RCG. Marshall notes that the District of West Vancouver is hosting an Invasive Plant Workshop this March 7, 2019.

Additionally, he says, “On the fun side, I’ve been exploring the mountain bike trails and old logging roads near the southern border of the Conservancy.” Marshall has been exploring these areas mostly to locate the actual southern border of the OGC. He says that the District of West Vancouver has not clearly explained to the OGCS how the borders of the Conservancy were determined. Marshall has discovered some large old-growth trees outside of the OGC as well as what he believes are some bike trails inside the border. In 2018, Marshall began sorting through years of his photo records from the OGC to categorize and archive the material.

### **Forest Ecosystem Inventory of Old-Growth in the Conservancy<sup>2</sup>**

In 2017 and continuing into 2018, students at the BCIT Forest and Natural Areas Management Department conducted an inventory of the Old Growth Conservancy under the direction of Wayne Horvath, Program Head of Sustainable Resource Management. This inventory has been in partnership with the District of West Vancouver and the OGCS. The work that occurred included collecting and compiling data such as:

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<sup>2</sup> Information regarding the BCIT Inventory provided by Wayne Horvath through various emails to Hugh Hamilton, Dan Henegar and Corinne Ambor, DWV Parks, November 28, 2018 through January 17, 2019.

- Large tree inventory (by species)
- Small tree inventory (by species)
- Foliar estimates (by species for shrubs, ferns and herbaceous plants) & species richness
- Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) and forest floor biomass volumes
- Soil analysis for a select portion of the polygon (upper NW area)

In 2018, specifically, BCIT used a new Urban “ITree” program which enabled them to infer information from their collected data such as:

- A forest structure summary
- Species distribution by diameter class
- Leaf area and Biomass
- Relative performance index
- Tree “Benefits” summary
- Carbon storage of trees
- Annual Carbon Sequestration of trees
- Hydrology effect of trees
- Oxygen production of trees
- Pollution removal of trees and shrubs
- Air quality improvement of trees
- Susceptibility to Pests

BCIT anticipates providing a report regarding the above material to the District of West Vancouver, and through the DWV to the OGCS, this winter or spring, 2019. In addition, one student project team dedicated their efforts to the examination of the use of LIDAR that had been provided courtesy of the British Pacific Properties. LIDAR or Light Detection And Ranging is based on the concept of radar but uses light from a laser rather than radio waves to detect objects and map them. Wayne Horvath is attempting to find a company that can convert the LIDAR files from their current digital format to another format at no cost so that the files can be incorporated into further BCIT mapping work. If this file conversion can occur then it may be possible for the OGCS LIDAR data (in conjunction with the field data collected) to provide inventory data of the entire Conservancy area. This particular student group has been working with the resident BCIT GIS/LIDAR expert and they believe they are breaking new ground in the research area. This last piece of the OGCS inventory puzzle is contingent on the digital conversion of the files. If the files are converted then the mapping will continue through the spring of 2019 and the students will present their findings to BCIT this April.

If this is the case, then by the end of 2019 or early 2020, it is the hope of the OGCS that we will receive plot data information for over 700 trees as well as having access to an interactive map that will have GIS points that will link sample locations to a list with inventory characteristics. Should we receive this final GIS/LIDAR-based mapping material then we may be able to make it available to the community on the OGCS website.

### **Marr Creek to Brothers Creek Old-Growth Biophysical Study<sup>3</sup>**

History: Phase 1 of the study began in June 2015 when Terry Taylor and David Cook began compiling and mapping plant lists along all trails in an area that David identified as old-growth forest. This area comprised a distance of 2 kilometres west to east between Marr Creek and Brothers Creek on District of West Vancouver land. It ran from approximately the Baden Powell Trail north to the southern boundary of the cabin area. The boundaries of the old-growth forest were identified from satellite imagery confirmed with ground truthing. Phase 1 was completed in July 2016.

Phase 2 of the study, which continued through 2018, has included mapping, tagging and the photographing of veteran trees using a Garmin Montana 680 handheld GPS device. Alan Bardsley joined David to assist in the work required for the study and to add his considerable technical skills to the project.

The mapping of the veteran trees is ongoing and completion of that phase of the programme is anticipated to be the end of summer 2019. To date about 100 veteran trees have been identified.

Important findings to date:

1. The study area is by far the largest area of low elevation old-growth forest on the North Shore. i.e. below 800 metres and within the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone.
2. The biodiversity of the plant species in the study area is significantly higher than other areas of low elevation old-growth forest on the North Shore where Terry Taylor and David have previously compiled lists. This high biodiversity would appear to be a function of the large size of the area of essentially virgin forest that has been preserved.

The final report with recommendations for management of the area is anticipated to be submitted to the District of West Vancouver in 2020.

### **OGCS Communications Strategies and Member Engagement**

By April, 2018, the new constitution and bylaws had been filed with the Province to comply with the new BC Societies Act. In June, the OGCS struck a subcommittee on Communications Strategies and Member Engagement. The four core members were Alan, Paul, Mike and Karen. The OGCS's second purpose expansion into ensuring "...that the natural values of old-growth in West Vancouver are respected and appreciated by the community" meant that the OGCS had to examine how we communicate with members and what messaging we wanted to convey. A branding exercise was considered as was reaching out to OGCS members to seek a volunteer to manage communication and emails. A notice to members requesting that they renew their memberships (if the memberships had expired) was sent out. Some members responded and renewed their memberships quite quickly. The brochure to introduce people to areas of old-growth in West Vancouver was also discussed and further refinement as to its purpose and descriptions are still under consideration. Larger engagement ideas such as how to create opportunities for school children to participate in old-growth forest ecology and whether photo or drawing contests should be held are still to be tackled by the subcommittee. The

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<sup>3</sup> Progress report for 2019 AGM of Old Growth Conservancy Society provided by David Cook.

subcommittee has also been reviewing what I spoke to you about at last year's AGM regarding the best ways to directly engage all our members so that you can brainstorm and contribute your ideas to the OGCS. We are few people with big ideas and it takes time to determine the best route forward.

### **Randy Stoltmann Interpretive Sign Project**

In 2018, the OGCS began a research project into the life and work of Randy Stoltmann. The goal of the project is to create an interpretative sign near the Hollyburn Fir in the Upper Lands. The fir was discovered by Randy and his brother, Greg in 1985.

Randy grew up in West Vancouver. He was an author and an explorer. His remarkable life is reflected in his writings and in his discoveries of the natural world around us. Randy was a big tree hunter and founder of the BC Big Tree Registry. He pioneered the uncovering and locating of significant trees in West Vancouver and throughout BC. He has been widely acknowledged as having significantly contributed to the preservation of natural areas in BC. This included a major role that Randy played in the creation of what is now the Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park where there is a Commemorative Grove named in his honour. Sadly, Randy lost his life in a mountaineering accident in 1994.

It is Randy's important influence, both within and beyond the boundaries of West Vancouver, that has led the Society to believe that local recognition of Randy's efforts and achievements is overdue. The research and work to create an interpretive sign will continue through 2019.

### **District of West Vancouver**

Working with the District of West Vancouver on the protection of the Conservancy is at the heart of the Society. The District is an important and highly supportive partner. We are grateful to Corinne Ambor for sharing her expertise and for her dedication to our Conservancy. Last year, Kari Pocock also joined us at a number of our meetings and she has been especially helpful as she works with Katharine in the Randy Stoltmann interpretive sign project.

### **West Vancouver Community Award for the Environment**

The OGCS is extremely proud of our director, Hugh Hamilton who received the West Vancouver Community Award for the Environment at a ceremony November 29th at the Kay Meek Centre. Hugh also serves on the board of directors for the West Vancouver StreamKeepers Society. He has been active with the Nature House board and he has been a member of Nature Vancouver for many years.

### **OGCS Newsletters #13 and #14**

Although Hugh is currently enjoying his travels in Costa Rica, his work on the 2018 OGCS Newsletters is greatly appreciated.

## **Plans for 2019:**

### **Snowshoe Trips into the Conservancy**

This potential trip is snowfall dependent. Let's hope we see snow and also see you on the OGC snowshoe adventure.

### **Tours Outside the Conservancy**

Paul Hundal plans to continue to lead educational hikes into a number of District old-growth areas outside the Old Growth Conservancy. Watch the OGCS website for dates and feel free to suggest dates and areas of interest that you'd like to see. Trips will also be advertised in the North Shore News.

### **Summer Trips into Conservancy**

Dates for tours will be chosen in time for Community Days, May 31 and June 1, 2019. If you have an interest or background in biology, ecology, botany or forestry--please let us know if you are interested in becoming a tour leader.

### **Inventory of Old-Growth in the Conservancy**

The BCIT Old-Growth Inventory Report is expected to be delivered to the District of West Vancouver Parks Department in the Winter/Spring of 2019.

### **Marr Creek to Brothers Creek Old-Growth Forest Biophysical Study**

David Cook and Alan Bardsley will continue to tag and map veteran trees. They've tagged about 100 old-growth trees and have many, many more to go.

### **Community Day and Coho Festival**

We will see you at the 2019 Community Days and Coho Festivals!

### **Ongoing Monitoring**

OGCS's very own Eco-marshal, Marshall continues monitoring the Conservancy this year.

### **Website**

The website is regularly updated with news of guided tours and other pieces of interest throughout the year. OGCS has plans to overhaul the site but this is more likely to occur in 2020.

### **Special Thanks**

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the Directors and WV District's Corinne Ambor and Kari Pocock for their dedication to the conservation and educational work of the OGCS. And, thank you to each of you for joining us at our AGM and for your support as members of the OGCS.

Thank you,

Karen Marzocco, OGCS President